Funding for New Dimension Crewing, Accommodation and USAR Training

This circular provides information on grant funding being awarded to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in relation to the New Dimension programme for crewing, accommodation work and urban search and rescue (USAR) training.

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1.0 **Background**

1.1 Ministers announced at Fire 2004 that Government would provide up to £16 million per year from 2005/6 to help meet the cost of crewing the second phase of the New Dimension programme (for the purposes of this circular this means USAR).

1.2 Fire Service Circular (FSC) 10-2005 set out crewing funding totalling £8.4m for 2005/06 as well as explaining the distribution approach and method for crewing costs.

1.3 In January 2006, FSC 3-2006 provided information on the New Dimension accommodation strategy and set out the criteria for funding accommodation work. Furthermore, it announced funding of £1.4m to be awarded to FRAs for accommodating New Dimension equipment and vehicles under stage A of the strategy.

1.4 Further circulars issued in September 2006 (FSC 56-2006) and February 2007 (FSC 9-2007) announced funding of £1.9m and £1.2m respectively in relation to stages B, C and D of the accommodation strategy. The latter Circular also announced Government funding of £1.6m for the construction of USAR local training facilities (LTFs) for 13 out of 16 host USAR FRAs.

1.5 This Circular follows on from these three previous FSCs and informs FRAs about crewing funding to be awarded for 2006/07 and further accommodation and LTF funding.

2.0 **Funding Approach**

2.1 All funding referred to in this Circular has been awarded under the provisions of section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and is not ring-fenced. A copy of the New Dimension Crewing, Accommodation and Training Grant Determination 2006/07 (No.31/574), detailing amounts for individual FRAs, is attached. Those FRAs receiving funding have been written to individually. Payment of all funding will be arranged by this Department on 29 March 2007.

3.0 **New Dimension Crewing**

3.1 Following extensive discussions with USAR FRAs, LGA and CFOA, crewing costs have been established as £719,942 for a full USAR team in 2006/07. Crewing costs have been based on current Grey Book pay rates for a team of 30 personnel and take into account changes to the fire service pension arrangements. Total funding amounts to £13,604,497 between those FRAs hosting the equipment.

3.2 Four authorities (Devon, Norfolk, West Sussex and West Yorkshire) have not had full teams in place all year, so will receive a proportionately reduced amount of funding.

3.3 Two authorities (Manchester and Cheshire) provided temporary USAR cover in the first half of this year only, and receive £75k per authority, in line with the pro-rata level of payments agreed with them in 2005/06.
New Dimension Accommodation

Following on from previous grants noted above, total funding of £4,218,739 has been allocated to a further 6 FRAs to support accommodation needs relating to stage B, C and D of the New Dimension accommodation strategy. As with all accommodation cases, these FRAs were asked to submit bids for their accommodation work which have been assessed against the programme criteria, value for money and affordability.

Stage B of the New Dimension accommodation strategy concentrated on 14 Fire and Rescue Service (FRSs) with more complex accommodation needs. The majority of these cases have been funded under previous grants, and this grant awards two further FRAs (Avon and Norfolk) one-off funding in recognition of stage B accommodation costs, of £579,350 in total.

Stage C of the accommodation strategy covers London needs for the significant amount of New Dimension equipment and vehicles being hosted by them. The grant to London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority in recognition of their resulting accommodation costs is £3,197,504.

Stage D of the accommodation strategy concerns outstanding Incident Response Unit (IRU) accommodation, and in this grant, funding totalling £441,885 has been awarded between 3 FRAs (Cornwall, Dorset and Gloucestershire).

Work relating to the two remaining cases under stage B and D of the accommodation strategy is currently on-going.

New Dimension Training

Associated with the accommodation funding of Avon and Norfolk FRAs (see section 4.2 above), Ministers have agreed to provide funding to both these FRAs in recognition of their costs in construction of USAR LTFs – a total of £244,200 between the two authorities.

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