

## Falck - Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Staff Exchange Programme 2006

### Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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

#### 1 Purpose of Report

This report, together with the appended Executive Summary Report, provides a précis of the Falck - Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Staff Exchange Programme 2006.

#### 2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to:

- a) Note the contents of this report; and
- b) Authorise officers, in discussion with the Chair and Vice-Chair, to review and evaluate further opportunities for staff development through the Leonardo Da Vinci programme for 2007.

#### 3 Background

The European Commission (EC) has created<sup>1</sup> the Leonardo Da Vinci Programme<sup>2</sup> that provides funds for the exchange of European citizens between member states, for personal development.

In February 2006 the Danish private provider of fire and rescue services, Falck, in collaboration with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SF&RS), submitted a joint application to facilitate the exchange of members of staff from each organisation during 2006. The principal aim of the application was to establish a unique international partnership that facilitates the transfer of

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

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



staff for one-week secondments to undertake research into various subject areas, focused upon improvements in non-formal and informal learning.

During the summer and autumn of 2006 a total of 12 members of Falck visited SF&RS, undertaking one-week secondments. During the same period 16 members of SF&RS visited Denmark to undertake international research projects at Falck.

An Executive Summary Report, documenting key issues from the exchange programme, is attached.

#### **4 Further Opportunities**

The EC operates four lifelong learning programmes, of which Leonardo is one (Leonardo is the programme most suited to the needs of SF&RS). The lifelong learning programme has been refreshed for the period 2007 to 2013 and has an overall budget of 6.97 billion euros, of which not less than 25% is allocated to Leonardo. Organisations, who secure funding, are entitled to up to 75% of the respective placement costs from the EC; with the organisation contributing the remaining 25% (see appended report for further details of how this funding formula works in practice). During 2007 to 2013 the EC plans to facilitate 80,000 placements through Leonardo. **Applications for funding for 2007 must be submitted by no later than 30 March.**

As an existing, but moreover successful, user of the Leonardo programme, SF&RS is well placed to secure future funding, if deemed appropriate.

A number of potential opportunities exist to utilise the Leonardo programme for staff development during 2007. Clearly, a strong partnership already exists with Falck that could be used for staff and, if considered beneficial, Member development. A possible opportunity, in conjunction with Falck, would be a combined humanitarian project whereby both organisations donate and deliver to a European state in greatest need, redundant fire appliances. A potential recipient state – Bosnia and Herzegovina has expressed an interest to act as beneficiary, and it is envisaged that the EC, through the Leonardo programme, would finance this project, if it were considered a viable humanitarian act by the Fire Authority.

The opportunity to enter into a humanitarian project is, in part, dependent on the Fire Authority's approval to dispose of an existing, albeit at the time of release redundant, fire appliance. The act of donating redundant appliances to overseas fire and rescue services as a charitable act is not uncommon, but must be considered in accordance with the requirements set out in the Local Government Act 1999 and subsequent regulations and guidance. Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires best value authorities (including the fire authorities) to have regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Notwithstanding the above, further opportunities do, of course, exist to form staff exchange partnerships with other European public safety agencies.



Any tentative initiatives considered would be the subject of a detailed evaluation to determine that the potential benefits to be gained by both staff participating and organisation alike, were balanced against the capacity of the Service to manage the programme effectively without detriment to other service priorities.

## **5 Financial Implications**

Financial implications arising from the 2006 staff exchange programme are discussed in the attached appendix. Any consequential financial implications arising from further exchange programmes operated through the EC's Leonardo programme will be the subject of a separate report.

Although there are no financial implications arising directly from this report, there will be an opportunity cost, if the Fire Authority were not to sell the redundant appliance. There may also be some indirect financial consequences, depending on the detailed arrangements for delivering the appliance, which would need to be considered prior to any final arrangements being decided. It is anticipated, however, that those costs would be fully met by the EC's Leonardo programme.

## **6 Legal Comment**

Section 3 of 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.

If, therefore, 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 subsequent regulations and guidance.

## **7 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.

## **8 Appendix**

Executive Summary Report: Falck – Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Staff Exchange Programme 2006



## 9 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

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 and Rescue Service*  
Putting Shropshire's Safety First



**Appendix** to report on  
Falck – Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service  
Staff Exchange Programme  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority  
14 February 2007

# Executive Summary Report

## **Falck – Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Staff Exchange Programme 2006**



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

*Facilitated through the European Commission's  
Leonardo da Vinci lifelong learning programme*

February 2007





Name	Title	Version	Reference
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**Quality Assurance**

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Name	Title	Date of Approval	Version Assured
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## 1. Introduction

In 2006 the Danish provider of fire and rescue services – Falck, and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SF&RS), embarked upon a truly unique and innovative project that has enabled a total of 28 members of staff to undertake exchanges between each organisation. The exchanges have been facilitated through the European Commission's lifelong learning *Leonardo da Vinci* programme. The programme has enabled staff to undertake comparative analysis research based studies in an overseas environment dissimilar to their usual workplace.

The experience has been an unmitigated success, providing staff with unparalleled self-development opportunities not usually accessible through conventional academic routes. Its success has been described by the British Council as '*Good Practice.*'

What has made this initiative exceptional is the fundamental difference between Falck and SF&RS. For whilst both organisations provide fire and rescue services to their respective communities Falck is unique in that it is Europe's largest private provider of public safety services, where as SF&RS is a public sector local authority. Never before has an exchange, on such a scale, taken place between private and public sector providers engaged in public safety.

This report has been prepared primarily for Members of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, and has also been shared with key stakeholder organisations (Falck, British Council and ECOTEC). The document provides an executive summary of the exchange programme, detailing key findings and preliminary benefits identified from those involved, together with recommendations for post programme closure.

Steve Worrall, *Assistant Chief Fire Officer*  
Exchange Programme Manager

8<sup>th</sup> February 2007





## 2. Acknowledgements

The success of the Falck-SF&RS staff exchange programme is, in part, undoubtedly attributable to the enthusiasm, professionalism and dedication of all of the participants involved. However, the programme could not have functioned as effectively as it did without the continuous support, advice and guidance from the following individuals and organisations:

- **Henrik Hansen**, Chief Fire Officer, Falck
- **Frank Rasmussen**, Fire Captain, Falck
- **Laura Laver**, Programme Officer, Leonardo UK National Agency
- **Danish Tourist Board**, London
- **Alan Taylor**, Chief Fire Officer, SF&RS
- **Alison Pritchard**, Programme Support Officer, SF&RS
- **Louise Goodhead**, Programme Support Officer, SF&RS
- **Joanne Coadey**, Principal Accountant, SF&RS

## 3. Abbreviations

The following abbreviations appear within this report.

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Description</b>
BC	British Council
EC	European Commission
Leonardo Programme	Leonardo da Vinci lifelong learning programme
Falck-SF&RS staff exchange programme	Falck-SF&RS staff exchange programme
RTC	Road Traffic Collision
SF&RS	Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service
UK	United Kingdom
VET	Vocational Education and Training



## 4. The Leonardo da Vinci Programme

The Leonardo da Vinci programme is part of the European Commission's (EC) new Lifelong Learning Programme 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 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 offers several avenues to access VET.

The programme assists the implementation of an EC vocational training policy supporting Article 150 of the Treaty establishing the European Community. The programme strongly reflects the Lisbon Agenda (2000) and the goals of the Copenhagen Declaration (2002).

EC Leonardo da Vinci Objectives:

- **Objective 1:** To improve the skills and competences of people, especially young people, in initial vocational training at all levels, to facilitate their integration and reintegration into the labour market;
- **Objective 2:** To improve the quality of, and access to, continuing vocational training and the lifelong acquisition of skills and competences;
- **Objective 3:** To promote and reinforce the contribution of vocational training to the process of innovation, improve competitiveness and entrepreneurship, and meet new employment possibilities.

Within the United Kingdom (UK) the programme has previously been administered through the offices of the British Council (BC). The BC is the UK's international organisation for educational and cultural relations. During 2007 administrative responsibilities for the Leonardo programme will be transferred to the research and consulting company – ECOTEC.



## 5. Falck

Falck is a Danish based organisation that provides assistance, rescue, healthcare and training to the public sector, private members, business subscribers, insurance companies, pension companies and international clients. The company ambition over the next few years is to develop Falck into a pan-European organisation, and to achieve global status in certain sectors.

Since 1906 Falck has become a cornerstone institution in Denmark, to which the Danes entrust vital tasks. Almost nine out of ten ambulances in Denmark carry the Falck logo, and Falck carries out fire fighting services for the majority of Danish local councils. Falck carries out these services on the basis of contracts with public authorities, private subscribers, insurance companies and business clients. The same infrastructure of vehicles, stations, emergency operations centres, health clinics and the suchlike are used for both private and public clients. This strong integration of the public and private rescue service has provided major qualitative and financial benefits for Danish society.

All of Falck's activities are closely linked to the mission that the company's founder formulated in 1906 – to prevent accidents, emergencies and illness as well as rescuing people in distress and helping those who are ill and relieving the after-effects of sickness and distress. A century later Falck still has the same mission and as such have the vision of being Europe's leading rescue and assistance organisation, with major tasks for the public and private sector and adapted to rules and conditions of individual countries.

Falck provides fire fighting in 60% of the Danish municipalities. In a few municipalities, fire fighting is shared with other fire and rescue services. The remaining municipalities are either covered by municipal or voluntary fire and rescue services.

The Falck fire fighting service is handled partly by fulltime and partly by part time retained fire fighters. In most of the country, the services are provided by retained fire fighters.

Like the municipal and voluntary fire and rescue services, Falck's Danish fire services are subject to public inspection. This takes place through the registration and reporting of data from each fire.



## 6. A unique Exchange Programme

An association has existed between Falck and SF&RS since 2001, when Falck hosted a visiting SF&RS officer undertaking a research visit. Since 2001, and as a consequence of further research visits, a mutual proposal was agreed between officers from the two organisations to formalise a partnership and commence a staff exchange programme during 2006.

Cognisant of the opportunities to be afforded through the EC's Leonardo da Vinci programme each organisation submitted applications to their respective national educational and training agencies for consideration in early 2006. Both submissions were successful, with the Leonardo programme providing part-funding to facilitate the exchange of twelve members of staff from each organisation. Following confirmation of the submissions a Falck-SF&RS project team was established to manage the administration of the programme. As an indication of the corporate commitment to the programme a formal partnership agreement was prepared and agreed between the respective chief fire officers.

### 6.1 Overview of the Exchange Programme

During the spring of 2006 a series of presentations were hosted within SF&RS to raise awareness of the programme and promote participation of individuals from across the organisation to engage in what represented a truly unique experience. During the same period Falck selected staff from the five regions that make up Denmark. In Shropshire interest exceeded expectations, resulting in a total of sixteen members of staff eventually securing placements with Falck. An encouraging aspect of the programme is that staff participating from SF&RS are representative of the organisation as a whole, and not exclusive to any particular department or section of the Service. Table 1 below indicates the make up, by department, of SF&RS staff participating within the programme. Of those participating, 7 were female and 9 were male.

**Table 1 – Participant Profile**

<b>Department:</b>	<b>Participants:</b>
Fire Control	1
Headquarters (officers)	3
Human Resources Department	2
Information Technology Department	1
Programme Office	3
Retained Stations	1
Training Department	1
Wholetime Stations	4

Selection for participation was via an application form that required individuals to specify in detail their area(s) of proposed research, learning objectives and likely benefits to emerge through their participation. This process proved a useful



exercise as the completed application forms also enabled Falck to identify suitable hosts and venues to meet the research needs of SF&RS staff.

Prior to visiting Falck staff from SF&RS were required to attend a series of pedagogical training sessions. The sessions provided staff with an overview of Falck, Danish culture, research techniques, report writing, presentation skills and linguistic essentials. The sessions ran throughout the programme and proved a useful arena in which staff who had completed their visits could share experiences and lessons learned with colleagues.

The coordination of SF&RS placements was managed through the Service's Programme Office. The Programme Office coordinated all outgoing arrangements from the UK (travel and accommodation etc) for SF&RS staff and also facilitated the programme itinerary for all visiting Falck staff. SF&RS staff, travelling in pairs, visited Falck for a period of eight days (Saturday to Saturday). On average, two members of SF&RS visited Falck each month during the period June to December 2006. During this same period, again travelling in pairs, a total of twelve members of Falck's staff visited SF&RS.

SF&RS staff were predominately accommodated in the Copenhagen area of Denmark, with visits taking place to numerous Falck locations throughout the region of Sealand (Eastern Denmark). Falck staff were accommodated in the county town of Shrewsbury and transported to various fire stations and departments throughout Shropshire. In addition, a number of Falck staff also undertook visits to Shropshire Ambulance Service during their stay with SF&RS.

## **6.2 Areas of Research**

Whilst operating within a public safety environment, the breadth of subject areas researched by SF&RS staff was only limited by their imagination. Although carefully evaluated for suitability prior to participation in the programme, the areas of research included:

- Fire Investigation, Information Gathering and Use
- Resilience and Inter-agency planning
- Corporate Image and Branding
- Management of Equality and Diversity
- Dealing with and Reducing Malicious and Hoax Calls
- Recruitment and Retention of Retained/Volunteer Fire-fighters
- Road Traffic Collision Equipment, Techniques and Prevention
- Management of Performance Data
- Staff Induction Processes
- Water Safety Training
- Employee Health Monitoring
- Health and Safety at Work
- Water Strategy for Fire-fighting



The scope of the research undertaken focused upon a comparative analysis of the above areas, within Falck and SF&RS. The comparative analysis undertaken sought to explore variations of approach adopted within the public and private sector organisations. Within this analysis, participants also undertook to explore the impact of informal and non-formal learning relevant to their respective areas of interest.

Falck participants were provided with access to all of SF&RS's areas of activity. The prepared itineraries were designed to provide an overview of SF&RS and maximise exposure of resident SF&RS staff to the Falck visitors. This proved an extremely useful exercise, with Falck staff acting as *critical friends* in their constructive challenges of UK convention, to what many would perceive as a generic and traditional approach to emergency service operations.

The programme in both Denmark and Shropshire afforded participants, where appropriate, the opportunity to attend emergency incidents and engage with the respective communities encountered, thus furthering their cultural experiences gained.

### **6.3 Sharing of Information**

The sharing of information acquired from the experience was dynamic and ongoing throughout the programme. At the conclusion of all placements visiting staff were required to deliver an informative PowerPoint presentation (prepared during their visit) to their respective hosts. Following return to Shropshire, and upon completion of their research studies, SF&RS staff have been required to deliver a presentation of their findings to the Service's senior management board (Policy Group) supported with a detailed report. Arrangements are underway to create a web-page linked to the Service's website ([www.shropshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk)) to publish the presentations and reports produced by staff.

An executive summary presentation of the exchange programme and its benefits has also been delivered to the British Council, Falck and Telford & Wrekin Borough Council.

## **7. Learning Experiences**

### **7.1 What can SF&RS learn from Falck?**

Staff participating within the programme have identified a range of areas and issues through their experiences with Falck that they believe SF&RS could potentially benefit from. It must however be noted that participants within the programme fully recognise that the issues identified are not necessarily transferable to the UK or moreover a public sector environment. The environmental drivers influencing each organisations' strategy and ambitions



clearly differ, with Falck ultimately seeking to secure a return for its investors and SF&RS acting as a *not for profit* public body.

Whilst the majority of Danes possess the ability to converse fluently in the English language, which greatly aided research, SF&RS participants soon recognised that Danish culture plays a enormous influence on the manner in which Falck operates and interacts with its communities. Undoubtedly this viewpoint has probably been mirrored by Falck staff visiting Shropshire, who perhaps, have been equally bemused by local customs and traditions that we, in the UK, take for granted within our own culture. Consequently, whilst the areas observed may have stood out as being unique, innovative or simply different, it should not be construed that they represent a criticism of SF&RS's (*or Falck's*) current practices. What works in Denmark, may not, as a result of national culture and norms, work equally as well in the UK (*and vice-versa*).

Full details concerning the identified areas and issues witnessed at Falck are documented within each participant's exchange reports that will be made available via the Service's website.

In summary, staff identified that Falck had:

- a distinctive, strong, consistent and widely recognisable corporate brand image;
- employees had immense pride in the organisation and it's brand image;
- made effective use of its corporate image/character (Sophus Falck) to promote engagement with child education;
- utilised varied special appliances as part of standard attendances (e.g. water bowsers on all first attendances);
- trained specialist teams to train and deliver specific skills;
- made effective use of innovative equipment not in use in the UK (e.g. roof water spray spikes);
- made effective use of positive pressure fans for smoke control within domestic properties, an initiative supported and funded by the insurance industry;
- adopted a single unified incident command structure that was applicable across all emergency services;
- had secured improved integration with military assets for civil protection;
- made greater use of the intranet for internal communications;
- fostered and secured staff loyalty and trust;
- provided staff benefits;
- created a relaxed, informal organisational culture;
- made use of more ergonomic office furniture;
- established closer liaison with youth groups, focusing not only on educational issues but also on promoting Falck as a future career, especially for girls;
- explored alternative shift systems and watch structures;
- implemented individual performance indicators;
- effected better management and storage of data/information;



- utilised photo-boards ('who's who?') on stations to aid induction;
- established an organisational culture free from bureaucracy;
- provided continuation training of staff through commercial means; and
- achieved greater integration and collaborative working with other emergency services.

## 7.2 What can Falck learn from SF&RS?

As discussed above, national culture has a huge influence on the way both organisations and individuals alike behave. SF&RS participants visiting Falck noted several areas where it was considered that UK practices may be worthy of further consideration by Falck. A summary of the key issues are:

- fire investigation policies and practices;
- operational pre-planning;
- contingency planning;
- risk assessment of premises;
- sharing of risk information;
- community fire safety initiatives for all, not just subscribers;
- community fire safety initiatives with schools;
- the introduction of equality and diversity training and policies, including monitoring of employees;
- improvements in the monitoring of hoax calls to focus reduction strategies;
- statistical information on staff recruitment and retention;
- modern RTC equipment and rescue techniques;
- RTC training;
- production of corporate performance related reports;
- improvements in staff induction processes;
- policy writing;
- breathing apparatus entry control procedures;
- support and continuation training arrangements for retained staff;
- adopting a more proactive approach to the prevention of fires and RTCs;
- Staff health monitoring; and
- confidential psychological support independent of line management.

Falck have been surveyed to assess what key lessons they believe have arisen from the programme. Whilst Falck will be evaluating the aforesaid summary issues and feedback provided through the participant presentations and reports (from both Falck and SF&RS staff), they have stated that a key lesson has been:

*“Preparing our organisation to be international, together with the importance of having our people upgraded in different languages and knowledge to emergency services operations in foreign countries.”*





## 8. Exchange Programme Benefits

### 8.1 SF&RS benefits arising through Exchange Programme

Whilst a number of readily visible benefits have emerged both during and immediately post the programme the full benefits will only be quantifiable following completion of medium and long-term reviews. Such reviews should assess the positive changes arising in each participating individual, and the organisation alike, that may be attributable to the programme.

Individual benefits, within SF&RS can be determined through the organisation's formalised Individual Personal Development Review process, an appraisal process that it is conducted on an annual basis. Organisational benefits may be assessed through a review of the valued added benefits realised through adoption of one or more of the issues identified within section 7.1 above. Notwithstanding the latter, participants from SF&RS have been surveyed regarding a range of aspects concerning the programme. Regarding what aspect of the exchange programme has changed or influenced them most in respect of their individual personal development the following sample responses were provided.

- An understanding of trust being retained within the culture. I'm trying to trust people more.
- The differences observed in cultures have changed my outlook on living.
- The experience enabled me to make fair and non-biased comparisons between the two agencies, and gave me the confidence to communicate my findings.
- The experience has increased my confidence.
- The programme allowed me to focus on my objectives and set a realistic timescale for achieving these.
- The experience has provided me with a better appreciation of how different the equalities legislation is to that practised in the UK, even though we are all part of the EU. It is hugely different and has an impact on what each organisation has to do and how it operates with regard to equalities and diversity.
- In my role, it has enabled me to have a better cultural appreciation of a different country.
- I gained new skills in the use of PowerPoint and IT hardware.
- Improved my personal confidence in the delivery of presentations.
- The experience has encouraged me to interact more with other members of SF&RS.
- The exchange programme has enabled me to experience a different culture and language and make new friends.
- Just experiencing a different culture has taught me that I should keep an open mind and always challenge the tried and tested methods.
- Self confidence, meeting people, making new friends.
- The experience has had a good effect upon my personal development.



- Networking skills and personal confidence building.
- Realisation that my training and knowledge gained in SF&RS would stand up well in another culture/country/environment.
- We never stop learning.
- The development of my research and report writing skills.
- It's been a life-changing experience.
- I've made new friends for life!

Staff were also asked how they rated the exchange experience in supporting the delivery of their personal research objectives. 50 percent of staff surveyed stated that the experience had *'fully'* met their needs, with the remaining 50 percent stating that their needs had *'largely'* been met.

When they were asked how they rated the exchange programme overall, 70 percent stated that the programme was *'excellent,'* with 30 percent of staff rating the programme as *'good.'*

A tangible benefit to the organisation has been the opportunity for participants to deliver their findings via PowerPoint presentations to the Service's senior management board (Policy Group). The prospect of this experience had initially daunted some members of staff. The experience however proved to be mutually beneficial, allowing management to acknowledge the hard efforts of those who had participated in the programme and moreover, quelling the apprehensions and fears of staff who ultimately found the experience to be positive and rewarding.

All participants within the programme were awarded a certificate recording their involvement.

## **8.2 Benefits to SF&RS from visiting Falck staff**

An unexpected benefit arising from the programme was the impact that Falck staff created upon hosting SF&RS staff. An objective within the itineraries prepared for Falck staff was to maximise exposure of visiting officers to as many departments/stations as feasibly possible. The objective was principally intended for the benefit of Falck staff, but it soon emerged that the visitors were having a very positive effect upon the respective hosting departments/stations. This arose through a number of factors. Most notably was the friendliness and professionalism of Falck staff, attributes that eased and simplified integration. But an unforeseen benefit arose from their inquisitive nature and ability to constructively challenge convention. This has provided SF&RS staff with a greater appreciation and understanding of how traditional public services, such as fire and rescue, can be effectively facilitated through a private sector provider, a concept that is alien within UK culture.



An observation made during the programme was the increased interest by SF&RS staff to participate in future exchange programmes. Indicative figures suggest that at least 50-70 staff would apply to undertake research at Falck if the opportunity were to be repeated.

### **8.3 Benefits to Falck staff who visited Shropshire**

Falck have been surveyed to assess the benefits attained by their staff participating within the programme. The following summary feedback has been recorded:

*“Our staff have benefited from working in a different environment, socially and professionally. They have learnt a lot, and they have brought back new ways of thinking, and different ways to solve problems. They have opened their minds to the international society, and they have got new friends.”*

### **8.4 The benefits to Falck, as an organisation, from its involvement in the Exchange Programme**

Falck have stated that:

*“The staff involved in the exchange programme, came back highly motivated, with a lot of inspiration. They are now implementing some of the lessons learned at the local stations, and in our training programmes.”*

### **8.5 The benefits to Falck from hosting SF&RS staff**

When surveyed on the benefits to Falck from hosting SF&RS staff, Falck have stated that SF&RS staff were:

*“Highly competent guests, asking a lot of interesting questions. The exchange programme makes the world smaller, and it's interesting to recognise the similarities in our organisation.”*



## 9. Financial Matters

The exchange programme has operated within the financial parameters set by the BC. The BC, acting on behalf of the EC, allocates funding to support placements within the following key areas:

- Management and monitoring
- Mobility (travel, insurance and subsistence)
- Other (pedagogical, cultural and linguistic preparation)

The BC funds 75 percent of costs, with SF&RS meeting the remaining 25 percent, of certain key areas. The contribution of SF&RS may be as a direct financial contribution, or alternatively made up of staff time and overheads to coordinate the programme, or a combination of both.

Table 2 below provides a summary balance sheet in respect of the SF&RS exchange programme

**Table 2 – Summary Programme Expenditure**

	Income	Actual Expenditure	Underspend	SF&RS 25%
	€	€	€	€
<b>Management and Monitoring</b>	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00	1,435.00
<b>Preparatory Visit</b>	500.00	500.00	0.00	594.00
<b>Travel</b>	5,760.00	2,892.71	2,867.29	
<b>Insurance</b>	1,320.00	193.90	1,126.10	
<b>Subsistence</b>	12,600.00	12,600.00	0.00	
<b>Preparation</b>	2,400.00	2,400.00	0.00	2,919.00
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>23,780.00</b>	<b>19,786.61</b>	<b>3,993.39</b>	<b>4,948.00</b>

It must be noted that the above summary balance sheet is provisional and subject to formal audit by the BC and ECOTEC.



## 10. Programme Assessment

### 10.1 Interim Assessment of Exchange Programme

This report is a prerequisite to ECOTEC's formal review of the programme. However, in aiding the preparation of this report the BC have gratefully provided the following interim comments:

*"We usually do an evaluation of a project once the final report has been submitted, but it's worth highlighting that 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. The Leonardo project has been extremely well managed by Steve Worrall from the Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service and we have received continual feedback on the progress of the exchange visits. The evaluation and dissemination process is a very important part of the programme and although the project is not yet complete SF&RS have started to address these important elements of the project cycle with huge enthusiasm. This project has been an example of good practice within the Leonardo Programme."*

**Laura Laver**  
Programme Officer  
Leonardo UK National Agency

### 10.2 Internal Assessment

Whilst the full benefits to be realised from the programme will not be known for some time, the following observations can be made.

From a *project management* perspective the programme can be judged by the three standard project metrics – time, cost and quality.

- **Time.** The programme was managed and delivered within the agreed time timetable, with all exchanges taking place during 2006 and no slippage incurred.
- **Cost.** The programme was allocated a contract budget by the BC of 23,780 euros (of which SF&RS contribute 25 percent). The programme successfully delivered its objectives, staying within budget.
- **Quality.** The exchange has enabled SF&RS to expose a total of 16 members of staff to a truly unique experience, affording the opportunity for self-development on a scale unachievable through conventional means. The quality criteria set out within the original submission has



been exceeded, with the BC describing the programme as '*Good Practice.*'

The project qualifies as a complete success. Its success is largely down to the enthusiasm of those participating, and the enormous support provided by those administering the programme from the BC, Falck and SF&RS.

## **11. Lessons learned from managing the Exchange Programme**

Whilst the programme has undoubtedly been a success, for the reasons set out within this report, those engaged in the management of the programme have been ever mindful of the lessons learned. The following key lessons identify areas where corrective action would be required if further Leonardo programmes were to be embarked upon.

The key lessons learned for SF&RS are:

- Management of the programme was resource intensive. This was a deliberate action to secure the maximum benefits for the participants, but in doing so too much responsibility was removed from individuals, with the Programme Office being overstretched in the management of travel arrangements and accommodation bookings etc. Future programmes would place greater emphasis on the individual taking responsibility for his/her arrangements.
- The choice of Copenhagen as a destination for accommodation proved problematic for financial reasons. This arose principally due to high hotel and travel costs that fluctuated greatly from one week to another during the programme. This created difficulties for budget planning. Future exchange programmes with Falck, would, as a recommendation, be conducted in Jutland (West Denmark) where accommodation costs are generally lower and consistent throughout a season.
- Facilitating direct contact between participants and hosts. A decision taken at the outset of the programme was for the exchange programme project team to coordinate placements and itineraries. By removing this responsibility from individuals many participants only made contact with their respective hosts upon arrival at their allocated destination. This, on a few occasions, led to research needs not being fully catered for. Future programmes would place greater emphasis on the individual taking responsibility for identifying and making contact with his/her preferred host(s).
- Inter-departmental cooperation (SF&RS). On reflection, communication concerning the programme and its potential impact upon securing and maintaining the day-to-day exigencies of the Service could be improved. Whilst for the vast majority of participants their attendance at Falck created little



impact upon the management of departments/stations within SF&RS, communication regarding the programme could have been improved by all parties concerned.

## **12. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the senior management board of SF&RS:

- a) Review the observations set out in section 7.1 above, and where considered appropriate, adopt aspects of notable and best practice observed at Falck.
- b) Implement medium and long-term monitoring arrangements to identify and assess benefits realised through the programme.
- c) Review the benefits recorded within this report, and if considered noteworthy, explore further opportunities to utilise the Leonardo da Vinci lifelong learning programme for future staff development.
- d) Review the benefits and notable practice arising from the programme with a view to sharing information and promoting Leonardo to other UK fire and rescue services.
- e) Note the key lessons learned outlined in section 11 above, and consider alternative programme management arrangements for any future programmes undertaken.
- f) Establish a structured forum with Falck for further networking and sharing of best practice.



## 13. Useful Websites

For further information concerning the contents of this report readers are recommended to visit the following websites:

- Falck [www.falck.com/index-uk](http://www.falck.com/index-uk)
- British Council [www.britishcouncil.org/learning.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning.htm)
- Leonardo da Vinci [www.leonardo.org.uk/index.htm](http://www.leonardo.org.uk/index.htm)
- Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service [www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/](http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/)
- Danish Tourist Board [www.dt.dk/](http://www.dt.dk/)

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