Outcome of National Negotiations on the Continuing Professional Development Scheme

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1   Purpose of Report

This report updates the Committee on the recent conclusion of the negotiations in respect of the Continuing Professional Development Scheme.

2   Recommendations

That the Committee note the content of the report.

3   Background

Members will recall discussions at Fire Authority meetings regarding the protracted national negotiations on the matter of the introduction of a Continued Professional Development (CPD) Scheme for staff conditioned to the Grey Book.

These negotiations have now been concluded and the Scheme has been agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services and confirmed in Circular NJC/03/07.

4   The Agreement

The agreement means that the first payments under the scheme will be due from 1 July 2007. Transitional payments were agreed in principle in Circular NJC/10/06 for staff in receipt of a long service increment since 1 October 2006 of £165 due in January 2007 and £206.25 due in June 2007. NJC/03/07, however, instructs that the transitional payments should not be actioned until confirmation is received from the Pension Scheme Administrator that the payments are pensionable.

The first payments under the new CPD Scheme are subject to the completion and approval of an application form from those eligible to apply. This means that application forms will be issued to staff and must be returned by staff by 1 March 2007, after which date they must be assessed and verified by management. We are then required to write to all applicants by 1 June 2007 to confirm whether or not their application has been successful and, if not, the grounds for the refusal of the application.

The application form has been designed nationally and as part of the agreement it should not be varied.

5 Financial Implications

Each successful applicant will receive an annual payment of £615 (pro-rata for retained duty staff) and the cost of this could exceed the saving from the cessation of the Long Service Increment by some £38,000 in a full year.

The effect in 2006/07 is a potential saving of £9,000, which the Authority has agreed will be held in a specific provision for future costs of the arrangement. The net cost will be a change on the pay and prices provisions for 2007/08.

6 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

7 Equality Impact Assessment

The CPD Scheme is a national scheme agreed by the NJC, which includes employee representation. The introduction of the scheme is, therefore, mandatory. Officers have considered the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 5 Part 2) and have decided that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from this report. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed.

8 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

9 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	*
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*