



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	RPA Vacancy Control Procedure
Date:	9 October 2009
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Relevant Background Information

This report: outlines the main provisions of the Vacancy Control Procedures which have been agreed by the Local Government Reform Joint Forum (LGRJF) and issued under the authority of the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) under Section 40(4) (f) of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972.

The attached procedure has been issued by the LGSC as a statutory recommendation for adoption by councils from 1 October 2009.

All 26 councils (including Environmental Health and Building Control Group Committees), arc21 and SWaMP 2008 will implement the Vacancy Control System uniformly across local government, on a phased basis, with effect from 1 October 2009

Key Issues

1. The scheme seeks to safeguard the employment of existing council staff and mitigate against possible redundancies within local government sector and the RPA 'at risk groups'.
2. Essentially, the scheme means that where a Council has a vacancy it must seek to fill this from an appropriate 'at risk' group in the first instance.
3. Councils must consider trawling vacancies to the appropriate 'at risk' pools in the following order
 - a. 'At risk' staff in the individual council
 - b. 'At risk' staff in the amalgamated council cluster
 - c. 'At risk' staff across the 26 councils
 - d. 'At risk' staff across all the sectors in the RPA Affected Group.

4. The scheme is being phased in and from 01 October 2009 will apply to the posts of:
 - Chief Executive
 - Directors
 - Heads of Service
 - PAs to the above
 - Member Services

5. This means that if councils have a vacancy in any of the above areas they must seek to fill it from either their own council; the cluster; the 26 councils; or the RPA affected Group. This will therefore affect the filling of the Director of Property and Projects, the Director of Parks and Leisure, the Director of Health and Environmental Services; any vacancies that are heads of service or PA posts and any posts within the Member Services Section.

6. Members should note that the practical implications of implementing this scheme within Belfast City Council are the subject of ongoing consideration and discussion with the Local Government Staff Commission (as Belfast will not have the same degree of risk as a direct result of RPA as the other councils). A report will be brought to committee in the very near future on the filling of these posts and the consequences for BCC following receipt of advice from the Local Government Staff Commission.

7. It should also be noted that if BCC has to trawl affected posts in the first instance to an 'at risk' pool this will still be the subject of a merit based robust selection process in accordance with the LGSC Code on Recruitment and Selection. Should no candidate be deemed suitable to fill the vacancy as a result of the trawl to an 'at risk' pool the post can then be advertised externally.

Resource Implications

If the Council is required to trawl within an 'at risk' category in the first instance and no appointment is made the Council can then go to external advert. This however will mean two selection processes and therefore added cost. Consideration may therefore have to be given to ways in which the cost of assessment centres, adverts etc may be reduced.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the Vacancy Control Procedures and the potential impact on BCC.

Decision Tracking

A further report will be made to Committee on the impact for forthcoming recruitment exercises once further advice has been received from the LGSC.

Key to Abbreviations

LGSC - Local Government Staff Commission
 LGRJF - Local Government reform Joint Forum

Documents Attached

Vacancy Control Procedure and covering letter from LGJRF