

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE		
DATE:	1ST APRIL 2014	REPORT NO:	CFO/041/14
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	CFO STEPHENS	REPORT AUTHOR:	CFO STEPHENS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	NICK SEARLE AREA MANAGER OPERATIONAL PREPAREDNESS JANET HENSHAW DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES		
TITLE OF REPORT:	COLLABORATION WITH THE FIRE SERVICE COLLEGE		
APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: HEADS OF TERMS		

Purpose of Report

1. To advise Members of the intention of the Service to collaborate with the Fire Service College (FSC) to deliver efficiencies from the training budgets of both organisations and maximise the utilisation of the facilities at the Training and Development Academy (TDA).

Recommendation

2. That Members approve the proposed collaboration with the FSC.

Introduction and Background

3. Members will recall that the FSC was previously a trading fund and executive agency of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Since it became a trading fund in 1992, it has never been able to pay a dividend out of operating profits. The Government's response to Fire Futures on 12th April 2011 concluded that the FSC could achieve its full potential only if there was greater involvement from other sectors in its ownership, operation and governance.
4. The Government therefore decided to sell the FSC with key objectives in mind, to;
 - Secure the college's future as a provider of fire and rescue and wider emergency services operational training and as a venue for large multi-agency exercises
 - Achieve overall value for money for the Department for Communities and Local Government, the UK fire and rescue service and the taxpayer
 - Secure continuing access to National Resilience strategic assets
5. The sale was made to Capita who committed to invest in a significant programme of infrastructure and transformation and was keen to ensure that training courses deliver improved value for money. This approach was supported by CFOA and the LGA.

6. Officers have recently engaged with representatives from the FSC to explore if the potential exists to drive efficiencies from within the training budgets of both organisations and at the same time maximise the utilisation of the facilities at the TDA.
7. The FSC are limited as to the number of course places they are able to deliver as this directly corresponds to the number of beds available in the accommodation at the College at times of peak demand. In order to continue to deliver the number of courses on the FSC syllabus the College need therefore to identify additional capacity elsewhere or commit to significant capital spend to build additional accommodation which may be underutilised for significant periods of time.
8. The training facilities at the TDA and in particular the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) rig are of a very high standard. The Authority is rightly committed to maintaining high quality training facilities not least because this allows the Authority to meet its statutory duties in relation to the provision of risk critical training to operational staff. With the reduction in appliances as a result of budget cuts however the utilisation of the TDA has reduced resulting in some spare capacity.
9. There are also a significant number of hotels in the vicinity of the TDA offering high quality accommodation to delegates.
10. The FSC wish therefore to collaborate with the Service to deliver courses at the TDA. There are a number of advantages to be realised from this collaboration such as;
 - The FSC is able to deliver the required number of course places in the most cost effective way
 - The FSC recognise there is a very specific attraction to delivering courses at the TDA on account of Liverpool's global position as a destination of choice for tourism
 - The Service is able to utilise the spare capability at the TDA through a lease agreement with the FSC
 - The possibility also exists to second Merseyside instructors to the FSC to deliver the courses at the TDA on their behalf
 - Increased capability through access to the FSC state of the art Learning Management System
 - Access to new e-learning products for local delivery
 - Sharing of resources in the development and review of training products
 - Access to modern training technology developed by the FSC
11. A Heads of Terms which details the principles underpinning the collaboration is attached at Appendix A, the contents of which are self-explanatory. It is anticipated that the collaboration will be developed on a small scale initially to prove or otherwise the concept. The CFO will report appropriately as the project progresses.

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. There are no equality and diversity implications contained within this report.

Staff Implications

13. If Merseyside instructors are seconded on a short term basis to the FSC to deliver courses at the TDA on their behalf then this will be on the terms of the standard secondment agreement.

Legal Implications

14. The FSC is owned by Capita however in terms of training the Heads of Terms agreement represents a very early stage collaboration with a sole supplier to maximise efficiencies.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

15. Full costs incurred by the Service through the delivery of FSC training courses at the TDA will be met by the FSC in accordance with the Heads of Terms.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

16. The risk assessments in place for the training facilities at the TDA remain valid for any courses delivered.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

17. Driving efficiencies from the training budget will allow for the maintenance of high quality training facilities at the TDA which will be to the benefit of all Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority personnel.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS
