

REPORT TO: BEST VALUE SUB-COMMITTEE - 20 JANUARY 2003

REPORT ON: BEST VALUE REVIEW OF STAFFING LEVELS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE PLANNING AND THE DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES

REPORT NO: 98-2003

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report the findings of the working group on the Best Value Review of Staffing Levels and agree any actions arising thereof.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the committee:

- a) agrees the findings of the working group in respect of staffing levels within Council departments
- b) agrees the working group recommendations regarding the submission of figures in respect of the Joint Staffing Watch returns

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications as a result of the recommendations.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct Local Agenda 21 implications.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct Equal Opportunities implications.

6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 At its meeting of 26 February 2002, the Best Value Sub-Committee considered Report No 127-2002 by the Chief Executive approving the proposal to examine staffing levels throughout the Council as part of the Council's Best Value Review process.
- 6.2 The report stated that the Best Value Working Group would have the authority to set up appropriate procedures to obtain the information required and to conduct pilot projects when necessary. Furthermore, the report confirmed that staffing levels throughout the Council would be reviewed by looking at each individual department to establish exactly what staff each department has and if there was any potential to reduce staffing levels.
- 6.3 Included in this review was a remit to examine Staffing Watch returns to COSLA/Scottish Executive, to review how these figures are collected, and to ascertain how accurately they reflect staffing levels within the Council.
- 6.4 Officers' meeting were held with all departments in early May. The aims of these meetings were as follows:

- to advise departments of the background to the common objectives of the Best Value Review of Staffing Levels;
- to provide departments within information on the current staffing numbers;
- to request departments to analyse the staffing formation;
- to provide a copy of the latest published Staffing Watch

6.5 This was to ensure that departments were in a position to provide the Working Group with the information requested.

7 **WORKING GROUP REMIT**

7.1 Definition of the Service

Staffing levels throughout the Council would be reviewed with the intention to look at each individual department in turn and establish exactly what staff each department has and whether there was any potential to reduce staffing levels. Included in this review was a remit to examine Staffing Watch returns and establish how these figures are collected and collated, and how accurately they reflect staffing levels within the City Council.

7.2 Justification for Reviewing the Service

The Council employs 8,073 staff (December 2001 Staffing Watch figures, see Appendix 1) across the whole spectrum of services and occupations. This figure includes Dundee's "allocation" of Tayside Contracts' employees. The job satisfaction and personal development which people derive from working for the Council is crucial in continuous improvement within the Council. Council services are continually under enormous pressure to change especially in times of economic difficulty. This puts increased pressure on employees.

In addition the Council have received criticism with regard to Staffing Watch levels in comparison to other Councils. However, a significant proportion of Council posts are a result of external and ring-fenced funding from central government and are temporary. In order to address any statistical difficulties at arriving at Dundee City Council's Staffing Watch figure and to review any areas where there are unnecessary duplication, the Working Group undertook to examine all aspects of staffing within Dundee City Council. Where a Department identifies an employee as surplus to operational requirements that employee is transferred to another section within that Department that needs to recruit or to other Departments within the Council that needs to recruit. This enables the Council to maintain its no redundancy policy for permanent employees.

7.3 Review Process

As this was a matter to be reviewed across all departments of the Council, it was agreed that the Working Group would consist of the Chief Executive as chairperson, the Director of Personnel and Management Services; the Director of Corporate Planning with additional officers' support as appropriate. Representation on the working group was from elected members on the basis of 2:2:1:1; with trade union representation consisting of one representative from APT&C employees; one representative from manual craft employees; and one representative from teachers.

9 WORKING GROUP FINDINGS

9.1 Procedure

The Working Group met on 8 separate occasions between May 2002 and December 2002. At its first meeting on 30 May 2002 a timetable was agreed for presentations by Departmental Directors. In preparation for these meetings it was further agreed that the Director of Personnel and Management Services would provide:

- a) Staff Number FTE statements as at December 2000 and December 2001 for comparison purposes;
- b) A paper on the structure of every Council department - in addition the Director of Finance to supply Departmental staffing budget figures;
- c) Sickness absence statistics for each Council department for each of the last 3 years.

