



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION EUROPEAN WORKING GROUP

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda No:

Date: 04 September 2009

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on work being proposed to be undertaken by the Chief Fire Officer of behalf of the Fire and Rescue Service nationally, and to seek approval for this to be done.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The implications of decisions made at the European level, for Fire and Rescue Services in the UK, emanate from a variety of areas of interest, not always immediately obvious. Examples of this are construction directives, product directives and more latterly, employment directives, such as the European Working Time Directive.
- 1.2 Once these issues become within the broader Fire and Rescue Service knowledge base Officers, on behalf of the Service nationally, work towards assessing impact, advising central and local government and producing best practice guidance. This helps the Service prepare for changes in legislation and address any resourcing issues.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 In an attempt to improve its interface with Europe, the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), undertook to establish a small task and finish group to assess the best way of addressing the European interface. This was in recognition of the growing influence of Europe and its impact on the Fire and Rescue Service. The Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser was supportive of this approach.
- 2.2 The study found that there were both influences from within the fire community and those, as stated in Paragraph 1.1 above, that are somewhat unseen. Organisations such as the European Union Fire Safety Network; CTIF (the international Technical Committee for the prevention and extrication of Fire); FOBFO (Federations of British Fire Officers); and FEU (Federation of the European Union Fire Officers Association) are all influential on European matters.
- 2.3 Additionally, the Brussels Officers Network, the CEN Standards Hub and the MEPs network, all present additional opportunities to engage on emergency issues, not always fire related, that will have an impact on Fire Services within the UK.
- 2.4 As a consequence, it was identified that CFOA needed to establish a network of Officers who could engage with Brussels, make appropriate representation, and make key contacts on behalf of Fire and Rescue Services within the UK. The Chief Fire Officer of Nottinghamshire was part of this initial group.
- 2.5 The group has identified that the key issues can be divided into three discrete areas:
 - Policy scanning;
 - Policy influence;
 - Standards development.

- 2.6 In each case if it is felt that with a small degree of interface (2-3 times per annum) CFOA, through its lead officers, can engage early enough with the European structures and if necessary, exert appropriate influence and enhance the Fire and Rescue Service cause. There may also be the opportunity to identify any EU funding streams which may support the Fire and Rescue Service cause.
- 2.7 Additionally, these Officers will also be able to forge stronger links with the Local Government Association leads on Europe, as well as the network of MEPs.
- 2.8 The impact which this work will have in respect of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is approximately 6-7 days per annum of the Chief Fire Officer's time. It is felt that this is worthwhile as it ensures that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service remains at the forefront of the European engagement and is able to inform and influence at a national level.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are some financial implications in respect of travel and accommodation which will be attributed to Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. These are not anticipated to be significant, but it is recommended that a ceiling of £5k per annum be agreed to support this contribution to the national agenda. No additional expenses will be incurred as these will be met personally.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

In respect of the organisation there are no specific issues arising from this report, however in respect of the individual, the learning and development will have a beneficial impact which will indirectly help Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There are no specific aspects relating to a disproportionate effect in respect of the key equality strands.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A lack of anticipation and awareness of issues arising from Europe can have a detrimental effect on the Service, locally, regionally and nationally. The implications of unchallenged European directives can have significant impact on the Service's delivery and preparation. By engaging in this task, the impact should be much reduced.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 9.1 Support the Chief Fire Officer in the work to engage with Europe on the basis of 6-7 days per annum.
- 9.2 Support the budget provision of a limit of £5k to cover travel and accommodation only.
- 9.3 That the Chief Fire Officer be requested to report progress to Policy and Strategy Committee on the work undertaken, on an annual basis.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER