



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Decision title

London Fire Brigade Values - Fairness, Integrity, Respect, Service and Trust (FIRST)

Recommendation by
Assistant Director, Communications

Decision Number
LFC-0186-D

Protective marking: **NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

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Summary

The existing London Fire Brigade (LFB) values of Fairness, Integrity, Respect, Service and Trust (FIRST) have not in recent years been as widely promoted as they once were and are arguably less visible to LFB staff. This report provides the board with further background and seeks agreement that the values remain appropriate for current use, including planned leadership work during 2019/20.

Decision

The London Fire Commissioner:

- Agrees that Fairness, Integrity, Respect, Service and Trust remain appropriate LFB values; and
- Notes the values will be included in the leadership work being led by People Services and will be subject to further exploration as part of that work.

Dany Cotton QFSM
London Fire Commissioner

Date 14-08-19

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LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Report title

London Fire Brigade Values - Fairness, Integrity, Respect, Service and Trust (FIRST)

Report to

Commissioner's Board

Date

8 May 2019

Report by

Assistant Director of Communications

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Summary

The existing London Fire Brigade (LFB) values of Fairness, Integrity, Respect, Service and Trust (FIRST) have not in recent years been as widely promoted as they once were and are arguably less visible to LFB staff. This report provides the board with further background and seeks agreement that the values remain appropriate for current use, including planned leadership work during 2019/20.

Recommended decision

That the London Fire Commissioner:

- Agrees that Fairness, Integrity, Respect, Service and Trust remain appropriate LFB values; and
- Notes the values will be included in the leadership work being led by People Services and will be subject to further exploration as part of that work.

Background

1. FIRST values were defined and included in all LFB Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs) up to and including the fifth London Safety Plan (2013 to 2016). The format of the sixth and current IRMP (2017 to 2021) did not specifically reference FIRST. This was because LFB wanted the current plan to focus on newly formed aims and principles.
2. The values are included in the LFB Inclusion Strategy, Safer Together (2016 to 2026) which is both an internal and external strategy.
3. Work is underway on a new internal Leadership strategy. This work is led by the AD of People Services working with the AD of Strategy and Risk and AD of Communications. Presenting values that the organisation agrees remain current is clearly relevant to this work.
4. The Assistant Commissioner (AC) Fire Stations and AD of Communications have also been working on communication proposals to ensure LFB values are more visible and referred to by managers and fire station based staff. Mixed messages in recent years about when or how the values should be used have caused confusion amongst some staff groups.

5. The values were included in the LFB's HMICFRS Self Assessment (section 3.1 - how well does the FRS promote its values and culture).
6. LFB currently defines its FIRST values as set out below:
 - **Fairness:** we treat everyone as individuals whilst applying consistent standards, policies and procedures.
 - **Integrity:** we encourage leadership at all levels, accountability for personal and team performance and high ethical standards and behaviours.
 - **Respect:** we value and embrace diversity and seek to understand the opinions and beliefs of others.
 - **Service:** we are committed to excellence and providing a professional and quality service that is value for money.
 - **Trust:** we believe in being open and honest whilst being clear when confidences must be maintained.
7. Discussions held with Heads of Service on 19 March 2019 concluded that FIRST values do feel appropriate and remain relevant to the work of the organisation, but that these values should be explored, discussed with all staff groups, and properly used, meaning that they are integrated into all policies and procedures. Heads of Service attending the meeting agreed that a report should be taken to Commissioners Board seeking agreement that FIRST values are appropriate and should continue to be used before further detailed work is completed.
8. It should be recognised that because the values have been less visible there is a need to properly integrate them. The following examples demonstrate where LFB, led by People Services, could ensure its values are properly understood and used:
 - a. Introducing the values into job descriptions.
 - b. assessing candidates using the values during job interviews.
 - c. Including and explaining the values in all LFB policies, such as grievance and disciplinary policies that must make clear the values staff are expected to uphold.
 - d. Including the values in LFB procurement processes, ensuring that they are added into all LFB contracts and are understood by contractors.
 - e. Including the values in all induction materials and all staff development / training.

Proposed communications activity

9. Integrating FIRST into all LFB policies and procedures is a priority if the organisation is to truly benefit from their value, but the following communication opportunities could in the future (following or as part of the planned leadership work) be used to support that integration.

New policies and opportunities to communicate the values in 2019

10. The AD of Communications will report a Sponsorship Policy in 2019. A new social media policy will be reported to Commissioner Board in June. New brand guidance will also be launched for

use by all LFB staff in 2019 to support managers or other decision makers and ensure the LFB brand and all official associations with LFB are appropriate.

