

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



REPORT REFERENCE NO.	DSFRA/14/4
MEETING	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY (BUDGET MEETING)
DATE OF MEETING	24 FEBRUARY 2014
SUBJECT OF REPORT	TRANSFORMATION FUNDING FOR 2015-16
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>(a) <i>That the indicative process for submission of bids against the government Transformation Funding for fire and rescue authorities in 2015-16, together with the proposal to submit bids on behalf of the Authority as outlined in paragraph 2.3 of this report, be noted;</i></p> <p>(b) <i>that, in line with (a) above and with guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Treasurer and Authority Chairman be authorised to sign-off any bid submitted on behalf of the Authority against the fire and rescue authority transformation funding 2015-16.</i></p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This report outlines the government's fire and rescue authority transformation fund available for 2015-16, the proposed single competitive process for bidding against this fund and the proposed method for the Authority to duly submit bids in accordance with the bidding process indicated by the Department for Communities and Local Government.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	As indicated in report.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	The contents of this report are considered compatible with equality and human rights legislation.
APPENDICES	Nil
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	Department for Communities and Local Government Consultation Document "Fire and Rescue Authority Transformation Funds for 2015-16 Bidding Process, published December 2013

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In December 2013 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued a consultation document on its intended bidding process through which the transformation funds for fire and rescue authorities, announced as part of the Spending Round 2013, will be administered.
- 1.2 A single, competitive bidding process is proposed for the distribution of both the £30million revenue funding to be made available to the fire sector for 2015-16 to support transformational change and deliver sensible savings and the £45 million capital fire efficiency incentive fund aimed at assisting fire and rescue authorities in achieving efficient and effective service delivery.
- 1.3 It is intended that the funds will be targeted at efficiencies that have a good strategic fit with the four themes set out below and with the Spending Round documents, and that have the potential to deliver the greatest savings, particularly through greater collaboration with other emergency services combined with optimisation of an authority's existing asset base. The four themes relate to initiatives which:
- encourage greater collaboration;
 - improve local accountability;
 - prioritise prevention and protection; and
 - promote asset transformation/ other efficiencies.
- 1.4 DCLG has indicated that it would expect all bids submitted to clearly demonstrate:
- a sound business case/value for money (in line with the Treasury Green Book criteria);
 - alignment with transformation objectives set out in the consultation document and associated guidance; and
 - sound plans for project management to ensure delivery of intended outcomes.
- 1.5 The consultation document also indicates that there will be an expectation that bids will be signed off by the relevant elected member with responsibility for fire and rescue and by the senior responsible financial officer (chief finance officer or Treasurer). A copy of the consultation document, together with other associated documentation, can be found by following the link below:
- www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fire-and-rescue-authorities-transformation-funds-for-2015-to-2016-bidding-process

2. CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 The outcome of the consultation together with final details as to the bidding process have yet to be announced. The indicative timeframe, however, as per the consultation document is for the bid process to commence at some point in February 2014 and close by April 2014.

- 2.2 Since the announcement, via the consultation document, of the bidding process the Service has been working with potential partner agencies, such as the South West Ambulance Services Trust, on appropriate bids around the sharing of estate etc. Clearly, however, the indicative timetable is extremely tight and considerable, detailed work will be necessary to formulate bids within this timescale that are capable of meeting the criteria as specified in paragraph 1.4 above.
- 2.3 It is also the case that the Authority calendar of meetings does not readily align to the indicative bidding timetable. Consequently, it is proposed that officers should continue to identify and develop appropriate bids, in conjunction with partner agencies as appropriate, with the Treasurer and Authority Chairman duly authorised to sign any final bids for submission, in line with DCLG requirements. It is proposed to keep Members apprised of the details of any such bids being developed via the Members Forum meeting scheduled for Wednesday 26 March 2014.

LEE HOWELL
Chief Fire Officer