LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

LFC-26-086

Modern Firefighting Strategy Phase 2

Report to:

Investment & Finance Board
Commissioner's Board
Deputy Mayor's Fire Board
London Fire Commissioner

Date:

24 September 2026
7 October 2026
20 October 2026

Report by:
James Ryan, Project Lead, Group Commander for training Review and Modernisation

Authorising Head of Service:
Keeley Foster, Assistant Commissioner Training Review

Report classification:
For decision

For publication

Values met

Service
Integrity
Teamwork
Equity
Courage
Learning

I agree the recommended decision below.

Jonathan Smith
London Fire Commissioner

Date **This decision was remotely signed on 23 November 2026**

PART ONE

Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker

Executive Summary

This report seeks approval to commence initial procurement to secure specialist live-fire training facilities and associated services for the Urban Firefighting Modules, training and delivery of Year One of the Modern Firefighting Strategy Phase 2, using the existing budget allocation as stated in Part Two.

The recommended risk-based programme will modernise operational training, strengthen firefighter competence and target capability development against the Assessment of Risk, Corporate Risk Register, operational learning and emerging risks.

Full workforce rollout is expected to take a further two years and will require further funding as stated in Part Two, and will only proceed when that funding is approved; otherwise delivery will be paused, re-phased or re-prioritised within affordability.

Recommended Decision

For the London Fire Commissioner

The LFC agrees that the amount detailed in Part Two be allocated from the existing revenue budget to commit to initial procurement to secure specialist live-fire training facilities and associated services for the Urban Firefighting Modules, training and delivery of Year One of the Modern Firefighting Strategy Phase 2.

The LFC delegates authority to the Assistant Director Technical and Commercial to award a contract up to the value set out in part 2 of this report for the purpose of procuring specialist live-fire training facilities and associated services for the Urban Firefighting Modules, training and delivery of Year One of the Modern Firefighting Strategy Phase 2.

The LFC approves option 3 in the accompanying Business Case in Appendix 1; establishment of the full risk-based Phase 2 framework, with initial delivery prioritised within the approved funding envelope.

The LFC approves development of the LFB-owned instructor capability, programme governance, quality assurance and competence arrangements needed to support delivery.

The LFC notes that the full three-year programme is expected to require further funding as set out in Part Two and therefore full programme roll out beyond Year One will only proceed where sufficient funding is confirmed and with appropriate governance approval. Should this not happen, delivery will be paused, re-phased or re-prioritised within approved expenditure.

1 Introduction and background

1.1 The Modern Firefighting Strategy was established following approval of the Urban Firefighting Training proposal in 2023. That work identified that traditional training arrangements, while providing a strong operational foundation, needed to evolve in response to London's changing built environment, increasingly complex fire behaviour and emerging operational risks and the need for more realistic, technically informed and risk-focused training.

1.2 Phase 1 focused on Tactical Ventilation. It introduced Positive Pressure Ventilation (PPV) as a frontline capability, provided advanced fire-behaviour training, delivered 143 PPV fans onto frontline appliances and will have delivered tactical ventilation training to 94% of operational staff by the end of October 2026. Learning from Phase 1 - particularly watch-based attendance, realistic live-fire delivery, strong communications, flexible scheduling, instructor development and quality assurance - informs the proposed Phase 2 model.

1.3 Phase 2 is the next stage of that long-term programme. It is intended to enhance existing operational capability where the Assessment of Risk (AoR), Corporate Risk Register, operational assurance, incident learning, training currency and emerging risks indicate that further development or maintenance is proportionate. It is not based on an assumption that all existing capabilities are deficient; rather, it provides a structured way to identify, prioritise and address capability needs as London's risk profile changes.

1.4 The principal drivers include organisational learning arising from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry response, HMICFRS improvement activity, the Lakanal House Rule 43 response, firefighter injury and fatality investigations, National Operational Guidance implementation, Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) commitments and risks identified through the Brigade's AoR. The programme also supports the Respond Strategy 2026-2029 commitments to improve communications resilience, improve water management and deliver the Modern Firefighting Strategy, together with the Annual Plan 2026-27 commitment to begin Phase 2.

