

Date: Tuesday 10th November 2020

Location: Teams Call

Attendees:

Aaron Reid (Balfour Beatty), Antoinette Irving (SCSS), Belinda Blake (Highways England), Briony Wickenden (CECA – chair), Dale Turner (Skanska), Emer Murnaghan (Graham), Ian Heptonstall (SCSS), Jo Pottinger (BAM), Kevin Mcloughlin (K&M McLoughlin), Kevin Bowsher (Mace), Lorna Brown-Owen (Network Rail), Paul Aldridge (WJ Group), Sara Gouveia (SCSS), Stephen Cole (CITB) and Stephen George (CITB)

Apologies:

Richard King (Osborne), Joanne Mercer (Vinci Construction)

1. Welcome & Review of minutes of last meeting

Briony Wickenden (BW) chaired this meeting in Ian Heptonstall's (IH) absence. BW welcomed the group and outlined the agenda for the meeting. BW talked through outstanding actions that were all due to be addressed through the course of the meeting.

2. FIR Programme activities

2.1 Progress against plan for this FY

Outputs	Target to Dec 2020	Actual to date	Target to March 2021	Project target
Overall number of learners ¹ (classroom + e-learning + webinar)	3,880	6,137	4,180	5,000
Overall number of companies	1,600	2,141	1,700	2,000
Overall number of companies that are SMEs ² (60%)	960	1,047	1,020	1,200
Number of FIR Ambassadors ³	425	Trained: 1,037 Active: 420	450	500
Marketing campaign - number unique visitors reached	13,000	27,589	14,000	18,000

Sara Gouveia (SG) talked through the above figures, outlining the target set to the end of December 2020 and the actual figures achieved, highlighted in green above. SG was pleased to report that all targets outlined above have been achieved/exceeded. It's particularly positive to see that the 'Overall number of companies that are SMEs' is at 1,047 organisations, which has exceeded the target set of 930 companies. This had been an ongoing challenge for the programme, and it is great to see that virtual training has allowed an increase in SME engagement.

SG talked the group through slides 9 – 11 (refer to the slides included) which highlights all FIR activity that has taken place to date. It is encouraging to see that participants completing feedback post sessions are rating the quality and relevance of sessions consistently high,

with a 94% average either selecting 'excellent' or 'good' across training delivered. SG also pointed out the delivery of brand-new courses throughout Q3, particularly highlighting that these sessions were particularly well attended.

2.2 Proposed activities for rest of year

SG provided an update on proposed activities for Q4, as well as providing an overall summary of activities and training, in comparison to what was set out in the initial business plan. SG mentioned that the FIR programme has decided to overdeliver on "Becoming a FIR Ambassador" sessions by replacing four "Business Case for FIR" sessions, to accommodate the high demand for these sessions, whilst remaining within budget.

Stephen Cole (SC) asked whether it would be possible to track bounce rates across the FIR pages, in relation to the marketing hits reported. This will provide further insight into understanding the engagement and dwell time on the site. SG reconfirmed that we can certainly look at this information via Google Analytics and will come back to the group with further insights. SC also asked whether there was a breakdown of individuals from SMEs that could be shared, and SG confirmed that this could be shared amongst the group.

Aaron Reid (AR) mentioned that it can be very difficult to find new FIR resources on the FIR Toolkit, which Emer also echoed. SG highlighted that whilst e-learning modules are 'featured' on the website when they are new, she would investigate to see if it can be highlighted on the School's homepage.

- ✓ **Action 185:** SG to send out additional marketing (bounce rates) and statistics on SMEs to the group
- ✓ **Action 186:** SG to investigate whether new FIR learning can be promoted on the School's home page

2.3 Conference Update

BW mentioned that the Inspiring Change Conference & Awards have been postponed to the 20th May 2021 as it would be best to run this in person, as opposed to virtually,

2.4 New content development

The FIR programme has now launched the 3 new e-learning modules:

- [Race and Intercultural Competence: Part 1](#)
- [Understanding Invisible Disabilities](#)
- [Managing Challenging Conversations](#)

IH highlighted that the final Race and Intercultural Competence: Part 2 e-learning module is due to launch over the next week. All new training materials linking with the new courses can also be found on the [FIR Toolkit](#).

2.5 Process for gold Ambassadors

IH updated the group on this process. As previously outlined, the programme is developing a learning pathway that will rank FIR Ambassadors based on their School activity into bronze, silver, and gold status. Regarding the process suggested in a previous meeting, to 'fast-track' anyone that has excelled in FIR to gold, IH recommended identifying highly active FIR Ambassadors who should be considered. The FIR team can then reach out to these individuals, asking them to apply for this position if they are interested. Once individuals are put forward, the FIR group or a smaller working group could go through and review individuals and assess their suitability. BW mentioned that the FIR team are working to send out a survey to FIR Ambassadors so we could look at tweaking the survey to factor in this process.

