

MPS TALENT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Talent management has been identified as an increasingly important strategic challenge for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Looking across the changing demographics of the UK population, the talent pool from which the police service traditionally recruits is shrinking. By 2010, projections by the Director General of City and Guilds, backed up by the Government's Leitch Report (2006), suggest that the UK economy could have 2million skilled jobs unfilled. Policing is unlikely to escape the problem. The prospect of such a dearth of new 'talent' will place the MPS in a position where we increasingly have to compete for potential employees with the private sector and the higher salaries that can be commanded outside the public sector. The last two decades have also seen the psychological contract between companies and employees renegotiated away from the idea of job security in return for a generous pension, towards one where individuals maintain their 'employability' through managing their own development and career progression.

Against this backdrop, the MPS cannot afford to assume that the organisation can draw from an ongoing external supply of high potential, high performing people. The challenges for the police service in attracting and retaining talent are unique in comparison to other organisations. Effectively, the MPS has to survive on the talent recruited at the junior levels of the service and then nurtured up the ranks. In this context, the MPS needs to do more, both to attract talent into the organisation, but also to retain and effectively deploy the talent we already have.

Projecting forward to the Olympics, it has been highlighted that many senior officers, who can lead Command Teams and have the necessary Public Order experience, will be eligible for retirement by 2012. Work is required now to develop succession plans and to ensure we are "pulling through" the requisite talent. The Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA), National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) are all looking closely at talent management processes within the MPS. At senior levels, the MPA has expressed concern about the number, quality and diversity of the talent pool eligible to fill Commander posts and this prompted the recent MPA Scrutiny into Talent Management and Succession Planning across the MPS. The report from the Scrutiny lists a number of recommendations, including the need to articulate talent management as an express enabler of the MPS's seven strategic priorities, to develop and implement a succession planning and talent management strategy, and to develop positive action initiatives as part of that strategy.

The Commissioner has recently stressed the strategic importance of talent management to the MPS, and Martin Tiplady, HR Director, also highlighted talent management as the key challenge for HR in the MPS in 2008. With

this in mind, this paper outlines proposals for a talent management framework and structure for the MPS that will ensure we are developing and progressing our 'brightest and best' at all levels to deliver a more representative and assured pipeline of talent across the organisation.

Talent Management Framework¹

The new talent framework² focuses on facilitating the progression and succession planning for those identified with the greatest potential to rise to the highest levels of the organisation. The framework will build on existing talent management programmes, but enable the MPS to introduce a more cohesive and robust approach to identifying and developing talent, with rigorous talent assessments and validation processes at each stage of the talent pipeline. The core of the talent pool will come from the formal High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) and Intensive Development Programme (IDP). Around these schemes, the MPS will introduce and run associated programmes to ensure sufficient numbers in the talent pool. A graduate development programme will be introduced for police staff and officers to ensure we attract the brightest and best recruits into the organisation, and feed these through to the talent pool. Depending on the outcomes of the NPIA work on a combined national high potential scheme for staff and officers, the MPS would look to implement further high potential programmes for staff and officers at varying bands and ranks. These programmes would offer a range of development experiences within the organisation, including coaching, development meetings, project assignments, internal secondments, mentoring and work-based assessment to test and validate skills.

Currently, the HPDS finishes at Chief Inspector rank. Under existing processes, there is no structured career development available to senior talent outside the National Senior Careers Advisory Service (NSCAS). In the new framework, the MPS talent pool will be extended to include senior talent (superintending ranks and Band A / B police staff), offering individuals at this level bespoke career development and career management. Access onto this senior talent pool will be via a new Senior Leadership Development Review, incorporating 360-degree feedback and leadership diagnostics, to identify the best at this level and enable effective succession planning.

Work-based Assessment

Within this framework, questions arise as to the most appropriate 'development path' for those identified as talent. A review of our current promotion processes suggest they are not functioning as effectively as they should in getting talent to the top of the organisation. One option is to

¹ Please note that as a result of the MPA Scrutiny into Talent Management and Succession Planning, a number of proposals have been developed and will be developed to address the specific recommendations within the MPA draft report. However, it is not envisaged that any of these proposals will deviate substantially from the blueprint presented here.

² Ref. Developing Talent in the MPS: Talent Management Framework, 21st September 2007, Tamsyn Heritage

introduce a work-based assessment pathway to Superintendent, which would allow our most talented individuals to achieve rapid promotion, but demonstrate through rigorous on-the-job scrutiny and assessment that they have the right balance of operational, strategic and managerial skills to support the future leadership needs of the organisation. This would effectively allow the organisation to realize the Commissioner's Vision of enabling our best talent to reach Superintendent rank with 8-9 yrs service.

Work-based assessment to Superintendent would only be introduced for members of the talent pool and the positive action strands. Officers outside the talent pool would continue to progress through the mainstream promotion processes (i.e. the process would affect 120 or so officers as opposed to the 2,500-3,500 officers taking part in the mainstream promotion processes).

Robust assessment processes within the talent pool would be used to identify those Inspectors and Chief Inspectors who are suitable for promotion. Those officers identified as suitable would be temporarily promoted at the higher rank (Chief Inspector or Superintendent) and rigorously assessed in the workplace over a period of 6 months, to test and prove their competence. Only those officers who demonstrated that they met the relevant standard would be substantively promoted, those found to be unsuitable would revert to their former substantive rank.

Such a process would enable the MPS to better monitor the effectiveness and capability of its talent pool through scrutiny at each rank, and give greater confidence in the pool of talent the organisation has at Chief Inspector and Superintendent level.

Positive Action

It has been widely recognised that the MPS needs to do more to ensure that any talent pool is selected to include a diverse and representative group. Data from promotion processes over the last twelve months highlight a number of progression issues amongst BMEs, with only seven BME officers promoted to the rank of Sergeant and no BME officers selected for promotion at Chief Inspector rank and above. Only two BME officers have applied for the High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) over the last two years, neither of these individuals proving successful in their application. This would suggest our current promotion and talent spotting processes are failing to support the progression of BME officers.

The talent framework includes a programme (Equip to Achieve) to develop our brightest and best BME officers to level the playing field and ensure we have a more representative pipeline of talent across the organisation. The Equip to Achieve programme will target BME Constables, Sergeants, Inspectors and Chief Inspectors. The overarching objective is to develop effective leaders and managers from minority groups, currently under-represented in the leadership and management levels of the MPS. Under the talent management strategy, the Equip to Achieve programme will be one of the places we look for potential candidates to apply for the talent pool and,

ultimately, move onto the work-based assessment pathway for promotion to Superintendent.

Officers on the programme will benefit from intensive two-day development sessions based around core personal development and leadership modules; 1-2-1 coaching; mentoring; feedback and learning events. The programme will be explicitly linked to the MPS talent pool, with each Equip to Achieve participant mentored by a high potential officer to enable them to develop more understanding of what it takes to be successful as a member of the talent pool. The programme will also be accredited, with each participant expected to complete a Certificate in Leadership Development.

Such an approach will enable the MPS to take positive action to address current promotion and progression issues, but within the constraints of the legal framework.

Consultation

Organisational feedback has been sought on both the positive action strategy and the work-based assessment promotion pathway through a structured consultation process. Feedback was generally good with Business Groups and Staff Associations indicating that the proposals would have a positive effect on the issues highlighted.

Specialist Operations (SO) supported the proposals. Specialist Crime Directorate (SCD), Territorial Policing (TP) and METTUS gave broad support, although highlighted that at some future date they would like to see the Equip to Achieve programme expanded to embrace all the diversity strands and to include police staff.

Both the Leadership Academy and the Diversity and Citizen Focus Directorate (DCFD) indicated that they would like to work in closer partnership with the Career Management Unit (CMU) to support positive action initiatives, such as Equip to Achieve. However, DCFD identified that their capacity to work with HR in these terms is limited, rather their role is to provide advice on diversity and equality issues at a strategic level.

The British Association for Women in Policing (BAWP), the Ibero-American Association, the MPS Chinese and SE Asian Staff Association and the Association of Muslim Police all offered their support to the proposals. The latter did, however, stress the importance of the programme developing credibility over time by proving successful in getting BME officers promoted. The MPS Chinese and SE Asian Staff Association also made it clear that the positive action strategy needed to be carefully marketed and positioned corporately to ensure the majority workforce did not feel alienated or resentful. This was a theme that was picked up by the Superintendents' Association. No feedback was received from the other Staff Associations, although a series of meetings are planned at the beginning of February 2008 to ensure their engagement in the strategy.

