

## INVEST TO SAVE BUDGET

BID NO

<i>Project title</i>	<b>CITIZEN'S FIRE, SAFETY AND HEALTH ACADEMY (Northumberland County Council Fire Authority)</b>		
<i>Parties to project (lead partner in bold)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Northumberland County Council Fire &amp; Rescue Service</b></li> <li>2. Northumberland Youth Offending Service</li> <li>3. Probation Service</li> <li>4. Fire Service Youth Training Association</li> <li>5. Northumbria Police</li> <li>6. 6 x Local Crime Prevention Partnerships (Northumberland Strategic Partnership)</li> <li>7. Blyth Valley Borough Council</li> <li>8. North East Ambulance Service/Royal Life Saving Society</li> <li>9. Northumberland County Council Social Services</li> </ol>		
<i>Objectives of project</i>	<p><b>Promote a Safer and more Inclusive Community, through Education and Citizen Engagement, to;</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduce Fire Deaths and Injuries</li> <li>2. Reduce Arson Incidents</li> <li>3. Reduce Crime and the Fear of Crime</li> <li>4. Target Excluded Groups, such as Unemployed, Youth Offenders, Looked After Children &amp; the Elderly</li> <li>5. Promote 'positive action' to attract women and ethnic minorities to the Fire Service and other organisations</li> <li>6. Create a core of community volunteer workers who could be accessed by others such as the Ambulance Service and volunteer groups</li> <li>7. Develop a dedicated Academy Website, linked to other relevant sites</li> </ol>		
<i>Description of project</i>	<p>The development of a Citizen's Fire, Safety and Health Academy would enable a number of agencies to reach out into the community and engage in the education, guidance and coaching of all age groups in various aspects of community safety and health. There will be particular emphasis on safety and health in the home, and crime/accident prevention.</p> <p>The project will develop five community access premises, which will be created by initially utilising five existing fire stations strategically placed throughout the County. These stations have been selected to ensure effective targeting of areas in need of regeneration and the more difficult to access (and often neglected) rural areas. Student instruction and development, will be given by the staff of parties to the project.</p> <p>The sites will provide a community focal point to run safety education courses for both the younger element of the community and for the adult population. The scheme will be concentrated on a citizen focus that will develop the safe-person concept to help tackle the fear of safety, crime and health within both the urban and rural communities.</p> <p>Sectors of the community to be targeted would include the unemployed, youth offenders, 'looked after children' and the elderly. The project is designed to build a core of 'community volunteer workers', who would in turn become trainers within the scheme drawn from within an alumni of successful older youths and adults. The scheme would also support 'positive action' activities to assist in the attraction of women and ethnic minorities to the Fire Service and other organisations. Certain vocational experience would be offered to younger members and unemployed.</p> <p>It is planned to make effective use of IT and to have Internet access from all five centres, as well as developing an Academy website. The website would be linked to other relevant or supportive sites such as the new Crime Free Countryside website, the 'Looked after Children' website and the participating partner sites. It is hoped to develop this access county-wide at all fire stations through the use of Public Information Kiosks.</p>		
<i>Round 4 theme (secretariat use only)</i>	<i>Policy category (secretariat use only)</i>		
<i>ISB funding sought (2 years only)</i>	£	02/03	03/04
	Current	£251,750	£215,250
	Capital	NIL	NIL
	Total	<b><u>£251,750</u></b>	<b><u>£215,250</u></b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The development of a Citizen's Fire, Safety and Health Academy is an innovative initiative, which would enable a number of agencies to reach out into the community and engage in the education, guidance and coaching of all age groups in various aspects of community safety and health. There will be particular emphasis on safety and health in the home, and crime/accident prevention. There are a number of issues to be considered when examining the 'additionality' of the project. However it can be clearly demonstrated that the project would not go ahead without the ISB support.

Since the initial Expression of Interest, the scale of the scheme has been reduced, to drive down the funding bid to less than £500,000 in line with the request in the formal submission guidance. Realistically, this is the minima for the project progression within the defined objectives.

The project will develop five community access premises, which will be created by initially utilising five existing fire stations strategically placed throughout the County. These stations have been selected to ensure effective targeting of areas in need of regeneration and the more difficult to access and often neglected rural areas.

The sites will provide a community focal point to run safety education courses for both the younger element of the community and for the adult population. The scheme will be concentrated on a citizen focus that will develop the safe-person concept to help tackle the fear of safety, crime and health within both the urban and rural communities.

Sectors of the community to be targeted would include the unemployed, youth offenders, 'looked after children' and the elderly. The project is designed to build a core of 'community volunteer workers', who would in turn become trainers within the scheme drawn from an alumni of successful older youths and adults. The scheme would also support 'positive action' activities to assist in the attraction of women and ethnic minorities to the Fire Service and other organisations. Certain vocational experience would be offered to younger members and unemployed.

It is planned to make effective use of IT and to have Internet access from all five centres, as well as developing an Academy website. The website would be linked to other relevant or supportive sites such as the new Crime Free Countryside website, the 'Looked after Children' website and the participating partner sites. It is hoped to develop this access county-wide at all fire stations through the use of Public Information Kiosks. A second IT benefit is that of improved Data Warehousing between groups interested in similar community profiles and issues, whereby the data can be shared on a corporate GIS

The initiative will have a strong partnership influence, involving a number of partners and a large number of interested supporting groups, who would offer financial support, instructional support and specialist advice to the project and the team. In addition, the Academy will provide a suitable portal for other interested parties, to access a pool of volunteers or targeted sectors of the community thereby assisting in achieving their own service specific (and often cross-cutting) objectives. The initiative will also complement existing related strategies in Northumberland such as the County Wardens Project, Trailblazer, Community Safety Strategy and the Young Firefighters Association.

The proposal has well defined objectives, which are achievable within the scope of the project, and are easily measured as well as being linked closely with the Best Value Performance Indicators. Robust Project Cycle Management has been introduced to assist in

the monitoring and evaluation of the project, and the financial accountability will be scrutinised within the Northumberland County Audit framework.

There are clear benefits to the users, with substantial financial benefits to the wider community and an associated reduction in service delivery costs. There are overarching unquantifiable benefits of improved quality of life in the community through reduced levels of crime and the fear of crime, improved access to services, improved community safety, a healthier citizen lifestyle and improved educational opportunities. These will all be achieved whilst demonstrating inclusivity in all project activities.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General**

It is perceived that this proposal meets all of the objectives and priorities as laid down in the guidance for the Invest to Save Budget – Round 4 guidance as laid down in Fire Service Circular 13/2001. The proposal;

- Improves the quality and effectiveness of the services delivered
- Reduces the cost of delivering the services encompassed
- Has effective citizen focus built around the needs of targeted users
- Tackles some of the root causes of social problems
- Helps deliver the Modernising Agenda

The more detailed script below explains in outline format how the bid meets the objectives, and how the project will practically be delivered.

Northumberland has significant areas of deprivation and rural sparsity. Each of these elements are in need of addressing to improve accessibility to services, improve inclusivity and to regenerate socially declined areas.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2000, published by the DETR in 2000 is a ward level index based on six groups of indicators detailing facets of deprivation. These are Income, Employment, Health, Education, Housing and Access to Services.

An overview of the situation can be seen as follows:

- (a) 14 of the Northumberland wards are within the worst 10% in England.
- (b) 45 of the Northumberland wards are within the worst 30%.
- (c) Many rural wards score particularly high in the Access to Services domain. Elsdon Ward in Alnwick is in fact the most deprived in England within its domain, and 34 others are among the worst 10%.

The development of a Citizens' Academy, which will address all aspects of community safety and health, is a multi-agency partnership initiative, which will assist in tackling a number of social, community and service delivery problems. It is underpinned by developing community volunteers, which in turn will assist in providing more community awareness and spirit.

The programme will involve the development of five education sites, which will be developed within existing fire stations throughout Northumberland. These sites have been specifically selected to ensure a targeted, yet equitable provision of opportunity in urban and rural communities. It is proposed that if the programme proves

successful, then it will be extended in future years to provide wider coverage and availability.

The provision will be distinctly available to both the adult and youth population. The style, syllabus and content of courses will reflect the age of the community group involved. The outcome of each style course will be based on different objectives. The adult courses will be aimed at educating citizens in safety and response issues, and to ultimately act as community volunteers. It will also offer an opportunity for North East Ambulance Service in identifying suitable individuals for the progression of 'First Responders' in the community, who would assist in providing an availability of defibrillators and first aid in remote rural areas. This would directly assist the Ambulance Service deliver a more effective emergency response to incidents.

## **1.2 Adult Provision**

This sector of the proposal is to offer four courses per year of about ten weeks duration at each of the educational sites, during which volunteer members of the community will have the opportunity to attend for instruction and involvement in a number of activities which would be structured around community safety. There will be an emphasis on provision for the unemployed. This would include issues involving:

- i. Community Fire Safety Education
- ii. Accident Prevention
- iii. First Aid – including resuscitation
- iv. Crime Prevention and Drugs Awareness
- v. Fitness and Lifestyle

At the end of the ten week period each volunteer will undergo an assessment and successful candidates will receive a graduation award, and then be invited to join the alumni of the academy as well as being invited to register as a Fire and Rescue Service Volunteer.

Throughout each ten-week programme, the students will be addressed by appropriate involved parties to the project, in an attempt to broaden the safety agenda, and to assist the parties in identifying suitable individual volunteers for addressing their own aspects of service provision and community agendas. It is hoped that this initiative will initiate further community engagement of volunteers by the involved parties. In addition it is also seen as a method of increasing awareness and hence availability of individuals in rural areas who are prepared to be employed as retained firefighters.

## **1.3 Youth Provision**

This sector of the proposal is to offer a rolling programme of membership to youths, which will complement and be an extension of the existing Young Firefighters Association. There will be targeting of young offenders, unemployed, youth clubs, ethnic minorities and females. There will be a definite drive for inclusivity, and will provide an avenue to assist in:

- i. Improving Community Safety in the wider context
- ii. Targeting minority groups for recruitment into the fire service and other organisations

- iii. The inclusion and education of young offenders in community issues
- iv. Creating a community awareness for the younger element in society
- v. Providing vocational experience for young people in a number of areas of work
- vi. Improving fitness and lifestyle of individuals

Within the rural community it is becoming increasingly more difficult to recruit retained staff, causing operational difficulties in providing a rural fire service. It is envisaged that effective targeting and education of youngsters will improve the prospects of recruiting them as either retained or wholtime firefighters, with the resultant effect of improving the percentage of women and ethnic minority recruits employed in the service.

#### **1.4 The Partnership Approach**

The underpinning ethos of the project which will focus upon customers, is an effective partnership approach to social and community issues, which will be effected by targeting the root causes of these problems. Targeting will be enabled by the sharing of information between the involved parties to the project, as well as the County, District and Borough Councils. The overarching partnership will include the following groups:

1. Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service
2. Northumbria Police
3. Northumberland Youth Offending Service
4. Probation Service
5. North East Ambulance Service/Royal Life Saving Society
6. Fire Service Youth Training Association
7. Blyth Valley District Council
8. Local Crime Prevention Partnerships (Northumberland Strategic Partnership)
9. Northumberland County Council Trading Standards Department
10. Northumberland County Council Social Services

Support has been extensively canvassed over recent months in respect of this bid. The groups listed above have offered their support to the initiative, in most cases in written form, but some as verbal support. Other organisations have formally offered their support and are listed below;

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Fire Brigades Union                   | 2. Alnwick District Council           |
| 3. Tynedale Community Safety Partnership | 4. Education Authority                |
| 5. North East Chamber of Commerce        | 6. Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council |

