

**Date: Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 09:30am – 1.00pm**

**Location: The Office Group, White Collar Factory, 1 Old Street Yard, London, EC1V 8AF**

### **Attendees:**

Aaron Reid (Morgan Sindall), Belinda Blake (National Highways), Ella Anderson (Mace Group), Emer Murnaghan (Graham) (virtual attendee), Emma Shakespeare (Laing O'Rourke) (virtual attendee), Osita Madu (HS2), Paul Aldridge (WJ Group), Peter Ball (Fortel), Stephen Cole (CITB), Stuart Coates (TfL), Shelley Caton (Bam) (virtual attendee).  
SCSS Staff: Cathryn Greville – Chair, Ian Heptonstall (from item 4), Sara Gouveia, Jenny Simpson.

### **Apologies:**

Charlotte Baker (Colas), Christina Scant (Core Highways), Lorna Brown-Owens (Network Rail), Ripesh Patel (Network Rail), Lucie Wright (CITB).

### **Guests:**

Nabeelah Uddin (TfL), Professor Jennifer Tomlinson (University of Leeds) (virtual attendee), Dr Kathryn Watson (University of Leeds) (virtual attendee), Dr Jack Daly (University of Leeds) (virtual attendee), Marcus Bennett (CITB), Alicia Pentelow (CITB).

## **ACTIONS:**

- ✓ **Action 260:** FIR team to investigate including 'Briony Wickenden Legacy' in the SCSS Summit in September.
- ✓ **Action 261:** Steering Group to consider the FIR Training catalogue and advise Sara Gouveia of their training needs.
- ✓ **Action 262:** FIR team to investigate creating an 'add to Outlook' button on the Diversity Calendar.
- ✓ **Action 263:** Steering Group members to advise Cathryn Greville if they are interested in joining the Black and Ethnic Minority Experience sub-group to provide input into the BAME Conference (18 October).
- ✓ **Action 264:** Steering group members help promote and encourage their supply chains to complete the Diversity Survey.
- ✓ **Action 265:** FIR Team to convene a discussion regarding the common assessment standard and potential to develop best practice guidance on inducting people into FIR.
- ✓ **Action 266:** FIR Team to work with School to proceed with gating FIR Resources to be able to capture accurate usage statistics and support FIR Ambassadors engaging with the programme.
- ✓ **Action 267:** Steering group to provide written quotes to Cathryn Greville on two questions: (1) Why inclusion/FIR is important; and (2) What FIR means to you.
- ✓ **Action 268:** FIR Team to work with marketing to update the FIR Logo to remove the words 'in construction', supporting the application of the programme across the built environment sector.
- ✓ **Action 269:** Supplier diversity discussion to continue at August steering group meeting.
- ✓ **Action 270:** Roundtable discussion to be held at August steering group meeting on what would move the dial quicker in site-based roles to overcome challenges and achieve better outcomes on site.

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### 1. Welcome & Introductions

Cathryn Greville (CG) welcomed the group and started introductions, including those joining virtually, and outlined the agenda for the meeting.

### 2. FIR Action Log

CG took the group through the action log, updating on progress on items that are still open.

The group discussed the opportunity to acknowledge Briony Wickenden's legacy at the School Summit in September.

### 3. FIR Programme Update

#### 3.1 Progress against plan

Sara Gouveia (SG) took the group through the quarterly statistics, including what is coming up in the FIR Programme. SG noted that no reporting was required to CITB in Q4 as the FIR Programme was not funded by CITB during that quarter, with the current contract commencing 1 April 2023.

During Q4, there was strong interest from partners in using FIR training sessions, reflecting continuous engagement with the FIR Programme. Workshops, masterclasses, webinars, and Ambassador networking workshops were run during the Jan to March quarter.

The Inclusive Recruitment (actor-led) session bookings from the previous contract have now been met, closing this item out with the upcoming sessions.

The Annual FIR Culture Survey achieved a 20% increase in responses during this period, with the analysis of data and preparation of findings report to follow.

SG updated the group on the three new additions to the FIR Toolkit ('Inclusive Attraction', 'Inclusive Selection', 'Procuring for a diverse workforce'), developed in collaboration with National Highways and working closely with Belinda Blake (BB). SG also reminded the group about the recent additions to the Toolkit, namely the toolbox talk ('Just a bit of Banter') and 'FIR: Flexible Working' session now available.

#### 3.2 Proposed training activities

SG ran the group through upcoming training sessions, including a LGBTIQ+ webinar to be held in Pride Month. The group were encouraged to consider the training catalogue and contact SG with their training needs for 2023-4 early as dates are filling fast.

#### 3.3 FIR Diversity Calendar

SG showed the group the location of the FIR Diversity Calendar for 2023-24, which is now available on the School website (the first item in the grey box on the FIR landing page). This calendar aims to identify upcoming awareness dates and how FIR ties into relevant training and resources. The calendar has also been promoted to FIR Ambassadors.

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Aaron Reid (AR) suggested that the FIR Team investigate the potential to create an 'add to Outlook' button on the calendar, allowing for easy download of events into a calendar.

### 3.4 2023-24 Mini Conferences

SG provided an overview of the three FIR mini conferences planned for 2023-24; a conference to engage the FIR Ambassador Network, a conference on the Black and Ethnic Minority Experiences, and the Diversity Data Benchmarking Results conference in December.

For the BAME Experience conference, the group noted the sub-group that will provide further input into the development of the programme. The group has convened by email, with Aaron Reid, Stephen Cole and Ella Anderson confirmed, and Lorna Brown-Owen and Osita Madu having expressed interest previously and to confirm their participation. The sub-group will then meet to agree the conference programme, with the conference currently planned for 18 October (date TBC). Any members interested in being included in that sub-group to advise CG.

To support the Diversity Benchmarking Results conference on 12 December, the steering group discussed the need to increase participation in the Diversity Survey and encourage their supply chains to attend webinars on completing the Diversity Survey on 22 May, 22 June and 27 July. The group also provided feedback into the potential focus for the event, including the data required, comparison against other sectors and other jurisdictions, and the need to address both office-based and onsite environments and cultures.

## 4. Survey Data: Integration into FIR Programme

CG provided an overview of how the intel gained through surveys (both Diversity Survey and FIR Culture Survey) is being incorporated into the delivery of the FIR Programme. This is done through the Inspiring Change Conference, Mini conferences, webinars, FIR Toolkit, FIR Diversity Calendar, Communications/articles, and outreach and sector engagement activities. The group provided feedback and ideas on topics and weaving the insights into the Inspiring Change Conference in June and other activities.

The group discussed how to best reach and influence culture on-site, including with those engaged by sub-contractors who are not yet across FIR, and the impact of self-employed workers or those engaged by labour providers. The group also discussed the need to follow up poor behaviour through enforcement activities. Key points included the reporting of grievances, external complaints, the need to elevate EDI to the same level as data compliance, the need for standardised EDI inductions and the need to get the FIR Programme joined up with other developments across the sector.

Clients and contractors cannot abrogate their responsibility for people working on site, however we are trying to move towards a standard set of culture/values that we want to see in the industry. There is a potential opportunity to develop best practice guidelines on inducting people into FIR. The FIR Team will convene a discussion group around this and the common assessment standard.

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### 5. FIR Engagement Report

Jenny Simpson (JS) spoke to the new FIR Engagement Report circulated with the agenda. This has been developed to report in more detail about our engagement across some key areas: marketing (social media, email), website and resources. This will be updated quarterly with the latest figures and be a standing agenda item moving forward. It includes data requested at the previous steering group meeting – particularly around comparisons to the School/other topics.

JS drew the group's attention to several highlights:

- The FIR Twitter account saw a 77% increase in engagement when compared to February 2023.
- When looking at the comparisons between topics across the School, Sustainability as whole receives the most webpage views. However, when breaking these down, FIR comes out as the most popular topic.
- The resource views are likely to be a lot higher, because FIR resources are ungated.
- FIR Followers on LinkedIn now at 467, with a gain of 62 in April alone.

This report will be taken as read each meeting moving forward, so the steering group can ask any questions they have about FIR engagement stats.

CG noted the issue of gating content discussed on the final page of the report. Historically, FIR content was initially set up ungated, but is the only topic in the School that works like this. Unfortunately, with FIR resources ungated, we miss critical data on what the needs of the sector are, from the users of the Programme itself. FIR usage stats only show those who are signed in when they access FIR resources, rather than everyone who uses them. We therefore don't have a full picture of who in the sector is using the Programme, and have no way to communicate with them or encourage them to do more and access learning pathways etc.

The problem was recently compounded with the introduction of the FIR Ambassador Journey, and completion of FIR Culture Survey (a requirement for Ambassadors) – if users do not sign into their member account first, they can complete requirements without us having any record of it, and then have to start again. This has proven to be an impediment to engaging FIR Ambassadors and building on our network. It will become a bigger issue in the future as the School moves to different plug-ins (over the next year or so).

The group discussed and agreed to approve the gating of FIR materials behind the same member access as other school topics. The group noted the ability to still allow for access to YouTube video content directly as necessary through sharing of a unique link.

### 6. Outreach & Commercial Report

CG spoke to the new template Outreach & Commercial Report to update the steering group on additional outreach activities and commercial opportunities for FIR – including outreach, industry collaboration, commercial proposals, wins for the team etc. This report will also be

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taken as read at each meeting moving forward, with any items for discussion or approval highlighted in the agenda itself and steering group members able to ask questions.

Arising from this report, the steering group was asked to provide quotes to support FIR marketing and comms around two questions: (1) Why inclusion/FIR is important; and (2) What FIR means to you. Steering group members to provide these written quotes to CG.

To support the growth of the FIR Programme and ensure it is seen as a programme relevant to the entire built environment sector and also captures the homes sector in terms of perception, the steering group also provided approval to stop limiting the text around the FIR Logo to 'in construction' and to instead use the words 'FIR...Fairness, Inclusion & Respect' without reference to construction. The FIR Team will arrange for the logo to be updated accordingly.

### 7. Discussion Item: Supplier Diversity

This item was a roundtable discussion of the challenges of finding and engaging a diverse range of suppliers (eg minority-owned businesses). Due to limited time, the discussion will be continued at the next steering group meeting in August.

### 8. Guest Presentations: Research Projects

#### ***8.1 University of Leeds – Harnessing diversity and inclusion to improve productivity and performance***

BB introduced this research project between National Highways and the University of Leeds. Professor Jennifer Tomlinson, Dr Jack Daly and Dr Kathryn Watson from Leeds University Business School presented to the group on the findings of the first phase, and aims of the second phase of research into the Costain A1 and Balfour Beatty M25 schemes. The presenters then conducted Q&A on the findings and the group discussed the most surprising findings, including the room for improvement in retention and selection of candidates and the impact on external reputation of the industry.

Three key points arose for the group to consider:

1. Buy-in from leadership – how to get the buy-in of CEOs of the sub-contractors who work onsite (eg scaffolding), and how to best engage SMEs as opposed to a Tier 1 focus.
2. Collection of integrated activities = FIR Programme provides this.
3. Change in systems is needed to achieve a change in culture and behaviours.

The group discussed the need to workshop what would move the dial quicker in site-based roles to overcome challenges and achieve better outcomes on site. The FIR Team will add this item to the August meeting agenda.

## 8.2 CITB current research projects

Marcus Bennett (MB) & Alicia Pentelow presented a verbal overview of CITB's current research and future research plans. MB spoke to the huge skills gap and demand for people (45,000 extra people every year for the next 4 years) and two fundamental challenges – productivity and diversity – in an industry that is not homogenous and is largely made up of small or micro businesses (95%). Frustration exists around sexist, racist, misogynistic behaviour on site, and that being treated as 'banter' with no ramifications, leading to those who stay in the sector being disproportionately resilient to this type of behaviour.

The group discussed the need to focus on subcontractors who are not influenced by main contractors.

Three key points arose from the discussion, consistent with the previous research discussion:

1. The need to continue what we are doing with the FIR Programme to impact existing sector culture.
2. The need for another programme of work to collect exit data, not just based on exit surveys (where answers are not frank or forthcoming). This may be through one-on-one research with people who have left the industry around why they actually leave.
3. Need for Process change and to understand what those process changes are and how clients can impact them throughout the supply chain.

## 9. Any Other Business (AOB)

Stephen Cole spoke to the group about the CITB's new Impact Fund which focuses on EDI and productivity. He encouraged group members to consider ideas around a project that meets the fund criteria and can be scaled up.

## 10. Future Meetings

- 9<sup>th</sup> August 2023 (virtual)
- 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 (virtual)

*Please accept/reject the calendar invites.*