The Federation returned no feedback, although the Superintendents' Association did respond at some length. In principle, the Superintendents' Association support the introduction of positive action programmes. Some of their feedback is already taken account of in the proposals, for instance the need to incorporate wider national developments when designing the strategy, the need to gather the views of DCFD on the proposal, and the requirement that any candidates progressing through positive action programmes meet national minimum standards. They also flagged up that there has to be proper governance of the schemes proposed and proper risk analysis undertaken; this risk analysis should provide for safeguards to ensure that we avoid fast-tracking unsuitable candidates through the promotion system. They also highlighted that the timescales for the launch of the Equip to Achieve programme appear unrealistic, particularly if we are to communicate and market the proposals in a way that secures widespread support.

With respect to the work-based assessment, the Superintendents' Association remain unconvinced that the introduction of alternative promotion processes outside the existing corporate processes represents the right way forward. There was some concern expressed at the reliance on work-based assessment to Superintendent within the framework and the assumption that the work-based assessment trial at Chief Inspector level would prove a success.

Additionally, the Superintendents' Association felt the proposals might become the subject of legal challenge in future. Specifically, they were concerned that Equip to Achieve participants would gain automatic access to the HPDS and/or work-based assessment to Superintendent. In fact, Equip to Achieve participants will still need to pass the national assessment centre for HPDS or any in-force selection processes, which are open to any MPS candidates evidencing the requisite potential. The papers were also circulated to the Directorate of Legal Services (DLS) for their views and they have indicated that the proposals fall within the legal constructs of section 38 of the Race Relations Act 1976.

The Way Forward

Given the broad organisation support following consultation, it is suggested that the proposals in this paper are taken forward as a blueprint for the future management and progression of talent within the MPS.

In this area, the MPS has the potential to break new ground and accordingly will be subject to national scrutiny. To ensure the effective implementation and management of the processes described, there is a clear requirement for sufficient resources and staff to be made available. At present, there is no one agreed department that holds accountability for talent management and there is no adequate resourcing provision for this area. The Career Development Team within the Career Management Unit, a team of four individuals, is largely driving the current work around talent management. The staffing level of this team is inadequate to deal effectively with current talent programmes (HPDS, IDP and senior career development), let alone the

development and delivery of the expanded framework detailed in this paper. In any event, there is no provision within the Transforming HR (THR) model for any dedicated resources to support talent management processes in the future (be they current or proposed talent processes).

There is a clear business need to allocate specific resources to this area within the THR model to ensure that talent management and positive action strategies can be delivered effectively. As one of the Corporate Priorities for 2008 and given its strategic focus, it is proposed that this team would fit better within the Strategic Centre under THR, rather than Expert Services. The Talent Management Unit will be setting the organisational strategy and framework for this area for the MPS, cutting across all Business Groups, and with heavy links to external organisations, such as the NPIA, MPA and HMIC. Decisions made on behalf of the MPS around positive action and extended work-based assessment will be scrutinised closely by other police forces and agencies, and it is likely any MPS work on senior talent management will have national repercussions. Reporting this team into the Deputy Director of Human Resources in the Strategic Centre will underline its strategic importance and ensure a lead of sufficient stature to drive the work forward and maintain momentum.

HR and Management Board are invited to agree the above as a basis for implementing the proposals described. Specifically, approval is sought for the following:

- ⇒ That the above talent management framework should be introduced to ensure we are identifying, developing and deploying talent effectively across the organisation
- ⇒ That the Strategic HR Advisors under the transformed HR model are designated leads for succession planning and talent management within their Business Groups to enable implementation of the talent management framework
- ⇒ That a Talent Management Unit should be formed within HR Directorate with appropriate resources made available to enable the MPS to scope, deliver and review the talent management framework
- ⇒ That the work-based assessment pathway to Superintendent is piloted on existing HPDS officers and evaluated, prior to full rollout across the talent pool
- ⇒ That the positive action Equip to Achieve programme is launched by HR Directorate in Spring 2008 to target BME officers with the highest potential