

REPORT TO THE SOUTH EAST FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

CAPACITY BUILDING BID 10 OCTOBER 2007

KEY ISSUE/DECISION

Members are asked to approve the second bid to the capacity building fund made by the South East Fire Improvement Partnership (SEFIP) on behalf of the South East Fire and Rescue Services' Regional Management Board (RMB).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper introduces the second bid to the Capacity Building Fund (CBF) made by SEFIP on behalf of the RMB. It has been generated to form a chapter to a 'book' which will comprise bids from all improvement and efficiency partnerships in the south east. Relevant national documentation has been used to assist in the development of the bid.

Approval is sought from Members to amend the detail of the bid in the light of the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, when the allocation of funding for improvement in the South East will be known.

CONSULTATION

Consultation has taken place with the constituent FRAs in the South East Region to develop the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

- i. Approve the bid to the Capacity Building Fund (**appendix 1** refers);
- ii. Delegate the authority to amend the detail of the bid in the light of outcomes arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 to the Chairman of the Improvement work area.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Building capacity remains a critical issue for fire and rescue services in the south east to allow them to take advantage of new ways of working and efficiencies available through regional collaboration.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

INTRODUCTION

This paper introduces the second bid to the Capacity Building Fund (CBF) made by SEFIP on behalf of the RMB. It has been generated to form a chapter to a 'book' which comprises bids from all improvement and efficiency partnerships in the south east. Relevant national documentation has been used to assist in the development of the bid, such as the Local Government White Paper and subsequent Bill, National Improvement Strategy, Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, the UK Climate Change Strategy and the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services.

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

The SEFIP Stakeholder group considered a framework bid for CBF at their meeting on 3 August 2007. The draft was then circulated to all CFOs and work area lead officers and subsequently discussed by CFOs at their recent meeting. The bid is attached at **appendix 1**, and Members are asked to approve it.

To maintain flexibility it is proposed to be able to vire allocations between projects under each section, to allow funding to be directed to emerging priorities from the Local Government Association (LGA) or the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) in the future. Such virements will be approved through the SEFIP Stakeholder Group where necessary.

The total level of funding set aside for improvement activities arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 is still not known. Informal discussions have indicated that more will be available compared to 2006/08. Therefore it is necessary to be able to amend the size of the bid if the total allocation is different to what informal discussions have indicated. Members are asked to delegate the authority to do this to the Chairman of the Improvement work area, as part of his role of the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Board (RIEB).

Underpinning the bid will be a number of project plans, which will be developed once Members have approved the bid. The project plans are primarily for governance purposes, and can be amended to reflect the current position at any time.

Content of the Bid

The bid represents a balance between improvement and efficiency projects, which is expected to be a key requirement on the use of CBF. The bid has been split into three sections:

- Section 1: Meeting the needs of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Authorities (£320k);
- Section 2: Working together (£340k);
- Section 3: Building capacity (£300k)

Bid process

The anticipated timeline for the bid is:

Action	Progress
August 2007 – formulate draft bid and submit to SEFIP Stakeholder group for comment	Complete
August 2007 – write to CFOs/RMB Members on development of the bid	Complete
September 2007 – submit bid and covering report for RMB to SE CFOs	In progress
October 2007 – submit bid to RMB, with delegated authority to amend in light of outcomes of CSR	
October 2007 – submit bid as ‘chapter to book’ to Regional Improvement and Efficiency Board	
November 2007 – business planning awayday for work area leads	
October to December 2007 – CSR 07 released	
January 2008 – final bid submitted to LGA/CLG	
April 2008 – receive CBF	

Update on Improvement Board assessment.

Members will be pleased to know that the Local Government Association (LGA) Improvement Board recently assessed the progress made by all improvement partnerships in the region, and that the progress made was signed off as acceptable. Comment was made on the balance between efficiency projects and improvement projects, and this bid reflects this need for balance.

IMPLICATIONS

Taken in their totality, the bid represents an ambitious programme of projects, which will stretch SEFIP. But they are also projects which will help to take the region forward. It may be that some projects are common to other regional improvement and efficiency partnerships and opportunities to collaborate with other improvement and efficiency partnerships will be taken where appropriate.

CONCLUSION

Members are asked to

- i. Approve the bid to the capacity building fund (**appendix 1** refers);
- ii. Delegate to the Chairman of the Improvement work area the authority to amend the detail of the bid in the light of outcomes arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.