**west midlands
police and crime
commissioner**

STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD
7TH April 2015

HR UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To report to the Board on strategic workforce issues facing the Force, including an update on the HR Change Programme

WORKFORCE UPDATE

2. Police Officer and Staff establishment and strength is in a managed position, ahead of implementation of the first phase of the 2020 Blueprint Programme of Work, with strength across both parts of the workforce running below authorised establishment.

3. Current Police strength (February 2015) stands at 6,985 FTE and includes the first cohort of 82 new police recruits, with a further intake of 80 officers due to commence before the end of the financial year. A further four cohorts are currently scheduled for 2015/16 and the first half of the 16/17 financial year, comprising a total intake of 450 new officers. The impact of the recruitment programme will be to broadly stabilise the Police strength position at just under 6900 across the next two years. Recruits from the first cohort are due to commence independent patrol in June this year.

4. Police Staff strength at February 2015 is 3,128 FTE. Two significant workforce programmes will impact on the overall position moving into the new financial year, linked to changes within Custody and Front Offices. Given reductions in Police Staff strength within Front Offices, staff have been encouraged to apply for opportunities within the Custody function. The new Custody and Front Office functions are scheduled to go "live "later in 2015.

5. PCSO and Special Constabulary strength at February 2015 is 628 FTE and 377 FTE, respectively. There are no plans at this stage for recruitment programmes in either of these parts of the workforce, pending publication of the 2020 Blueprint, although the Board may be aware that previous approval was given for twelve undergraduates to be recruited and sworn in through Coventry University as

Special Constables. They will spend their gap-year working on patrol in Coventry alongside regular Constables. The students will commence the 16-week Special Constabulary training programme in April before starting operational deployments in September.

6. As previously reported the workforce forecasts for the period running up to the 19/20 financial year show significant establishment reductions across the Police, Police Staff and PCSO workforce. Against that context the 2020 Blueprint will enable the Force to manage and develop policing delivery across and beyond that period, albeit with a smaller workforce.

7. As part of business as usual processes workforce resilience is kept under review, through Corporate HR. In that context our current priorities are to improve force attendance levels, maximize the productivity of Restricted/MRFD Officers and to ensure that flexible working arrangements are aligned to business requirements. At the end of February attendance was running at 95.3% for Police Officers, 95.4% for Police Staff and 94.6% for PCSOs. This position reflects the trend of consistently lower attendance levels during winter months due to a range of seasonal factors with attendance rates improving through the spring and summer. Work to improve this position includes quality assuring local compliance with Force absence management and reporting procedures, management reviews of those cases of most concern, and more analysis and feedback to SLTs of attendance data trends to help them address issues locally. A review of Flexible Working on LPUs has confirmed that the vast majority of cases are aligned to local business needs. The review process will be extended to central functions. Work to cleanse the data on Restricted/MRFD Officers will be completed by the end of March 2015 to enable a review of cases to take place.

8. Into the longer term, publication of the 2020 Blueprint provides the opportunity for the Force to consider how it wishes to address a number of strategic workforce matters, including workforce mix, talent management, the balance between specialisms and omni competent roles and the level of churn (internal movement) within the workforce. Included in the Blueprint Programme of Work are further projects aimed at addressing culture and leadership issues, as well as implementing a performance management framework.

POLICE OFFICER RECRUITMENT

9. The Board will recall that the first phase of Police Officer recruitment opened in the spring of 2014 and resulted in over 20,000 declarations of interest from individuals interested in a police career. This translated into 4,168 returned applications and to date 167 new Police Constables have been appointed.

10. The second phase of constable recruitment opens on 23rd March 2015 which will create opportunities for an additional 200 new constables. The selection process

will once again be highly competitive; given over 13,000 people, as at 1st March, have already registered their intention to apply for a position. It is anticipated that the two phases of recruitment will provide a sufficient number and calibre of candidates to preclude the need for any further phases of recruitment. The recruitment process comprises four main stages:

- Electronic Application
- Situational Judgment Tests
- Telephone Interview
- National SEARCH Assessment Centre

11. The overall quality of candidates has been excellent, as evidenced by the performance of individuals at the SEARCH assessment process. The scores are consistently higher than any previous selection process and exceed the national recruitment standards for constables.

12. The Recruitment Team have invested considerable effort to generate interest from across communities in the West Midlands in the recruitment campaign, particularly given that this is the first programme run for over five years. Data on the gender and ethnicity of the new recruits is shown at Appendix One. During the first phase the positive action campaign run comprised the following elements:

- Targeted attraction strategies through printed and social media in addition to TV and local radio.
- Pre-recruitment workshops for under-represented groups.
- Insight opportunities into WMP 'Discovery Days'.
- Aligning candidates to serving police officer 'buddies'.
- 'Myth Busting' presentations including eligibility requirements and the selection process
- Unconscious bias training for all assessors
- Adverse Impact Assessments for each attrition stage to demonstrate fairness in selection

13. Key learning points to emerge from the first recruitment phase include:

- Stronger levels of interest from some BME groups than others.
- Lower volume of Black and Chinese candidates compared to the population of the West Midlands.
- Engagement with different communities and cultural groups needs to be tailored to the audience.
- A need to clearly articulate an 'offer' that different parts of the community can relate to.
- A need to continually reaffirm eligibility criteria e.g academic attainment and good character

14. These learning points have been incorporated into delivery of support for the second phase, which has been developed as a more focused campaign, involving development of an on-line self-assessment tool for candidates to consider their suitability. Submission of the tool provides a detailed understanding of the volume of prospective candidates, their communities and cultures, educational and vocational attainment and motivation to serve the communities of the West

Midlands. This allows engagement events to be tailored to the needs and expectations of potential applicants.

POLICE OFFICER PROMOTION PROCESSES

15. A total of 6 Promotion processes have been run over the last 12 months for the following ranks:

   - PC to Sergeant x1, 66 Officers promoted (13 BME, 18 Female)
   - Sergeant to Inspector x1 34 Officers promoted (7 BME, 17 Female)
   - Inspector to Chief Inspector x1 8 Officers promoted (0 BME, 6 Female)
   - Chief Inspector to Superintendent x1 7 Officers promoted (0 BME, 2 Female)
   - Superintendent to Chief Superintendent x1, 7 Officers promoted (1 BME, 2 Female)
   - Chief superintendent to Assistant Chief Constable x1, 1 Officer promoted (0 BME, 0 Female)

16. Candidates entering these processes have received support at both local and Force level, including positive action initiatives, comprising:
   - PPF overview to confirm understanding of each competency
   - Approach to gathering evidence to support elements of the PPF
   - Active Learning Sets
   - Feedback on application answers
   - Senior Officer insights into the specific ranks and force requirements and expectations
   - Mentoring framework to support BME candidates

17. The programme of positive action supporting the promotion processes over the last twelve months have shown that both the mentoring framework and the action learning sets are key contributors to preparing candidates for the forthcoming promotion process. A programme of attracting more colleagues into the mentoring framework has been put in place to increase the current pool of mentors. Further work to address progression issues across the Police and Police Staff workforce is being considered by the BME Progression Group, under the Deputy Chief Constable.

APPRENTICESHIPS

18. The Force launched a traineeship scheme in September 2014 in partnership with Birmingham City Council and West Midlands Fire Service and supported by South and City College.

19. The traineeship provided young people aged 16-24 with the opportunity of spending a 4 week rotating work placement with each of the three employers. It was advertised on all four organisation's websites and also utilised local media, ambassador and community networks to advertise the opportunities. This approach ensured that the applicants reflected the West Midlands community with

over 50% from BME communities. Ultimately seven candidates commenced a 12 week placement programme with the force in November 2014.

20. The follow on Apprenticeship Scheme was subsequently launched using the same media/marketing approach which attracted 107 candidates. Shortlisting and interviews have been completed and twelve candidates are currently going through the vetting and medical stage.

21. The apprentices will be appointed within the Shared Services function towards the end of March 2015 and will gain experience working in Resource Management, HR Transactions, Procurement and Payroll during their 12 month apprenticeship. The apprentices will also attend college one day per week studying towards an NVQ level 2 in Business Administration.

HR TRANSFORMATION

22. At the end of last year, HR embarked on a review of the function to help assess capability and readiness to support implementation of the WMP 20/20 Blueprint, particularly capturing the 'voice of the customer'. This piece of work was aligned to work taking place to describe the Force Current Operating Model and as part of the budget review process.

23. Feedback has identified some areas where HR support to the organisation can be improved, particularly in relation to transactional services and in the guidance and support offered to line managers and the wider workforce. In response to the feedback received HR and Shared Services, are taking forward an implementation plan to support a number of service improvements. The areas of focus include;

- Fixing our intranet site so information can be found easily
- Reduce, simplify and consolidate the number of policies on the site
- Streamline and speed up HR transactional processes e.g. recruitment
- Transfer transactional services out of HR into the Shared Services Centre
- Improve availability and quality of workforce data

24. To support this work a number of temporary organisational changes have been made, as well as a programme of stakeholder engagement. Work has also commenced with staff to ensure that all are working effectively as a single team.

VOLUNTEER RESERVE SERVICE

25. The Home Office issued new guidance in March 2015 regarding membership of the Volunteer Reserve Force within the Police Service and requested that all forces review their existing policies.

26. The force policy on reservists is compliant with the new guidance and makes provision for a 1% of strength cap on the number of reservists formally recognised and supported within the force. Currently 0.5% of force strength (37 police officers and staff) are recognised as being members of the Volunteer Reserve Service, this is within the 0.5 to 2% range outlined in the guidance.

27. The guidance also outlines new pension considerations. Reservists are not, at present, automatically members of any Armed Forces' pension scheme. However, when they are mobilised, Reservists are given several options for pension provision including the opportunity to join the Reserve Forces Pension Scheme. This arrangement will change on 1 April 2015, when almost all Reservists will be automatically enrolled into a new Armed Forces pension scheme (apart from a few with transitional protection). Therefore, from 1 April 2015, individuals will need to decide whether to remain on their existing occupational pension scheme for the period of mobilisation and continue with their employee contributions. If this option is chosen, the MOD will pay the police force's employer's contributions (if the police force suspends its employer contributions during the period of mobilisation). Alternatively, the individual can join the Armed Forces' pension scheme for the period of mobilisation. If this option is chosen, there is no break in service in the police officer's police pension scheme (although no pensionable service is accrued in the police scheme during the mobilisation period). At the point of mobilisation Shared Services will work with the employee to explore the options available.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

28. Financial implications arising from this report are contained within existing Force budgets.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

29. The pension matters contained in paragraph 27 refers to the police officer's enrolment in the Police Pension Scheme 1987, the New Police Pension Scheme 2006 or the 2015 Police Pension Scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

30. The Board is asked to note the contents of this report.

David Wilkin
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