9.2 Departmental Structures

9.2.1 Education

A paper was submitted by the Director of Education providing a comparison of full time equivalent staff numbers between December 2000 and December 2001 which showed a decrease of 31.8 posts overall. It was pointed out that Dundee City Council's pupil:teacher ratios continued to compare favourably with other Scottish Local Authorities both at primary and secondary levels.

The Director of Education explained that pressures on management and school staff were increasing due to McCrone, Support for Learning, various Initiatives, Behavioural and Mental Health Problems, Autism etc. Despite this, absence levels for teachers were below the Council average at 5.02% for the year to 31 May 2002.

Members reviewed the supporting papers on departmental structures. It was noted that Support for Learning was a fast growing area of education. Reference was made to Staffing Watch returns which showed Dundee City Council in a less favourable light by including posts funded from external sources and posts shared with Angus and Perth and Kinross Councils.

Members felt that the Dundee Staffing Watch figures should be adjusted to reflect these factors.

9.2.2 Social Work

A report on the Best Value Review of Staffing Levels had been circulated, and a further paper was submitted by the Director of Social Work providing a comparison of full-time equivalent staff members between December 2000 and December 2001. It was noted that there had been an increase of 61 posts during this period but that 58 were funded from new external sources.

The Director of Social Work briefly reviewed the report and its appendices, and explained that as the department's service provision was statutory, it was obliged to have a framework in place for these services. It was also expected that due to further legislative changes, such as the provision of free personal care and meeting the needs of Special Education Needs children, staffing levels would need to increase.

Members noted that the Social Work Department was committed to providing its service users with choices in their care programmes, and that although specific services could be provided by voluntary organisations or the private sector, it was also necessary for the department to have the infrastructure for these services in place also. Reference was also made to the Direct Payments Act and it was noted that all necessary monitoring would still be required to be undertaken by the department.

Reference was also made to Staffing Watch returns, as posts funded by external sources were included in the figures. Members felt that figures should be adjusted to reflect this. It was agreed to examine this later in the Best Value Review.

9.2.3 Neighbourhood Resources and Development

There was submitted a report by the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Development providing a comparison of staff members between December 2000 and December 2001 which showed an increase of 3.4 posts overall.

The Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development explained that this figure was misleading however, and that during the period referred to there had in fact been a reduction of 2 full time posts and that the increase of 3.4 posts was attributable to the net effect of an increase in externally funded posts and staff turnover.

The Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development briefly reviewed the report and indicated that staffing levels within the Department were currently operating at the minimum levels indicated in Health and Safety Legislation and that the Department was actively pursuing measures to minimise staff absence levels.

Concern was raised about the impact that sessional staff numbers had on the overall return for Neighbourhood Resources and Development and it was noted that Neighbourhood Resources and Development staff were in the process of preparing information in relation to this issue.

The Group welcomed the report from the Director of Neighbourhood Resources and Development on the work undertaken and congratulated the Director on the constructive assistance that the staff within the Department offered to help stimulate the volunteer sector. The staffing structures and staffing numbers were agreed.

9.2.4 Leisure and Arts

There was submitted a report by the Director of Leisure and Arts providing a comparison of staff members between December 2000 and December 2001 of Leisure and Parks and Arts and Heritage prior to the merger of the two Departments in April 2002 to become the Leisure and Arts Department.

The Director explained that this merger resulted in a net reduction of 3 posts and that a further 2 members of staff were in temporary/supernumerary positions. The Director also explained that an analysis of staffing numbers since the departmental reorganisation showed a range of structural changes resulting in the establishment of 6 new posts and the deletion of 32 posts; a net reduction of 26 posts.

The Director outlined operational aspects of the Department in comparison to other local authorities and the resulting impact this had on statistics. The Group noted that the Department had a number of staff who were externally funded and continued to receive external resources to support key areas of developmental work in encouraging access to sport and the arts. It was also noted that the Department also had a role as a

regional co-ordinator for services which were also provided to Angus and Perth and Kinross Councils and that although the posts were co-funded by Sportscotland and other Councils the posts appeared on the Dundee staffing return.

The Director indicated that the Department had developed initiatives towards tackling absence levels and that these were showing to be successful. The Director also indicated that he could not identify any surplus posts within the Department and that further reductions would have an impact on Health and Safety implications and the overall provision of service to the people of Dundee.

The Group welcomed the report and congratulated the Director on the operation of the Department and the service which it provided. The staffing structures and staffing numbers were agreed.

9.2.5 Economic Development

There was submitted a report by the Director of Economic Development providing a comparison of staff numbers between December 2000 and December 2001 which showed an increase of 2.1 posts. The Director explained that the COSLA figures of 97.7 FTE at 31 December 2000 and 103.9 FTE at 31 December 2001 had been reassessed - the difference primarily referred to training staff which should have been included.

The Director pointed out that there were no surplus staff but additional firefighters would be needed at Dundee Airport to meet strict CAA requirements on safety and security matters. Increasing number of flights meant increased demands on staff. New projects taken forward tended to be mostly externally funded. Excluding externally funded fixed term posts, staff numbers had increased by 0.7 FTE between December 2000 and December 2001.

The Director explained that staff structures were constantly under review. Some work was also carried out for other Council departments on a corporate basis.

9.2.6 Dundee Contract Services

There was submitted a report by the Director of Dundee Contract Services showing staff numbers of 445.25 FTE at December 2000 and 455.25 FTE at December 2001, an increase of 10.0 FTE. These figures included 30 apprentices and 38 temporary employees at December 2000 and 36 apprentices and 42 temporary employees at December 2001. It was noted that the current total staff number was 583 including 480 manual workers of which 359 were tradesmen and 121 in parks.

The Director explained that the workload determined employment levels which could fluctuate appreciably with more employed in parks in the summer. Others employed included gas fitters, lift engineers, window fixers, tilers and blacksmiths. The Department undertook capital works which accounted for about a third of the workload.

The Chief Executive pointed out that Contract Services considerably influenced the Staffing Watch figures in view of the staff numbers involved. Where Contract Services made successful tender bids, substantial savings accrued for the Council and the Housing Revenue Account in particular. It was noted that other Councils did not undertake capital works to the same level as the City Council.

Members felt that the service provided to the citizens of Dundee was very important and could be used as an example of the best practice. The services provided also gave good value for money.

The Director pointed out that at December 2001 there were 36 apprentices out of a total of 376 tradesmen which was a healthy ratio. At the present time there were 52 young people signed up for apprenticeships at Dundee College - this number included apprenticeships with private contractors as well as the City Council. Members were encouraged by these figures and commended those involved.

The staffing structure and staffing numbers were agreed. In addition, the Director of Finance was asked to bring back a report identifying the benefits accruing to the Council through successful Dundee Contract Services tenders over a year, i.e. the difference between the first and second tenders and the profit retained by the Council on the completed contract.

9.2.7 Environmental and Consumer Protection

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environmental and Consumer Protection. He explained that the Department came into being at local government reorganisation in 1996 when four previously completed separate departments were amalgamated - Cleansing, Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Public Analyst.

The Director referred to the diverse, main functions carried out by the Department including refuse collection and disposal, street cleansing, food safety, health and safety, pollution control, animal control etc. He pointed out that there were only three categories available within the Staffing Watch returns and therefore Scientific Services staff (formerly Public Analyst) were included under Trading Standards - the other categories being Environmental Services and DLO/DSO. The Staffing Watch totals for Trading Standards for the years 2000 and 2001 were 32.6 FTE of which 23.0 FTE and 22.6 FTE posts refer to Scientific Services. The Director further explained that Scientific Services were jointly funded by Dundee City Council (31%), Perth and Kinross and Angus Councils. Fife Council was an external customer.

Staffing Watch figures for Environmental Services for the years 2000 and 2001 were 126.2 FTE and 136.1 FTE respectively and for DSO 252.0 FTE and 249.0 FTE. The increase for Environmental Services was largely due to additional manual posts at Baldovie and the filling of vacant posts.

The Working Group was advised that restructuring proposals for the Department had gone out for consultation. A new Team was required to implement the National Waste Strategy and a new post created to assist in taking forward the Council's IT policy. There was also a proposal to revise the role of the existing Marketing Officer.