11. These policies and the guidance share objectives to help staff and protect the LFB's reputation, and will, if agreed, include FIRST values because they should be considered for any sponsorship, public communication and / or use of the LFB brand. The launch of these policies and guidance, and associated internal communications would offer the opportunity to remind staff of what LFB values are.

Brand opportunities

12. As part of the brand management work the communications department is doing in 2019/20 there are a number of design opportunities to visibly display FIRST. These could include use on artwork planned at LFB headquarters, and at fire stations as part of the Opening Up Fire Stations Project (subject to agreement by the Opening Up Fire Stations project board). The values would form part of the design and clearly communicate what LFB stands for to anyone visiting its buildings.

Staff materials

13. There are a number of ways in which FIRST could be visually displayed as a reminder of the values staff are expected to uphold. These could include, subject to agreement with relevant heads of service:
 - The new LFB newsletter design (to be launched in quarter 3 of 2019/20)
 - Email sign off (aligned with a desire to move away from the use of disparate and off brand sign off messaging).

Further corporate and brand opportunities

14. External events and / or conferences organised by the communications department could, where appropriate, display or in other ways use LFB values, subject to design and key message priorities.
15. Community Safety materials, again when appropriate in terms of design and key message objectives, could include LFB values to communicate what LFB stands for to the public we serve.

Media briefings and training

16. New strategic media training was agreed at the beginning of 2019 meeting an action contained in the LFB Inclusion Strategy. Appropriate staff are to be trained to give media interviews and represent the corporate values held by LFB. Media briefings and training could therefore include an explanation of FIRST and ensure that any staff representing LFB feel confident to speak to and explain these values.

Finance comments

17. This report recommends that the FIRST values remain appropriate for the LFB. The report notes that this could include incorporating an explanation of FIRST within existing training, which will be contained within existing resources. The report also notes that these values could be

incorporated in new artwork as part of the Opening Up Fire Stations project. This was included in the London Safety Plan and is expected to be funded from within the London Safety Plan reserve.

Workforce comments

18. Despite not being as used or visible as they once were (which is the point of this report), the values are used in the Brigade's current Inclusion Strategy and are recognised by some staff. During discussions with heads of service, it was suggested that some operational colleagues use the values to measure performance. As detailed in paragraph six the values would be subject to renewed staff discussion and shared as values that we stand by both in how we deliver our service and also how all staff should expect to be treated when they are at work.

Legal comments

19. The proposals set out in this report are within the London Fire Commissioner's general powers; Section 5A(1)(a) of the Fire Rescue and Services Act 2004 ('2004 Act') states a relevant fire and rescue authority may do anything it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying out of any of its functions.
20. The FIRST values were included in earlier versions of the London Safety Plan (LSP), but do not appear in the current LSP. The format and focus of the current and previous LSPs are different, although ordinarily key organisational values which seek to influence staff and organisational behaviours and service deliver would be expected to be included in the 'corporate plan' and this should be considered in the preparation of the 2021 LSP.
21. While the FIRST values are not set out in the current LSP that does not necessarily suggest they are no longer regarded as relevant to the LFB and a re- invigorating of the FIRST values is not considered to be contrary to the current LSP provided it does not contradict or seek to supersede the priorities and objectives set out therein, and on that basis nor is it regarded as constituting a revision to the LSP such that approval would be needed by the Mayor under S327G of the GLA Act 1999.

Sustainability implications

22. The integrity element of the values define LFB as an organisation that encourages leadership at all levels, accountability for personal and team performance and high ethical standards and behaviours.
23. The Service and Trust elements of FIRST also define LFB as an organisation that is committed to providing a professional and quality service that is value for money and that it believes in being open and honest whilst being clear when confidences must be maintained.

Equalities implications

24. Under the Equality Act 2010 s149 (the Public Sector Equality Duty) the London Fire Brigade, in the exercise of its functions, is under a duty to have due regard to the need to:
25. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act.

26. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
27. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
28. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

Consultation

Name/role	Method consulted
Heads of service (Strategy and Risk, People Services, Operational Policy and Assurance, Fire Safety, Operational Resilience & Special Operations Group, Finance and General Counsel)	Meeting (19/03/19) and emails
Keeley Foster, Head of Cultural Change and Talent	Meeting and emails
Andy Roe, AC Fire Stations	Meeting and emails
Kathryn Robinson, General Counsel	Meetings and emails

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