

Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme 2007

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of the European Commission's Leonardo da Vinci Programme for 2007, and advises of the Service's recent success in securing funds to facilitate a staff exchange programme to fire and civil protection organisations operating within five European countries.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the contents of this report, and if in agreement,
- b) nominate three Members, acting as representatives of the Authority, to participate in the European Commission's Leonardo Da Vinci programme for 2007

3 Background

The European Commission (EC) has created¹ the Leonardo Da Vinci Programme² that provides funds for the exchange of European citizens between member states, for personal development.

The Leonardo da Vinci Programme, initially launched in 1995, is part of the EC's new Lifelong Learning Programme and is designed to build a skilled workforce through European partnerships. Leonardo funds transnational work placement, exchanges and the development of training materials with the objective of improving the provision of Vocational Education and Training (VET) across Europe.

¹ Council Decision of the European Union (1999/382/EC), Article 2

² Call For Proposals (Directorate-General For Education And Culture) Under The Second Phase of The Leonardo Da Vinci Programme - (EAC/11/04)2



Leonardo focuses on raising the quality and relevance of VET, and provides an opportunity for organisations involved in VET to build European partnerships, exchange best practice, increase the expertise of their staff and develop the skills of learners. The Programme is open to the entire spectrum of subjects covered by vocational education and training.

Proposals may be submitted by public and private bodies and companies, which are involved in training or concerned by vocational training issues, brought within an international partnership. This covers vocational training establishments, centres and bodies at all levels, including universities; research centres and institutions; the business sector, non-profit making organisations, and voluntary bodies etc.

During 2006 Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SF&RS) secured funding through the programme which resulted in a highly successful partnership being established with the Danish company - Falck, Europe's largest private provider of fire, rescue and paramedic services. This initiative led to 16 members of SF&RS undertaking study visits to Denmark and 12 Falck officers visiting Shropshire.

4 Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme 2007

Following previous Fire Authority approval³ officers submitted an application for further Leonardo funding to facilitate the establishment of a staff exchange programme for 2007.

Following a lengthy evaluation process, which included a detailed review of the 2006 staff exchange programme, the EC has approved a grant of €51,240 (circa £35,000) to SF&RS. The grant will enable 36 persons to undertake exchange visits during 2007 to fire and civil protection organisations operating within five European countries. The host organisations and respective countries are summarised in Table 1 below.

Each of the above organisations was contacted during the application preparation stage and has provided a written undertaking to support the programme.

Research visits will be for a one week period, with selected attendees travelling in small cross-departmental teams who will undertake a joint study of a predetermined subject. The subject areas are set out within Table 1 below.

³ Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority Meeting - 14 February 2007. Agenda Item 20:
Falck - Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Staff Exchange Programme 2006



Country	Host Organisation	Total number of placements	Research/Study Subject
Denmark	Falck	12	▪ Policy, Strategy and Governance
			▪ Youth Initiatives
			▪ Change Management
Germany	Aachen Fire Service	6	▪ Incident Command
			▪ Audit and Performance
Portugal	Lisbon Civil Protection	6	▪ Community Safety
			▪ Contingency Planning
Spain	AC Traductores (acting on behalf of Jaén and Córdoba Fire Services)	6	▪ Environmental Protection
			▪ Inter-agency Working/Partnerships
Hungary	Hungarian Fire-Fighters Association (Budapest)	6	▪ Training and Development
			▪ Rescue Techniques

Table 1 Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme 2007 – Host Organisations and Schedule of Research/Study Subjects

5 Member Participation

The 2006 Staff Exchange Programme carried out with Falck was found to be unmitigated success, with the British Council reporting:

“This project has been incredibly successful. The project has been an innovative one and comes from an unusual source for the Leonardo da Vinci Programme - a public services body. This type of enterprise involving a public/private partnership is very much encouraged and supported by the European Commission. This project has been an example of good practice within the Leonardo Programme.”