The group agreed that this process would work well, and it would be best to create a smaller working group to look at this further. Emer Murnaghan and Jo Pottinger have put themselves forward to help with this. If anyone else in the group would like to be a part of this, please get in touch with Antoinette.

- ✓ **Action 187:** FIR team to pick up on selecting FIR Ambassadors to "fast-track" to gold and create a working group to review applications

2.6 Embedding FIR within STEM Ambassador's training network

SC provided the group with an update on this item. SC has had numerous conversations with Stephen George who looks after the Construction Ambassador's programme. They have agreed that they would like to embed FIR training throughout STEM training. SC confirmed that further conversations are required to push this agenda forward, but initial conversations have occurred. Stephen George mentioned that CITB are still in the process of migrating the Ambassador programme over to STEM so this will be an ongoing action. SG reiterated that there is a commitment from CITB to engage STEM learning with the FIR and will continue to work on this.

3. FIR programme future funding

Ian Heptonstall (IH) went through the funding detailed below, highlighting the shortfall of money provided to fund the programme.

Source	Budget	Actual	Comment
CITB Core	£83,004	£63,000	
Construction Skills Hub extension	£78,480	£28,100	Only do the development work, no budget for delivery
School Partners	£50,000	£40,000	The School has a 30% cut in funding, need to reduce by 20%
	£211,484	£131,100	38% - £80,384 reduction

HS2 and Network Rail have agreed funding and Highways England have recommended it and it is now at Director level for approval. The FIR team should have decision mid-November 2020. Further details are outlined in the slides circulated to address the benefits to funding partners.

4. EDI Standards & Accreditations discussion

4.1 Kevin Bowsher update

Kevin Bowsher (KB) was invited to this meeting to give the group an update on various EDI standards as he sits on the committees that have developed some key standards. Kevin began by giving the group an overview of some key standards and assessment tools available within the industry.

Self-assessment tools:

1. *Royal Academy of Engineering:* Includes a Diversity and Inclusion progression Framework which is freely accessible. This does not provide organisations with accreditations.
2. *Mayor of London:* GLA Group Diversity and Inclusion Action Standard also offers a self-assessment framework.
3. *GOV.UK:* Disability Confident is a Government scheme that provides organisations with recognition and allows up to 3 years to achieve "employer" level. A list of companies involved in this scheme is freely accessible via the Government website

Standardised approach to standards:

1. *ISO 30415:* guidance standard but does not provide audit/accreditation
2. *BS76005:* guidance standard but does not provide audit/accreditation
3. *PAS 1948:* Some duplication with above standard so standard may be pulled

Independently assessed standards:

KB highlighted that independent standards carry a considerable cost and allows a body to enter an organisation, assess and provides an accreditation based on the standard assessed on. KB provided examples of these organisations such as, National Equality Standard, Investors in Diversity, Equality Works and Clear Assured. KB commented on the key issues for consideration when implementing these, particularly the barriers they can cause to SMEs. KB urged the group to think about how the FIR group can best support the sector to benefit both SMEs and larger organisations when addressing accreditations and standards.

4.2 Update from Stephen George – CITB

Stephen George joined the meeting to talk the group through the BeFair Framework. The BeFair Framework supports organisations embed the policies and procedures which support the delivery of FIR principles, consisting of five core modules. Stephen George provided an update on key considerations for companies wanting to sign up to the BeFair Framework, the different modules, and the accreditation process. Stephen mentioned that the BeFair Framework would need updating given the barriers and an industry wide approach needs to be achieved. Please refer to the accompanying slides for additional information.

BW provided additional context as to how the BeFair Framework links closely to the FIR programme and Toolkit. BW mentioned that the Framework would require additional attention and steering from the group to pick up momentum. This resulted in a group discussion with different thoughts on the various standards already available and whether it is the right approach and focus for the FIR programme. AR mentioned that it would be ideal to think about creating a self-assessment tool, which is available to all and that is less concerned about accreditation but instead a tool to help individuals grow their learning within FIR. The group discussed options to create a FIR self-assessment tool within the School's platform and agreed to take this away and discuss further through a working group

- ✓ **Action 188:** AI/SG to create a working group to discuss the accreditations/self-assessment options further
- ✓ **Action 189:** The FIR group to volunteer if they would like to be a part of working group outlined in action 188

5. Press Coverage: what can we do & what can we do better

Due to limited time in this meeting, the group decided to postpone this item on the agenda to a later date.

6. AOB

Meetings for next year:

- 9th Feb 2021 from 10am – 1pm – 3 hours to allow for business planning
 - 27th April 2021 from 10am – 12pm
 - 24th June 2021 from 10am – 12pm
 - 14th Sept 2021 from 10am – 12pm
 - 25th Nov 2021 from 10am – 12pm
- ✓ **Action 190:** SG to circulate all future FIR meeting invites for 2021