

# ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

## Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



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MEETING

**Principal Officers' Human  
Resources Committee**

AGENDA ITEM

**4**

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MEETING DATE

10 February 2016

REPORT NUMBER

**EFA/023/16**

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SUBJECT

**Progress report on the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within ECFRS.**

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REPORT BY

Acting Chief Fire Officer – Adam Eckley

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PRESENTED BY

Acting Chief Fire Officer – Adam Eckley

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### **SUMMARY**

The purpose of the report is to provide Members of the Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee with a progress report on the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within ECFRS. This supports the resolutions reached by Essex Fire Authority at its meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members of the Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee are asked to note the contents of this report and the progress report provided by the Chairman of the Expert Advisory Panel attached as Appendix A.

### **BACKGROUND**

At its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015 Essex Fire Authority accepted, in full, the 35 recommendations made within the report of the Independent Cultural Review of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (conducted by Irene Lucas CBE). The report itself was received by the Authority on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2015.

In addition to accepting the recommendations a number of other resolutions were reached at the 7<sup>th</sup> October meeting, amongst which was that Essex Fire Authority:

3. Instructs the Acting Chief Fire Officer to report progress to every meeting of Essex Fire Authority for a minimum of 24 months.

In the four months that have elapsed since the meeting of Essex Fire Authority on 7<sup>th</sup> October, the Acting Chief Fire Officer, members of the Strategic Management Board and Members of Essex Fire Authority have met with and benefited from the support and guidance of members of the Expert Advisory Panel and monthly meeting arrangements have now been formalised. Since the last progress report the following key actions have been taken:

1. Progressed further the management review in relation to which it can be confirmed that:
  - a) Members of the Essex Fire Authority received a report of the findings and recommendations in relation to the first stage of the management review at its meetings held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016. The recommendations in terms of the proposed management structure we agreed as were the suggested next steps.
  - b) Director HR & OD and key HR & OD staff have commenced the work to determine in detail the next steps in delivering this first two tiers of the revised management structure, including addressing any transitional management capability and capacity that will be necessary to support the Service as it seeks to deliver significant organisational change and transformation.
  - c) The Acting Chief Fire Officer has met with Natasha Edmunds along with Director HR & OD and key HR & OD staff to explore the following:
    - The requirements for the transitional management structure.
    - Agree what transitional management structure will look like and the duration and tenure of roles within it.
    - A realistic plan for the delivery of the transitional management structure.
    - Our communication approach to the staff affected.
    - Our communication approach for the remainder of the organisation.
    - Key messages and when and how they will be delivered.
    - Next steps including reporting to POHR committee and EAP and progress monitoring activity.
2. The Independent Review Action Plan was presented formally to Essex Fire Authority on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016. Progress against this plan will now be monitored through the monthly meetings of the Expert Advisory Panel, the next meetings of which is to be held on Tuesday 16 February 2016.
3. Following the meeting of the POHR committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> January a number of lead consultants from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), who have been engaged by the Service to support this work support the proposed programme of development for elected members and officers, have met with the EFA Chairman, Vice Chairman and EFA Group Spokespersons to outline the content and approach for a range of development workshops in the months ahead.

In addition to the information set out above, a progress report, prepared by the Chairman of the Expert Advisory Panel, Steve McGuirk CBE, is attached as Appendix A for the consideration of Members of the Principal Officers' Human Resources Committee.

## RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Failure to effectively address the issues identified within the Independent Review of Culture present significant risk to the Service and the Essex Fire Authority not least as the report suggests that without significant change our employees and the communities they serve may be at risk.

The information set out in this report and in **Appendix A** supports the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within ECFRS.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs over a 24 month period for the Expert Advisory Panel to support this work are estimated to total £400k. Around £100k of this is expected to fall in the current financial year. This report presents the progress that has been made to date and does not alter the financial implications already presented.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Failure to effectively address the issues identified within the Independent Review of Culture present significant risk to the Service and the Essex Fire Authority not least as the report suggests that without significant change our employees and the communities they serve may be at risk.

The information set out in this report sets out the progress made in the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within ECFRS and therefore serve to lessen any potential litigation presented by the risks identified within the Independent Review of Culture.

## EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Failure to implement the Independent Review Action Plan and address the associated recommendations could result in the Service failing to meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985</b>	
<b>List of appendices attached to this paper:</b> Appendix A – Third progress report by the Expert Advisory Panel	
<b>List of background documents (not attached):</b> Independent Cultural Review of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, EFA/081/15, EFA/082/15, EFA/096/15, EFA/097/15, EFA/098/15, EFA/099/15, EFA /104/15 and EFA/105/15.	
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