

European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme (Leonardo da Vinci)

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 is to advise Members of the completed 2007/08 Leonardo Staff Exchange Programme and the successful securing of funds to facilitate a further exchange programme during 2008/09.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the completion of the 2007/08 Leonardo Staff Exchange Programme, and
- b) Consider, and if agreed, nominate three Members to participate in the 2008/09 programme, visiting the Falck organisation in Denmark

3 Background

The Leonardo da Vinci programme is part of the European Commission's (EC) new Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) and is designed to build a skilled workforce through European partnerships. Leonardo funds overseas work placements and the development of training materials with the objective of improving the provision of Vocational Education and Training (VET) across Europe.

Leonardo focuses on raising the quality and relevance of VET, and offers the opportunity for organisations to build European partnerships, exchange best practice, increase the expertise of their staff and develop the skills of learners.

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) successfully secured Leonardo funding in 2006 to embark upon a truly unique partnership with the Danish private provider of fire and rescue services – Falck. This initial partnership enabled 16 staff from SFRS to visit Falck, with 12 Danish officers visiting SFRS during the same period. Based upon the success of this exchange programme the Service made a further submission for funding for 2007. The submission was approved and during 2007/08 several one week placements took place in five European countries – Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Spain and Portugal.

A total of 33 SFRS staff, representative of all departments/areas of the Service, together with 3 Fire Authority Members completed the programme, visiting a multitude of fire and civil protection agencies from both the public and private sector. And as in 2006, SFRS hosted visiting officers from Falck during 2007.

4 2007/08 Exchange Programme

The 2007/08 Exchange Programme has now formally concluded and has been hailed as a resounding success by all participants, with many benefits being achieved, both from an individual and organisational perspective.

The programme has been evaluated by the EC's United Kingdom (UK) based national agency – ECOTEC who have commended the Service on the programme's achievements.

A copy of the agency's report is attached at Appendix 1.

In addition, the continuing partnership between Falck and SFRS has been nominated by the EC to receive a European Quality Award for excellence within the Leonardo programme. This prestigious award will be presented at an international LLP Conference to be held in Slovenia in June 2008.

As a conclusion to the Hungarian exchange visit, three SFRS staff returned to the town of Pilisvörösvár in May 2008 to participate in the local volunteer fire department's Centenary Jubilee celebrations during which the earlier donated SFRS Rescue Tender was consecrated and commissioned into service. This event was also attended by Her Majesty's Ambassador to Hungary – Greg Dorey CVO who formally congratulated Pilisvörösvár Volunteer Fire Department on their Jubilee on behalf of the Fire Authority. A copy of the Ambassador's speech is attached at Appendix 2.

The Service has sought to disseminate the benefits arising from the programme and has delivered presentations at several national conferences during 2007/08 and mentored other fire and rescue services and police forces in the preparation of their applications.

5 2008/09 Exchange Programme

Having considered the benefits arising from the 2006-08 programmes a further third submission for funding was made in February 2008. Despite stiff competition, the submission was successful with the new programme devised to facilitate a total of 38 placements to Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Spain and Finland.

The programme will once more seek to explore a wide range of subject areas and hopefully appeal to all areas of the Service. A summary of the subject areas and countries to be visited is set out in Table 1 below.

Country	Organisation	Subject Area	Placements
Denmark	Falck	Integrated Risk Management	4
		Positive Pressure Ventilation	6
Germany	Regensburg Fire Service	Heritage Protection	8
Hungary	Pilisvörösvár Volunteer Fire Department	Fire-fighting	6
Spain	Jaén and Córdoba Fire Services	Staff Development	6
Finland	Helsinki University	Regional Control Rooms	8

Table 1 – Exchange Programme Summary

The following key points should be noted in respect of the 2008/09 programme:

- Building upon the success of the previous Member visit to Falck, provision has been made within the 2008/09 programme for a further three Members to visit Denmark to explore alternative approaches to integrated risk management planning.
- The Hungary exchange visit will include the transportation and donation of a conventional fire engine, kindly donated by the Service's current vehicle leasing provider.
- The Spanish exchange visit is being undertaken in partnership with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, who were the only other UK fire and rescue service to secure funding.
- The visit to Finland will be undertaken in collaboration with regional partner fire and rescue services involved in the implementation of the Regional Control Centre.

- SFRS will (*subject to confirmation*) act as a reciprocal host to visiting fire officers from Falck, Jaén and Córdoba Fire Services during 2008/09.
- The programme's contents, in respect of self-development, will be more demanding during 2008/09. All participants will be required, through supported self-study, to learn the language basics relevant to their chosen destination. Participants will also be required to attend a mandatory one-day exchange preparation event (to be held in August).
- All placements will be for a period one week and are expected to take place during September to December 2008.

6 Financial Implications

The 2007/08 programme was awarded a grant of approximately €51,000 which was prudently managed and as such generated an under-spend that was returned to ECOTEC (as stipulated within LLP contract).

The submission for 2008/09 sought to secure approximately €68,000 but as a result of fluctuations in the value of sterling against the euro, coupled with a record number of submissions for LLP funding from within the UK, the grant has been capped to approximately €48,000. This is less than ideal, but manageable subject to participants recognising that a lower standard of accommodation (compared to previous years) and the use of budget airlines will be necessary to avoid any overspends.

7 Legal Comment

The new LLP was initiated as a result of Decision 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament on 15 November 2006 (OJ L 327, p.45).

Within section 5 of this report reference is made to the donation of a fire engine from the Service's current vehicle leasing provider. The vehicle concerned is currently in operation with SFRS but is under the ownership of the leasing company. Upon expiry of the lease (circa September 2008) the leasing company have agreed that the asset will be donated to Pílisvörösvár Volunteer Fire Department.

The Local Government (Overseas Assistance) Act 1993 enables Fire Authorities to provide advice and assistance to bodies outside the United Kingdom, and the donation of such assets would fall under this legislation. However, it should be noted that the Fire Authority's interests, in this instance, are not affected as the asset is owned by the leasing company and not the Fire Authority.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

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

9 Appendices

Appendix 1

ECOTEC Programme Evaluation Findings

Appendix 2

Speech - HM Ambassador to Hungary

10 Background Information

Further details regarding the Leonardo programme may be obtained at the following website:

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

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	*



Initial Equality Impact Assessment Form

EQIA Number:

Directorate	Performance	Department/ Section	
Name of officer	Steve Worrall	Job title	ACFO
Name of Policy/Service to be assessed	Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP)	Date of assessment	28 May 2008
New or existing policy	E		

1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy/service	The facilitation of staff/Member personal development exchanges to fire and rescue services operating in other European countries.
2. Are there any associated objectives of the policy/service?	<p>Yes – in addition to those set out in the main body of the report, the programme seeks to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the transnational mobility of staff responsible for vocational training and/or human resources. • Reinforce the contribution made by education and training to achieving the Lisbon goal. • Implement the priorities of the Copenhagen process. • Develop synergies between areas of education and vocational training on the one hand and culture on the other. • Align to the European Quality Charter for Mobility. • Include a clear plan for dissemination. • Support improvements in quality and innovation in vocational education and training systems, institutions and practices. • Support the Service's corporate objectives for staff training and development.
3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy/service and in what way?	Primarily, staff and Members participating in the Exchange Programme.
4. What outcomes are wanted from this policy/service?	The exchange project will expose participants to an environment and culture that is dissimilar to that experienced within the UK. Each of the trans-national partners has been specially selected as they operate in divergent settings, adopting a myriad of approaches to training, education, training planning and career guidance

	<p>to that experienced in the UK.</p> <p>Participants will undertake an analysis of the approach within their respective host's organisation, drawing learning points, comparisons and conclusions to their own area of expertise within SFRS.</p> <p>Participation in the exchange project will form an integral element of each participant's personal development programme, enabling them to constructively challenge conventional approaches to training, education, training planning and career guidance. It is envisaged and intended that the experience will aid each participant's personal development in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Interpersonal skills • Cultural awareness • Team work • Leadership • Presentation techniques • Research and analysis techniques • Report writing • Self-awareness • Project Planning 		
5. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy/service?	<p>European Commission ECOTEC Fire Authority SFRS Staff</p>		
6. Who implements the policy/service and who is responsible for this?	<p>ECOTEC administers the LLP on behalf of the EC.</p> <p>The programme is managed internally by the Service's Programme Office.</p>		
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	Y	N	<p>The programme is an internal initiative open to all staff and Members.</p>
9. Disability	Y	N	
10. Gender	Y	N	
11. Race	Y	N	<p>Exposure by staff and Members to cultures dissimilar to that experienced in the UK should lead to a greater understanding of other nationalities resident in Shropshire.</p>
12. Religion or belief	Y	N	
13. Sexual orientation	Y	N	
14. Dependant/caring responsibilities	Y	N	
15. Could the differential impact identified in 7-14 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy/service?	Y	N	<p>The exposure to other cultures could lead to a <u>positive</u> differential impact upon the Service's interaction with other nationalities resident in Shropshire.</p>

16. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or another reason?	Y	N	As discussed above.
17. Have you consulted those who are likely to be affected by the policy/service?	Y	N	All staff will be consulted on the programme and application arrangements. This activity will take place during June/July 2008.
18. Should the policy proceed to a full impact assessment.	Y	N	Not necessary.
19. Date by which full impact assessment to be completed	N/A		
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	28 May 2008
Line Manager	Alan Taylor, CFO	Date	29 May 2008
Please note that this impact assessment will be scrutinised by the Equality and Diversity Officer.			



24 APR 2008

Steve Worrell
Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service
St Michael's Street
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY1 2HJ

22nd April 2008

Dear Steve

Re: Leonardo da Vinci Programme, Final Report – 2007 Call
Project No: UK/07/LLP-LdV/VETPRO/163032
Project Name: Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service European Staff Exchange Project 2007

Thank you for returning your completed Final Report. Please find enclosed with this letter the overall comments on your Final Report prepared by the UK National Agency.

Your Final report was approved on 20/04/08.

I am pleased to inform you that the Leonardo National Agency has authorised the final payment for the above project on 22/04/08.

Payment Amount (EURO): 2479.12

If you have any queries regarding this repayment request please contact me on 0121 616 3789 or at Lorna.Couper@ecotec.com.

Yours sincerely,

Lorna Couper
Assistant Project Manager
Leonardo UK National Agency

Enc. Qualitative Report Feedback

NB: November 2007 Call [1.43] Euro/£ was the rate used to calculate the EURO equivalent of your project expenditure as per your contract.

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Leonardo Final Report Feedback Form: 2007 Call

Organisation Name: Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service
Project Number: UK/07/LLP-LdV/VETPRO/163032
Project Name: **Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service European Staff Exchange Project 2007**
Project Manager: Lorna Couper
Additional Materials Submitted: Staff Presentation Promoting Project
Internal Poster Advertising Exchange Project
Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Logo
Date Feedback Sent to Project: 22nd April 2008

CONCLUSIONS

1. Overall message to project:

This has clearly been another successful mobility project, which has had a beneficial impact on the lives of the participants and has also had a wider impact on the fire and rescue sector.

It would appear that participants have greatly benefited both personally and professionally from the work placement. On a professional level they have improved their research and presentation skills and on a personal level they learnt about living and working in a different culture and developed their foreign language skills.

It is encouraging to see that the exchange has led to the implementation of important procedures not commonly used in the UK, such as the Positive Pressure Ventilation (PPV) system for tactical fire-fighting and community projects such as the 'Community Safety Village'.

The reciprocity of innovative ideas within this project is also another positive aspect. The UK has adopted ideas from their partners but has also exported some of their own areas of expertise, as well as donating a fully equipped rescue tender to the Hungarian Fire Fighters Association. This shows that the partnership is exploited to maximum effect.

It is pleasing to see that equal opportunities issues continued to play an important role in the selection and recruitment procedures and there was a cross-departmental focus on this project.

2. Strengths and opportunities

The strengths of the project are in the skills that the participants developed during the week-long work placement. It would appear that they developed better team working and leadership skills, research and presentation techniques and effective report writing as well as a greater linguistic and cultural awareness.

Partners have been able to learn from each others good practices and reciprocal organisation changes have been implemented as a result of the work placements, such as the implementation of the Positive Pressure Ventilation (PPV) system in the UK.

There was a good collaborative effort between participants, host organisations and SF&RS. Participants agreed their own objectives and liaised with the host organisation about what they could offer and which department they would be best placed in.

3. Lessons learnt / problems overcome

No lessons to be learnt or problems to be overcome.

**Speech, delivered in Hungarian, by HM Ambassador to Hungary – Greg Dorey
CVO (24 May 2008).**

It's a real pleasure to be for the first time in your lovely and historic town, in the beautiful Pilis hills. For a Budapest dweller, it's good to get out into the countryside occasionally. And I am particularly pleased that this is on the occasion of the Centenary Celebrations of Pilisvörösvár Volunteer Fire Department. When I was growing up as a small child in a village in England, I always wanted to be a volunteer firefighter too. In the words of Attila Jozsef - "You can be a firefighter or a soldier, a shepherd in amongst the wild beasts." I'm sure lots of Hungarian children had similar dreams. Sadly this changed and I became a diplomat instead. But that change of career path means that I can instead be privileged to be here at the blessing and commissioning of the UK Fire and Rescue Tender presented by the Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service to Pilisvörösvár some months ago and I'm delighted to be able to present you with another big surprise. What I have in my hand is a letter from the Chair of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority and the Chief Fire Officer which with the help of the interpreter I'll share with you.

[At this point in the ceremony the Ambassador reads aloud the annexed letter in English, which was translated by a local interpreter.]

It's good to know that many links have grown up between the UK and Hungary since I was last serving here between 1989 and 1992. Some of them are encouraged by the Embassy. But I can't help feeling that many of the strongest and most enduring connections are nothing to do with governments, but are instead based on the ties between individuals and organisations. Our two countries are geographically a long way apart. Perhaps that helps to make our friendship all the better. In English we say "distance lends enchantment." When I come across relationships like this one between Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service and Pilisvörösvár, it gives me great hope for the future.



Thank you for inviting me to attend this very special occasion. May I end by thanking all those on the Hungarian and British sides for making this possible. And in this context I'd particularly like to congratulate Steve Worrall on this outcome of all his hard work. Remember, this isn't just about equipment – it's about friendship.

Pictured: Her Majesty's Ambassador delivering his speech

Letter from Chair and Chief Fire Officer

Gromon István s. k.
Polgármester
Pilisvörösvár
Hungary

20 May 2008

Steve Worrall

steve.worrall@shropshirefire.gov.uk

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ms/acfo/let ACFO/let18jt

Dear Mayor Gromon

Pilisvörösvár Fire Station Centenary Jubilee

On behalf of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority it gives us immense pleasure and honour to extend our sincere congratulations and good wishes to the community of Pilisvörösvár as you celebrate your Fire Station's Centenary Jubilee.

We are particularly pleased at this time to be able announce that, with the continued support of the European Commission and our colleagues within the Hungarian Firefighters Association, we propose to provide you with a replacement Fire Engine. As with the previously donated vehicle, a crew of Shropshire firefighters will travel to Hungary later this year to offer training in the use of the Fire Engine and equipment provided.

We hope that the Fire Engine will serve the community of Pilisvörösvár well for many years to come and make an excellent addition to the Mercedes Rescue Tender.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Stuart West
Chair of the Fire Authority

Alan Taylor
Chief Fire Officer