

# NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

14 November 2008

Agenda Item	
Report No	

## Corporate Operational Shift Pattern Revision (VSA-99)

### Report by the Chief Constable

#### **SUMMARY**

This report provides Members with an update on the current position and progress regarding the proposed implementation of shift revision for operational shift workers.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Members will be aware of the ongoing project work in relation to the proposed revision of shift patterns for operational staff arising from recommendations made by the Force Review Programme aimed at securing a variety of organisational and officer benefits through the adoption of a corporate shift pattern and rest day cycle.

The proposed revision can significantly improve the work-life balance of operational staff whilst enhancing operational capacity and capability to meet demand and support the corporate resource planning process.

Such an approach is currently in existence within all other Scottish forces and provides greater flexibility in delivery of response policing, undertaking local initiatives, event policing and resourcing abnormality, also having the potential to reduce existing revenue spending for more productive use.

Detailed study and training in professional resource management supported by Home Office recognised experts in this field from Merseyside Police Work Scheduling Unit provided a variable shift model ('Variable Shift Arrangement 99<sup>1</sup>') which was found to be a viable option for the Force to adopt, this being supported by both the Force Executive and staff associations.

Progression of this proposal was approved by the Force Executive with the direction that successful completion of formal consultation with staff should prompt its implementation across the Force area commencing January 2009.

It was recognised that the application of the shift system must be guided by the geography of the Force, and full consideration of local policing requirements, and therefore may not apply to selected areas for reasons of practicality, viability and service provision. Such cases will be determined by local commanders.

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<sup>1</sup> A variable shift arrangement involves shifts which are longer than eight hours duration, with varying start times which can be flexed to meet demand. Due to the longer hours worked by officers, the working week then becomes compressed into fewer working days. This arrangement requires a **Work Force Agreement** in terms of The Working Time Regulations 1998 (reg.41) and a **Variable Shift Arrangement** in regard to the Police (Scotland) Regulations 2004, between the Chief Constable and the Northern Joint Branch Board of the Scottish Police Federation.

## **Current Position**

Following progression of the proposal, a Work Force Agreement and a Variable Shift Arrangement were prepared in conjunction with the Northern Joint Branch Board of the Scottish Police Federation, and all federated ranks were thereafter asked to vote on their willingness or otherwise to support the introduction of a VSA. This initial consultation process concluded on 20 October 2008, which showed a majority of votes cast in support of pursuance of the proposed variable shift arrangement.

Revision of this kind requires significant planning and preparation and to this end Divisional Preparation Teams have been established in each of the policing divisions to determine local requirements in connection with the application of the variable shift pattern and associated team composition and preparations to deliver the incremental introduction of the new shift pattern commencing January 2009.

It is proposed that the implementation will be approached on an incremental basis commencing with core response police officers, later encompassing operational police staff (shift workers) and crime management staff.

Subsequent application of these arrangements in the case of specialised policing units or environments will be approached on an individual basis subject to management consideration, viability, need and service requirement.

The over-arching principle which will be applied in consideration of staff eligibility to work the variable shift arrangement will be that the opportunity to do so will be made available wherever this is deemed viable and sustainable.

This work-stream is progressing at a pace along with further necessary consultation led by the secretary of the Northern Joint Branch Board of the Scottish Police Federation and representatives of relevant staff associations.

A parallel project work-stream aimed at the introduction of the national personnel management IT system '**SCoPE**' (System to Co-ordinate Personnel and Establishment) to the force is progressing in tandem. The functionality of this system, particularly in relation to duty management capability, will greatly assist first line managers with the management of their resources, implementation of the new arrangements and maintenance of robust resource management.

A presentation on the operation of the new system will be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Members of the Board are invited to note the content of this Briefing document.**

**I Latimer  
Chief Constable**

**28 October 2008**