

By: DCFO Sean Ruth  
To: SEFIP Board – 3 October 2012  
Subject: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP UPDATE  
WAYS OF WORKING PROJECT  
Classification: Open

## **FOR INFORMATION**

### **Activities that have occurred since last report**

#### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This paper reports progress of the Collaborative Partnership to develop common Ways of Working.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 In January 2010, the SE Regional Management Board approved work to develop common approaches to improve safety, efficiency and effectiveness between the nine FRSs.
- 2.2 Since then, a further five FRSs have joined what is now called the Collaborative Partnership and others have shown an interest in joining. Work has progressed reasonably well, albeit proving more complex than originally thought, and plans are now well advanced to put the products of this collaborative effort onto a sustainable footing.

#### **3. Progress Report**

##### **CLG Interoperability Grant Bid**

- 3.1 On 20 July 2012 we were officially notified that the Collaborative Partnership had been awarded £1m grant funding, of which £160k is ring-fenced to support work to align our work with similar work being undertaken in the NW (Merseyside) to possibly create a national best-practice model.

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- 3.2 The bid provides sufficient funds in the remainder of this and the next financial year to support the forming of a full-time project team of seconded officers dedicated to developing SOPs, training materials and web-based training packages. The grant will also support the foundation of the administrative hub, based in Surrey, which will bring much needed capacity to help manage the project and create the document management and maintenance systems.
- 3.3 The work is divided into two programmes a) development of products, and b) development of maintenance arrangements.
- 3.4 To gain the maximum advantage from having dedicated grant funded staff, it is imperative that all seconded staff see themselves as a single 'core project team' and to that end will be expected to work at the same location (St David's, Reigate) for at least two days a week. Basic accommodation can be provided at Reigate to allow staff from further afield to apply. The aim is to have the 'core project team' in place by the end of 2012.

#### **Collaborative Partnership Relationship with National Guidance**

- 3.5 Further discussions have been held with various key players to consider how this work should dovetail into the arrangements to develop national guidance, a prerequisite of the Interoperability Grant Funding. £160k of the grant funding is ring-fenced to support further work to align our work with that of others, to potentially create a national best practice model.
- 3.6 SE CFOs have been briefed on these arrangements by John Mills, Chair of the National Operations Guidance Board (NOGB), on behalf of CFOA, whose membership includes CLG, LGA, FBU, LFB, CFOA, etc. Our view is that they should concentrate on refreshing the Sector's body of reference information, i.e. the underpinning knowledge that was previously available through the Manuals of Firemanship.
- 3.7 We are about to start the process of aligning our work with that of others (particularly the NW) and, whilst not wanting to prejudge the outcome of that exercise, it would appear that our views on using incident types as the proposed national document structure are something that the National Operational Guidance Board would support.

### **Interest from other FRSs**

- 3.8 We are receiving lots of requests from other FRSs to have immediate access to the national incident type list (which we continue to develop) and to our work that hangs from it. The East of England has expressed an interest in 'joining' the Collaborative Partnership and might form an additional practitioner hub to provide additional capacity to undertake OPAP work.
- 3.9 We have also had requests from West, South and North Yorkshire, Humberside, Derbyshire, Northumberland and Tyne & Wear for access to our work and we've spoken to Cornwall about their possible involvement. In addition, we currently provide access to view our work via our web site to Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and West Yorkshire. The Coordinator has also had detailed discussions with London's policy team who seem generally and genuinely supportive of our approach.
- 3.10 The SE has always been open to sharing the work, believing that the more FRSs that adopt the same incident list and the operational guidance and training associated with it, the easier it will be to create a national model; and if we don't give access or share work, others may start to develop variations, particularly those that are working on joint mobilising control solutions.
- 3.11 However, there is a concern that if FRSs just take advantage of our work (as a short-cut and then adapt to build back in unnecessary localisms), without committing to working with us towards a national model, then a real opportunity to build resilience, improve safety and drive out efficiencies might be lost. This is most likely when those making the request to access the work don't fully understand our rationale, safeguards or wider benefits, but getting the right level of managers to engage is often problematic; clarity over the relationship with the national arrangements would greatly assist.
- 3.12 We should also be mindful that we haven't yet formed the initial administrative hub and so our capacity to service a wider 'client base' is limited and, if the Collaborative Partnership is to grow, we will need clear terms of engagement to be agreed. To address these concerns, a partnership agreement and a set of business rules and expectations are being developed that would support what is trying to be achieved nationally, recognising that the long-term maintenance costs incurred by individual participating FRSs is reduced by achieving wider buy-in.

### **CFO Stakeholder Group – Collaborative Partnership Future Governance**

- 3.13 Given that the Interoperability Grant was awarded to 13 local FRAs, there is a need to agree more suitable governance arrangements that don't swamp the normal SE CFOs' agenda and provide transparency for all participating FRSs. These issues are being considered in detail by a smaller CFO Stakeholder Group.

### **LGA Mobilising Seminar – West Midlands FRS Training Academy 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012**

- 3.14 We gave a presentation at the LGA sponsored mobilising seminar held in the West Midlands in late July. The seminar was reasonably well attended and our presentation has generated interest in our work from a number of FRSs (see above). CFOA has seconded two officers to offer peer support to the various mobilising projects in England and the Coordinator has already met them to consider how they might support our work and take advantage of our collaborative effort.

### **Overarching Implementation Plan**

- 3.15 The Stakeholder Group asked for a list of ten completed SOPs that would offer the most benefit for wide-scale implementation. The list was agreed in principle at the last SE CFOs' meeting and will enable CFOs to 'chase progress' in their respective FRSs.
- 3.16 SE Operational Response and Resilience Group (SE ORRG) have agreed to 'own' this overarching implementation plan, accepting that it may need to be flexible given more important SOPs coming off the production line, and that each FRS will have their own priorities.
- 3.17 The production, maintenance and monitoring of an overarching implementation plan will be made much easier once the core project team is in place, providing much needed capacity to better project manage the entire enterprise.

### **Key activities that are planned**

- 3.18 A suitable selection process will be conducted during October/November to create the new core project team and administrative hub. The plan would be to have the admin hub established and the secondees in place by the end of 2012, with a clear plan to complete the development phase and have sustainable maintenance arrangements in place by March 2014.

**Issues or areas of concern**

- 3.19 The need to achieve clarity over the relationship between this project and the national guidance arrangements is important if we are to fulfil the obligations that accompanied the grant funding. If a satisfactory relationship with the national guidance arrangements is not achieved, CFOs will want to consider how the project is to be taken forward.

**For Decision:**

1. Approve the proposals to form the core project team and administrative hub.
2. Advise on suitable future Governance arrangements

**APPENDICES:** None