

Status of Report: Public

Meeting:	Combined Fire Authority
Date:	27 July 2022
Subject:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2022-27
Report by:	The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Author:	Namita Patel – Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Safeguarding Manager
For:	Decision

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) for the proposed Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme 2022-2027, whilst also presenting the Equalities Annual Report 2021-22.

Recommendation

2. The CFA is asked to:
 - a) Approve the draft EDI Scheme 2022-27 for wider consultation and publication;
 - b) Authorise the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer to make any necessary amendments prior to publication;
 - c) Approve that progress against this plan is presented to the Corporate Governance Committee on a six monthly basis, and;
 - d) Acknowledge the content of the Annual Equalities Report 2021-2022.

Executive Summary

3. The CFA has a duty to publish its equality objectives in line with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011. The Act requires listed public authorities to prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objective that it thinks it should achieve to further the aims set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Public authorities are required to publish these objectives at least every four years.

4. The CFA has opted to continue using the EDI Scheme as a means of setting out its equality objectives to meet the statutory obligation to prepare and publish its equality objectives.
5. The EDI Scheme 2020-2025, agreed by the CFA in February 2020, is subject to annual review to remain current. The review for 2022 has resulted in improvements to the way the document is set out and includes a revised action plan against the previously CFA agreed objectives.
6. The Annual Equalities Report 2021-2022, attached as Appendix B to this report, contains equality monitoring data covering the workforce and the communities receiving service delivery activities. The data captured within this report is used to inform the content of the EDI Scheme Action Plan. It is the first time that information relating to the demographics of those receiving Home Fire Safety Checks has been presented.

Background

7. The EDI Scheme 2020-2025 provides a platform to meet the statutory obligation to prepare and publish equality objectives. The EDI Scheme is published on the LFRS website and will be made available in different formats upon request (free of charge). The EDI Scheme contains an action plan that contains specific actions designed to achieve the equality objectives.
8. The governance arrangements monitoring the progress of these actions is achieved quarterly through the Strategic Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board (SEDIB) attended by the CFA's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Champion and chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer, Service Delivery. It is proposed that progress against these actions will be presented to the Corporate Governance Committee on a six monthly basis commencing January 2023.
9. The EDI Scheme is subject to an annual refresh to ensure it remains current. As part of that review a series of changes influenced by developments within the fire sector, including the inclusion of the National Fire Chiefs' Council and the Local Government Association derived Core Code of Ethics, have been recognised in the draft EDI Scheme 2022-2027.
10. The review of the document has also resulted in proposed content changes, improving the visibility of achievements and removing material that is replicated in other EDI related documents that LFRS is mandated to publish:

- a) The draft EDI Scheme 2022-2027, attached as Appendix A to this report, includes better visibility of the achievements made towards meeting the equality objectives during the previous period covered by the EDI Scheme 2020-2025;
 - b) The Gender Pay Gap is published annually providing a range of data relating to the workforce. This data was replicated in previous EDI Schemes and no longer features, and;
 - c) The workforce profile and other metrics associated with prevention, protection and response activities is reported in the Annual Equalities Report. This data is used to inform the content of the EDI Scheme Action Plan. The data was replicated in previous EDI Schemes and no longer features.
11. The review of the EDI Scheme included the previously agreed CFA equality objectives. It is proposed to reduce the number of these objectives from seven to six and amend their wording to enable them to better reflect the three aims of the Equality Duty:
- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and;
 - c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
12. The proposed CFA equality objectives to be included within the EDI Scheme 2022-27 are:
- a) Develop an inclusive culture where all staff are valued;
 - b) Embed knowledge and understanding of EDI across the workforce;
 - c) Increase our knowledge, understanding and needs of our diverse communities;
 - d) Embed a culture of evidence based decision making;
 - e) Promote equality in commissioning and procurement activity, and;
 - f) Increase diversity across the workforce.

Report Implications/Impact

13. Legal (including crime and disorder)

- a) The proposed EDI Scheme will assist LFRS in fully complying with its legal responsibilities as set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011.
- b) The Equality and Human Rights Commission is responsible for assessing compliance with the specific duties, and for their enforcement. As with the Equality Duty, it has powers to issue a compliance notice to a public body that it believes has failed to comply with the specific duties, and can apply to the courts for an order requiring compliance. Unlike the Equality Duty, the specific duties cannot be enforced by judicial review.

14. Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

Resources needed to complete any activities linked to the EDI Scheme 2022-2027 will be managed within the budget agreed by the CFA in February 2022 and be factored into future years budgetary forecasts.

15. Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)

The provision of the EDI Scheme 2022-2027 and associated action plan supports the CFA to make continuous improvements in relation to meeting the requirements of the Equality Duty.

16. Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

Progress made towards achieving the CFA equality objectives is intended to positively impact on LFRS's workforce, Service users and all stakeholders, creating equal opportunities for all.

17. Environmental

There are no environmental issues identified as a result of this report.

18. Impact upon Our Plan Objective

This proposal contributes towards our purpose of 'Safer People, Safer Places' and supports all of the strategies within Our Plan.

Background Papers

CFA February 2020 – Equalities Scheme 2020-2025

<https://leics-fire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/equalities-diversity-and-inclusion-scheme-2020-25-final.pdf>

CFA September 2021 – Equality Scheme Annual Report 2020-2021

<https://leics-fire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/item-9-appendix-1.pdf>

Appendix

Appendix A – Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2022-2027 (draft)

Appendix B – Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Annual Equalities Report 2021-2022

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