

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Personnel Committee - 10 May 2004

REPORT ON: Housing Department - Establishment of Post of Common Housing Register Development Officer

REPORT BY: Director of Housing and Assistant Chief Executive (Management)

REPORT NO: 323-2004

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to establish a post of Common Housing Register Development Officer within the Housing Department for a period of two years following the announcement by the Scottish Executive that grants would be awarded to local authorities to set up common housing registers.
- 1.2 This post will be funded from a specific grant from the Scottish Executive.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approve the creation of one post of Common Housing Register Development Officer, graded PO1-4 (£24,888 - £27,015) for a temporary period of two years.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 All costs associated with this post will be met from a specific grant awarded by the Scottish Executive. There are no implications for the Housing Revenue Account or the General Fund.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The development of a Common Housing Register will meet a number of local agenda 21 themes:
 - ensuring that local needs are met locally
 - ensuring access to shelter at a reasonable cost
 - ensuring that goods and services are accessible to all.
- 4.2 By improving access to services and in particular improving access to social rented housing (both mainstream and special needs) a positive contribution to tackling poverty will be made.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The development of a Common Housing Register will develop new partnerships to promote equality of access and improve awareness of housing options for all.

6 BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS

- 6.1 The Scottish Executive introduced the legislative basis for Common Housing Registers in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, s8. In November 2003, the Scottish Executive announced that local authorities would be awarded grants for the period 2004-2006 to set up common housing registers subject to the submission of a proposal
- 6.2 In February 2004 the Scottish Executive announced that Dundee City Council had been awarded £50,000 for each of the two years 2004/05 and 2005/06. The grant is to fund the following items:
- a Common Housing Register Development Officer
 - IT feasibility study
 - developing a common application form for people seeking social rented housing
 - quantifying the current costs to the Council and housing associations for running allocation services
 - providing joint training for Council and housing association staff
 - developing public information and consultation on common housing registers.
- 6.3 It is clear that there is a great deal of work to be done on this project and it will have significant consequences for all social housing landlords.
- 6.4 If done correctly, a Common Housing Register should have clear benefits for applicants:
- simplified process of application
 - access to wider choice of accommodation
 - better matching of need to available housing
 - scope for better co-ordination of housing information and advice.
- 6.5 It is therefore proposed that a post of Common Housing Register Development Officer be established for a period of two years to oversee the development and implementation of a Common Housing Register in Dundee.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and the trade unions have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.

E Zwirlein
Director of Housing

(DATE)

J.C. Petrie
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(DATE)