

**Status of Report: Public**

**Meeting: Combined Fire Authority (CFA)**

**Date: 12 February 2020**

**Subject: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme 2020-25**

**Report by: The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer – Rick Taylor**

**Author: Mpazi Siame - Equality and Diversity Advisor**

**For: Decision**

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Combined Fire Authority for the proposed Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services (LFRS) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme for 2020-25.

### **Recommendations**

2. The Combined Fire Authority is asked to
  - a. Approve the draft equality scheme 2020-25 for wider consultation and publication;
  - b. Authorise the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer to make any necessary amendments prior to publication.

### **Executive Summary**

3. The Single Equality Scheme 2018-20 comes to an end on the 31 December 2020 and the CFA has a duty to publish its equality objectives in line with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations of 2011.
4. The Act requires listed public authorities to prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives 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 4 years
5. The CFA has opted to continue using the Equality Scheme as a means of setting out its equality objectives. The Equality Scheme, now referred to as the EDI Scheme, serves to meet the CFA's statutory obligation to prepare and publish its equality objectives.
6. The EDI scheme 2020-25 is currently in draft form, once consultation is completed any relevant amendments will be incorporated with publication expected in April 2020.

## Background

7. LFRS currently has a Single Equality Scheme which runs out on the 31 December 2020. At its meeting in December 2017, the CFA was informed that due to significant changes to the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) Equality Framework, the Service was unable to achieve some of the equality objectives set out in the current Scheme.
8. Further developments in the FRS such as the introduction of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) have also provided a timely opportunity to revise the Scheme.
9. Although it was not possible for the Service to achieve all the CFA objectives, as set out in the Scheme, the Service did however achieve some successes during the current scheme and these are outlined below:
  - i. Workforce diversity – The Service performance in attracting and recruiting people from underrepresented groups saw significant increases in a 3-year period. This led LFRS to winning a national award at the Asian's in the Fire Service (AFSA) National Awards in 2019.
  - ii. Additionally, LFRS was awarded the "Highly Recommended Award" after coming second only to the Home Office for the "Representative workforce" award at the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI) National Awards in 2018. This was based on the diversity of new recruits to the Wholetime Duty System.
  - iii. Knowing our communities – The development of a data warehouse to allow the Service to use equality monitoring information relating to its communities was also nominated for a national award for "Impact through Innovation" in EDI practice" by the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI).
  - iv. The Service successfully integrated into a joint partnership (with Leicestershire Police) on the Independent Advisory Groups (IAG's) covering Race, Disability, Faith, LGBT+ and Older People. IAG's bring together community groups and individuals to scrutinise the work of both the Fire and Police Services.
  - v. Revised EDI structures at LFRS bringing in the Tactical Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board (TEDIB) and the Strategic Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board (SEDIB) in order to strengthen both the delivery and accountability for EDI within LFRS.
  - vi. Developed 3 staff networks (Race, Gender and Disability) adding to the LGBT Staff Networks to support staff and the delivery of community-based initiatives.

## **Informing the proposed EDI Scheme 2020-25**

9. The proposed EDI Scheme takes into account a number of developments nationally, locally and also aspects that are specific to LFRS in informing the proposed objectives and action plan. These include:
  - i. HMICFRS inspection report of 2019
  - ii. Revised Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework (FRSEF)
  - iii. National Joint Council (Inclusive Fire Service Group Improvement Strategy)
  - iv. National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) – Inclusion Strategy
  - v. Equality monitoring and analysis of the workforce and Service data
  - vi. Equalities annual reporting and analysis
  - vii. Benchmarking results and good practice
  - viii. Staff input (staff networks and commissioned reports)
10. The proposed EDI Scheme has responded significantly to the HMICFRS inspection report of June 2019 and proposes actions that will raise knowledge and awareness of EDI among employees of LFRS.
11. The scheme also proposes some work that will examine the culture of the Service and its impact on embedding EDI while investing in managers and elected members to increase their knowledge and accountability towards EDI.
12. The proposed Scheme also details the new EDI structure in order to strengthen the delivery and monitoring of the EDI objectives and plans and are detailed below.

## **The Equality Objectives for 2020-25**

13. The Scheme proposes new objectives but also incorporates 2 objectives from the current scheme as these were not achieved and they remain relevant to progressing EDI in a modern FRS. The 2 objectives to be carried forward are:
  - i. Develop a skilled and committed workforce
  - ii. Embed equality practices in commissioning and procurement activity
14. The full list of the proposed equality objectives for 2020 -2025 are:
  - i. Develop an inclusive culture where all staff are valued
  - ii. Increase knowledge and understanding of EDI across the workforce
  - iii. Increase our knowledge and understanding of our diverse communities
  - iv. Develop a culture of evidence-based decision making
  - v. Develop a skilled and committed workforce
  - vi. Increase diversity across the workforce
  - vii. Embed equality in commissioning and procurement activity

Further detail is included at the Appendix.

## Consultation

15. In developing the proposed Scheme, the Service has consulted with members of 3 of the 4 existing staff Networks (Race, Disability and LGBT+). Efforts to meet with members of the Female Staff Network were made but staff commitments meant this was not achieved by the time of this report. Efforts are still being made to ensure this group is consulted.
16. Consultation took place with TEDIB who endorsed the proposed action plan.
17. Further consultation was undertaken with heads of Departments and Group Managers within the Service.
18. SEDIB has also been consulted with and endorsed the plans.
19. The Service has consulted with representative bodies through SEDIB. However, due to time constraints the Service has been unable to consult with external partners and other stakeholders.
20. The Service intends to consult with local partners and other local stakeholders through partnership arrangements as well as using social media and IAG's.
21. The Service also intends to consult with wider staff internally through a Service Matters article and will invite feedback.
22. The proposed consultation at 20 above will commence after the CFA meeting on February 2020 and will last for 6 weeks with a view to the Scheme becoming effective from the 1 April 2020.

## Other Considerations

23. The workforce profile data will be updated after the financial year end (2019/20) to correctly reflect the workforce profile for the start of this Scheme.

## Report Implications / Impact

### 24. Legal (including crime and disorder)

The proposed EDI Scheme will assist LFRS in fully complying with its legal responsibilities. Non-Compliance may result in the Equality and Human Rights Commission, issuing a notice of non-compliance.

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

There will be some minor cost implications from the Scheme, including:

- i. The proposed cultural audit and subsequent programme to develop a culture that promotes inclusion
- ii. The proposed approach to Positive Action
- iii. Proposed training programmes

iv. Undertaking external assessments under the FRS Equality Framework

The costs of this will be overseen by the Strategic Equality Diversity and Inclusion Board (SEDIB) and will largely come from existing budgets and activities.

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

Without a coherent strategy and action plan to address equalities, there is significant risk of legal challenge against the Service for failure to comply with the public sector equality duty.

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

The outcomes of any achieved progress is intended to positively impact on staff, Service users and all stakeholders, specifically those who are underrepresented in the workforce and communities (also see para 29 below)

28. *Environmental*

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

29. *Impact upon Our Plan Objectives*

EDI is central to good service provision and in promoting a positive and inclusive working environment. Good equality and inclusive practices will contribute to achieving all of the Service objectives as set out in “Our Plan”. However, by implementing the proposed EDI Scheme 2020-25, the Service will not only be complying with the legal duties but also ensuring that “Staff are skilled, equipped and motivated to deliver its purpose of “Safer people, safer places”.

## Background Papers

- a) [HMICFRS Inspection Report 2019](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/fire-and-rescue-services/leicestershire/) (for LFRS)
- b) Revised FRS Equality Framework <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/guidance-and-resources/equality-frameworks/fire-and-rescue-service-equality-framework>
- c) NFCC Inclusion Strategy <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Inclusion>
- d) National Joint Council – Inclusive Fire and Rescue Service Improvement Strategies <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/workforce%20-%20fire%20and%20rescue%20services%20circulars%20->

[%20NJC%2001%2018%20%E2%80%93%20Inclusive%20Fire%20Service%20Group%20report.pdf](#)

- e) Equalities Annual Report 2018-19 <https://leics-fire.gov.uk/your-fire-service/who-we-are/equality-and-diversity/>

## **Appendix**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme 2020-25

### **Officers to Contact**

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