

CORPORATE PLAN
2004 – 2007
and
ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN
2004 – 2005



GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

DCU	- District Command Unit
DPP	- Director of Public Prosecutions
JNCC	- Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee
NIO	- Northern Ireland Office
NIPB	- Northern Ireland Policing Board
OOC	- Office of the Oversight Commissioner
OFFICE	- The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
PSNI	- Police Service of Northern Ireland

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INTRODUCTION

It is important for any organisation to reflect on the current work and challenges it faces and, in that context, to plan ahead with goals and objectives which will maintain direction and progress. I am pleased to present to the Secretary of State and, through his Office, to the public and the police our goals for the next government planning cycle 2004 – 2007 and our business objectives and targets for the next 12 months 2004 – 2005.

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

My Vision for the Office remains unaltered, we strive to build excellence in the police complaints system which is independent and impartial, which has the confidence of the public and the police, and we want to build quality and excellence into everything we do. Much has been done, much remains to be done, I do not believe we have yet achieved this but it is what drives us from day to day in delivering this public service essential for the governance, accountability and improvement of policing in Northern Ireland.

AWARENESS ACCESSIBILITY RESPONSIVENESS

The awareness of the Office is exceptionally high but this can never be taken for granted. If a person does not know how or where to make a complaint about a service provided, the system of complaints is quite useless. Accessibility is equally important in the context of fairness. We must continue to do everything within reason to be accessible to all members of the public regardless of their situation or location. Delays in service provision are always an issue in offices such as mine and while staff attempt to respond quickly to complaints, I know we can do better. Information technology has many benefits, particularly in efficiency in the use of staff time. The Office has a computerised case management system which is gravely lacking in key areas and urgently needs to be replaced or enhanced. It is our objective for the next 12 months to resolve this particular problem so that we can achieve efficiencies in administration and give a better and more comprehensive service to members of the public and to police officers. Providing an effective and efficient service to the public and to police remains a central element in our Mission and goals and indeed our core statutory duty.

EFFECTIVE AND ROBUST INVESTIGATION

This is core to the Mission of the Office. Any allegation by a member of the public of misconduct by a police officer must be investigated thoroughly and professionally with evidence gathered which will withstand the scrutiny of a court or tribunal. We are building a strong professional investigation capacity into our teams. Already 15 members of our investigation staff are nearing completion of an investigative programme accredited by Portsmouth University, a leader in the development of competence-based qualifications in policing and investigation studies. We aim to double the number of staff involved.

The Office deals with the full range of complaints and allegations, from incivility to accusations of collusion or murder. Evidence based investigation is difficult even with current allegations, but investigating older complaints is much more difficult. This is a challenge which now weighs heavily on the Office. We handle grave or exceptional complaints from all sections of the community: relatives of civilians murdered by terrorists, relatives of murdered police officers, prison officers, UDR/RIR and other military personnel, and relatives of individuals who may themselves have been involved in terrorism. When such matters are brought to the Office, they cannot be disregarded and, provided the statutory criteria and tests are met, the Office must respond. Significant resources and highly developed skills are required for such

investigations. As with other public bodies additional funds are limited, so priorities and resources within the Office have had to be re-aligned to help us manage this situation. One of the strategic goals of the Office over the next three years will be to meet this challenge.

IMPROVING THE POLICY AND PRACTICE OF POLICING

We have had the responsibility under legislation to research trends and patterns within the complaints system and in policy and practice issues relating to policing. This duty has now been supplemented by a new duty and challenge placed upon the Office under the Policing (NI) Act 2003 to investigate and not just research Policy and Practice. Research will continue to be an important function but clearly over the next three years we must build our Directorate of Policy and Practice and establish a capacity and a capability to carry out such work.

In this Plan we share with you the objectives and targets which will underpin the activity, output and outcomes of the Office. We have also identified almost 60 specific performance indicators which demonstrate a commitment on our part to be open and transparent in the targets and performance to which we need to be held to account, whether internally or externally. We welcome consultation and feedback at all times. We attempt to engage and visit as many community organisations or bodies as we can. We have extensive consultation and good working relationships with key stakeholders in the Criminal Justice system, and with the police staff associations. I urge you again to make contact with us through our Information Office at info@policeombudsman.org.

NUALA O'LOAN
Police Ombudsman
April 2004

STATUTORY DUTIES

THE POLICE OMBUDSMAN FOR NORTHERN IRELAND IS:

- Established by the Police (NI) Act 1998;
- Accountable to Parliament through the Secretary of State;
- Constituted and operated independently of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the Chief Constable;
- Required to have regard to any guidance given by the Secretary of State;
- An executive non-departmental public body financed by a Grant in Aid from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO).

THE POLICE (NI) ACT 1998 DIRECTS THE POLICE OMBUDSMAN TO:

- Secure an efficient, effective and independent complaints system;
- Secure the confidence of the public and of members of the police force;
- Observe all requirements as to confidentiality;
- Receive complaints and other referred matters and to decide how to deal with them;
- Receive and record policy complaints and refer them to the Chief Constable;
- Make recommendations to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) for criminal action;
- Make recommendations and directions in respect of disciplinary action against police officers;
- Notify the Secretary of State, NIPB and Chief Constable of the outcome of certain complaints, referred matters and any investigation which the Ombudsman initiates without a complaint;
- Report to the Secretary of State annually.

THE POLICE (NI) ACT 2000 DIRECTS THE POLICE OMBUDSMAN TO:

- Carry out inquiries as directed by the Secretary of State;
- Supply statistical information to the NIPB.

THE POLICE (NI) ACT 2003 DIRECTS THE POLICE OMBUDSMAN TO:

- Investigate a current practice or policy of the police if:-
 - the practice or policy comes to her attention under the Act, and
 - she has reason to believe that it would be in the public interest to investigate the practice or policy.

PUBLIC VALUES

INDEPENDENCE

The Police Ombudsman operates independently of the Police Service and the NIPB in Northern Ireland and strives to investigate all complaints objectively and even-handedly.

IMPARTIALITY

The Police Ombudsman and her staff handle and investigate complaints free of bias or influence.

INTEGRITY

The Police Ombudsman and her staff operate with integrity in all their dealings with the Public and the Police.

OPENNESS

The Police Ombudsman is determined that the police complaints system will be as open and transparent as possible within the requirements of the law.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Police Ombudsman must not disclose any information in relation to a complaint except as provided by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.

FAIRNESS

The Police Ombudsman gives all complainants and police officers an opportunity to state their case.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Police Ombudsman observes the relevant international principles and standards on policing and respects human rights.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Office is open to the public during normal working hours and there is also a dedicated phone number for complainants.

SATISFACTION

The welcomes from members of the public and police officers any complaints, criticisms or comments in relation to the manner in which complaints have been handled.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Police Ombudsman is accountable to Parliament, to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and to the Courts. An Annual Report and Accounts to the Secretary of State must be laid before Parliament.

CORPORATE GOALS 2004-2007

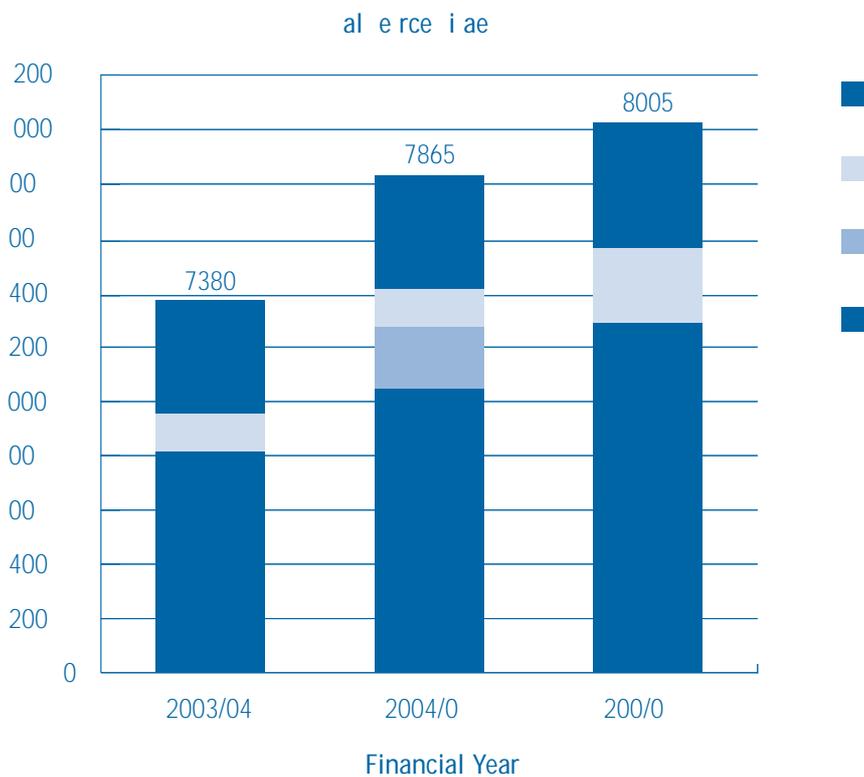
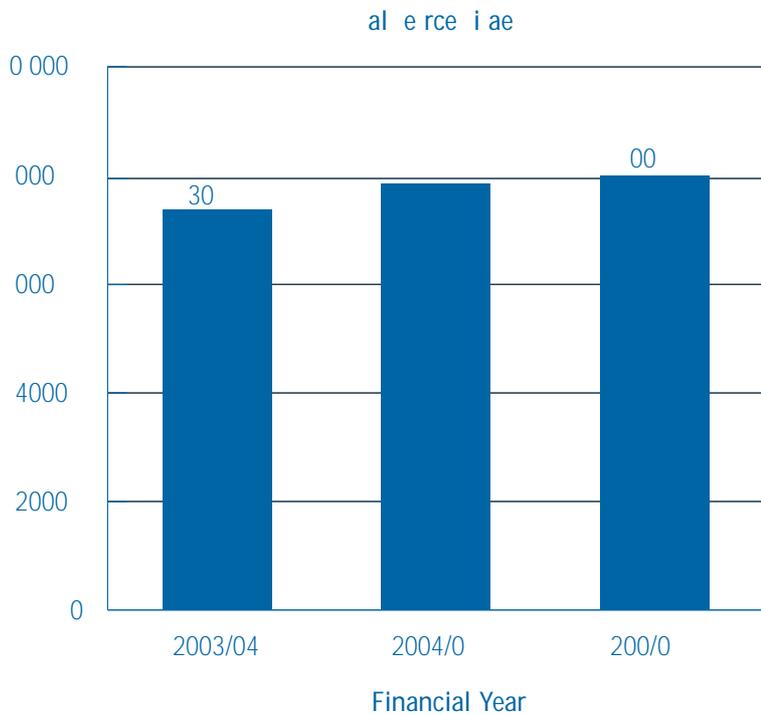
GOAL 1 – TO STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE DELIVERY OF AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE POLICE COMPLAINTS SYSTEM

OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS WE AIM TO:

- Operate within financial approvals and baselines set by the NIO, achieving maximum efficiencies and effectiveness in the use of resources;
- Maximise the level of informal resolution of suitable complaints. Currently 72% of complaints which are deemed suitable are informally resolved;
- Apply the highest standards in the effective, independent and impartial administration and investigation of complaints;
- Improve timeliness in the administration and investigation of complaints (excluding process time with external bodies eg DPP);
- Introduce effective mediation processes;
- Train and externally accredit at least 75% of investigators through the programme agreed with the University of Portsmouth.

GRANT IN AID AND RESOURCE BASELINES 2004-2007

TOTAL RESOURCE BASED ESTIMATES	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Baseline	6825	7060	7300
Approved Funding Carried Forward		250	
Capital	100	100	250
Total Cash	6925	7410	7550
Resource Elements	455	455	455
Total Resource	7380	7865	8005



CORPORATE GOALS 2004-2007

GOAL 2 – TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT IN POLICING THROUGH POLICY AND PRACTICE, RETROSPECTIVE AND OTHER INVESTIGATIONS

OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS WE AIM TO:

- Work with the police in decreasing the number of situations which give rise to members of the public making complaints;
- Work with the police in decreasing the number of situations giving rise to serious allegations against the police - current average allegations of oppressive conduct over the last 3 years' allegations have reduced from 50% to 37%;
- Contribute to the overall improvement in policing policy and practice through general and specific recommendations arising from investigations;
- Play a full part in the strengthening of Policing governance and accountability mechanisms in conjunction with the NIPB, the Office of the Oversight Commissioner (OOC), District Policing Partnerships, the NIO and other key stakeholders;
- Develop a comprehensive framework and programme for the investigation of policy and practice matters;
- Investigate in so far as is possible within available resources, retrospective grave or exceptional matters;
- Play a full part in the strengthening of policing governance and accountability mechanisms in conjunction with the NIPB, the OOC, District Policing Partnerships, the NIO and other key stakeholders;
- Develop a comprehensive framework and programme for the investigation of policy and practice matters;
- Investigate in so far as is possible within available resources, retrospective grave or exceptional matters.

GOAL 3 – TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND IMPROVE POLICE CONFIDENCE IN THE INDEPENDENCE AND IMPARTIALITY OF THE POLICE COMPLAINTS SYSTEM

OVER THE NEXT 3 YEARS WE AIM TO:

- Maintain public confidence in the independence and impartiality of the Office as measured against the results in the public survey published in April 2004;
- Improve awareness, understanding and confidence of Police Officers in the independence and impartiality of the Office as measured against survey results released in March 2004;
- Contribute to the Government Public Service Agreement target of improving confidence in Policing;
- Consult about, approve and implement a new Code of Ethics for staff of the Police Ombudsman;
- Maintain the performance and compliance with the Equality Scheme of the Office and the requirements of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and Article 55 of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998, measured against 2003-2004 performance;
- Comply with and satisfy the expectations of relevant Commissions and Inspectorates such as the Criminal Justice Inspectorate, OOC, the Surveillance Commissioner, the Criminal Justice Oversight Commissioner, the Equality Commission, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission;
- Through the Secretary of State, report to Parliament on the performance and achievement of the Office in compliance with the legislation.

BUSINESS PLAN 2004-2005

OBJECTIVES, TARGETS AND INDICATORS

OBJECTIVE 1 To provide information about the nature and outcomes of police complaints and developments in policing practice

- Give presentations within the community on the work of the Police Ombudsman, having regard to the needs of Section 75 groups
Equality Scheme Progress Reports six monthly
- Inform the public through the media and the website (www.policeombudsman.org) about the nature of complaints against the police, their outcomes and recommendations for development in policing practice
Information on the website to be up-dated regularly
- Make resources available for the purposes of the Review of the Office by Northern Ireland Affairs Committee of Houses of Parliament
As required
- Report as required to Equality Commission, OOC, Surveillance Commissioner, Criminal Justice Inspector, Information Commissioner, Criminal Justice Commissioner
Report as required
- Publish the Corporate Plan and the Annual Business Plan
May 2004
- Publish Annual Report and the Statement of Accounts
July 2004

OBJECTIVE 2 To communicate to the Chief Constable and key stakeholders recommendations for the improvement of policing matters

- Communicate trends and patterns issues arising from complaints to the Chief Constable, NIPB and NIO
Statistical reports to be available quarterly
- Monitor and report on multiple complaints against officers to PSNI and District Command Units
Report and up date to be issued quarterly
- Monitor and communicate all recommendations made by this Office and the relevant responses of PSNI
Recommendations and responses thereto monitored 6 monthly
- Give presentations to NIPB, District Policing Partnerships and key policing stakeholders on opportunities for improving policing policy and practice
Policy and practice presentations to stakeholders
- Comply with Patten Recommendations and report accordingly to the OOC
Report to Oversight Commissioner as required

BUSINESS PLAN 2004-2005

OBJECTIVES, TARGETS AND INDICATORS

OBJECTIVE 3 To enhance the communication to and confidence of members of the PSNI

- Review communication procedures for the dissemination of information to PSNI
Review October 2004
- Further develop a corporate and co-ordinated programme to meet the information needs of PSNI officers, including the use of presentations, staff literature and 'policenet'
Programme of presentations to be implemented in September 2004
- Establish a Working Committee in conjunction with Police and police staff associations and strengthen working arrangements
Initiate by June 2004
- Maintain procedures for consultation and liaison with Staff Associations, the Police Federation of Northern Ireland, The Chief Police Officers' Staff Association and the Superintendents' Association of Northern Ireland
Programme of meetings
- Keeping police officers informed on investigation progress
Up date on progress 6 weekly

OBJECTIVE 4 To conduct complex and retrospective investigations in line with resources and priorities

- Prioritise and maximise the ability of the Office to address complex investigations within available resources
Staff resource to relevant investigation teams to increase
- Inform complainants with regard to realistic timescales in relation to the commencement of investigations
Timescale to be indicated to complainants
- Provide progress reports on retrospective or complex investigations to complainants
Complainants to be informed at 6 weekly intervals

BUSINESS PLAN 2004-2005

OBJECTIVES, TARGETS AND INDICATORS

OBJECTIVE 5 To develop the framework for policy and practice investigations

- Review the existing system for recording policy and practice complaints
Policy and practice framework to be approved September 2004
- Identify patterns and trends arising from policy/practice complaints
First report to be issued December 2004
- Maintain a database on policy/practice investigations and outcomes
Policy and Practice investigation monitoring quarterly
- Research, analyse and report on key policing complaints issues
Research reports or papers as scheduled

OBJECTIVE 6 To improve organisational policies, structure, security and ICT support

- Realign the structure and staffing resource to meet new operational and statutory requirements
New functional structure to be in place by September 2004
- Review internal policies in compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
Review by May 2004
- Improve the communication policy and procedures within the Office
To be revised, agreed and implemented by October 2004
- Review the effectiveness of the ICT strategy and support systems
Report by September 2005
- Analyse and improve risks management controls in line with the Risk Management Strategy
Audit compliance against Risk Management Register
- Conduct review of security policy and procedures in compliance with Manual of Protective Security
Report and recommendations to be agreed by June 2004
- Review staff consultation machinery, occupational health and health and safety regimes
Revised arrangements to be in place by November 2004

BUSINESS PLAN 2004-2005

OBJECTIVES, TARGETS AND INDICATORS

OBJECTIVE 7 To develop the knowledge and skills of all staff to deliver an effective and efficient police complaints system

- Expand the programme for participation in the University of Portsmouth accredited training for investigation staff
Enrol an additional 15 staff
- Approve relevant competence based or specialist training for other staff
Provide for additional 15 staff
- Provide for a high level of staff training needs identified in performance development plans
Provide for minimum 80% of staff development or training needs so identified
- Introduce a new role of trainee investigator
To be agreed through JNCC and to be implemented by end of March 2005
- Conduct quality assurance exercises on complaints and investigations processes
Quality Assurance reports as scheduled

OBJECTIVE 8 To achieve operating costs targets in line with Business Plan 2004-2005

- Plan, manage and monitor expenditure within the conditions attached to Grant in Aid
Management of grant aid within 2% of allocated budget
- Develop the delegation of budgets and revision of cost centre structures within the Office
Revised structure and monitoring in place by July 2004
- Develop performance management information for managers within the Office
Performance management reports to be provided to SMT Quarterly
- Extend the internal audit programme to undertake value for money studies
Audit reports on best value to be conducted as agreed in Audit Plan
- Comply with internal and external audit requirements and recommendations
Monitor through Audit Committee quarterly
- Finalise the business case for a new or enhanced Case Handling System. Secure appropriate funding and procure
By the end of March 2005

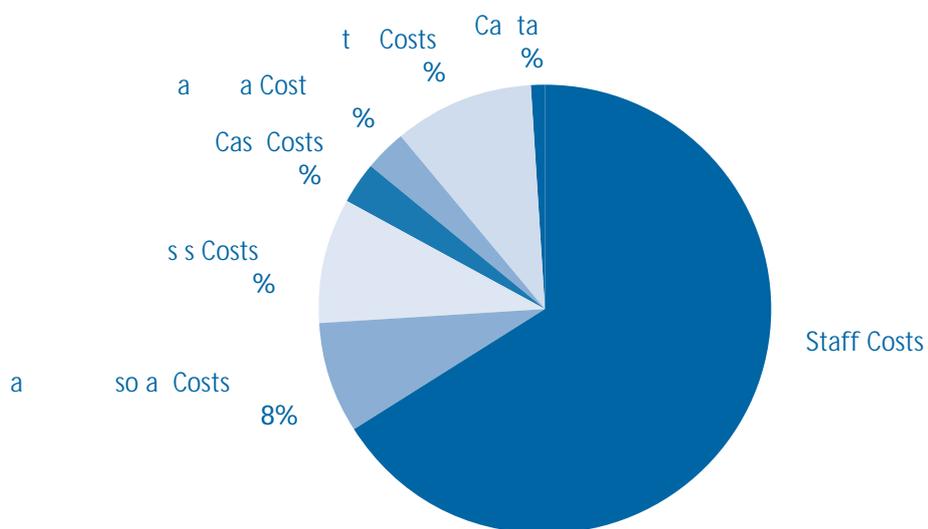
BUSINESS PLAN 2004-2005

OBJECTIVES, TARGETS AND INDICATORS

RESOURCE AND EXPENDITURE TARGETS

RESOURCE 2004/05	TOTAL	RECURRENT	CAPITAL
Staff Costs	4835	4835	
Training and Personnel Costs	620	620	
Premises Costs	680	680	
Case Costs	225	225	
Admin and Media Costs	230	230	
Other Costs	720	720	
Capital	100		100
Total Cash Costs	7410	7310	100

