

Distribution of fire capital grant - *consultation*

Summary of responses

Introduction

1. The Department for Communities and Local Government consulted on the distribution of capital grant funding from 12 September to 21 October 2011 at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/fire/pdf/1986537.pdf>
2. Capital grant funding is currently distributed by allocation of a fixed sum to every authority with the balance distributed pro rata according to population. The Department sought views on the proposal that future funding be distributed based on a combination of:
 - an efficiency fund, administered via a bidding process; and
 - a pro rata distribution using the current distribution method.
3. In total, 44 submissions were received, mainly from fire and rescue authorities (41) and organisations representing their interests (3).
4. Ministers have now considered the views of the sector and have decided to give fire and rescue authorities more time to prepare bids for capital grant funding that can target efficiency savings while demonstrating value for money. As such the current pro rata distribution method will remain in place for 2012 -13.
5. However, subsequent to this, the allocation of capital will be a combination of pro rata distribution and bids with a one off bidding round for 2013 - 2015 funds. Detailed guidance for the bidding round will be published in the New Year.

Responses to consultation

QUESTION 1

Do you have a view about the proportion of funding that ought to be available for distribution versus the proportion of funding that ought to be available to bid against?

The vast majority of respondents (31) had no view on this as their overarching preference was that the current distribution system should be retained. However, of the respondents that did indicate a preference, views were split, with approximately half favouring bidding for less than 50 per cent, and half favouring bidding for more than 50 per cent of the total funds available.

QUESTION 2

What are your views on our proposal of one bidding round?

Of the respondents who gave a view, 15 supported the proposal of one bidding round, and 16 preferred more than one bidding round.

QUESTION 3

If there is one round, are you content that we should reserve the option for a second round if there are significant under allocations?

Of the respondents who gave a view, nine agreed that they would be content for the Department to reserve the option for a second round if there are significant under allocations and 17 respondents did not support this approach.

QUESTION 4

As an alternative, do you think a bidding round for each year would be better? And if so, why?

Eight respondents said yes as an alternative one round for each year would be better, with 24 respondents not supporting this approach.

QUESTION 5

Do you think that these are the right criteria for assessing bids for Capital Grant Funding? If not, what would your proposals be?

Twelve respondents indicated the proposed criteria were right for assessing bids, while 20 were of mixed views, suggesting that a range of other criteria could be included, including social and environmental factors.

QUESTION 6

Do you agree with the approach on accountability and monitoring?

Of the respondents who answered this question, the vast majority supported the proposed light touch approach to accountability and monitoring.

QUESTION 7

How do you think best practice could be shared with the rest of the fire and rescue service?

The majority of respondents suggested that best practice could be shared via Chief Fire Officers Association, and the Fire Finance Network. Others suggestions included: ensuring summaries of successful bids are accessible to all fire and rescue authorities; sharing of information via fire and rescue authority websites; and presentations.

Annex

List of respondents

Fire and Rescue Authorities

Avon Fire Authority
Bedfordshire Fire Authority
Berkshire Fire Authority
Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
Cleveland Fire Authority
Cornwall County Council
Cumbria County Council
Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority
Dorset Fire and Rescue Authority
Durham Fire and Rescue Authority
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Authority
Essex Fire and Rescue Authority
Greater London Fire and Rescue Authority
Gloucestershire County Council
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority
Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Hertfordshire County Council
Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
Humberside Fire and Rescue Authority
Isles of Scilly Fire and Rescue Service
Kent Fire and Rescue Authority
Lancashire Fire and Rescue Authority
Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Authority
Lincolnshire County Council
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Northamptonshire County Council
Northumberland County Council
Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority
Oxfordshire County Council
South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Warwickshire County Council

Suffolk County Council
Surrey County Council
West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
West Sussex County Council
West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Other groups

Society of County Treasurers
Local Government Association and Chief Fire Officers Association Joint Response
Association of Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities (AMFRA)

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