

Item 4

Review of Fire Service Executive Leadership Programme (ELP)

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

The contract with Warwick Business School to provide the current fire service ELP expires in March 2012. The LGA and CFOA have constituted a working group to review and revise the specification for a new ELP. This report informs Members of the progress made so far. Councillor Richard Hobbs will set out the background and next steps at the Commission meeting.

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the contents of the report.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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Background

1. Members will be aware that the Fire and Rescue Service traditionally runs a national leadership programme for its most senior officers. For the last four years this ELP has been run by Warwick Business School in partnership with the Fire Service College.
2. The current programme has been very well received by attendees and their sponsoring services. Five graduates of the programme have been appointed Chief Fire Officer with many more achieving promotion to Principal Officer posts.
3. Warwick Business School remain very interested in continuing their relationship with the Fire and Rescue Service. However, the Fire and Rescue Service and the environment in which it operates, has changed considerably during the last two years. We are now taking the opportunity to consider the content and delivery method of the programme.
4. In October 2011 the LGA and CFOA established a working group to undertake a review. The LGA is represented on this working group by Councillor Richard Hobbs (Warwickshire) as Chairman and Councillor Colin Spence (Suffolk). Councillor Mark Healey (Devon and Somerset) has also attended a workshop to aid in the redesign. CFOA has also secured the secondment of an officer from Avon Fire and Rescue Service (Maggie Harte, Director of HR and People Development) to lead the work.
5. The group has met on a number of occasions and established a number of principles which will guide the revisions to the programme.

New principles

6. The principles which will guide the new programme are as follows:
 - 6.1 The new ELP will be hosted by the Fire Service College on behalf of LGA/CFOA and will be delivered in partnership with appropriate partners in line with procurement good practice.
 - 6.2 Candidates for the programme will come from across the UK and from all sectors of the Service and will be selected via a robust "Gateway".

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- 6.3 Core parts of the programme will be based upon "Applied Learning" using actual fire service case studies and scenarios, delivered by senior fire service figures, including both officers and Elected Members.
- 6.4 The programme will put increased emphasis upon developing political acumen, improving understanding of decision making processes and political relationships.
- 6.5 The programme will develop skills required in today's public service environment, such as Peer Assessment skills.
- 6.6 Academic accreditation will not lead the programme but accreditation will be sought from appropriate vocational bodies such as the Institute of Directors.
- 6.7 The programme will cost under £10,000 per candidate but without loss of quality. Contact time will be approximately 20 days and will be delivered in modular format.

Conclusion and next steps

- 7. The new ELP is expected to commence in late 2012. Further work is now underway to find suitable partners, secure legal advice on procurement issues and design the selection gateway.
- 8. The joint LGA/CFOA Review Group will continue to provide governance for the project until the new ELP is underway, at which time new and appropriate governance arrangements will be put in place.