

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	12 OCTOBER 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/045/23
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEGAL SERVICES , NICK MERNOCK	REPORT AUTHOR:	ASSOCIATE HEAD OF CULTURE AND TRANSFORMATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, MO JOGI
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	DEB APPLETON, NICK MERNOCK, MARK THOMAS, BEN RYDER, KEV LONGSHAW AND MARK BUCHANAN (CHAIR SOCIO ECONOMIC NETWORK)		
TITLE OF REPORT:	ADOPTING, EMBEDDING AND REPORTING ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY - UPDATE REPORT		

APPENDICES:	NONE
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Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the ongoing progress of the plans to formally adopt the Socio-economic Duty working with Liverpool City Region (LCR) and associated partners and what this will mean in terms of embedding the duty across Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.

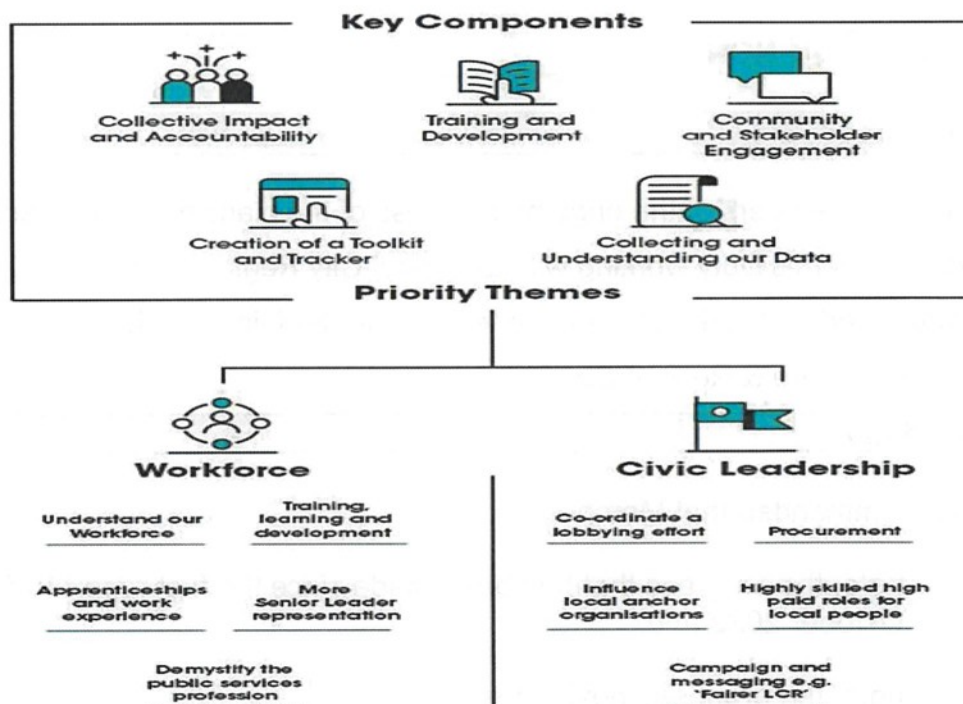
Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note, the progress that has been made since the first report to Authority in October 2022 and;
 - b) note, the proposed next steps.

Introduction and Background

3. A paper was presented in October 2022, to the Authority, which included details of a report and series of recommendations presented to Liverpool City Region, Metro Mayor, Leaders and Mayor by the Chief Fire Office Phil Garrigan on the 18th of August 2022 regarding the adoption of the Socio-economic Duty and the proposed next steps.

4. Subsequently on the 22nd of January 2023, a workshop was held involving representative from all five local authorities, the Liverpool City Region and members form the Merseyside & Cheshire Health & Wellbeing Board. The purpose of the workshop was (a) develop a shared understanding on socio-economic duty and what it means for LCR (b) learn from how other areas are approaching they duty (c) work together to identify shared opportunities, challenges, and joint solutions (d) develop action plans to progress the adoption of socio-economic duty and embed this alongside the other nine protected characteristics.
5. The following key components were agreed as part of a Liverpool City Region approach alongside diving deeper into two priority themes as follows:



6. Following the meeting and reflections it was decided to set out how MFRS could set out is own plan to embed the Socio-economic Duty (the Duty) and share the plan with partners with the intention to work together.

7. To recap the Socio-economic Duty (the Duty) is set out in Part 1, Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010. It *requires specified public bodies, when making strategic decisions, such as deciding priorities and setting objectives, to pay due regard to the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome that result from socioeconomic disadvantage*. The overall aim of the Duty is to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage by ensuring that those taking strategic decisions:

- Take account of evidence and potential impact through consultation and engagement.
- Understand the views and needs of those impacted by the decision, particularly those who suffer socio-economic disadvantage;
- Welcome challenge and scrutiny; and
- Drive a change in the way that decisions are made and the way that decision makers operate
- Such inequalities could include inequalities in employment, education, health, housing, or crime rates.
- Although this section of the Act was passed with the rest of the Equality Act in 2010, it has never been enforced in England, even though it represents a real opportunity for tackling inequality
- Several local authorities and combined authorities (including North of Tyne) have adopted the duty voluntarily within their Public Sector Equality Duty.

8. Liverpool City Region & Plan for Prosperity



- A shared blueprint for local engagement with Government on 'levelling up' – an inclusive city region where no one and no place is left behind
- In LCR too many communities have remained excluded from economic opportunity for too long, with concentrations of significant deprivation, low levels of skills and difficulty accessing employment locations
- A combination of health-related economic inactivity and not enough high-quality jobs, means productivity is too low and too many people and places have fallen behind
- Shared prosperity is conditional on improving health, skills, infrastructures, and quality of place.

9. Underlying problems relating to deprivation

- A person's socio-economic background is a key factor in determining their life chances – how they get on at school, the chances of continuing with their education, employment prospects and their health
- LCR has significant employment, unemployment and economic inactivity gaps remaining for women, those from an ethnic minority, those with a disability, young people, and older people

- Nationally, median weekly earnings for female employees working full-time were £558 at April 2021, compared to £652 for male full-time employees (ONS)
- Social mobility refers to change in a person's socio-economic situation, either in relation to their parents (inter-generational mobility) or throughout their lifetime (intra-generational mobility). Social mobility is linked to equality of opportunity: the extent to which people have the same chances to do well in life regardless of the socio-economic background of their parents, their gender, age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, birthplace, or other circumstances beyond their control.
- Social mobility and equality of opportunity can be measured in terms of earnings, income, or social class, but can also be understood to encompass other well-being dimensions such as health and education.

10. Cost of living crisis

- The majority of LCR neighbourhoods are more at risk from rising cost of living than the national average. Risks around north Liverpool, south Sefton, east Wirral, and north Knowsley.
- This analysis is based on LCRCA's Cost of Living Index, which pulls together a range of datasets to assess an area's resilience to rising cost of living.
- Neighbourhoods are given a score for each indicator relative to the national average (above 0 means higher vulnerability). Indicators are grouped into three categories:

<p><u>Income & employment</u></p> <p><i>(Universal Credit, Household income, income deprivation, employment deprivation, free school meals)</i></p>
<p><u>Housing</u></p> <p><i>(Housing energy score, electricity prepayment meters, overcrowded dwellings, private rental costs, older dwellings)</i></p>

Energy & fuel

(Annual energy bills, energy as % of income, fuel poverty, car ownership)

LCRCA Cost of Living Index Score below, higher the score the more the risk & 20 high risk areas & 13 Community Fire Stations

Council Ward	Local Authority	MFRS station(s)	Cost of living index
1. Walton South	Liverpool	Aintree	1.08
2. Anfield East	Liverpool	Liverpool City Centre	0.97
3. Kensington	Liverpool	Kensington	0.96
4. Bidston Hill	Wirral	Saughall Massie	0.92
5. Fairfield West & Newsham Park	Liverpool	Kensington	0.92
6. Poulton	Wirral	Wallasey	0.90
7. Toxteth Park	Liverpool	Toxteth	0.90
8. Walton Hall	Liverpool	Aintree	0.89
9. Birkenhead South	Wirral	Birkenhead	0.88
10. Norris Green West	Liverpool	Croxteth	0.88
11. Anfield West	Liverpool	Kensington	0.88
12. Bootle North	Sefton	Crosby	0.87
13. Seacombe	Wirral	Wallasey	0.86
14. Egremont	Wirral	Wallasey	0.86
15. Tranmere	Wirral	Birkenhead	0.83
16. Page Moss & Fincham	Knowsley	Prescot	0.80
17. Wavertree South	Liverpool	Old Swan	0.77
18. Bootle East	Sefton	Aintree	0.77

19. Southport High Park	Sefton	Southport	0.75
20. Tuebrook	Liverpool	Old Swan	0.74

11. Next Steps - Advancing fairness & opportunity across MFRS & key principles

- Using the principles of SED, MFRS can deliver advancing fairness, opportunity and reducing gaps in outcomes across the deprived people and places.
 - Encourage strong and visible leadership
 - Using data effectively as a tool for focusing on certain areas of Merseyside aiding decision-making and accountability
 - Develop capacity across the organisation through working with LCR & plans for learning and development sessions for managers and policy writers to apply and report on the SED.
 - Look at routinely including SED in decision-making:
 - Business planning cycle
 - Policy making process
 - Service delivery
 - Investment decisions and appraisal process
 - Procurement
 - Equality Impact Assessments
 - Engaging with residents, civil society and voluntary and community sector organisations from the outset focused on high-risk areas & make the most of opportunities to undertake joint activities with partners across LCR
 - Measuring the socio-economic background employees and potential recruits
 - Integrate the work on workplace culture & knowing our communities
 - Annual Report - monitoring impact and compliance – identify ‘what works.
- 12. Next steps and Action Plan 2023-24 – Year 1 & leads**

- **Align existing priorities within the functional plans for Prevention, Protection and People & Organisational Development (POD) focusing on**

the 20 high risk areas & 13 community fire stations identified by LCRCA's Cost of Living Index.

Actions to include:

- ✓ **Prevention** - *Cross reference & report across the top 20 high risk areas identified by LCRCA's Cost of Living Index with existing activity focusing on home safety, community safety, safeguarding & youth engagement & what activities take place and also what % of overall activity takes place across the top 20 high risk areas*

Lead: AM Mark Thomas

- ✓ **Protection** - *Align the work on the socioeconomic duty & the business safety engagement work & in particular the Business Safety Engagement (BSE) framework and associated plan documents.*

Lead: AM Kev Longshaw

- ✓ **Response**: *Commit to focusing positive action recruitment activities across the top 20 high risk areas & associated 13 community fire stations identified within the LCRCA's Cost of Living Index*

Lead: AM Ben Ryder

- ✓ **POD** - *Include a question on the recruitment application form which focuses on social mobility.*

Lead: Sara Fielding

- ✓ **POD** - *Achieve Level 3 & Disability Confident standard Social Mobility Index benchmark & Fair Employment Charter to support the measurement of progress*

Lead: Vicky Campbell

Internal Groups - Influence the work of MFRS the Cost-of-living working group (external facing) and the socio-economic staff network (internal)

Actions to include:

- ✓ *Influence Cost-of-living working group (external facing) to cross reference proposed activity across the top 20 high risk areas identified by LCRCA's Cost of Living Index & report activity as part of its evaluation.*

Lead: AM Mark Thomas

- ✓ *Encourage parties to focus resources associated with the Community impact fund across the top 20 high risk areas identified by LCRCA's Cost of Living Index & report activity as part of its evaluation.*

Lead: AM Ben Ryder

- ✓ *Encourage the socio-economic staff network (internal) to measure & determine a baseline of internal social mobility of staff to help develop its work addressing in house poverty.*

Leads: Mark Buchannan

- **Embed the impact socio economic disadvantage can have, clearly articulating what this means in terms of Business planning cycle, policy making process and Equality Impact Assessments & knowledge and skills**

Actions to include:

- ✓ *Give further prominence including advice and support within the existing Equality Impact Assessment Template & the socio-economic duty*
- ✓ *Taking part in training and development activities on how best to apply and report on the socio-economic duty with a focus on policy writers and managers in conjunction with the LCR*

Leads: Vicky Campbell

- **Annual Report & socio-economic duty**

Actions to include:

- ✓ *Baseline assessment for the first year of activities and how the basement influences business planning.*
- ✓ *Case studies of activity*
- ✓ *Sharing progress with function and members*

Leads: Mo Jogi & Vicky Campbell

Equality and Diversity Implications

13. There is considerable overlap between inequality because of having protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage. The two directly intersect in the racialised, gendered, and disability inflected nature of poverty.

Staff Implications

14. The proposed work on the socio-economic duty has implications for staff as the proposal includes plans to; (a) measure the social mobility background of staff (b) to undertake the Social Mobility Maturity Commission Assessment Framework to help measure our approach.

Legal Implications

15. The approach demonstrates MFRA is going beyond the requirements of the Equality Act and acknowledging equality is multifaceted.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

16. There will be no financial implications this year.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

17. There are no risk management, health and safety or environmental implications arising from this report.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

18. The report demonstrates strong civic leadership across the region. Through making the case for embracing socio-economic disadvantage, the duty will allow organisations to take an increasingly intersectional approach.
19. Deprivation interacts with equality-protected characteristics, and certain communities and geographies may also experience worse outcomes than in other areas. The intersectionality between deprivation and other characteristics can be thought of as a web, where different areas connect, compounding and exacerbating each other.

20. Finally working across the region and focusing on how a duty on socio-economic disadvantage can help work on all aspects of life, including health, life expectancy and educational attainment.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/046/22 Adopting, Embedding and Reporting on the Socio-economic duty - update with Liverpool City Region

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CA	Combined Authority
CFO	Chief Fire Officer
EHRC	Equality Human Rights Commission
FSD	Fairer Scotland Duty
HCP	Health and Care Partnership
HR	Human Resources
LCR	Liverpool City Region
MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is the service provided by MFRA. When writing reports MFRS is the “action”
OD	Organisational Development
SED	Socio-economic Duty