

<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>			
<b>MEETING OF THE:</b>	<b>AUTHORITY</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>27 OCTOBER 2022</b>	<b>REPORT NO:</b>	<b>CFO/046/22</b>
<b>PRESENTING OFFICER</b>	<b>PHIL GARRIGAN, CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>PHIL GARRIGAN, CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>MO JOGI</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM NETWORK CHAIRS</b>		
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>THE CASE FOR ADOPTING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY AND PROPOSED NEXT STEPS WITH LIVERPOOL CITY REGION</b>		

<b>APPENDICES:</b>	<b>APPENDIX A: THE CASE FOR ADOPTING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY AND PROPOSED NEXT STEPS REPORT TO LCR AUGUST 2022</b>
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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of the proposal presented to the Liverpool City Region, Metro Mayor, Leaders and Mayor in August 2022 recommending the adoption of the Socio-economic Duty by the City Region
2. To capture the proposed next steps and implications for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) on the adoption of the duty - subject to Authority approval

### **Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that Members;
    - a) note the attached report and 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.
    - b) approve the adoption of the duty by MFRA and support the proposed next steps as detailed within the report.
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## **Introduction and Background**

4. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service has a long history of highlighting the link between socio economic factors and fires in the community. The data associated with fatalities in accidental dwelling fires between 2006/07 and 2020/21 provides compelling evidence that in general and as deprivation increases, the number of fire deaths is gradually increasing across Merseyside.
5. Socio-economic disadvantage affects all aspects of life, including health, life expectancy and educational attainment in Great Britain. The 'socio-economic duty' (SED), Part 1 of the Equality Act (2010), aimed to deliver better outcomes for those who experience this disadvantage. The duty states that certain public bodies, when making strategic decisions on, for example, priorities or objectives, must consider how their decisions might help to reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage. 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, even though it represents a real opportunity for tackling inequality.
6. The SED came into force in Scotland as the 'Fairer Scotland Duty' (FSD) in April 2018 and in Wales on 31 March 2021. The UK Government has no plans to introduce the SED in England, although several English local authorities (such as Newcastle City Council and the North of Tyne Combined Authority and most recently Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority) have adopted the duty voluntarily.
7. In Scotland, the duty's visible effect so far has been the integration of socio-economic issues into such as area deprivation, fuel poverty, pay ratios, precarious housing and community empowerment into public planning and decision-making.

8. We know the extent of wealth and income inequality is of widespread concern across the Merseyside region. Since the Grenfell Tower disaster in June 2017 and, more recently, the cost-of-living crisis there has been increased focus on tackling disadvantage caused by socio- economic inequality, whether by reducing poverty or promoting inclusive growth. Therefore, the socio-economic duty becomes even more necessary.
9. In February 2022, following discussions with the Equality and Human Rights Commission Chief Fire Officer Phil Garrigan (MFRS) approached Liverpool City Region (LCR) suggesting the adoption of the Duty by the LCR.
10. These initial discussions with Chief Executive Katherine Fairclough led to further discussions with policy leads and equality officers in the region's six local authorities and the Combined Authority.
11. A joint paper supporting the adoption of the duty was subsequently taken to the LCR Chief Executives Group.
12. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2022, CFO Phil Garrigan presented to the Metro Mayor, Leaders and Mayor and the following recommendations were adopted:
  - a. Endorse the 'in principle' adoption of the socio-economic duty (SED) and request the LCR Chief Executives Group, following consultation with their respective leaders/mayors, to work together and in collaboration with MFRS and the Chief Fire Officer and other relevant partners, to explore arrangements to operationalise and co-ordinate adoption of the socio-economic duty, working in the first instance through the LCR Local Government Equality Officers Group, with regular progress reports submitted to meetings of the Metro Mayor, Leaders and Mayor.
  - b. Work closely with the Equality Human Rights Commission (EHRC) using their insights and expertise.
  - c. Continue to advance and encourage employers across the region to sign and implement the Fair Employment Charter developed by the Liverpool City Region.

- d. For Chief Executives to be asked to explore the feasibility of adopting the social mobility maturity assessment within their organisations and/or explore other approaches that could be utilised.
  - e. Explore how to influence the Population Health Board of the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership (HCP) and use the SED to support the work in reducing health inequalities in the region through action on the social determinants of health.
13. Following the meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2022, and as a result of further discussions with colleagues from the Liverpool City Region it was agreed that the following course of action would be undertaken to take forward the above recommendations.
14. Two region wide task and finish groups would be set up as follows:
- **Task group 1: Our role as employers:** this will consider what we can do to support recruitment, wellbeing and progression of people with protected characteristics and socioeconomic disadvantage. This group will be sponsored by Katherine Fairclough, Chief Executive, Liverpool City Region and would involve HR and OD Colleagues from across the Merseyside Region.
  - **Task Group 2: Civic Leadership:** this will consider how we can work together with stakeholders to tackle socioeconomic disadvantage across the city region, considering our own service delivery investment and funding as well as how we communicate with, and influence, other organisations and businesses to put practices in place to tackle inequality for those facing socioeconomic disadvantage. CFO Phil Garrigan, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service will lead this work.

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### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

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

## **Staff Implications**

16. 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**

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

## **Financial Implications & Value for Money**

18. There will be no financial implications this year.

## **Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications**

19. 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.*

20. 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.
21. 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.
22. 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.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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**CFO/111/11** If this report follows on from another, list the previous report(s)

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

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