

Briefing Note – Police Officer Deployment Plan

Prior to the 2008-11 Budget and Business Planning process the MPS deployment plan allocated budgeted workforce targets (BWTs) between business groups with the intention of providing resources to meet those allocations. The deployment plan operated on an annual basis and the BWT was effectively correct only on the 31 March of each year (the target date for achievement of the BWT). The effect of a BWT is that people viewed it as the full staff number to be achieved at the beginning of the year, not the end. Given that BWTs could only be set once budgets were confirmed (i.e. in March) and it takes at least six months to recruit, let alone train a PC, this was always an erroneous view. The Service, therefore, could not meet these allocations (until year end) for a number of reasons, i.e.:

- the time required to recruit and retain officers
- the one year budget cycle meant any changes in officer numbers took some time to deliver as the deployment plan was subject to sharp peaks and troughs which affected the Service's ability to plan and deliver recruitment programmes
- the demand to fill posts in specialist business groups tended to result in vacancies being held predominantly by TP as the experienced resources required came from TP

All police officers join the MPS through the Initial Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP), delivered through the Territorial Policing (TP) business group. The replacement of wastage across the Service, therefore, starts with new officers coming into TP on the IPLDP, as does much of any growth in police officer numbers across the MPS. Under the borough-based police officer training programme introduced in August 2008 all recruits provide a visible police presence and are closely linked to the borough to which they will be posted.

To improve the management of police officer numbers more effectively across the Service, the MPS moved to a three year deployment plan from 1 April 2008 based on target strength numbers. Target strength is the level of resources that will actually be available to business groups rather than the more abstract BWT. This more medium-term planning approach is allowing the Service to:

- plan and manage recruitment and training programmes more effectively over three years
- reduce vacancy levels across all business groups
- provide business groups with more certainty on the timing of deployments to their units
- provide more effective protection to TP

The new three year deployment plan process will see the Service significantly reduce the number of officer vacancies from 4% in 2008/09 to 1% in 2011/12. This equates to approximately 900 more officers in post across the Service.

Based on the current planning assumptions the change in police officer numbers (police officers and police recruits) is set out below:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	+/-
Police Officers – TP	20,726	21,411	21,225	21,027	-301
Police Officers – Rest	10,662	11,123	11,458	11,440	+778
Police Officers - Total	31,388	32,534	32,683	32,467	+1,079
Police Recruits	1,542	749	598	488	-1,054
Total	32,930	33,283	33,281	32,955	+25

The principal reasons for the movement in police officer numbers are:

- the impact of the roll-out of Operation Herald
- additional posts to be funded jointly with local authorities

- additional posts within a number of specialist business groups
- a reduction in the number of recruits coming through the IPLDP
- other growth and reductions agreed as part of the 2009-12 budget

The reduction in growth by 2011/12 mainly reflects the net impact of Project Herald. This new staffing model which aims to deliver a more efficient and safer custody environment will involve the reduction of 550 officers over three years and the introduction of some 700 Dedicated Detention Officers and 200 nurses and staff. The released officers will be redeployed within the approved deployment plan.

The planning approach now adopted is expected to result in 1,079 more non-IPLDP officers being deployed across the Service by March 2012.