It is also envisaged however that links may need to be developed with:

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. ROSPA  | 2. Youth Justice Board             |
| 3. Drugs Action Teams   | 4. Health Authorities (inc HAZ)    |
| 5. Housing Departments/Associations   | 6. Regeneration Units              |
| 7. Youth Training Association   | 8. Learning Skills Council         |
| 9. Rural Community Councils   | 10. Northumberland Training Agency |
| 11. Other Volunteer Groups – i.e. Age Concern, Help the Aged, St Johns Ambulance and the Samaritans (often via Council for Volunteer Services & Volunteer Bureau) |                                    |

These lists are not exhaustive, but only indicative of some of the groups requiring to be consulted with or even co-opted onto the partnership. It is planned that the involved parties will share databases to enable effective and efficient use of resources and information. Some of this information is already being collated onto a Corporate GIS database to assist in targeting and research activities. This area of development can be further advanced within the project.

Support for the project will come from the provision of specialist staff from within each participating group. Direct financial provision regarding capital works, purchase of equipment and transport will be delivered by the Fire Authority.

The partnership approach would be developed within the recent Government guidelines as discussed in 'Preparing Community Strategies: Government Guidance to Local Authorities' (DETR, 2000) and 'A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy and Action Plan' (Cabinet Office, Social Exclusion Unit, 2001).

The training will not discriminate against individuals with criminal convictions, but will be inclusive, and target these persons through effective liaison with the Police, Courts, Youth Offending Services and Probation Services. This will attempt to create a community belonging for these youngsters, by providing meaningful training and work experience primarily from Fire and Rescue staff, who are regarded by the Government and the community as effective role models. The ultimate goal is to improve opportunity and safety education to disadvantaged individuals within an inclusive environment.

## **1.5 Project Deliverability and Credibility**

The project arises from a coherent strategy which links with a wider regeneration agenda. As such the initiative will work alongside established projects, which will complement it and extend the value for money element inherent in the submission. The project sponsor is confident that the project can be delivered on time, as well as achieve its outputs. In the recent past, the Fire Service in Northumberland has led on a number of innovative projects and has therefore developed confidence to undertake this initiative.

Examples of this include:

- The Northumberland County Wardens Project

This initiative stemmed from research carried out by the Fire Service into similar conditions in Spain. The VOVIS Project, run by a Spanish Organisation PMQE, had identified similar problems and had piloted the concept of a neighbourhood warden scheme. The Spanish scheme had developed over a 3 year period. The Northumberland Fire Service analysed this project and has now replicated it within Northumberland. The project currently employs 27 wardens, from an initial pilot of 8. The essential feature of such work is that a robust analysis is taken at the outset to ensure that outputs can be met. This approach allows the project to expand, and to be part of the mainstream in due course. This project is now funded via Objective 3 of the European Social Fund and SRB.

- Trailblazer

This project was developed in response to a need to decrease gender imbalances within the operational service. Funded via the European Union Equality Programme, Trailblazer allowed us to pilot a new approach to recruitment and retention, in itself a major cost to the Authority. Trailblazer was disseminated in a pan-European context, including being presented as part of the Europe

Commission Directorate Generale Social Policy Unit, Employment week, in Brussels in November 2000.

- The Northumberland Community Safety Strategy

This innovative, nationally recognized strategy was undertaken by the Directorate of Protective Services, of which the Fire Authority is part, and has been expanded into new areas – including of course, the preparation of this bid.

As promoter, therefore, we are able to state that we have a successful track record in related projects and that therefore we have evolved an approach which has inbuilt the concept of risk assessment as a central feature. Deliverability of the project has been assessed as part of the proposal, including at even this most embryonic stage, as initial consideration of the desired exit strategy.

## **1.6 Proven Successes**

The initiative of a Citizen's Fire Academy was first observed by the author in Plano Fire Department, Dallas, USA. This fire department has developed an increasingly large alumni of volunteers from the community, and has targeted Safety in the Home (with specific emphasis on Community Fire Safety), and has achieved significant results. This population of about 300,000 (similar to Northumberland) has not suffered a Fire Related Death in 18 years, and the Fire Related Injuries are well below the USA norm and only a fraction of the UK and Northumberland norm.

The strategies to be employed in engaging the community and educating/counseling individuals, have been tried and tested with some very encouraging results. Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service piloted the first 'Firesetters' initiative in the UK, which targeted offenders and gave counseling. Prior to the scheme, the majority of the offenders re-offended in a short period of time. However since the inception of the scheme, there have been some startling success rates. In 2001/2002 to date, 35 offenders have undergone counseling with a 100% success rate, and in previous years the success rate has been close to this 100% . This initiative has since received National TV coverage on BBC Crimewatch Daily, highlighting successes of the work.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT**

The objectives of the project are extensive, as it is believed that the initiative will foster a fertile environment, where many additional issues involving numerous agencies will be progressed and the subsequent benefits gained. In order to keep the objectives focused, and at first glance realistic and achievable, the number of detailed objectives has been refined and reduced to the list below. The financial and economic appraisal details are contained in the Economic Appraisal attached to this bid.

### **2.1 Measurable Objectives**

A number of clear prime objectives have been linked to measurable outcomes. As mentioned above, the financial benefits are detailed in the Economic Appraisal, however the targets are listed below, indicating the milestones for auditing and assessing the progress of the project and its ultimate level of success.

The data to be gathered in order to measure the benefits to the community, is readily available on the IT system in the form of a statistics package. The system is designed to format the data in line with the appropriate Best Value Performance Indicators, and shows up to relevant timely data, in tabular format for easy comparison with previous performance, projected outturns and targets.

The prime objectives linked to direct financial benefits include;

1. Achieve a reduction in Fire Related Deaths of 60% over first 5 years (related national target = 40 %)
2. Achieve a reduction in Fire Related Injuries of 30% over first 5 years (related national target = 20%)
3. Achieve a reduction in Arson Incidents of 60% by 2009 (related national target = 30%)
4. Achieve a reduction in False Alarms of 60% by 2009 (related national target = 30%)

*Achieving any of the above, will result in a reduction in Service Delivery Costs*

The prime objectives linked indirectly to financial benefits include;

1. Run twenty, ten week Academy programmes in the County per year (target 300 students)
2. Develop a Young Firefighters Association group at each of the five Academy centres
3. Recruit an alumni of twenty volunteers from the Academy programme per year

The baseline position will be confirmed by utilising historical data, and the analysis will be of a continuous nature, however milestone at quarterly intervals by comparison with set objectives. Benchmarking will also be undertaken against the similar brigades in the Best Value Family Group, as well as the national suite of fire brigades.

Details of the arrangements for monitoring and evaluation are detailed in Section 9.1 of this bid.

## **2.2 Sharing Best Practice**

Dissemination of the project to allow shared best practice will be via 4 mechanisms;

- Production of a final report, in action, research and audience targeted formats
- Presentation of the action to community networks
- Presentation of the action to national Fire Service networks concerned with regeneration initiatives
- Presentation of the action to Regional networks concerned with regeneration initiatives

## **2.3 Funding for Sustainability and Determining an Exit Strategy**

For the Project to make a difference in a lasting context, and to provide long-term savings, it will need to be mainstreamed. However, to maintain momentum and to develop a sustained approach after termination of the ISB investment, will require consideration of an exit strategy as part of the pre-emptive planning. The Monitoring Group will therefore, from the outset, develop an approach to mainstreaming and additionally to identifying external resources to support those core activities that continue beyond the ISB project. Initial indications show that support may be available from a number of sources, namely the Regeneration Budget, Youth Training Association, and the Learning Skills Council to name but a few, with the possibility of progressing charitable status if the criteria of the project support such a move.

In addition to the above, there are a number of other avenues currently being explored, which have potential for providing funding to assist in ensuring continuation of the initiative at the end of the ISB funding period. These sources are listed below;

Connexions Partnership  
DTI  
Private Sector  
North East Chamber of Commerce  
District and Borough Authorities

Additionally, we will consider again via the Monitoring Advisory Group, the options for dissemination and replication.

Our exit strategy will therefore be in three parts

- Operational exit options
- Financial exit options
- Dissemination and guidance of replication

The emphasis on succession planning is a key feature of innovative work in the County Council generally and in the Fire Service in particular. This project has arisen from a strategy expressed on a community focused basis, and it is crucial that from its inception we consider the way in which the community will continue to be served after the ISB project as such is complete.

### **3. FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECT**

#### **3.1 Scale of Project and Level of Contribution**

As requested in the notification for a submission of a formal bid, the Project Development Team have attempted to reduce the cost of the bid and hence the project by reducing the scale of the project slightly. This has resulted in a reduction in the amount of ISB funding from £765,000 to £467,000. This has reduced the scale of the project to a level, which cannot be further reduced without having a significant adverse affect upon the key objectives of the initiative.

- It is thereby established that it is not feasible to increase the bidders' total contribution to the total cost
- It is also established that it would not be advantageous or feasible to proceed with the project on a further reduced scale, as it would involve exclusion of parts of the community (inclusion being a key outcome), and severely reduce the financial and social benefits.

#### **3.2 Funding Requirement Proforma**

As required in the bidding guidance, the completed financial pro forma is detailed below;

	<b>02-03</b>	<b>03-04*</b>
<b>ISB funding</b>		
of which: current	£251,750	£215,250
capital	Nil	Nil
<b>Bidders' own funding</b>	-	-
Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service	£156,000	Nil
<i>of which:</i>		
<i>current</i>	Nil	Nil
<i>capital</i>	£156,000	Nil
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b><u>£407,750</u></b>	<b><u>£215,250</u></b>

Details of the funding requirements and financial implications are detailed in the Economic Appraisal within this bid.

#### **4. INNOVATION**

This Academy initiative would be the first of its kind in the UK, which in itself proves its innovative nature.

A broad band of rural and urban society will have access to information, training and community involvement, which will be provided by the proposal. The provision will be delivered by a range of methods including face-to-face instruction and assistance, and it is planned to make effective use of IT by having Internet access from all five centres, as well as developing an Academy website. The website would be linked to other relevant or supportive sites such as the new 'Crime Free Countryside' website, the 'Looked After Children' website and other participating partner sites. Links would also be developed with similar websites throughout the country. It is hoped to develop this access county-wide at all fire stations through the use of Public Information Kiosks. This can then be rolled out county-wide to the broader community in due course once established. In the future, and if the project were a proven success, then the proposal is to 'roll out' the information access points for the community to all fire stations in the county, hence maximising the use of public buildings owned by the Authority, and improving service accessibility to the community.

#### **5. BENEFITS TO USERS**

##### 5.1 External Customers

The development of a Citizens Fire Safety & Health Academy would support communities facing social, geographical and economic isolation, and promote the concept of the safe citizen. It would link closely with previous pilot initiatives that have proved to be valuable resources in the drive to reduce crime vandalism and social delinquency. In particular, the Northumberland County Wardens Project, which was promoted by the Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service, has now been nationally recognized as a major addition to developing sustainable communities and is in fact now classed as an exemplar. Careful attention has been paid to the choice of area of benefit to ensure complementarity with other regeneration initiatives in areas of acute need. The targeting of resources will ensure a significant level of added value from the ISB to complement these other initiatives, and to provide a level of focus, to enable the project to make an impact in the shortest possible time. By following this

approach, the Academy will extend and support community endeavour and voluntary effort, providing resources, which are responsive to the needs of citizens, in areas which require external intervention.

The Academy will link with voluntary agencies and community organizations, harnessing the enthusiasm of local people who are committed to the project and who have expressed strong support. In undertaking this approach, the sponsor will acknowledge the valuable contribution of the local Council of Voluntary Service and the Community Volunteer Bureau, which have undertaken a comprehensive programme of capacity building. This prior work will enable a faster start to the project than would have otherwise have been the case, and these organisations are a welcome addition to an already strong and effective Partnership.

The benefits to the user are wide-ranging, and a more comprehensive list of these include;

- Enabling adults and young people to access quality training and guidance in community and safety issues
- Targeting disadvantaged young people and assist their integration into the community in an inclusive environment
- Making effective use of IT and the Internet
- Helping deliver the Government Modernising Agenda
- Reducing the cost of delivering the Safety Agenda
- Improving the quality and effectiveness of the involved public services
- Having a citizen focused approach
- Tackling root causes of social problems
- Addressing the challenge of two tier local government working
- Addressing issues in the Rural White Paper (problems of 'super sparsity') and deprivation
- Exploiting economies of scale (shared responsibilities and information)
- Delivering expenditure savings
- Providing better access to services
- Addressing targets and performance indicators set by Local and Central Government
- Addressing the Crime and Disorder agenda
- Improving quality of life in the community
- Improving Quality of Service

Users have been consulted by discussion within an established User Panel, and the opinion of the external customers and other agencies is one of substantial support at what they see as an exciting development and facility.

## **5.2 Financial Benefits**

The financial benefits to the community (in the wider sense) are equally as broad-based and substantial. The details of the benefits are detailed in the attached Economic Appraisal, however they can be listed as follows;

- Reduced Service Delivery Costs
- Reduced Costs in Life and Injury Costs
- Reduced Fire Property Losses
- Reduced 'Resultant Costs' from Crime and Disorder, such as Vandalism and Theft

## **5.3 Educational Benefits**

The work with young people will 'Contribute to the development of young people by encouraging them to adopt the positive culture of the Fire Service'. A similar contribution will apply to participating adults. This is referred to directly in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire Services Thematic Review 'Making a Difference'. Relationships will also be pursued with The Prince's Volunteer Trust and The Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme.

The schemes will encourage young people to develop themselves, and will enable them to embark on the Fire Services Youth Training Association Young Person's Development Programme, which leads ultimately to a BTEC Qualification in conjunction with Edexcel, thus leading to greater training opportunities and achievements.

Following discussions with the Children's Joint Development Officer of Northumberland County Council and Northumberland Health Authority, it is clear that there is a strong possibility of developing a NVQ for the adult graduation awards. A similar award could be developed with the New Start partnership and the Guidance Company, who work with disaffected young people to engage them in training and work. The partnership includes Northumberland College and the Learning Skills Council. A useful and related development to this bid, is the evolution of the new 'Connexions' partnership in Northumberland. As from September 2002, New Start and the Guidance Company will become part of the new Connexions service for *all* young people aged 13 to 19.

## **6. ESTIMATED SAVINGS**

Details on the substantial estimated savings are shown in the Economic Appraisal within this bid.

## **7. 'ADDITIONALITY' TEST**

A number of factors can be stated which demonstrate the fact that the project would not have gone ahead without the support of the Invest to Save Budget. Some are general to the geographic and political region, and others are service specific.

### **7.1 General**

Northumberland continues to suffer from low levels of public investment, both in terms of statutory funding and in allocated regeneration monies. Nevertheless, the authority has pursued its aims by alternative funding sources. This project could not be accommodated in the revenue budget for the foreseeable future, because of the significant and continuing financial pressure faced by the authority. As such the Fire Service is committed to 'investing to save' as an underlying concept of both operational and financial management. The intervention of this funding will allow the service to attempt to bring on stream an initiative, which is deliverable, needed and timely, against a background of cuts and financial trimming. It is fully additional, and the Invest to Save programme will unlock significant additional value added.

### **7.2 Fire Service Specific**

Between May 2001 and October 2001, a Strategic Management Review was carried out of Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service. The benchmarking carried out utilised Best Value Performance Indicators, which included several indicators, which will be applicable to monitoring the outcomes and the progress of the project. The review identified a service,

which is attempting to deliver the Government modernising agenda. This is one of engaging the community, and pursuing a preventative approach to reducing fire related deaths and injuries, as opposed to being a predominantly responsive service. Another strand of this agenda is to broaden the role of the Fire Service to assist in delivering the wider context of Community Safety as opposed to purely Community Fire Safety, and to play a more involved role in the Crime and Disorder strategies. This review of the service concluded that although the service was attempting to address the new agenda, it was significantly under-resourced to allow the progression of many initiatives, the achievement of improved performance and hence improved public service. These findings have since been confirmed during an inspection of the brigade by Her Majesty's Fire Inspectorate in October 2001.

### **7.3 Other Services**

The benefits as identified with the Government initiative promoting increased involvement of the Fire Service in youth work (Wider Role of the Fire Service – Links with Youth Inclusion Programmes, DTLR letter to fire brigades, 9<sup>th</sup> October 2001), could not be better achieved than such an initiative as this. Utilising the Fire Service as the lead body will maximise the benefit of the effective role-model status held by fire brigades in the community.

## **8. ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUDIT**

The proposed Accounting Officer is Mr Clive Burns, Director of Finance, Northumberland County Council. The scheme has already been scrutinised by that department, and the proposal is to integrate a regular audit of accounts on a six monthly basis, which will be undertaken within the internal audit procedure of Northumberland County Council, with accounts being available for scrutiny by External Auditors if required. Routine administration will be undertaken by the Finance & Business Manager of the Fire & Rescue Service.

## **9. PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT**

### **9.1 Details of Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation**

The project has taken as a core aim, the need to identify a strategic approach to monitoring and evaluation from the outset.

The emphasis will initially focus on the setting up of a monitoring advisory group. This will be a combination of internal and external verification, and comprise representatives from the statutory, community and voluntary sectors. The Group will undertake an output led approach to monitoring, by analysing the results of monitoring on a continuing basis. This approach will allow the Project to avoid the pitfall of continuing with an original workplan, if that workplan proves to be inappropriate. It also allows a process of continuous evaluation to inform the development of the project, to facilitate 'fine tuning' of the initiative. This will also encompass, at the outset, a detailed risk assessment, to provide a benchmark against which initiatives can be measured on an interactive basis. This will provide the project sponsor with a potential 'troubleshooting check list' to identify likely barriers, and begin to use the monitoring system to evaluate progress from the initial launch of the project.

The involvement of external agencies in the monitoring process will allow a significant degree of transparency in the evaluation process. It also prevents the emergence of "siloism", where operational project managers become blinded to outputs, by being immersed in the iteration of the initiative. County Council staff with experience as skilled project managers will be utilized during the life of the project. Specific tasks identified are therefore:

- Ex-ante monitoring
  - Identification of statistics to inform the baseline position
  - Defining a clear methodology for evaluation which is understood by both the project and the monitoring group
  - Identification of benchmarking which will form an evaluation progression
- Ex-itinere (Phase I)
  - Continual assessment of progress to objectives, via benchmarks
  - Remedial action strategy outline (if necessary)
  - Continual assessment of performance and operational excellence
  - Initial dissemination strategy developed
 (Phase II)
  - Initial development of exit strategy
  - Interim evaluation of achievement published
  - Summary findings presented to regional, local and community organizations
- Ex Post
  - Production of final report (May 2004)
  - Audit completed (June 2004)
  - Dissemination of project via Fire Service (August 2004)
  - Regeneration and Community Networks (August 2004)
  - Financial Analysis completed (August 2004)

The monitoring advisory Group will meet on a bi-monthly basis, with the Fire & Rescue Service Finance and Business Manager being a member of this group. Each meeting will generate a financial report, which will be forwarded to the Accounting Officer, and then on a six monthly basis to the internal audit team.