



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Re-introduction of RPA Vacancy Control
Date:	19 October 2012
Reporting Officer:	Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources, extension 3220
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1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	RPA Vacancy Control Procedures, agreed by the Local Government Reform Joint Forum (LGRJF) and issued under the authority of the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) came into force on 1 October 2009 and were subsequently suspended on 23 June 2010.
1.2	The primary rationale of these procedures is to seek to “...safeguard the employment of existing council staff as a result of the decisions arising from the Review of Public Administration”.
1.3	Now that the timetable for implementing RPA in local government has been clarified, the LGSC has advised that the Vacancy Control Procedures will be re-introduced under Section 40 (4) (f) of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 with effect from 1 November 2012.

2.0	Key Issues
2.1	<p>The Procedures set out a stepped process for councils to follow in respect of mitigating potential redundancies as follows:</p> <p>Step 1 - Avoid creating any new posts unless there is an inescapable need or requirement to do so;</p> <p>Step 2 – Avoid filling any vacant posts;</p> <p>Step 3 – If needs be, fill vacant posts using restricted pools i.e. from ‘at risk’ staff within own council; ‘cluster’ councils; 26 councils; or the RPA Affected Group.</p> <p>Step 4 – If post is not filled via the restricted pool approach, publicly advertise the vacant post but consider filling it only on a temporary, fixed term basis etc.</p>

	Step 5 – Record all relevant issues / decisions made and provide regular reports to the LGSC.
2.2	At this stage the procedures only relates to vacancies that exist in the following groupings of staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive, • Director, • Head of Service, • PAs to the above posts • Members' / Democratic Services posts.
2.3	The re-introduction of these RPA Vacancy Control Procedures will be incorporated into the council's existing vacancy control processes (whereby the decision to fill a post is considered on a case by case basis in the context of corporate priorities, the efficiency programme and the need to deliver our Investment Programme)
2.4	The council is committed to providing 200 job opportunities as part of the Investment Programme; this means 200 job opportunities publicly advertised by Belfast City Council. The re-introduction of these RPA Vacancy Control Procedures will have a minimal impact on the Investment Programme because the need to avoid creating any new posts, avoid filling vacant posts and fill posts via the restricted pool approach instead of public advertisement will only relate to the aforementioned five categories of affected staff. Should however the scope of affected RPA staff be widened beyond these five categories of staff, then the impact of the RPA Vacancy Control Procedures may be more significant.
2.5	This issue will be kept under review and committee will be updated accordingly.

3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no significant financial or human resource implications contained within this report.

4.0	Equality Implications
4.1.	The method of filling RPA affected posts will depend on the circumstances of each individual case with the council taking full account of all equality considerations.

5.0	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to note the re-introduction of RPA Vacancy Control Procedures for Chief Executive, Director, Head of Service, PA and Members' / Democratic Services posts with effect from 1 November 2012.

6.0	Key to Abbreviations
RPA – Review of Public Administration LGRJF – Local Government Reform Joint Forum LGSC – Local Government Staff Commission PA – Personal Assistants	