

## **POLICE POSTS – VACANCY MANAGEMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This report informs Members of how the Force sustains Police staffing levels at the optimum commensurate with the prevailing Force funded levels.
2. The optimum is deemed, by consultation with Branches and Divisions, to be not having a vacancy level greater than 2% of the total Force funded staffing level for police officers. As such this is one of the Performance Indicators of the Personnel Branch. Over the past 5 years the average vacancy level has been 1.1%.

### **PREDICTION OF VACANCIES**

3. A rolling 5 year average is used to “predict” vacancies that will occur in respect of resignations, (voluntary or otherwise), dismissals, transfers to other Forces/Constabularies, career breaks and ill health retirements. Naturally occurring retirements are predicted on the basis that the officer will retire on the due date, (based on the length of service).
4. A similar format is utilised to “predict” officers returning from secondment, career breaks, re-joiners and transfers into the Force from other Forces/Constabularies.
5. Taking into account the deletion of, and the conversion of posts, through the Workforce Modernisation Programme and “new growth” posts, a spreadsheet then models the number of vacancies against the Force Funded staffing level. This is done on a calendar monthly basis and is a global determinant of the number of vacancies that need to be filled by basic entry recruits.
6. On a four weekly basis, a Census is undertaken by the Personnel Branch, (Resourcing Unit) in conjunction with Branch and Divisional staff. It identifies actual staff levels against funded staff levels and enables any variance to be reconciled in terms of vacant posts. The Census also ensures that the Finance Unit allocate the devolved budget monies accordingly to the respective Branch or Division.
7. An illustration of how the vacancy level can fluctuate is shown at Appendix 1.

### **VACANCY MANAGEMENT CONSTRAINTS**

8. The Census information takes account of those hours being reduced or increased by officers within the normal, (40 hour) week, as part of the part time working arrangements that exist within the Force. Any hours reduced by a

Branch or Division to accommodate an individual officer's wishes can under the devolved budget arrangements be accrued by the Branch or Division, and used to improve performance. As such whilst the Census may show a "vacancy" the funding may have been utilised elsewhere.

9. The Force is restricted by timescales imposed by Centrex on the timing of Assessment Centres to select recruits. Dates of Recruit Assessment Centres are set with Centrex some 12 months ahead. This means that there can be occasions when the Force cannot react to rapidly changing situations where officers leave the Force unexpectedly, resulting in an unacceptable vacancy level.
10. Furthermore a number of phased vacancies are facilitated to take account of those police officers whose post is subject to the Workforce Modernisation Programme. In the current financial year approximately 40 police posts will be converted to police staff status with the result that those police officers have or will have to be accommodated elsewhere in the Force. Approximately 60% of the officers affected have been accommodated in this manner.
11. In order to lessen the impact of vacancies, a method that can be adopted is for Branches and Divisions to at times exceed their funded levels. This can be done on the basis that at certain points in the financial year there will be occasions when there will be vacancies. Provided over the course of the year that the budget is not exceeded, this action is encouraged and appears to offer a solution.

### **SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR PROMOTION**

12. A "top down" approach is adopted in as much as those vacancy predictions at the Chief Superintendent rank are used as the datum point. Following this vacancies through the remainder of the ranks are then summated to give an estimate of the requirement at each rank. This is usually done on an 18-24 month forecast. Monitoring is done on a monthly basis and reported to Strategy Team as such, any change to the forecast is adjusted as required.
13. At the Sergeant and Inspector rank account has to be taken of the OSPRE qualification necessary for an officer to be substantively promoted following success at the In-Force Promotion Assessment Centre. The In-Force Assessment Centre is planned to be as close as possible to the dates set nationally by Centrex for the OSPRE examinations.

### **SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR THE LATERAL MOVEMENT OF POLICE OFFICERS**

14. Succession planning in this respect takes the form of consultation between the Resourcing Unit and the Branches and Divisions. A prediction is made of those officers who will move from the particular specialist posts. Such posts include crime management, operations support, roads policing, family protection, and firearms. These posts are multiple in origin.
15. A mixture of historical and present day data is used and this informs the number of posts that will require to be filled over a defined time period. The

period is usually 18-24 months. A selection process is implemented to accommodate the requirement for the period in question.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

16. It is recommended that Members note the report.

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**Illustration of how the vacancy level in whole time equivalent posts can fluctuate  
Taken from the Census dates in 2005/2006**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>FUNDED LEVEL</b>	<b>ACTUAL LEVEL</b>	<b>NO. OF VACANT POSTS</b>
04.10.05	2276.31	2261.94	14.37
01.11.05	2276.31	2251.06	25.25
29.11.05	2274.31	2242.94	31.37
28.12.05	2276.31	2238.49	37.82
24.01.06	2277.31	2224.37	52.94
21.02.06	2277.31	2250.32	26.99

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