



FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING: 26 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: TWFRS CULTURAL REVIEW UPDATE

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE (THE CLERK
TO THE AUTHORITY) THE FINANCE DIRECTOR AND THE PERSONNEL
ADVISOR TO THE AUTHORITY**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a progress update on the Services Cultural Review which incorporates amongst other work, both the independent cultural audit that has been commissioned by the Service and the implementation of the recently procured staff engagement tool.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2021 the Service launched the Services priorities within the *Strategy TWFRS 2025* which are centred on three key areas, one of which is Inclusion for which ACFO McVay is the lead. The focus of the inclusion element is to further diversify the workforce to ensure we reflect our whole community, ensure that we have fair and transparent routes to both employment and progression and to have a positive culture where everyone is valued and takes pride and ownership of their actions and behaviour.
- 2.2 In support of this priority, over the last 12 months the Service has been working towards undertaking a cultural audit to allow us to establish a 'baseline' in terms of our culture, allowing us to monitor improvement and progress over the period of TWFRS 2025 programme of work and beyond.
- 2.3 Towards the end of 2022 the Service was in a position to go out to tender for a company to undertake an independent cultural audit of the Service and a contract was awarded for this work.

3 TWFRS CULTURAL REVIEW

- 3.1 Due to the specific nature of the work to be undertaken and a requirement within service for an employee engagement tool, at the end of February 2023 a contract was awarded for a platform called Hive. The Hive contract also ensures that there is an independent way in which the Service can survey staff with the



support of occupational psychologists, who will review and interpret staff feedback and produce reports and recommendations to support future improvement actions.

- 3.2 The Service was also keen to ensure that staff were offered the opportunity to provide verbal feedback to independent facilitators, as such a contract has been directly awarded to Jagtar Singh Associates who will ensure conversations also take place with staff. All feedback will again be gathered anonymously and a further report with recommendations which will support additional improvement actions will also be produced.
- 3.3 Both companies are experienced in their field of expertise and have worked extensively with a number of companies, including blue light services and the NHS. Initial meetings have taken place and clear and concise expectations have been laid out and agreed.
- 3.4 The Service are also working through the actions published within the HMICFRS Culture and Values report to ensure that we comply with all of the recommendations, which again when complete should contribute towards cultural improvement within the Service.

4 Cultural Review Timeline

- 4.1 It is recognised that there is a time pressure associated with both the survey and the cultural audit as the Service are keen to move these on as soon as possible. With that in mind, support has been provided to both companies to enable commencement of the work to begin in June 2023.
- 4.2 For the HIVE timeline, there will be a process of engagement with the workforce prior to the full launch of the survey. This is to ensure that staff have a voice in subjects and types of questions to be asked ensuring that the survey is suitable and sufficient and achieves what we want.
- 4.3 Below is an outline of the timeline for the Hive staff survey and subsequent report:

HIVE STAFF SURVEY	DATE
Cultural Readiness Session with ELT.	Friday 19 th May
Managerial Buy in session with SLT (16 Members of SLT)	Tuesday 6 th June
Employee Workshops (Network groups, TU Reps, general staff) x 2 sessions for up to 15 people	Friday 23 rd Monday 26 th June
Full Launch of Survey	Monday 3rd July
Closure of Survey	Monday 31 st July



Processing of results and production of report	3 weeks
Report issued to Service (1 week to review and digest)	21 st – 25 th August
ELT Presentation (areas of focus and strengths)	W/C 28 th August
Action Planning Session x4 (ASAP after the above, with SLT)	W/C 4 th September

- 4.4 For the JSA cultural audit, their process will start remotely by reviewing our internet and through analysing documents (policies and procedures) provided by the Service. Following that they will spend a total of 8 days within the Service facilitating various focus groups and conducting interviews and workshops.

JSA CULTURAL AUDIT	DATE
Comprehensive Desk Top Review	June & July 2023
North East Stations G/W Focus Group (10:00-12:00)	30 th June
HR/Network Staff/ Focus Group (14:00-16:00)	
South West Stations R/W Focus Group (10:00-12:00)	7 th July
Fire Control / Rep Bodies Focus Group (14:00-16:00)	
TSC Focus Group (10:00-12:00)	21 st July
South East Stations W/W Focus Group (14:00-16:00)	
North West Stations B/W Focus Group (10:00-12:00)	4 th August
Station Managers/SLT Focus Group (14:00-16:00)	
Group Managers/Area Managers Focus Group (10:00-12:00)	18 th August
Headquarters Focus Group (14:00-16:00)	
1-1 Face to Face interviews with : DCFO Heath : ACFO McVay	1 st Sept
Half day workshop with key leads reviewing feedback and actions	14 th Sept
Workshop with ELT to share findings and recommendations	5 th October
Submission of final report and recommendations	12 th October

- 4.5 Whilst there is every intention to stick rigidly to both schedules there is a chance that the JSA programme may slip due to unforeseen circumstances such as large scale incidents.
- 4.6 Both the staff survey and cultural audit will form part of a project that will be monitored by the Project Board. This will ensure timely updates are given and will ensure that there are timelines established for recommendations.

5 STAFF ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

- 5.1 The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) have been updating staff on the Cultural Review progress since the beginning of the year. ACFO McVay has recently published a vlog, again giving staff an update on progress and the Service now



have a page on the intranet which contains all information relating to the review as well as a countdown to the launch of the all staff survey.

- 5.2 Staff (including trade union representatives and staff network group members) are also involved in establishing the themes and subjects to be covered in the all staff survey (as highlighted in the Hive timeline above).
- 5.3 The Corporate Communications team have been tasked with establishing a plan to ensure all staff are aware of what the Service is intending to do in the coming months, and the rationale behind it. The team will manage the staff survey platform ensuring all elements of it are maximised.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 TWFRS have captured a risk within the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) relating to the culture of the service, namely risk number 02.23 *Risk that national issues surrounding culture within the fire service become localised within TWFRS resulting in reputational damage.*
- 6.2 The work associated with the services cultural review and the independent cultural audit will help to reduce and mitigate the risks associated with a number of areas that contribute towards the perceived culture of the organisation, including the above mentioned risk.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The cost of both contracts are covered within current budgets as confirmed by the Finance Director, but due to the commercially sensitive nature of this information, it is not included within this report. For reassurance, both contracts have followed the Procurement rules of the Service and achieve best value for the Authority.

8 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

9 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The Authority is recommended to:
 - a) Endorse the contents of this report
 - b) Receive further reports as appropriate.



BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report: