

## REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

# FALCK/SHROPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE STAFF EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

### 1 Purpose of Report

To inform the Fire Authority of the progress and developments in the previously reported Falck - Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Staff Exchange Programme.

### 2 Recommendations

Members are requested to note the Programme's progress.

### 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, submitted a joint application to facilitate the exchange of 12 members of staff from each organisation during 2006/07. The principal aim of the application was to establish a unique international partnership that facilitates the transfer of staff for one-week secondments to undertake research into a variety of subject areas focused upon improvements in non-formal and informal learning.

In April 2006 notification was received from the EC confirming the success of the joint application (it should be noted that not all applications are approved, with many first-time applications failing to secure funding). The British Council, responsible on behalf of the EC for the administration of the programme within the UK, commented

<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



that the strength of the application lay in its unique and innovative partnership between private and public sector agencies engaged in public safety.

#### **4 Falck**

Falck, established in 1906, is a private company that undertakes fire and rescue services on behalf of 171 of Denmark's 271 municipalities, serving 50% of country's population. Falck is the largest private provider of fire and rescue services in Europe and is also the largest provider of ambulance services, with operations in six European states. As with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, Falck's primary role is to save life, protect property and render humanitarian services. For further details regarding Falck please visit:

<http://www.falck.com/about-forside-uk>

#### **5 Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Applicants**

In May/June a series of seminars were held within this Service to promote the exchange programme. As a consequence of the seminars held, 15 applications have been received from staff expressing an interest in visiting Falck. The applicants include both uniformed and non-uniformed, wholtime and retained staff, representative of almost every department within the organisation. The array of proposed subjects to be researched is equally diverse, ranging from fire investigation to marketing. The attached appendix summarises the applicants' current positions and research subjects.

A review panel scrutinized the applications and concluded that all 15 applicants should be afforded the opportunity to participate in the exchange programme. It was considered that the margin of quality within the applications was too small to eliminate three applicants from the programme. Consequently, an approach has been made to the British Council for additional funds for the additional placements, but unfortunately, whilst they applaud the proposal, no further funds are available within the current year. Recognising the benefits in staff development achievable through this unique and innovative programme, it is proposed to fund these additional placements from within existing budgets. Indicative costings are discussed below.

#### **6 Partnership Agreement**

To formally acknowledge the commencement of this distinctive partnership the Service received a visit from Falck's Chief Fire Officer, Henrik Hansen, on Friday 23 June.

During the visit Chief Fire Officers Henrik Hansen and Alan Taylor signed a Partnership Agreement, forging what will undoubtedly be an exciting joint venture for both organisations.



## **7 Outline of Exchange Programme**

Commencing in August 2006, 2 to 3 members of the Service's staff will undertake on a monthly basis one week placements with Falck. Staff participating within the programme will stay in Copenhagen, Denmark and will visit a variety of Falck sites in the surrounding area relevant to their respective areas of research. Visiting staff will be required to maintain a learning journal of their experiences in addition to delivering a presentation of their key findings to their respective Danish hosts at the conclusion of each placement. Upon return to the UK, staff will be required to produce and present a detailed report documenting their findings and offer recommendations for improvements in service provision within the Service (where applicable). Additionally, the experience will form a key element of each individual's personal development plan.

During the same period, 12 members of Falck will visit this Service. These visits will be of particular value and will undoubtedly provide an opportunity for the Service to receive constructive feedback on local arrangements for securing public safety, compared to those deployed by Falck.

## **8 Dissemination of Good Practice**

All examples of good practice identified through the exchange process will be presented to the Fire Authority and, where appropriate, shared with other fire and rescue services through the various public safety publications/journals. At the conclusion of the programme an evaluation report will be presented to both the EC and Fire Authority.

## **9 Financial Arrangements**

The EC makes available allowances (with set ceiling limits) to facilitate the 12 members of staff subscribed through the programme and will fund approximately 75 percent of the placement costs which include travel, insurance and subsistence. The remaining 25 percent of costs is to be met from existing Fire Authority budgets.

As seasonal fluctuations with flight and hotel accommodation charges will cause variations in costs, indicative financial projections point towards an approximate total cost of £12,000 to undertake the programme (for 12 staff), with the Fire Authority contributing a proportion of 25 percent (£3,000). It should be noted that this contribution is discounted by an allowance of potentially up to £2,300 granted by the EC as a management allowance to co-ordinate the programme. This grant may be counted as part of the Fire Authority's 25 percent contribution.

The additional three placements will be met entirely from local budgets. Taking advantage of low season flight and accommodation charges, it is envisaged that these placements will equate to approximately £2,500.

The total indicative cost of the programme to the Fire Authority, to facilitate the exchange of 15 members of staff, will be approximately £3,200 (an average of £213 per placement).

## **10 Legal Comment**

There are no legal matters arising from this report.



## 11 Appendix

Summary of Applicant Details

## 12 Background Papers

### Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority

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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.

Balance Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	*
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Equality and Diversity	*	Retained	
Efficiency Savings		Risk and Insurance	
Environmental		Staff	*
Financial		Strategic Planning	
Fire Control/Fire Link		West Midlands Regional Management Board	

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



## Falck/Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Staff Exchange Programme: Summary Applicant Details

<b>Post</b>	<b>Station/Dept</b>	<b>Research Subject</b>
Divisional Officer	Headquarters	Fire Investigation
Station Officer	District (HQ)	Recruitment and retention part-time/volunteer staff
Fire Control Operator	Brigade Fire Control	Malicious and Hoax Calls
Leading Firefighter	Shrewsbury Fire Station	Health and Safety Legislation
Leading Firefighter	Telford Central Fire Station	Inter-Agency Resilience
Firefighter	Wellington Fire Station	RTC techniques/equipment/procedures
Leading Firefighter	Shrewsbury Fire Station	Staff Assessment Processes
Firefighter	Telford Central Fire Station	Employee Health and Health Monitoring
Firefighter	Wellington Fire Station & Baschurch Fire Station (Retained)	RTC techniques/equipment/procedures
Firefighter	Shrewsbury Fire Station (Retained)	Water Supplies
Human Resources Assistant	Human Resource Dept	Staff Induction Processes
Equality and Diversity Officer	Human Resource Dept	Equality and Diversity
Sub Officer	Brigade Training Centre	Water Safety
Statistics Officer	Programme Support Office	Management Information
Web Officer	Information Technology Dept	Branding/Marketing

