

report

Meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AUTHORITY		
Date	3 September 2004	Agenda Item Number	6

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PROJECT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information regarding the successful bid to fund a National Performance Management Framework Project instigated by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Government has made funding available to support Local Authorities pilot projects which promote new and innovative ways of driving forward improvement on issues such as performance management, financial management, leadership and scrutiny. The fund is jointly managed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Local Government Association.
- 2.2. The Capacity Building Fund is primarily aimed at local authorities who have undergone a Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). CPA is continuing to be developed by the Audit Commission for the Fire Service, following the White Paper "*Our Fire & Rescue Service*" published June 2003, as part of the Government's improvement agenda.
- 2.3. Fire Authorities have never been considered eligible to access the capacity building fund available to Local Authorities in the past. This was due to either the Fire Authority having not been assessed (CPA), or they were seen to be outside the scope of the fund, e.g. not directly a local council (unless part of a County Council)

3. NATIONAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

- 3.1. An approach was made to the East Midlands LGA with a view to seeking their financial support for external consultancy. It was explained that following the Authority's involvement with the pilot project for Fire CPA it sought to pursue improvement in the area of performance management.
- 3.2. The LGA were very interested in giving their financial support and providing an external consultant in an effort to provide a National Performance Management Framework that would be available to other Fire Authorities. As this is a jointly managed fund the LGA passed on the request to the ODPM, who were also very interested in the proposal.
- 3.3. One of the criteria for receiving funding is that the project must be able to be rolled out to the rest of the Service after completion. It was also stressed that the bid would be looked on more favourably if another Authority were involved in the project.

- 3.4 Following the results of the pilot CPA it was clear that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and ourselves had many things in common. There were many areas where we could share good practice and this work had already started.
- 3.5 With support from the Regional Director of Local Government Practice the Service sought the expertise of an external provider specialising in Performance Management. As Cheshire and Nottinghamshire were audited by the same company it was suggested that PriceWaterhouseCoopers be approached.
- 3.6 With the Auditors in support an application to the Capacity Building Programme was prepared and objectives for the project were drafted. The key objectives of the project are :
- ◆ To identify, through a process of review, research, testing and evaluation by consultants in partnership with Nottinghamshire and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services, the elements of a successful performance management framework for the Fire and Rescue Service.
 - ◆ To develop a model performance management framework for the Fire and Rescue Service.
 - ◆ To pilot and evaluate the framework in Nottinghamshire and Cheshire.
 - ◆ To make the framework available for application across the Fire and Rescue Service.
- 3.7 The time-scale for the project is to run from July to December 2004 in time for implementation following the first full Fire CPA's in January.
- 3.8 The Service received a telephone call from the Director of Local Government Practice on the 6th July confirming that Nottinghamshire had been successful in its bid for the full amount for the project. In addition to this he stated that the Authority should be congratulated on being the first Fire Authority to be granted funding of this type from the Capacity Building Programme.
- 3.9 The first meeting of the combined project team met at West Bridgford Fire Station on the 14th July. The purpose of this first meeting was to ensure that all parties were clear about the expectations for the project and that everyone was committed to working together to achieve the deadline.
- 3.10 It was agreed at the meeting that a steering group should be set up to ensure the project team keep to the brief. Arrangements are in hand to contact individuals from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Local Government Association, Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate, the Chief Fire Officers' Association, PriceWaterhouseCooper, the Audit Commission and a representative from Nottinghamshire and Cheshire Fire Service. The first meeting of the steering group will held on the 23rd September.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications for the Authority arising from this report as the total cost of the project (£248,440) will be jointly funded by the ODPM and LGA.
- 4.2 Included within the budget is £24,400 for each of the Authorities to resource the extra work that will be generated whilst assisting the consultants.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service will utilise the associated funding to provide the necessary resources to ensure this project is successful.

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no equal opportunity implications arising from this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

By addressing this project, the potential will exist to implement a resilient framework that will improve performance and performance management throughout the organisation.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

None.

Paul Woods
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER