



QUESTIONS



Question No. 446

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority - Meeting: 17 February 2016

Question by Darren Johnson AM (Green Member) to the Commissioner of LFB (Ron Dobson)

Heating controls in fire stations

I recently attended a sustainability briefing session for firefighters at Richmond Fire Station and one of the issues that came up in the discussion afterwards was the lack of flexibility regarding heating controls in stations. It appears from the discussion that this has been one of the most common concerns raised by London firefighters keen to do their bit to improve the sustainability of stations. Can the Commissioner update me on what is being done to address this in order to add to the Brigade's already commendable achievements on energy efficiency?

Reply

We are aware of the issue raised at Richmond, which was identified during staff consultation sessions in preparation for the Brigade's third Sustainable Development Strategy. As a result, the draft strategy, which will be presented to the Resources Committee in March for approval, includes an action to pilot provision of improved user control of heating, allowing on/off control. This will be up to a limit of 20°C, provided the external temperature is below 16°C. The aim is to reduce emissions and improve staff comfort. The pilot will include support for staff to understand how to use the existing heating controls they have and the additional controls provided. Richmond station in particular has an old heating system that is scheduled for replacement, which will improve both the performance of the heating and staff comfort. If the pilot proves successful we will consider extending the approach to other stations.

Question No. 447

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority - Meeting: 17 February 2016

Question by Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Labour Group) to the Commissioner of LFB (Ron Dobson)

Duty to collaborate between the emergency services

Given that in London, the emergency services already work together on a regular basis, what additional areas of work and/or shared services do you anticipate are likely to be included as the result of the duty to collaborate between the emergency services?

Reply

I am very proud of the excellent partnerships that already exist between the emergency services in London. The co-responding pilot and our hosting of Exercise Unified Response, which will be the largest multi agency exercise ever to take place in London, are just two examples of this in action. Whilst the duty to collaborate will bring a welcome emphasis to that work, a joint team of officers was put together in July 2015 comprising LFB, MPS and LAS colleagues who have been working to determine areas for potential blue light collaboration in the future.

These areas include emergency service control rooms, prevention and response activities, more collaborative procurement and sharing of premises. I am confident that closer collaboration between London's emergency services has the potential to provide significant benefits in terms of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of blue light services to the people of London.

Question No. 448

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority - Meeting: 17 February 2016

Question by Councillor Jack Hopkins to the Chairman of LFEPA (Gareth Bacon AM)

Scheme Advisory Board

Whilst the Authority has a Local Pension Board, there is no Scheme Advisory Board in place. Can the Chairman tell the Authority whether he has lobbied the Government to address this?

Reply

My office is in the process of arranging a meeting with the new Fire Minister to discuss many of the issues of importance to LFEPA. I will happily raise this issue and report back to Members as soon as I have more information.

Question No. 449

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority - Meeting: 17 February 2016

Question by Tom Copley AM (Labour Group) to the Commissioner of LFB (Ron Dobson)

Smoke alarms and carbon dioxide alarms

How many of the 98,000 smoke alarms and 11,500 carbon dioxide alarms does the Brigade still have and what are you doing to ensure they reach those in the private rented sector?

Reply

Since the launch of the DCLG scheme to issue smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to the private rental sector, the Brigade has issued 7,333 smoke alarms to higher risk households. The Brigade has also issued 6,338 Carbon Monoxide alarms to higher risk households.

Unfortunately, despite significant proactive promotion of the free offer, the take up has been much less than anticipated. Officers believe that this is mainly due to the Brigade's approach to targeting the most at risk properties and therefore vulnerable residents. As a result, although numbers are low, officers are confident that those alarms that have been collected have reached the right properties and people to reduce risk. The intention going forward is to review the criteria to assess what other opportunities and partnerships exist to promote the take up of alarms.

There has though been a lot of good work already. Throughout the campaign the Brigade has undertaken a sustained promotional campaign in web, social media, radio, television and printed media. There was also a national campaign accompanied by paid advertorials. Officers wrote to 3,261 estate and letting agents with details of the scheme and are currently repeating the process. Officers have also liaised with the National Landlords Association and other strategic partners, promoting the benefits to Landlords and their tenants as well as the availability of the alarms.

In December 2015, in order to simplify the application process, the Brigade's web application form was amended to enable both landlords and tenants to apply for the alarms. Further changes were made to enable applicants to self-declare tenants as being at higher risk.

The Brigade is currently in the process of targeting local papers in each borough with an updated press release saying that the free alarm offer is now open to tenants as well as landlords and further social media promotion.

Question No. 450

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority - Meeting: 17 February 2016

Question by Andrew Dismore AM (Labour Group) to the Commissioner of LFB (Ron Dobson)

Stations off the run

Can the Commissioner provide details of the number of and identify which stations that were off the run for a) the duration and b) more than 2 hours of the night shift on Saturday 6 February and provide details of why they were taken off the run?

Reply

On the night shift on Saturday 6 February 2016 there were nine appliances off the run for the shift. These appliances were at Poplar, Leyton, Shoreditch, Harold Hill, Eltham, Dockhead, Willesden, Fulham and Surbiton fire stations. This was despite the fact that there were 742 staff on duty, which is 68 more than required to staff all appliances. The reason the nine appliances were taken off the run was due to unavailability of officers. Under normal circumstances, suitably assessed officers from other stations would be sent in to standby to keep these appliances on the run. Standby staff were arranged, but there was a shortage of officers due a combination of leave, sickness, training and vacancies. In addition, there were five appliances off the run for two hours or more waiting for stand by staff to arrive. These appliances were at Soho, Ilford, Hillingdon, West Norwood and Sutton.

However, there were no fire stations that were uncovered because appliances from other stations were sent in to cover each one on three hour rolling reliefs throughout the night. In any case though the Brigade plans emergency cover on a strategic London-wide basis. When an appliance is unavailable because they are at an incident, carrying out community safety work or off-station training, emergency cover is provided by neighbouring fire stations.

In terms of addressing these issues in the future, a watch manager assessment process has recently been completed and a crew manager assessment process will conclude by the end of February. The results of both these processes, combined with the managerial focus on increasing the number of crew manager plus candidates; the discussions with the National Joint Secretaries on a way to resolve the issues of redeploying appliances; reconstructing training courses for offices and close management of sickness levels, will ensure that such officer shortages are minimised.

It is worthy of note however that this number of appliances off the run is an unusual occurrence. So far this year, there have only been two shifts where appliances have been unavailable due to officer shortages, one being 6 February and the other Sunday 25 January, when only one appliance was unavailable. In total in 2016, appliances have only been unavailable on less than half of one per cent of occasions due to skill/officer shortages.

Question No. 451

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority - Meeting: 17 February 2016

Question by Councillor Martin Whelton (Labour Group) to the Commissioner of LFB (Ron Dobson)

Fuel hoarding

In view of the low oil prices, what assessment has been made of the risk of fuel hoarding?

Reply

Officers have well developed relationships with the Brigade's nine Primary Authority (petroleum) partners. These partners are responsible for the significant majority of the petroleum distribution and sales in the London Fire Brigade area. Officers have raised this issue at both local and national levels through the Petroleum Co-Ordinating Groups and maintain close liaison with partners to identify any upward trends in sales volume which could indicate that local hoarding may be taking place. There is currently no intelligence to suggest that this is the case and Officers continue to maintain the planned inspection regime and work closely with Local Authority agencies to monitor the situation, and will respond accordingly should the need arise.

Question No. 452

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority - Meeting: 17 February 2016

**Question by Councillor Pauline Morrison (Labour Group) to the Chairman of LFEPA
(Gareth Bacon AM)**

Removal of fire appliance from Forest Hill

Members of the Labour Group have heard nothing during the consultation process to convince them that the removal of the fire appliance from Forest Hill is necessary nor justified. Will you listen to the residents of Lewisham and return the appliance to Forest Hill?

Reply

Decisions regarding the future of Forest Hill fire station's second appliance are not for me to take, they are corporate decisions of LFEPA.

Question No. 453

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority - Meeting: 17 February 2016

Question by Councillor Liaquat Ali (Labour Group) to the Chairman of LFEPA (Gareth Bacon AM)

Abolition of LFEPA

When do you expect further details/timescales for the abolition of LFEPA?

Reply

My office is in the process of arranging a meeting with the new Fire Minister to discuss the timetable for LFEPA's abolition, as well as other issues. I will happily report back to Members as soon as I have more information.

Question No. 454

London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority - Meeting: 17 February 2016

Question by Councillor Sarah Hayward (Labour Group) to the Commissioner of LFB (Ron Dobson)

Sixth London Safety Plan

What work has already been carried out on the Sixth London Safety Plan and when do you expect Members to get first sight of this?

Reply

As you would expect, work is in train to develop the Sixth London Safety Plan. Much of this work will be reported to Members over the coming months, as indicated by the forward programme of Authority and Committee business. For example, next month, the Strategy Committee will receive a paper on *Partnership working with Health* and the *Equalities strategy* will be presented at the Authority meeting. The timetable for the development of the plan itself was agreed by us at the Authority meeting on 2 December. If Members have any views about those arrangements, I would be very happy to discuss them.

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