

AGENDA ITEM:

REPORT TO:	MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY
DATE:	THURSDAY 19th JANUARY 2012
REPORT NO.	CFO/023/12
REPORTING OFFICER:	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
CONTACT OFFICER:	GROUP MANAGER HITCHEN EXT- 5416
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	GROUP MANAGER HITCHEN EXT - 5416
SUBJECT:	PROJECT WATERSAVE OUTCOMES

THERE ARE NO APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise members of the unanimously positive outcomes of Project Watersave and to seek the support from Members for the continued involvement of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) in the development of the national and international response capability through the maintenance of the Watersave module on the EU Common Emergency Communication Information System (CECIS).

Recommendation

2. That members note the unanimously positive outcomes detailed within this report and support the continued involvement of MFRS in the development of national and international operational response capability through the maintenance of the Watersave module on the CECIS.

Introduction & Background

3. In the 2009 the EU called for proposals from member states for the development of rapid response rescue capabilities. The UK, Czech Republic and the Netherlands submitted a combined proposal and were awarded a grant to establish a joint flood response module capability.
4. Officers from the Dutch Fire & Rescue Service lead on this project and were nominated as the coordinating beneficiary. Partner Fire & Rescue Services from UK (lead by MFRS) and Czech Republic (Region of Silesia Moravia Fire and Rescue Service) were nominated as associate beneficiaries.

5. The participation of MFRS in Project Watersave was approved by the Authority following the submission of CFO/69/10 to the Community Safety Committee on 29th April 2010. A Project Watersave interim progress report was provided to the Community Safety Scrutiny Committee on the 10th December 2010 (CFO 199/10).
6. The UK team has been lead by Officers and Rescue Boat Teams from MFRS supported by Rescue Boat Teams from Northumberland, Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Gloucestershire and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RLNI)
7. The module was registered on CECIS from 1st November 2010 for worldwide deployment for a 12 month project period to 30th October 2011.

Project Outcomes and Benefits

8. The project delivered an initial 3 training events which took place in the Czech Republic (Ostrava), England (Liverpool) and the Netherlands (Zoetermeer). The purpose of these events was for the boat teams and team leaders to familiarise themselves with each other's equipment and to build effective working relationships.
9. Team leaders benefited from an additional command training event in the Netherlands.
10. Team leaders from MFRS also significantly benefited from the opportunity to attend EU Civil Protection training courses at the Swedish Civil Contingencies College for Module team leaders, Technical experts and Operational management training in an International environment.
11. Project team members attended a conference of EU experts in Prague as part of the standard operational procedure ratification process.
12. The project budget funded all of the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended inoculations for team members that didn't already have them. This has provided a significant cost saving to MFRS in preparations for UK ISAR membership.
13. MFRS hosted the project evaluation exercise and closing conference in Liverpool. This prestigious event gave MFRS the opportunity to showcase its capability to an EU audience.
14. MFRS has benefited in kind from the acquisition of items of equipment which will support the future deployment of MFRS teams on Merseyside, across the UK and Worldwide to a range of incidents.
15. As a result of positive feedback received during the conference and outcomes achieved throughout the project, the strategic steering group agreed to retain the module as available for worldwide deployment via CECIS. Members are therefore requested to support the continued involvement of MFRS in the module.
16. Any training costs in relation to the Module moving forward will be met through bidding for EU grants or from existing budgets given that water rescue is core

business for MFRS and so would be training that will have to be undertaken in any event.

17. Any deployment costs associated with the Module would be met by the EU.

Equality & Diversity Implications

18. None contained within this report.

Staff Implications

19. MFRS staff have significantly benefited from the development opportunities as a result of their participation in the project.
20. Participation in the project has been excellent preparation for MFRS for entry in to UK ISAR in terms of the training courses personnel have accessed, the experience of international deployment protocols gained from training events and exercises and the development of a far better understanding of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) guidelines and methodology.

Legal Implications

21. None contained within this report.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

22. The Watersave project was funded by the EU with a total budget of 1,165,215 Euros (about £950,000). The budget was managed by the primary applicant in the Netherlands. All of the travel and accommodation costs for attendance at training events and conferences have been paid from the project budget.
23. MFRS has been reimbursed for a proportion of the hours worked on the project by the strategic lead, project manager and project assistant.
24. The UK element of the project achieved the required contribution in kind of 120,000 Euros (about £100,000). This was achieved by participation in the training events and by the use of existing equipment for which an in kind cost was allocated. This training would have been carried out as a matter of routine by MFRS staff however completing the training in an international environment delivered significant additional benefits.
25. Ongoing costs associated with the maintenance of the modules availability will be met from residual funds realised from the income (received in recompense for the time given by the strategic lead, project lead and project assistant) and by the means detailed at paragraphs 16 and 17 above.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

26. All of the training and operational activities carried out during the project were subject to Service risk assessments. Watersave Standard Operational Procedures were aligned to UK generic risk assessment guidance.
27. All training was delivered in accordance with CFOA guidance and DEFRA FRNE Flood rescue standards.

Contribution to Our Mission –

To Achieve; Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Fire-fighters”

28. The involvement of MFRS in Project Watersave has provided many unique opportunities for training and deployment in environments which have offered significant knowledge and skills development opportunities. These skills will be cascaded throughout the Service improving our capabilities and consequently making a significant contribution to the mission.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO 069/10 – Project Watersave II

CFO199/10 – Project Watersave

***Glossary of Terms**

DEFRA - Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs which is the lead government department for flooding

FRNE - Flood Rescue National Enhancement Project which is the DEFRA backed project in response to the 2007 summer floods

INSARAG (International Search and Rescue Advisory Group) - The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) is a network of disaster-prone and disaster-responding countries and organizations dedicated to urban search and rescue (USAR) and operational field coordination

CFOA (Chief Fire Officers Association) - The professional voice of the UK Fire Service

CECIS (Common Emergency Communication Information System) - The EU Civil Protection Mechanism communication tool used for coordination of relief provision and requests.

WHO (World Health Organisation) - The United Nations Public Health arm

UK ISAR – The UK International Search and Rescue Team