Laura Laver
Programme Officer
Leonardo UK National Agency
November 2006



Building upon the success of the Falck-SF&RS partnership, it is proposed that the 2007 programme is extended to incorporate placements with Falck for three elected Members representing the Fire Authority. The attending Members would be accompanied by a SF&RS officer and, it is recommended, observe and review arrangements at Falck for setting and implementing policy, strategy & governance. This represents a distinct opportunity to review such arrangements in what is renowned as the world's best known *'private fire and rescue service.'*

Whilst subject to Member availability, it is envisaged that the one week visit to Falck's Headquarters in Arhus, Jutland, would take place during September/October of this year.

6 Falck Staff Exchange Programme

As a continuing reciprocal arrangement and valued partnership, Falck has also been successful in securing Leonardo funding and will be placing 12 Danish officers with SF&RS later this year.

7 Humanitarian Aid

As discussed and agreed⁴ by Members previously, this year's programme will also include an humanitarian aid project whereby the Service's reserve rescue tender, which will become redundant later this year, will be donated to a European state in need of such assistance.

Following enquires and dialogue with representatives from several European states; it has been deemed that the rescue tender would be of most benefit to the volunteer fire-fighters of Hungary. The Hungarian Fire-Fighters Association has formally agreed to accept the vehicle, which will be transported via funds from the Leonardo programme to Budapest. The vehicle will be accompanied by six members of SF&RS staff who will, as a development opportunity through the programme, be responsible for training the recipient fire-fighters in the use of the rescue tender and associated equipment provided.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the Fire Authority does not have the general power under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972 to make charitable donations, and the Local Government Act 1999 requires that the Authority secures best value, provision does exist elsewhere within legalisation. Such assistance is permitted under the Local Government (Overseas Assistance) Act 1993. A general consent has been granted under section 1 of the provisions of this Act for the donations of equipment and support staff up to a financial threshold, which is relatively high, and which the aforesaid proposals fall within.

⁴ Refer to - Minutes of the Meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority held at The Business Development Centre, Telford, on Wednesday, 14 February 2007



8 Financial Implications

The EC's lifelong learning programme has an overall budget of €6.97 billion; of which 25 percent is allocated to Leonardo based projects. The EC has approved a grant of €51,240 (circa £35,000) to SF&RS.

Organisations who secure funding are entitled to up to 75 percent of the respective placement costs from the EC; with the organisation contributing the remaining 25 percent. Management and administration time incurred in delivering the programme may form part or all of the 25 percent contribution made by the organisation.

The Falck-SF&RS Staff Exchange Programme 2006 was operated on a cost-neutral basis, with management and administration time factored to account for 25 percent of the programme's overall budget. The 2007 programme will operate on a similar basis, with no expected additional budgetary implications.

9 Legal Comment

The Local Government Act 1999 requires best value authorities, including the Fire Authority, to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Therefore, if redundant fire appliances have a value at the time they are to be donated this must be considered in accordance with the requirements set out in the Local Government Act 1999 and any subsequent regulations and guidance.

However, the Local Government (Overseas Assistance) Act enables local authorities to provide advice and assistance as respects any matter in which they have skill and experience to a body engaged outside the United Kingdom in the carrying out of any activities of local government. This includes the Fire Authority. The Fire Authority must ensure that they comply with the general authorisation to use this legislation given by the Secretary of State in 1993.

10 Equality Impact Assessment

Officers have considered the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 5 Part 2) and have determined that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from this report. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed. It is however fully recognised that the proposed arrangements set out within this report would be subject to Equality Impact Assessments as deemed applicable at the appropriate times should further exchange programmes be established.



11 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

12 Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority:

- Meeting 10 May 2006 - Report 22, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service - Falck Staff Exchange Programme, and Minutes
- Meeting 19 July 2006 - Report 22, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service - Falck Staff Exchange Programme, and Minutes
- Meeting 20 December 2006 - Agenda Item 18 Presentation, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service - Falck Staff Exchange Programme, and Minutes
- Meeting 14 February 2007 - Report 20, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service - Falck Staff Exchange Programme, and Minutes

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk); the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	*
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*

