

European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme (Leonardo da Vinci) Update on Progress and Proposals

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Steve Worrall, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260204.

1 Purpose of Report

This report appraises Members of progress with the current Staff Exchange Programme facilitated through the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme and sets out proposals for further Member/staff development opportunities during 2008/09.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note progress to date with the current Exchange Programme; and
- b) Give consideration to the submission of a further application(s) for funding for 2008/09.

3 Background

Earlier in 2007 the Fire Authority successfully secured funding from the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme to facilitate the exchange of staff via the Leonardo Da Vinci scheme to fire and civil protection agencies operating in five European countries. The funding (circa £35k) has supported the exchange of 36 members of staff and elected Members for one-week placements. The table on the following page provides a summary overview of the programme and progress to date.



Country	Host Organisation	Number of placements	Research/ Study Subject	Team size	Progress
Denmark	Falck	12	▪ Policy, Strategy & Governance ¹	4	Visit Completed
			▪ Youth Initiatives	4	Visit Completed
			▪ Change Management	4	Visit Completed
Germany	Aachen Fire Service	6	▪ Incident Command	3	Visit scheduled for January 2008
			▪ Audit & Performance	3	
Portugal	Lisbon Civil Protection	6	▪ Community Safety	3	Visit Completed
			▪ Contingency Planning	3	Visit Completed
Spain	Jaén and Córdoba Fire Services	6	▪ Environmental Protection	3	Visit Completed
			▪ Inter-agency Working/ Partnerships	3	Visit Completed
Hungary	Hungarian Firefighters Association (Budapest)	6	▪ Training & Development	3	Visit scheduled for 4 January 2008
			▪ Rescue Techniques	3	

Staff Exchange Programme 2007/08 – Summary of Progress

The visit to Hungary also includes the transportation and donation of the redundant reserve rescue tender (Mercedes ET). The recipient fire station is located in Pilisvörösvár, located 12 miles north of Budapest. Pilisvörösvár is a small village occupying 2,430 hectares and has a population of approximately 12,000.

A formal review of this year's programme will take place in February 2008, following the final visit to Aachen. Initial feedback has been extremely positive, with many personal development benefits having been achieved.

4 Lifelong Learning Programme (Leonardo) 2008/09

The Fire Authority is asked to give early consideration as to whether it wishes to approve the Service's making a submission for further funding through the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme (Leonardo) for 2008/09.

NOTES:

¹ The Falck visit included three Fire Authority elected Members accompanied by the Chief Fire Officer.



The deadline for 2008/09 applications is **8 February 2008** and, whilst submissions for funding are subject to stringent scrutiny and evaluation by the European Commission, early indications suggest that applications from this Authority would be looked upon favourably due to the success of the programme to date.

To aid discussion four initial outline proposals for 2008 are set out below. These proposals are *outline* and are subject not only to the agreement of the Fire Authority, but moreover the approval of the European Commission and the participation of suitable host organisations. The proposals are not intended to be exhaustive and further ideas can be created, where Members believe a development opportunity exists.

Project Title

Managing Change – learning from the Finnish experience

Description

In 2004 the 400 fire and rescue services of Finland were amalgamated to form 22 regional services. In 2006 Helsinki University conducted a review² of the regionalisation exercise to determine the lessons learned from this major change programme. A key finding and criticism within the University's report related to the establishment of regional control rooms [Emergency Response Centres - ERCs]. The following extract is taken from the University's report:

“The transformation of the Emergency Response Centre (ERC) to a governmental system was the issue that many rescue region directors have seen as a dramatic change in the chain of safety....The lack of a clear role for the national ERC system is mentioned as the biggest risk among the operational rescue officers. Some interviewees criticised that the ERC system has focused too much on improving its public image, whereas the focus should instead be on how to enhance the information flow from dispatchers to the Police, the Rescue Units etc. They argued that the ERC should be seen as a body to serve rescue authorities, not as a body in itself.”

The current FiReControl project will, by 2011, see the regionalisation of the nation's fire and rescue service control rooms from the current 46 down to 9. Projects, such as this, are ultimately about *change management*, and run the risk of failure if not properly managed.

The Leonardo proposal is to form a partnership with Helsinki University, and at least two Finnish fire and rescue services, to explore in detail the lessons learned from Finnish experience. The partnership would involve the placement of a small number of staff from SFRS with Helsinki University and Finnish fire and rescue services.

²http://www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/civpro/publications/eurobaltic_case_study_regionalisation_of_finnish_rescue_services.pdf



On completion of the placements, the visiting staff would be responsible for disseminating the lessons learned, acting as *change agents* and creating an action plan to facilitate the transition from local to regional control rooms in Shropshire and the West Midlands region. The learning benefits derived through this proposal would be shared with national agencies/bodies with responsibility for the UK's fire and rescue services.

It is possible that this proposal could be managed as a West Midlands Regional Management Board submission, with staff from all five fire and rescue services participating.

Project Title

Meeting the needs of a rapidly increasing local Polish community

Description

Shropshire, like many English counties, has witnessed a phenomenal increase in the number of Polish nationals wishing to settle into what many would describe as a traditional middle-England Anglo-Saxon county. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that this increase has created a host of social issues, not previously experienced with other migratory nationals, and sadly, on occasion, it has led to fire-related deaths and injuries.