1.5 The AoR is a central input. It identifies traditional and emerging operational risks including fires in high-rise residential buildings, basement fires, communications failures, water-supply disruption, flooding and water rescue, hostile threats, climate-related risks and wildfires. Phase 2 converts these risk themes into proportionate training and competence interventions, which may be delivered workforce-wide or targeted to stations, watches or specialist functions according to risk and operational exposure.

1.6 The programme applies a risk-based methodology across three connected dimensions: strategic risk affecting the Brigade as a whole; local risk that varies geographically across London; and emerging risks driven by climate change, technology, the built environment and societal change. This supports evidence-based prioritisation while retaining flexibility to respond to future operational challenges.

1.7 Phase 2 also contributes to Corporate Risk Register controls GT2, OP2, OP7, OP17, ORC18, ORC22, ORC23, TPD2 and TPD3. It is a contributing control rather than the sole control for these risks; effectiveness and any residual gaps will continue to be assessed through the relevant risk owners and governance arrangements. The main Fire Standards alignment is with the Operational Preparedness Fire Standard, including risk assessment, capability-based planning, competent personnel, organisational learning and training informed by National Operational Guidance.

2 Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1 The primary objective is to enhance operational capability and safety-critical competence by providing firefighters and incident commanders with the knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence required to apply modern firefighting tactics and technology safely and effectively within London's complex operational environment.

2.2 The programme will deliver a modern, risk-led and NOG-compliant competence framework; embed organisational and sector learning; improve firefighter safety through stronger fire-behaviour understanding and tactical decision-making; support CRMP and Respond Strategy commitments; maintain capability in line with London's changing risk profile; and establish auditable arrangements for acquisition, maintenance, revalidation and assurance of competence.

2.3 Expected outcomes include improved understanding of fire behaviour and dynamic fire development; enhanced high-rise and basement competence; improved tactical use of ventilation and associated equipment; stronger communications and water-management resilience; improved water-rescue compliance and assurance; increased wildfire preparedness in higher-risk locations; improved readiness for hostile threats and civil disturbance; and stronger incident-command decision-making, human-factors awareness and risk management

2.4 Phase 2 complements rather than replaces the Brigade's established competence arrangements. Skills acquired through the programme will be maintained and assured through the Operational Competency Framework/License to Operate (L2O), station-based training, targeted revalidation, scenario-based assessment, testing and exercising, operational assurance and instructor-led quality assurance. The intention is to reduce reliance on repeated workforce-wide acquisition cycles by embedding sustainable maintenance of competence.

2.5 The Brigade will retain ownership of the programme design, governance, instructional standards and quality assurance. This gives the Brigade greater control over how training responds to operational learning, National Operational Guidance and changes in London's risk profile.

2.6 A sustainable Brigade-owned instructor capability is central to the delivery model. Instructors will receive specialist development in fire behaviour, tactical firefighting, tactical ventilation, basement fires, live-fire instructional techniques, assessment and quality assurance. It is intended that the cadre will support both initial acquisition and future maintenance of competence, reducing reliance on external instructional resource while retaining access to specialist facilities and expertise where required.

2.7 The programme comprises eleven operational training modules. Modules 1 to 3 form the core Urban Firefighting package: Module 1 Fire Behaviour and Tactical Firefighting; Module 2 Tactical Ventilation Maintenance of Competence; and Module 3 Fires in Basements. These modules require access to a specialist external venue capable of providing realistic carbonaceous live-fire conditions that are used within bespoke custom built venues that can deliver the required fire behaviour and ventilation profiles.

2.8 The operational capability modules are: Module 4 Fires in High-Rise Buildings; Module 5 Marauding Terrorist Attacks and Hostile Threats; Module 6 Civil Disturbance; Module 7 Water Rescue Operations Capability; and Module 8 Wildfire Operations, Module 9 Radio Communications, Module 10 Water Management and Module11 Critical Decision-Making. Modules 9 and 10 are intended to be delivered together and Module 11 is intended to be incorporated across Modules 1 to 10 rather than delivered as a stand-alone acquisition course wherever integration provides the stronger operational learning outcome.

2.9 Initial Urban Firefighting delivery will be phased using a risk-based station prioritisation model. The current Group 1 cohort comprises 34 stations and approximately 1,442 operational personnel. Prioritisation uses building risk, incident exposure and training currency, including high-rise and basement exposure, complex building stock, regeneration and tall-building growth, operational activity and time elapsed since Tactical Ventilation training. The final cohort will be validated against Level 2 AoR geographic risk information before delivery is confirmed.

2.10 Delivery is planned to commence during 2027 and continue through to 2030. Watch-based attendance will be used where practicable, supported by coordinated scheduling, communications and engagement, robust quality assurance and a flexible delivery model that can respond to operational establishment pressures and procurement outcomes.

3 Values Comments

3.1 The LFC notes the Fire Standards Board requirements around adopting and embedding the Core Code of Ethics at an individual and corporate level. Following extensive engagement, the LFC has introduced Brigade values which build on and do not detract from the Code of Ethics.

3.2 The Brigade values are:

- Service: we put the public first

  The programme puts public and firefighter safety first by targeting training at the operational risks most likely to affect safe and effective incident response.

- Integrity: we act with honesty

  Investment decisions are based on risk, organisational learning, transparent prioritisation and affordability, with future full programme rollout explicitly conditional on further funding approval.

- Teamwork: we work together and include everyone

  Design and delivery require collaboration across Learning and Professional Development, operational teams, Procurement and Commercial, Finance, Operational Resilience, Health and Safety, Training Operations, workforce planning and external partners.

- Equity: we treat everyone fairly according to their needs

  Delivery arrangements, PPE, welfare, accessibility and venue requirements will be designed so that personnel can access training fairly according to need, with equality impacts reviewed throughout implementation.

- Courage: we step up to the challenge

  Phase 2 responds to changing operational risk by challenging established training models and investing in realistic, technically demanding training where evidence indicates it is required.

- Learning: we listen so that we can improve

  The programme embeds learning from incidents, inquiries, inspections, Phase 1, National

Operational Guidance, National Operational Learning, Joint Organisational Learning and operational assurance into an ongoing review and competence model.

4 Equality Comments

4.1 The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service are required to have due regard to thePublic Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when taking decisions. This in broad terms involves understanding the potential impact of policy and decisions on different people, taking this into account and then evidencing how decisions were reached.

4.2 It is important to note that consideration of the Public Sector Equality Duty is not a one-off task. The duty must be fulfilled before taking a decision, at the time of taking a decision, andafter the decision has been taken.

4.3 The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the requirements to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), race (ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, and sexual orientation.

4.4 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision-takers in the exercise of all their functions,to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

4.5 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves havingdue regard, in particular, to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic where those disadvantages are connected to that characteristic.
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

4.6 The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

4.7 Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- tackle prejudice
- promote understanding.

4.8 The Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 has been considered during programme development.

4.9 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Initial Screening Form has been completed. A full EIA will be conducted in collaboration and consultation with the Equalities Team.

4.10 Learning from Phase 1 has identified practical equality considerations including PPE sizing and availability, welfare and changing facilities, accessibility, accommodation and the physical demands of realistic live-fire training. These matters will be reflected in procurement specifications, risk assessments and delivery planning, with further engagement with representative bodies, staff networks and Health and Safety advisers.

4.11 Equality impacts will remain under review before, during and after implementation, and reasonable adjustments will be considered where compatible with the safety-critical requirements of operational competence.

5 Other considerations

5.1 The programme supports the Brigade's strategic review of its wider training delivery model. The Brigade will retain direct ownership of Modern Firefighting programme design, governance, quality assurance and competence standards. Module design will be done in close collaboration with Operational Improvement (OI) to ensure it is NOG-aligned and meets LFB standards on training commissioning. Specialist infrastructure and services will be procured where they are not available internally.

5.2 The wider review will consider the most appropriate balance of in-house delivery, strategic supplier support and specialist external provision by training area, using risk, operational benefit, quality, resilience and value for money as the determining factors. This allows Modern Firefighting to build internal expertise and agility without prejudging the delivery model for other high-volume training activities or future contractual arrangements. Any further developments with regards to the National College of Fire will be considered as part of this.

Workforce comments

5.3 Current planning assumes approximately ten additional instructors to join the current cadre of instructors recruited as part of phase 1, with the final establishment to be confirmed through workforce planning. Recruitment may draw on internal applicants, fixed-term secondments, suitably qualified transferees or external candidates and flexible instructional resource.

5.4 The final model may include permanent instructors, fixed-term secondments, suitably qualified external or transferee recruitment and flexible instructional resource through established Day 6/Day 7 arrangements.

Sustainability comments

5.5 This report does not introduce any significant sustainability impacts. A Sustainable Development Impact Assessment (SDIA) is to be completed during the design phase

5.6 Procurement and delivery will consider travel, accommodation, welfare, use of specialist live-fire facilities, consumables and environmental impacts alongside operational suitability and safety. The procurement evaluation will include environmental and social value considerations, and the programme will seek to minimise unnecessary travel and repeat acquisition through a sustainable maintenance-of-competence model.

Procurement comments

5.7 The Brigade is currently undertaking early market engagement in accordance with the principles of the Procurement Act 2023 to better understand the market's capability and capacity to deliver the specialist live-fire training facilities and associated services required for Phase 2 of the Modern Firefighting Strategy.

5.8 The outcome of this engagement will inform the procurement strategy and determine the most appropriate route to market, ensuring compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 while delivering value for money, operational resilience and the required training outcomes. Any subsequent procurement activity will be subject to appropriate governance approvals and conducted in accordance with the Brigade's Contract Standing Orders and procurement governance requirements.

Communications comments

5.9 Communications, engagement and consultation where required will support mobilisation and phased delivery. Priority audiences include operational staff and station leadership, instructors and subject-matter experts, representative bodies, staff networks, enabling departments and relevant external partners.

5.10 Communications will explain the purpose of Phase 2, the risk-based prioritisation model, attendance and abstraction arrangements, what competence is being acquired or maintained, and how full rollout depends on future funding.

5.11 The approach will build on Phase 1 lessons, using clear pre-course information, leadership briefings, programme updates and feedback routes. Communications and Engagement support will be confirmed in advance of launch of the programme and key governance decisions.

6 Financial comments

6.1 Costs are based on assumptions at this stage of the business case and need to be tested in the market. At present, on balance, it is considered that the public interest is best served if the information is not disclosed at this point and therefore indicative and estimated costs for each section of the phase 2 programme are detailed in full in part two of the report.

7 Legal Comments

7.1 Under section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the London Fire Commissioner (the "Commissioner") is established as a corporation sole with the Mayor appointing the occupant of that office. Under section 327D of the GLA Act 1999, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the Mayor may issue to the Commissioner specific or general directions as to the manner in which the holder of that office is to exercise his or her functions.

7.2 By direction dated 1 April 2018, the Mayor set out those matters, for which the Commissioner would require the prior approval of either the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience (the "Deputy Mayor").

7.3 Paragraph (b) of Part 2 of the said direction requires the Commissioner to seek the prior approval of the Deputy Mayor before "[a] commitment to expenditure (capital or revenue) of £150,000 or above as identified in accordance with normal accounting practices...". The decision to approve expenditure up to the value set out in part 2 of the report to secure specialist live-fire training facilities and associated services for the Urban Firefighting Modules, training and delivery of Year

One of the Modern Firefighting Strategy Phase 2 will therefore require approval from the Deputy Mayor.

7.4 The General Counsel notes that Procurement will be conducted in compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 and London Fire Commissioner's Procurement Standing Orders.

7.5 The statutory basis for the actions proposed in this report is provided by sections 7 and 5A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 ("FRSA 2004"). Under Section 7 (2)(a) FRSA 20014 the Commissioner has the power to secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements for firefighting and section 5A allows the Commissioner to procure personnel, services and equipment they consider appropriate for purposes incidental or indirectly incidental to their functional purposes.

List of appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential*
1	Modern Firefighting Strategy Phase 2 Business Case	Confidential

Part two confidentiality

Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part Two form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a Part Two form: YES