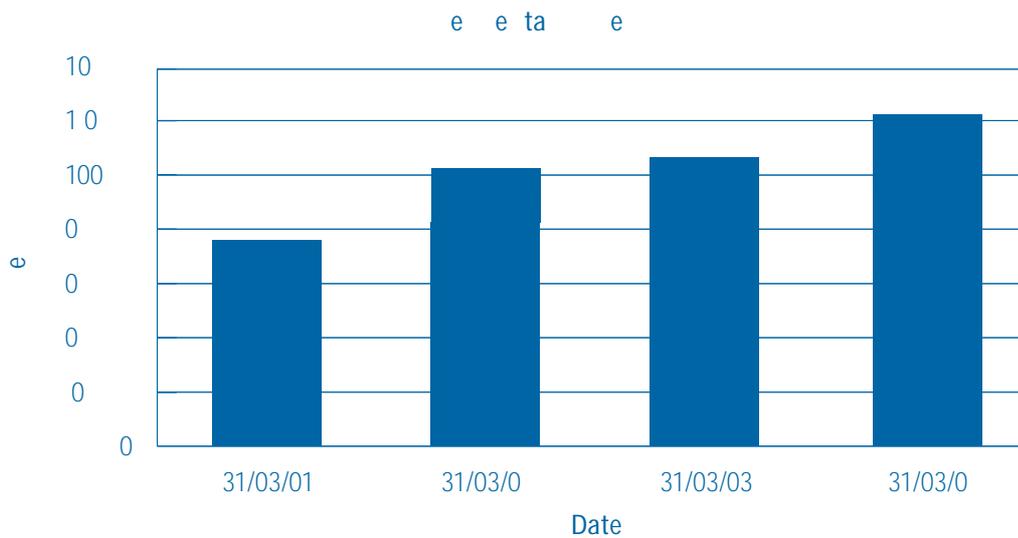
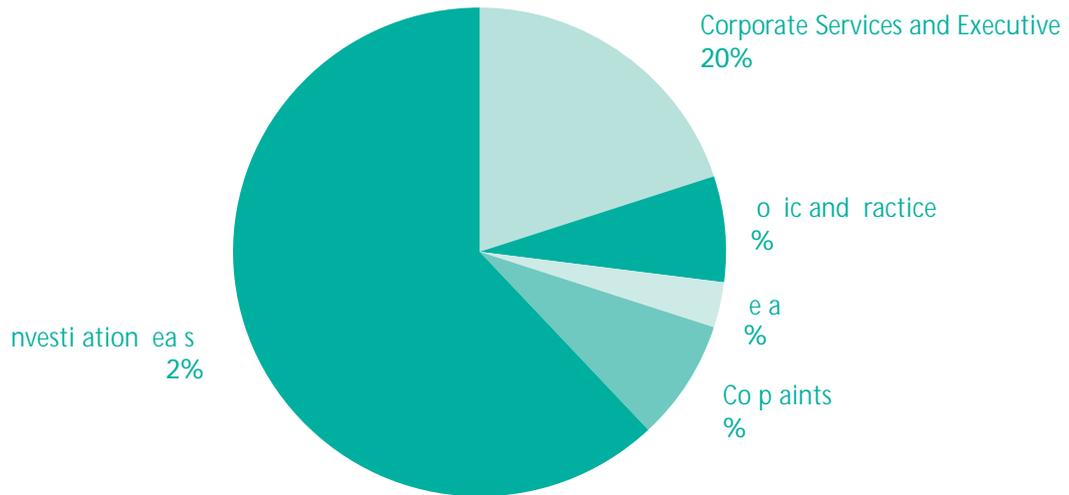
Resource by Expenditure Category



BUSINESS PLAN 2004-2005

OBJECTIVES, TARGETS AND INDICATORS

Staff Costs by Functional Area



IF YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT ABOUT A POLICE OFFICER, YOU SHOULD CONTACT US.

You can:

- Write to us at the address given below;
- Call in at the Office between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday;
- Phone the Office at any time on 0845 601 2931 or 028 9082 8600; telephone calls to this Office may be monitored for training, quality assurance and other lawful purposes;
- Send us a fax at any time on 028 9082 8659;
- E-mail us at info@policeombudsman.org; or
- Visit our website at www.policeombudsman.org

You do not have to pay to make a complaint.

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