SFRS is experiencing difficulties in engaging with the newly-arrived Polish community, a community that did not exist a few years ago. Through Leonardo the proposal would seek to place a number of SFRS staff with Polish fire and rescue services to learn about, and understand, Polish culture and Polish fire safety/prevention initiatives. The outcome of the proposal would enable SFRS to develop techniques to engage more effectively and proactively with the local Polish community, leading to a reduction in deaths and injuries from fire.

Project Title

Positive Pressure Ventilation – Learning from the Danish Experience

Description

A consistent observation made by visiting Falck staff to SFRS concerns the absence of positive pressure ventilation (PPV) fans on fire appliances. In Denmark the use of PPV fans is commonplace with fans carried on all appliances. The benefits of PPV fans, if used correctly, are well documented and widely accepted. However, the use of PPV in the UK is relatively limited, certainly in the context of everyday use. Through the Leonardo programme, the proposal would be to second a small group of staff to Falck to train as instructors in PPV and experience the use of PPV in a Danish environment. Upon return to Shropshire, the trained staff would oversee the controlled evaluation of a PPV fan, which would be placed on the run at one of the Brigade's stations. Upon completion of the evaluation period an objective judgement could be made regarding the future use of PPV fans throughout the County.



Project Title

Delivering Integrated Objectives and Services – Learning from the Europeans

Description

The Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' sets out the Government's vision for local government to be more responsive and deliver better outcomes for communities. The Government believes that it will be for Fire and Rescue Authorities to shape their role in working with partners to develop Sustainable Community Strategies and through Local Area Agreements. This proposal will explore collaborative working within European public safety agencies, from examining shared multi-agency objectives through to the benefits of delivering integrated services from combined premises.

5 Financial Implications

The European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme has an overall budget of €6.97 billion; of which 25 percent is allocated to Leonardo based projects.

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 2006 and 2007/08 Staff Exchange Programmes have operated on a cost-neutral basis, with management and administration time factored to account for 25 percent of the programme's overall budget. The proposals set out above for 2008/09 programme will operate on a similar basis, with no expected additional budgetary implications.

6 Further Information

Further details regarding the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme may be accessed at:

Lifelong Learning Programme:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/newprog/index_en.html#call

Leonardo Programme:

<http://www.leonardo.org.uk/>



7 Legal Comment

The Decision (No 1720/2006/EC) establishing a new Lifelong Learning Programme, was signed by the Presidents of the European Parliament and of the Council on 15 November 2006 and was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 24 November 2006. It came into force on 14 December 2006.

The Fire Authority is eligible to apply for funding through the provisions of Decision No 1720/2006/EC.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached to this report.

9 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

10 Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority:

10 May 2006. Report 22. Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service – Falck Staff Exchange Programme

20 December 2006. Report 18. Falck Exchange Programme

14 February 2007. Report 20. Falck - Shropshire

25 April 2007. Paper 3. Minutes of 14 February 2007 meeting

18 July 2007. Report 19. Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme 2007

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	*





Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service EQIA number
Initial Equality Impact Assessment Form

Directorate	Performance	Department/ Section	Performance
Name of officer	Steve Worrall	Job title	ACFO
Name of Policy/Service to be assessed	CFA Paper	Date of assessment	15 November 2007
New or existing policy	N		

1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy/service	To discuss the Leonardo Exchange Programme		
2. Are there any associated objectives of the policy/service?	Yes – This report supports Strategic Aims 3 & 4, Strategic Objectives 8 & 11		
3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy/service and in what way?	The Fire Authority – through participation of Members in the Leonardo programme. The Service – through participation of staff in the Leonardo programme.		
4. What outcomes are wanted from this policy/service?	Agreement from Policy Group to progress the Leonardo programme into 2008		
5. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy/service?	Fire Authority and Policy Group.		
6. Who implements the policy/service and who is responsible for this?	Performance Improvement Department.		
7. Are there any concerns that this policy/service could have a differential impact on the following groups and what existing evidence do you have for this? Yes or No, please detail in boxes below.			
8. Age	¥	N	
9. Disability	¥	N	
10. Gender	¥	N	



11. Race	☒	N	
12. Religion or belief	☒	N	
13. Sexual orientation	☒	N	
14. Dependant/caring responsibilities	☒	N	
15. Could the differential impact identified in 7-14 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy/service?	☒	N	Please detail
16. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or another reason?	☒	N	
17. Have you consulted those who are likely to be affected by the policy/service?	☒	N	Not applicable at this stage in the planning process.
18. Should the policy proceed to a full impact assessment?	☒	N	Not applicable at this stage in the planning process, but may be necessary at the drafting stage of the application.
19. Date by which full impact assessment to be completed	1 st February 2008		
20. Reason for non completion	N/A		

**I am satisfied that this policy has been successfully impact assessed.
I understand the Impact Assessment of this policy is a statutory obligation and that, as owners of this policy, we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this process.**

Assessing person	Steve Worrall, ACFO	Date:	15 th November 2007
Line Manager	Alan Taylor, CFO	Date:	15 th November 2007
Please note that this impact assessment will be scrutinised by the E&D Officer			

