

WYPCC – Briefing / Decision template

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Circulation list:

Timing:	Urgent – Required for 11 March 2013 due to immediacy of recruitment campaign.
Purpose:	Briefing for PCC
Cleared by:	ACC John Robins

SUBJECT OF ADVICE: Police Officer Recruitment

Summary:

1. The Police and Crime Commissioner has agreed funding to enable recruitment of 44 police officers during 2013/14. This report outlines the issues to be considered in respect of the recruitment of these officers.
2. This report addresses the matters to be considered under the following broad headings:
 - I. Determining the recruitment pool
 - II. Selection process
 - III. Timescales

Recommendation:

3. It is recommended that :
 - a. The 'pool' of applicants for 2013/14 be restricted to serving police staff and Specials.
 - b. The selection process outlined in this report be applied to candidates.
 - c. The 44 student officers be appointed over two intakes to be held in the summer and autumn of 2013.

Consideration:

4. The Police and Crime Commissioner has agreed funding to enable recruitment of 44 police officers during 2013/14. This report outlines the issues to be considered in respect of the recruitment of these officers and provides the options that were considered by the Force Command Team.
5. The last recruitment campaign took place during the summer of 2012 when the Force was seeking to appoint 96 student officers for the 2012/13 financial year. The last of these appointments will be made on the intake that commences on 25 March 2013.

6. The recruitment pool on that occasion was restricted to existing police staff, specials and a small number of candidates who had been in the recruitment process from the previous recruitment campaign.
7. A total of 738 candidates applied for the last campaign (of which only 20 were external), which was sufficient to meet Force needs, even with an increase in the recruitment standards.
8. If this next campaign is also limited to existing police staff and specials, it is reasonable to assume a broadly similar level of interest which should easily meet the Force needs for 44 student officers.
9. We know from feedback that there were a number of potential candidates who could not apply in the last campaign because they could not meet the limited timescales and there is a small pool of Special Constables from a diverse background that have now completed their training and would be eligible to apply this time.
10. There is the possibility that changes to the starting salary for student officers may have some impact upon the attractiveness of the role but it is considered unlikely that it would have sufficient impact to prevent the appointment of 44 suitable candidates who are of a high quality. Police officer applicants tend to view the police service as a long term career choice.
11. It is 4 years since the last external police officer recruitment campaign and the level of interest from potential recruits will be overwhelming, particularly given that only a small number of appointments are required. (for example Wiltshire Constabulary have recently taken external applications for their latest recruitment campaign and attracted 200,000 hits on their website within just a few hours).
12. This report addresses the matters to be considered under the following broad headings:
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Determining the Recruitment 'Pool'

13. Given that the last external recruitment campaign produced 1,800 applicants in just 7 days, the recruitment 'pool' needs to be defined and managed in a way that enables the Force to recruit the best quality officers whilst at the same time allowing an efficient use of resources. An external campaign would be lengthy, inefficient, costly and not meet our immediate needs.
14. The following are a range of options for the 'pool'. Candidates from the previous campaign have been discussed above. Additional options are:
 - a. West Yorkshire Police employees only.
 - b. West Yorkshire Police employees and WYP Special Constables.
 - c. External campaign.
 - d. Transferees from other forces.

15. Consideration has also been given as to whether Community Volunteers should also be included as part of the extended police family. However, volunteers do not give a minimum level of commitment of their time to the Force and it is difficult to see what qualifying criteria could be fairly set if they were to be included.
16. These options do not have to be mutually exclusive. For example, the Force could choose to go with option (a) in the first instance and only move to option (b) to widen the pool of candidates if we are not successful in filling all our vacancies from that first campaign.

(a) West Yorkshire Police Employees only

17. There can be no doubt that there will be a high level of interest from current employees. For example, during the last recruitment campaign which ran in the summer of 2012, 507 members of police staff applied to become police officers. There is no reason to expect that this same number will not be similarly replicated this time. With the same success rate as the last campaign, that could be enough candidates to fill all 44 appointments.
18. A police officer recruitment campaign restricted to existing employees will assist in reducing the number of employees who need to leave the Force due to redundancy. This should have a positive effect upon morale and employee relations in the Force.
19. Creating opportunities for police staff also has a considerable financial benefit, creating movement in the workforce and reducing redundancy and pension costs.

(b) West Yorkshire Police Employees and Special Constables

20. The last recruitment campaign attracted 211 applications from serving Special Constables and it is anticipated that this interest will be maintained during our next campaign. Over the past 12 months in particular, there has been anecdotal evidence to indicate that an increased number of Special Constables are joining the Special Constabulary because they see it as a first step towards joining the regular Force.
21. Depending upon the length of service and hours of duty performed as a Special Constable, the assessments as to the suitability and performance of specials should be accurate.
22. Command Team has previously indicated their desire that recruit applicants should have shown their commitment to West Yorkshire Police in a meaningful way. Service as a Special Constable is a good way of doing this and including this group would be consistent with that requirement. It would also signal to potential future applicants that becoming a Special is a potential route, thereby encouraging applications to become a Special.
23. There may be a broader advantage in opening applications to Special Constables in that the intake pool is not seen to be limited only to existing paid members of the WYP workforce.

24. The Special Constabulary is particularly well represented by officers from a BME background (12.9% of the current strength) and the advertisement for this recruitment campaign includes a statement that applications from BME candidates are particularly welcomed. A separate support seminar will also be held for applicants who are from a BME background.

(c) External Campaign

25. The level of interest from an external recruitment campaign will be so high that it will be impossible to manage in an efficient way. Even if we were to introduce strict pre-application criteria the only way to restrict the number of applications to around the number required would be by severely limiting the time that the application process remains open. Controlling it in this way will not improve the quality of applicants and presents a risk to public confidence.

26. Taking a large number of applicants from an external campaign and appointing the 44 best performing will be very expensive and resource intensive.

27. Staffing levels within the HR Department were determined on the basis of there being no police officer recruitment. If the recruitment campaign does go external, then additional staff will have to be appointed temporarily in order to deal with the campaign. An external campaign would be lengthy, inefficient, costly and not meet our immediate needs.

(d) Transferees from Other Forces

28. It is reasonable to assume that there will be a level of interest from officers seeking to transfer from other Forces. The level of casual enquiries that are currently received would support this assumption.

29. A recruitment campaign for transferees could be targeted to attract officers with the specific skills and experience required to meet current and predicted Force need.

30. The advantages of recruiting transferees are significant savings in training costs and time, but on occasions the motivation of such applicants is not straight forward.

Selection Process

31. One of the opportunities arising from recruiting a small number of officers is that it allows the recruitment process to be designed and run to select the best performing 44 candidates.

32. If the number of candidates is restricted by controlling the 'pool' as outlined above, this will enable all the applicants to be assessed with appointments being offered to the best 44. If this is done in conjunction with the improved assessment and selection process introduced for the last recruitment campaign this will meet Command Team's aims of appointing the best candidates available.

33. In accordance with national guidance, those candidates from the last campaign who passed the national SEARCH Assessment Centre and were unsuccessful at the final in-force interview, will automatically progress to that final stage of the

34. Early indications from Force Training School are that the revised selection process has produced an excellent group of student officers and that it has improved the quality of appointments. It is proposed that the same process should be applied for this recruitment exercise i.e:

- a. Attendance at a recruitment support seminar.
- b. Shortlisting of competency based questions (CBQ).
- c. National Recruit Assessment Centre (SEARCH).
- d. Structured interview.

(a) Attendance at a recruitment support seminar

35. Only potential candidates who have attended a recruitment support seminar will be eligible to apply. The seminar will have an emphasis on the standards and behaviour that the Force expects from recruits. It will explain the high standards that will be set for the selection process and encourage weaker candidates to self-deselect.

(b) Shortlisting of competency based questions

36. The competency based questions (CBQ) that form part of the current police officer application form are a relatively cheap and cost effective method of reducing large numbers of applications.

37. The CBQ is a significant de-selector of candidates and it also has high predictive validity for the National Recruit Assessment Centre (SEARCH).

(c) National Recruit Assessment Centre (SEARCH)

38. Although it is now widely considered that SEARCH has some limitations, it is, nevertheless, a good measure of the competencies required of a student officer. There is also a requirement under Police Regulations for officers to successfully pass SEARCH.

39. The minimum pass mark set for SEARCH by the NPIA is 50% but forces can increase this mark if they wish. It is proposed that the Force should apply a pass mark of 60%.

(d) Structured Interview

40. Command Team has previously agreed in principle to the introduction of a competency based interview to assess factors such as values, motivation and attitudes based upon the work carried out by Dr Pete Jones of Shire Professional.

41. The Resourcing Team in HR has worked with Dr Jones to develop the questions and scoring criteria and to deliver training to interviewers for this part of the selection process. In particular, this process assesses candidates against the areas of service delivery, professionalism and serving the public.

42. The level of involvement of operational officers is a key element of the revised process. This is in terms of both the credibility and acceptance of the process and also in terms of the quality of the candidates appointed.

Timescales

43. It is planned that the first intake of student officers from this campaign will be appointed during the early summer with the final appointments being made during the autumn.

Affordability

44. Funding has been made available for the appointment of 44 police officers.

Recommendations:

45. The recommendations contained in this report have been agreed by Command Team and the Police and Crime Commissioner is now asked to approve them –

1. The recruitment pool for this campaign will be from serving police staff and Special constables,
2. The selection process will be as the last process and as described in this report and include positive action measures to encourage applications from under-represented groups,
3. The final interview process will be split between existing SEARCH eligible candidates from the last process and this new process, to enable an early intake of recruits,
4. The intakes will be appointed as soon as possible in the early summer and early autumn of 2013.

APPENDICES:

None