

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SHROPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - FALCK STAFF EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

1 Purpose of Report

This report advises Members of an innovative and unique opportunity that has arisen to exchange staff of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SF&RS) with staff of Denmark's foremost provider of emergency services - Falck, through the European Commission's (EC) - Leonardo da Vinci Community Vocational Training Action Programme.

2 Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- a) Note the contents of this report; and
- b) Receive further updates on the benefits achieved through the EC funded SF&RS-Falck Staff Exchange Programme.

3 Background

The EC has created an exchange programme aimed at contributing to the development of the European labour market. The programme, known as the Leonardo da Vinci Community Vocational Training Action Programme, facilitates the transfer of staff between countries to improve skills and competences through vocational training. The duration of the exchange may be from one to six weeks and is open to both public and private sector European organisations. Staff eligible for the scheme will be funded by the EC to a maximum of 75 percent of costs to cover travel, accommodation and expenses etc.

The EC has recently announced that SF&RS and Falck have been successful in their joint submission for funding through the Leonardo da Vinci Community Vocational Training Action Programme. Falck is the mainstay provider of emergency services, including fire, rescue, salvage, ambulance and security, to the majority of Denmark's citizens. The principal difference between Falck and SF&RS is that Falck is a private company and has been since 1906.



4 Aim of Staff Exchange Programme

The exchange programme will promote the sharing of ideas, strategies and innovative practice between Falck and SF&RS emergency service personnel involved in training, leading to improvements in non-formal and informal learning.

The programme's outcome will lead to enhancement of the quality of service afforded to each organisation's respective communities.

The partnership formed with Falck is unique and puts SF&RS at the forefront of creating innovative opportunities to develop staff and expose the Brigade's own working practices to scrutiny by Falck officers.

5 Summary of Staff Exchange Programme

This innovative and unique partnership will involve the exchange of personnel between Falck, Denmark and SF&RS, during 2006. Both Falck and SF&RS operate in a similar business environment, in that they provide fire safety and rescue services to their respective communities, but with one fundamental difference, Falck is a private company and SF&RS is a public local authority.

The project will involve the exchange of personnel who are involved in training for one-week secondments, with secondments (exchanges) taking place on a monthly basis. It is envisaged that during the period June – December 2006 approximately twelve Falck personnel would have experienced secondments with SF&RS, and similarly, twelve SF&RS personnel undertaking secondments to Falck.

Secondments will be cross-cutting (e.g. open to whole-time, retained and non-uniformed staff) throughout both organisations, aimed at all levels of management. Placements will be undertaken in departments that provide: Human Resource Management, Training Development, Operations, Command, Strategic Management, Fire Safety, Industrial Relations, Finance and Logistics.

A key objective of the exchange is to establish a framework that encourages the transfer of skills and competencies of personnel through exposure to differing national and organisational cultures. The outcome of this exposure will promote personal development and organisational improvement through the sharing of best practice, particularly in the field of non-formal and informal learning. Ultimately, the proposed exchange programme will serve to add value to the services provided to the people of Denmark and Shropshire, leading to safer communities.

It is proposed to provide periodic updates to the Fire Authority and other key stakeholder groups on the benefits derived from the exchange programme. It is envisaged that the expected benefits will add capacity and quantifiable value to the organisation's operations, which will contribute to future external audit processes (e.g. Audit Commission Service Assessments during 2006).

6 Funding Arrangements of Staff Exchange Programme

Subject to final confirmation from the EC, the funding allocation to support this programme will be €15,180 (circa £10,600) provided by the EC, with the remaining 25 percent - €5,060 (circa £3,500) to be met by SF&RS from existing budgets.



7 Further Details

Further details relating to the EC programme and Falck can be found at:

- http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/leonardo/leonardo_en.html
- <http://www.falck.com/index-uk>

8 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

9 Background Papers

There are no background papers accompanying this report.

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	

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