

6. SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (AN323-2002)

Reference is made to Article V of the Minute of Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 19 August 2002 when the Committee noted that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 had received Royal Assent.

The Act has now come into force and the new Ombudsman, Professor Alice Brown, has taken up her duties.

Section 22 of the 2002 Act introduces a new requirement on the Council to publicise the Ombudsman service in the following ways

- (a) by taking reasonable steps to publicise the application and effect of the Act including in particular providing information about the right conferred by the Act to make a complaint to the Ombudsman, the time limit for doing so and how to contact the Ombudsman
- (b) by including this information in or providing this information with (1) any document published by the Council which contains information about services the Council provides to members of the public or about its procedures for dealing with complaints and (2) any document issued by the Council responding to a complaint made to it by any person who might be entitled to make a complaint to the Ombudsman.

The Scottish Executive recognised that many Authorities would be likely to have significant stocks of publicity material already printed at the time of the 2002 Act coming into force and, accordingly the Act allows this information to be inserted into existing documents. The Council will however have to ensure that any leaflets etc which are subsequently printed include the information required by Section 22. The Director of Support Services will liaise with other Directors and Chief Officers to assist them in complying with these statutory duties.

It is recommended that the Committee note the position.