FIR Steering Group Notes & Actions

Date: **Tuesday 12th of June 2024 9:30 am – 11:30 am**
Location: **Virtual Teams meeting**

Attendees:
Paul Aldridge (WJ Group), Belinda Blake (National Highways), Emer Murnaghan (Graham), Christina Scant (Core Highways), Ella Anderson (Mace Group), Lorna Brown-Owens (Network Rail).

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

Apologies:
Stephen Cole (CITB), Ripesh Patel (Network Rail), Shelley Caton (BAM), Peter Ball (VGC), Sarina Mitchell (Network Rail), Samiya Hirji (TfL), Pamela McInroy (HS2).

ACTIONS:

- ✓ **Action 302**: FIR Team to share the feedback questions approved by CITB with the Steering Group.
- ✓ **Action 303:** Members of the Client-funding group to discuss FIR training they would like to see delivered to their organisations
- ✓ **Action 304:** Share recording of Black and Ethnic Minority Experiences in the Built Environment Sector virtual conference.
- ✓ **Action 305:** Review the 2023 event with this lens, and for future events on ethnic minority experiences, continue with the approach of appointing a task and finish groups to refine conference topics collaboratively. SG members to volunteer for these task and finish groups to feed into conference development.
- ✓ **Action 306:** Steering Group Members to share details of any potential speakers across these topics.
- ✓ **Action 307:** Steering Group Members to consider if they can contribute to a task and finish group around video content development and advise the FIR Team.
- ✓ **Action 308**: FIR Team to explore a potential collaboration for a Virtual Conference with the Digital team on AI and Diversity/Inclusion issues.
- ✓ **Action 309:** Emer Murnaghan to share contact details for content development around non-binary gender identities.
- ✓ **Action 310:** Emer Murnaghan to share contact details for the best person within GRAHAM to speak about women's health issues and men's health issues in the context of the build environment industry (eg the sanitary boxes project), with a focus on ensuring men have a stake in these issues.
- ✓ **Action 311:** Christina Scant to share examples of the menopause policy introduced by Core Highways, and explore the potential for Core Highways to speak about this topic on a short video.
- ✓ **Action 312:** Lorna Brown-Owens to explore with the FIR Team the potential to speak on a video regarding design considerations and women's safety issues.

✓ **Action 313:** CG to update terms of reference and process for selecting new Steering Group members, and prepare the skills matrix, to consider and decide the recruitment process at the next meeting.

1. Welcome & Introductions

Chair Cathryn Greville (CG) welcomed the group and updated the Steering Group on resignations and new additions. 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.

CG reiterated the importance of Steering Group members providing feedback on what would be most useful for pushing FIR content out to their networks (**Action Point 272**). CG encouraged members to continue suggesting improvements for the distribution of FIR content.

The quarter four usage figures and the FIR Culture Impact Survey were discussed (**Action Point 292**). All survey responses have been received, and the report is being prepared for publication in September to coincide with National Inclusion Week. CG mentioned the team is exploring the possibility of creating a video highlighting key findings to provide an alternative way for people to engage with the survey results.

CG reminded members to help share the FIR Programme's social media accounts with their networks (**Action Point 288**) and to keep sharing relevant posts and information across social media platforms.

CG announced exciting news about the upcoming Inspiring Change Conference (**Action Point 296**) and emphasised its importance. She also noted the potential formation of task and finish groups to aid in resource development, to be discussed later in the meeting.

3. CITB Commission Update

CG reported that after winning the tender, CITB has been working with us to scope the commission deliverables to what is achievable, and works within systems, practicalities etc. The new contract introduces significant changes, particularly in reporting requirements, and lots to develop from scratch, with a grandfather period until July 31st to implement these new elements.

CG summarised some of the key contractual points from the EDI Commission contract:

- The contract is for two years, with a potential two-year extension.
- Additional funding is available if stretch targets are met.

- The contract covers five virtual training types: videos up to 30 minutes, case studies, tools, e-learning, and live virtual events. Non-virtual content like documents and presentations, and any in-person events, are excluded.
- A new questionnaire will now be added to e-learning, and sent to training participants by email afterwards, to capture similar information that we already capture following our live events (eg virtual conferences and webinars).
- Both existing and new training can now be counted towards the targets, eliminating the proposed distinction that would have limited updating content as appropriate.
- The contract requires collecting protected characteristics information. Reasonable efforts must be made to capture this data through the user profile page. Monthly reports are required for user numbers, with quarterly reports for diversity data and feedback.

    Action 302: FIR Team to share the feedback questions approved by CITB with the Steering Group.

CG ran through what the contract outputs, how they are measured by CITB, and the various payment terms associated with those. CG noted these deliverables are in addition to the delivery for School partners and FIR Client Funding partners, who also provide funding for the FIR Programme.

CG emphasised the importance of promoting SME and micro businesses, which must constitute at least 70% of the unique companies claimed. A comprehensive review of FIR and EDI materials is ongoing, with efforts to co-brand and co-tag relevant resources.

Belinda Blake advised that EDI topics fall under the social value pillar in the National Highways supply development system, a structure they had to adhere to despite advocating for a dedicated EDI pillar.

Emer Murnaghan highlighted the need to ensure that the training materials remain accessible and relevant to diverse user groups. She stressed the importance of user feedback in refining the training content.

Paul Aldridge underscored the significance of maintaining data privacy and security while collecting diversity data. He suggested implementing stringent measures to protect user information.

4. FIR Programme Update

Sara Gouveia (SG) provided an overview of the FIR Programme close-out for 2023-24, advising that we finished the year very strongly with CECA and CITB very happy with achievements. SG explained that with the new commission model, CECA will no longer be involved from a contractual perspective, as they were when the funding was a grant. This will speed up and simplify operations.

SG shared the final numbers for 2023-24, highlighting that contractual targets were surpassed by the end of Q1 in 2023. Momentum remained strong throughout the year, surpassing all targets, testament to the hard work of the FIR Team. SG noted the considerable external facing work and

events CG has covered in the past year, which have helped increase visibility and reach, supported by the internal strategy and team members. She thanked Saira Khan and Berta Santos for their work.

SG reported that several e-learning modules have been updated and published. These include 'Achieving Business Success for FIR', 'Understanding Non-visible Disabilities' (renamed from 'Invisible' as a more respectful and inclusive term), and 'Managing Challenging Conversations'. The updates incorporate recent figures and relevant quizzes to enhance engagement.

The 2024 FIR Culture Impact Survey closed in April. The report is set to be published ahead of National Inclusion Week at the end of September. SG thanked the Steering Group for their support in promoting the survey. This year saw a significant (32.7%) increase in responses, with 1,686 participants compared to 1,270 in 2023.

Berta Santos (BS) provided an overview of the Diversity Survey webinars, noting their high performance this year. BS confirmed the Diversity Survey went live in April, with strong engagement and participation. The FIR Team have been including content at the end of each Diversity Survey webinar to link the collection and analysis of data to the FIR Programme offering. SG and CG acknowledged BS's support in attending and speaking about the FIR Programme, emphasising the direct link between Diversity Survey completion and the FIR programme.

SG highlighted upcoming training sessions, requesting support for promoting these events to meet stretch targets. Key focus areas include webinars and virtual conferences, backed by a solid communications plan.

The group noted the complexity of funding arrangements with different deliverables for each contract/group. SG reassured that funding allocations are being managed carefully, with ongoing discussions about the use of client funds for various initiatives.

5. 24-25 Forward Planning

The group reviewed the budget and contractual obligations for the upcoming year, focusing on optimising workshop and webinar schedules. SG emphasised the benefits of hosting more webinars over workshops to maximise participant engagement and value. She also confirmed that the Inspiring Change Awards Ceremony will take place on 22 October, and the 2024 Diversity Data Benchmarking Conference will take place on 10 December – both in-person events. The third Conference this year is intended to be a virtual conference on 25 February 2025, with a Diversity Survey intel or ethnic minorities focus.

> **Action 303:** Members of the Client-funding group to discuss FIR training they would like to see delivered to their organisations

CG highlighted budget constraints and strategic resource allocation. She clarified CITB funding, including a 20-25% increase with increased focus on inclusive recruitment modules. She also emphasised the need to meet base contract targets initially before scaling to stretch targets.

SG outlined plans for upcoming conferences and asked for ideas for a virtual conference in February, pending theme selection aligned with insights from the 2024 Diversity Data Benchmarking Report.

Lorna Brown-Owens raised an important point regarding the need to ensure ethnic minority discussions extend to look at specific demographics, such as Black construction workers. There is risk in broader ethnic minority discussions of diluting the experiences of particular groups within that dataset, and the critical issues within demographics not being adequately met. CG acknowledged the feedback and proposed forming task and finish groups to refine conference topics, to assist in ensuring future events are targeted to most effectively address specific community needs while maintaining thematic coherence and impact. The group agreed to review past conference recordings to inform future planning, aiming for more focused and impactful sessions that resonate with all stakeholders involved.

> **Action 304:** Share recording of Black and Ethnic Minority Experiences in the Built Environment Sector virtual conference.

> **Action 305:** Review the 2023 event with this lens, and for future events on ethnic minority experiences, continue with the approach of appointing a task and finish groups to refine conference topics collaboratively. SG members to volunteer for these task and finish groups to feed into conference development.

FIR Content Development

CG discussed FIR Content Development, sharing that there is a plan to expand resources under CITB deliverables to increase outreach, and summarising the groups input into topics, cross referenced to resources library to identify the biggest topic gaps. Topics identified for development included the experiences of Black workers, disability rights, just transition (eg digital exclusion), and sexual harassment training options. The idea of exploring gender diversity beyond binary terms and inclusive recruitment practices was also highlighted. The group had some suggestions for potential speakers, and can share details of individuals directly with the FIR Team, who will be mindful of the best way to approach potential speakers with lived experience.

> **Action 306:** Steering Group Members to share details of any potential speakers across these topics.

A proposal was discussed to create shorter, focused videos (up to 30 minutes) as an alternative to webinars, aiming to enhance engagement and reach new audiences. She highlighted the advantages and gave some examples where these could be well used within the limited budget, such as short virtual interviews with partners, FIR Ambassador Series and FIR Culture Impact

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Survey video content to accompany launch. The group supported this approach as beneficial for broader dissemination, the positive impact of storytelling, and prolonged impact compared to traditional webinar formats.

CG put a call out for member interest in task & finish groups around development of videos, to work closely with SK on content development.

Action 307: Steering Group Members to consider if they can contribute to a task and finish group around video content development, and advise the FIR Team.

Belinda Blake queried plans to leverage existing materials from inclusive attraction and selection efforts for the new SME Inclusive Recruitment module to be developed under CITB Commission contract. CG confirmed that this is being explored as part of the planning phase, and the group discussed enhancing these modules with new elements required by CITB while avoiding redundancy.

CG updated the group on the newly developed senior leadership training sessions, emphasising the importance of psychological safety in leadership roles. Suggestions were made to explicitly include psychological safety in leadership training modules to foster supportive environments for team members.

Belinda Blake and Ella Anderson suggested to explore the role of AI in reviewing, creating, or enhancing resources. While recognizing AI's potential efficiency, the group agreed on the complementary role of human input in maintaining quality and relevance. Paul Aldridge highlighted the ongoing work with BITC (Business in the Community) on responsible AI, including potential pitfalls in AI applications, emphasising the need for ethical considerations and responsible use to avoid unintended consequences.

Action 308: FIR Team to explore a potential collaboration for a Virtual Conference with the Digital team on AI and Diversity/Inclusion issues.

The group discussed how topics for training modules are identified beyond CITB requirements. CG explained that while CITB specifies certain modules like inclusive recruitment, other topics are identified through surveys (Diversity Data Survey and the FIR Culture Impact Survey), discussions within the Steering Group, and outreach in the market and with industry representatives. The group's input, including feedback from diverse stakeholders, plays a vital role in shaping the training agenda to address industry gaps effectively.

The group also discussed the importance of addressing discrimination in early recruitment stages within the industry. Emer Murnaghan suggested involving high-profile individuals in developing content related to non-binary gender identities, highlighting the value of visible role models in promoting diversity across the sector.

Action 309: Emer Murnaghan to share contact details for content development around non-binary gender identities.

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CG also proposed creating short and longer video formats to complement existing webinars and workshops. These videos would feature interviews and case studies to provide diverse perspectives on recruitment practices and lived experiences within the industry. The series could include short, impactful videos showcasing different perspectives within the industry, such as a series that dives deep into the varied experiences of Black workers in the sector. Cathryn emphasised the importance of case studies and personal narratives to drive home these points, suggesting that these stories could be powerful tools for educating and engaging their audience.

The group expressed enthusiasm for these video ideas, recognising them as valuable supplements to ongoing educational efforts, and suggested topics and speakers that could be explored. All agreed it is critical to have genuine visibility and understanding in such discussions, ensuring that all voices are heard and respected, and overcoming the risk of members of minoritised groups felt tokenized rather than truly represented.

> **Action 310:** Emer Murnaghan to share contact details for the best person within GRAHAM to speak about women's health issues and men's health issues in the context of the build environment industry (eg the sanitary boxes project), with a focus on ensuring men have a stake in these issues.

> **Action 311:** Christina Scant to share examples of the menopause policy introduced by Core Highways, and explore the potential for Core Highways to speak about this topic on a short video.

> **Action 312:** Lorna Brown-Owens to explore with the FIR Team the potential to speak on a video regarding design considerations and women's safety issues.

7. Steering Group Recruitment

CG addressed the next steps regarding the Steering Group recruitment, which includes reviewing the terms of reference and the process for selecting new members. CG advised of the considerable level of interest from potential new members and suggested using a skills matrix again to assess expertise required and diversity within the group. It was agreed to follow this approach again before advertising the vacancies.

Under the terms of reference, the Steering Group must comprise a minimum of 7, and maximum 16 members, including at least 1 supply chain specialist. The group agreed to appoint up to the maximum 16 members for the greatest input and perspectives.

CG emphasized the importance of feedback from current and past members to refine the recruitment process further and welcomed input from the group directly to her.

> **Action 313:** CG to update terms of reference and process for selecting new Steering Group members, and prepare the skills matrix, to consider and decide the recruitment process at the next meeting.

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8. Future Meetings

- 11th September 2024
- 27th November 2024

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