

**Date:** Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 12:30pm – 3.00pm

**Location:** Virtual Teams meeting

**Attendees:**

Paul Aldridge (WJ Group), Belinda Blake (National Highways), Emer Murnaghan (Graham) (joined late), Nabeelah Uddin (TfL), Osita Madu (HS2), Peter Ball, Stephen Cole (CITB) (left early), Christina Scant (Core Highways), Sarina Mitchell (Network Rail) and Ella Anderson (Mace Group).

**SCSS Staff:** Cathryn Greville (CG) – Chair, Sara Gouveia (SG), Saira Khan (SK) and Berta Santos (BS).

**Apologies:**

Lorna Brown-Owens (Network Rail), Stuart Coates (TfL), Ripesh Patel (Network Rail), Shelley Caton (Bam).

**Absent:**

Aaron Reid, Emma Shakespeare (Laing O'Rourke).

**ACTIONS:**

- ✓ **Action 283:** Steering Group members to suggest 3<sup>rd</sup> e-learning module to review.
- ✓ **Action 284:** FIR Team to share the "Inclusive Leaders" webinar registration link and information booklet with the Steering Group.
- ✓ **Action 285:** FIR Team to circulate the Sponsorship Package for the Diversity Data Benchmarking Conference.
- ✓ **Action 286:** Steering Group members to support the promotion of the [Diversity Data Benchmarking Conference](#) and the Sponsorship package.
- ✓ **Action 287:** Steering Group members to provide any suggestions for additional/new resources to add to the FIR resources library and/or [Diversity Calendar](#).
- ✓ **Action 288:** Steering Group to help share the FIR Programme's social media accounts with their networks: [Twitter/X](#) & [LinkedIn](#).
- ✓ **Action 289:** FIR Team to share relevant outcomes from discussions with the Diversity Tool team with the Steering Group members.
- ✓ **Action 290:** Steering Group members to encourage CITB to renew funding for the FIR Programme.
- ✓ **Action 291:** Belinda Blake to share the piece of work on attrition that she has been working on.

## 1. Welcome & Introductions

Chair Cathryn Greville (CG) welcomed the group and introduced the two new members of the FIR Team. Saira Khan (SK) has joined as the Conference & Outreach Officer and Berta Santos (BS) has joined as the new FIR Project Coordinator.

CG shared apologies from members who could not attend and then outlined the meeting agenda.

## 2. FIR Action Log

The Action Log circulated with the agenda was taken as read.

Delivered by:



Part funded by:



Endorsed by:



Sara Gouveia (SG) highlighted **Action 267** (Steering Group to provide written quotes to CG on two questions: (1) Why inclusion/FIR is important; and (2) What FIR means to you) and asked members of the Steering Group to contribute with quotes on the importance of the FIR Programme to be used in FIR marketing materials.

An update was shared on **Action 272** (Steering Group members to provide feedback to SG around what would be most useful to push FIR content out to networks) and SG asked members to provide suggestions on how to improve the distribution of FIR content.

### 3. FIR Programme Update

SG provided a programme update, highlighting some of the successes for the FIR Programme over the second quarter and covering the CITB funding claim up to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

The FIR Programme has surpassed the training target for companies, SMEs, and individuals during the first quarter. The Programme is also on track to complete all target training sessions by March 2024.

SG updated the group regarding target to update 3 e-modules. Lynne Hunt (FIR trainer) has reviewed the 'Achieving Business Success through FIR' e-module and updated the script. SK is in the process of reviewing the 'Understanding Invisible Disabilities' e-module. The FIR Team hasn't settled on the third e-module review and will be reaching out to the Steering Group for feedback on the module that would benefit the most from a refresh.

**Action 283:** Steering Group members to suggest 3<sup>rd</sup> e-learning module to review.

The Irish Supply Chain Sustainability School is launching in January 2024. The FIR Programme has been asked to revisit the 'Achieving Business Success through FIR' and create an updated version that applies to Irish businesses. SG also updated the group that a new [FIR Growth Assessment case study](#) has been published.

SG shared the launch of the 'Inclusive Leaders Programme', which is an opportunity targeted at FIR Ambassadors looking for further growth. The FIR Programme is working in partnership with Lisa Reynolds from IODA and will run a [1-hour Introductory webinar on 29th November 2023](#), with the formal launch and option to sign up to follow immediately in our marketing and communications. The launch of the programme will be supported by a half-day FIR Ambassadors Conference on the 29<sup>th</sup> of February 2024, a facilitated event incorporating insights from the FIR Culture Impact Report.

**Action 284:** FIR Team to share the "Inclusive Leaders" webinar registration link and information booklet with the Steering Group.

Following this, SG provided an update on the 'Black & Ethnic Minority Experiences in the Built Environment Sector' virtual conference that was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2023. There were 423 registrations and 216 attendees, with most attendees staying for most of the session. The [recording of the virtual conference](#) is available online.

SG drew the groups attention to the dates for the 2 remaining FIR conferences this financial year:

1. [12 December 2023 – Diversity Data Benchmarking Conference](#) (in person, Birmingham).

Delivered by:



Part funded by:



Endorsed by:



- CG mentioned that the FIR Team have developed a sponsorship package to cover the shortfall in budget to support this conference. We would appreciate your assistance in helping us secure sponsors to cover this. Please liaise with Sara or Saira to discuss further.

### 2. **29 February – FIR Ambassador’s Conference** (virtual, to reach ambassadors across UK).

**Action 285:** FIR Team to circulate the Sponsorship Package for the Diversity Data Benchmarking Conference.

**Action 286:** Steering Group members to support the promotion of the [Diversity Data Benchmarking Conference](#) and the Sponsorship package.

SG provided an update on key marketing activities during Q2. Mainly highlighting the campaign launch of the [FIR Culture Impact Report](#) at the end of September 2023, during National Inclusion Week. The campaign ran through the week, including the [press release](#) shared with media contacts, as well targeted member and partner newsletters. The launch was also supported through social media marketing.

The FIR Programme has also been prioritising ED&I content through the publication of articles for diversity awareness dates. These include articles for ‘Equal Pay Day’ and ‘Advancing Ethnic Diversity: The Value of Data’. CG shared that the FIR Team is looking at creating additional articles and non-academic reports for each of the topics covered in the Diversity Data Benchmarking Conference, which aims to get more people to complete the FIR Culture Impact Survey, which will be launched in February 2024, along with more participants of the Diversity Survey which will open again in April 2024.

Emer Murnaghan (EM) enquired about progression paths to help users on their learning journey. SG shared that once organisations complete the FIR Growth Assessment, a personalised action plan with recommended resources is provided to help individuals upskill in FIR. SG also advised that there is also a learning pathway for FIR Ambassadors and an [introductory learning pathway](#) about the FIR Programme, coordinated by the FIR client funding group. The FIR Team is considering creating bespoke learning pathways to target new members and SMEs over the next few months. CG also shared the creation of the [Diversity Calendar](#), which is now available on the FIR homepage. CG welcomed suggestions from the group relating to additional/new resources that could be added to this document.

**Action 287:** Steering Group members to provide any suggestions for additional/new resources to add to the FIR resources library and/or [Diversity Calendar](#).

Belinda Blake (BB) asked how the FIR Team can raise further awareness about the FIR programme. CG shared that the team is currently upskilling internal teams such as the Partner Relations team to support raising awareness of the Programme to School Partners. Additionally, the work CG and SK are currently undertaking with outreach and relationship building (as per Outreach & Commercial Report below) is significantly helping to raise awareness.

Delivered by:



Part funded by:



Endorsed by:



## 4. FIR Engagement Report

The Q2 FIR Engagement Report was circulated with the agenda and taken as read. The key priorities for the team this quarter include:

- Growing the FIR Programme's social networks ([Twitter/X](#) & [LinkedIn](#)) and online presence by adopting a more consistent posting schedule.
- Considering switching the fortnightly FIRry Friday newsletters to a FIR Ambassadors microsite, to increase engagement and support the growth of the FIR Ambassadors Network.

**Action 288:** Steering Group to help share the FIR Programme's social media accounts with their networks: [Twitter/X](#) & [LinkedIn](#).

## 5. FIR Outreach & Commercial Report

The Q2 FIR Outreach & Commercial report was circulated prior to the meeting and therefore taken as read. CG highlighted positive reflections from the FIR Culture Impact Report, including better experiences reported for Black & Ethnic Minority workers in the industry and improvements in workers' perception of belonging. However, a significant amount of work remains to ensure these improvements are implemented across the whole sector.

CG updated the group on the Common Assessment Standard. The working group, which included members of the FIR Steering Group, put together an assessment for Build UK and were praised for their outstanding work.

CG shared that she has finalised the FIR Industry Collaboration Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and sent it to the Road Safety Marking Association. Active engagement with other industry associations and the option of joining the MOU will be shared start soon. The aim is to increase the awareness and usage of the FIR Programme and commitment to implementing FIR in the sector.

BB enquired as to the Diversity Tool planning day, and CG provided an update on that internal session and that there will be opportunity to seek further input from Steering Group members moving forward. The priority is to ensure that the Tool team and the FIR team are promoting the Diversity Tool through various channels, and updates as to the marketing of the Diversity Tool will be provided to the Steering Group as they arise.

**Action 289:** FIR Team to share updates on Diversity Tool with the Steering Group members.

The group discussed synergies between the FIR Programme and other sustainability topics such as social value. CG shared that she has been collaborating with other specialists internally, such as the Social Value team and that collaboration will be explored and continue further. EDI is a topic that fits into all three arms of the Action Sustainability business: School, Consultancy and Tool.

Delivered by:



Part funded by:



Endorsed by:



## 6. Funding and Sponsorship Updates

CG shared an update on the state of funding for the FIR Programme, with the view of the current contract ending at the end of March 2024. CITB are exploring a 24 month contract rather than 18 month contract, with more details to be released towards the end of 2023. CITB is still keen on funding the FIR Programme. The FIR Team is in the process of considering potential opportunities to put forward for CITB's Impact Fund.

**Action 290:** Steering Group members to encourage CITB to renew funding for the FIR Programme.

The group discussed financial support of the FIR Programme, how the industry can push the FIR Programme onsite, and potential competitors for the work of the FIR Programme.

## 7. Menti Reflections from Black & Ethnic Minority Conference

The Steering Group parked this agenda item, agreeing to review the reflections after the meeting in order to permit time in other areas.

## 8. Business Planning 2024

SG explained that there is a new Business Planning process based on feedback received from the School's board. With over 20 topic groups across the School now, the Board agreed that there was a need to standardise the business planning process. The new process is rooted from the '6 Thinking Hats' facilitation method. For School groups, this would mean taking on board the findings from the School's Impact Survey that members and partners participate in every year. Insights gathered from the survey will help provide groups with clarity on key takeaways, main priorities, etc. The timeline for business planning should be ongoing from November to February but since funding for the FIR Programme hasn't been agreed yet, the group will look at business planning during the March 2024 meeting.

CG spoke to the FIR Programme priorities, actions and future opportunities that can be considered to keep delivering a successful programme, as well as the interlink between FIR and other school topics, and the inclusion of FIR/EDI across the Action Sustainability business (School, Tool and Consultancy).

BB noted two pieces of legislation that may impact the FIR programme: the Procurement Act 2024 and the Worker Protection Act (amendment to the Equality Act), which focuses on sexual harassment in the workplace. These will be considered by the FIR Team the 2024 Programme.

OM raised the question of how to engage the industry to make collective change. He suggested focusing on three key areas that are simple, clear and easy to get people behind. OM highlighted that attrition rates across the sector could be a good option, specially making a commitment to reduce attrition through FIR. BB has completed a research project on attrition and discovered that people from Black & Ethnic Minority backgrounds find more issues joining the sector but those that do are less likely to leave.

Delivered by:



Part funded by:



Endorsed by:



**Action 291:** Belinda Blake to share the piece of work on attrition that she has been working on.

OM raised the question of whether boundaries are in place to clearly distinguish the FIR Programme from other topics, such as Wellbeing, Social Value etc. within the School. CG reassured the group that boundaries are clearly defined, but that her ultimate goal is for FIR to be incorporated into/seen by businesses as important across all areas of sustainability, as both a topic and a driver of sustainable change.

### 9. Future Meetings

- 12th March 2024
- 12th June 2024
- 11th September 2024
- 27th November 2024

Calendar invitations to follow for the above dates. Steering Group members to please accept/reject the calendar invites to confirm attendance.

Delivered by:



Part funded by:



Endorsed by:

