

ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



MEETING

**Principal Officers' Human
Resources Committee**

AGENDA ITEM

4

MEETING DATE

7 January 2016

REPORT NUMBER

EFA/001/16

SUBJECT

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

REPORT BY

Acting Chief Fire Officer – Adam Eckley

PRESENTED BY

Acting Chief Fire Officer – Adam Eckley

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 7th 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 7th 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 2nd September 2015.

In addition to accepting the recommendations a number of other resolutions were reached at the 7th 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 twelve weeks that have elapsed since the meeting of Essex Fire Authority on 7th 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 through a continuous dialogue have:

1. Progressed discussions with Natasha Edmunds, the HR & OD Advisor to the Expert Advisory Panel on the Management Review. In relation to this specific action it can be confirmed that:
 - a) A set of design principles for this and future phases of the management review has been established.
 - b) The Acting Chief Fire Officer has proposed a management structure for the Strategic Management Board (SMB) and the Strategic Delivery Board (SDB) which seeks to satisfy the design principles. This has been tested in consultation with Natasha Edmunds.
 - c) The Acting Chief Fire Officer has held 'one to one' meetings with every member of SMB and SDB to explain the rationale for the proposed management structure, how it may affect the personally and the timetable for the approval and implementation of this first phase of the management review.
 - d) Members of the Essex Fire Authority received a presentation at the EFA workshop held on 18th December 2015 from Natasha Edmunds, the HR & OD Advisor to the Expert Advisory Panel, on the progress made on the management review to date and the next steps.
2. The governance arrangements which define how the relationship between Essex Fire Authority, the Service Management team and the Expert Advisory Panel will work in the months ahead has been finalised and approved by the PO HR Committee at its meeting held on 10th December 2015.
3. The Independent Review Action Plan has been drafted and will be presented formally to Essex Fire Authority on 13th January 2016. The PO HR Committee considered a draft version of this action plan at its meeting held on 10th December 2015. However since that time further progress has been taken against the actions contained within that version of the plan and as a result it can be confirmed that:
 - a) Action 1.5 – *'The relationship between the Fire Authority, the Service Management team and the Expert Advisory Panel to be defined'* – This is now complete – see 2 above.
 - b) Action 2.1a – *'Create a your voice employee forum of approximately 40 employees, representative of all areas and levels of the Service'* – This continues to progress with the inaugural meeting of this group being held on 7th December 2015 with a good cross section of staff groups represented.
 - c) Action 5.2 – *'Identify a range of organisations that can support the delivery of a Member development programme'* - This is progressing well and partially complete - The Acting Chief Fire Officer met with representatives from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) on 11th December 2015

and this organisation has now been commissioned to support the delivery of a Member development programme and Action 5.3 below. Members of Solace will meet with Members of the POHR committee and the Clerk to EFA on 7th January 2016 to discuss the outline for the EFA Member development programme.

- d) Action 5.3 – ‘*Establish a programme of development for senior and middle managers that seeks to raise political awareness and insight into the management of the political operating environment*’.- This is progressing well and SOLACE has now been commissioned to support the delivery this programme alongside the Member development programme discussed in Action 5.2 above.
- e) Action 11.1 – ‘*EAP HR & OD Advisor to undertake a review of senior management structure and make recommendations to SMB/EFA*’ – This is progressing well as reported in 1 above.
- f) Action 19.1 and 20.1- ‘*Create a sub group of the EAP who will act as a clearing house for live and current grievances*’ - This is progressing well. A sub group of the EAP has been established. A set of draft Terms of Reference have been prepared for the panel to consider. A process for undertaking the review of live grievance and discipline cases has been established and the Services Discipline and Grievance policies have been provided for consideration. Following a desktop review of the information provided, two members of this group met with staff representatives on 18th December 2015 and the initial findings will be presented to the Acting Chief Fire Officer on 8th January 2016.

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 information has previously been presented to Members at the meeting of Essex Fire Authority held on 7th October 2015 when it was resolved that Essex Fire Authority

- 9. Agrees to set aside a budget of up to £400k over the next 24 months to fund the processes required to support the implement the recommendations of the report.

This report presents the progress that has been reported by the Chairman of the Expert Advisory Panel 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 recommendations set out in this report support 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 action plan and address the associated recommendations could result in the Service failing to meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

The recommendations set out in this report support the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within ECFRS.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985	
List of appendices attached to this paper: Appendix A – Third progress report by the Expert Advisory Panel	
List of background documents (not attached): 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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