The Operations Manager stated that there had been a reduction of 23 posts in DSO since 1996. The introduction of wheelie bins and changes in methods of street cleansing had enabled the level of output to be maintained.

The Director pointed out that there was very little scope for staff reductions - the number of Trading Standards Officers based on population was below the Scottish average and other demands on the Department were increasing.

The Chief Executive proposed that only the 31% City Council share of Scientific Services staff should be included in the Staffing Watch returns and this was agreed.

Staffing numbers were agreed and it was noted that changes to the staffing structures were likely.

9.2.8 Housing

There was submitted a report by the Director of Housing stating that since local government reorganisation, the Department had seen a marked reduction in structured posts due to a number of factors, e.g. departmental restructures, demolitions and stock transfers. The Staffing Review at reorganisation in April 1996 showed 475 posts and the Area Office Restructure at April 2002 showed 376 posts - not all posts were filled, a number were held vacant for slippage or restructuring activity. Fifteen posts were externally funded at December 2001 and included in Staffing Watch figures. One Area Office had been closed.

The Director referred to the current workload which was increasing for the following reasons:

- increased responsibilities under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Homeless Strategy Increased Homeless responsibilities
- Tenant Participation Strategy
- Local Housing Strategy
- Anti-social Behaviour Team
- Scottish Executive Housing Improvements Task Force

It was also noted that tenants were seeking improved services and there was a greater demand for supporting private tenants against rogue landlords. A Committee report on Supporting People in Tenancies would be prepared in the coming months.

The Department had not sufficient staff to cope with all demands at present and would need to prioritise.

Staffing structures and staffing numbers were agreed.

9.2.9 Planning and Transportation

The Director of Planning and Transportation reported staff numbers of 176.5 FTE at December 2000 and 178.5 FTE at December 2001. The Department had taken on Customer Services on Floor 2, Tayside House, during the period which accounted for the small increase in numbers. Posts were being reviewed when they became vacant. There were no externally funded posts. Additional capital grant funds from the Scottish Executive were serviced by the existing staff, e.g. Roads and Transport Section. There were no surplus staff within the Department.

The Policy and Design Manager post was currently vacant. The Director was to present a report to Committee shortly with proposals to address the distribution of work within the Department, especially to assist the Roads and Transport Section. Some routine work was temporarily not up to date e.g. street lighting records.

The staffing numbers and structures were agreed.

9.2.10 Finance

The Director of Finance referred to the staffing comparisons between December 2000, December 2001 and September 2002. The total staff numbers were 280, 289, 298 respectively. The increased staffing levels were in areas of high activity, some of which

had arisen due to the implementation of new legislation and others to generate more income for the Council. Temporary posts accounted for some of the increase and within Finance Revenues there was a high level of staff turnover which could result in variations in staffing watch statistics. For example, to alleviate the position, the Department had made the early appointment of eleven staff in order to train them in advance of vacancies arising.

Whilst the Finance Department did not have any direct externally funded posts, services were provided for a number of Joint Boards and outside bodies for which a significant level of income was received. Services included payroll, insurance and risk management and clients included Tayside Police, Tayside Fire Board, Tayside Contracts, Tay Road Bridge Board etc. The City Council also administered Tayside Local Government Superannuation Scheme which had forty scheduled and admitted bodies and employed 17 staff.

Changes in regulations and the introduction of new improved computer systems involved the Department in a lot of work on a regular basis.

The Director stated that the Internal Audit section was understaffed. There was a requirement for internal audit services to be provided to Tayside Contracts, the Tay Road Bridge and Tayside Valuation Joint Boards. It was proposed that additional staff costs be offset by recharges to these bodies. The level of sickness absences within the department was generally satisfactory - the rate was slightly higher in Revenues.

Vacant posts were discussed with the Chief Executive and the Director of Personnel and Management Services prior to being filled.

The staff numbers and structures were agreed.

9.2.11 Support Services

The Director of Support Services had submitted papers on each of the three divisions within Support Services - Architectural Services, Administration and Legal. These divisions are, for the most part, not direct service providers - each had been the subject of Best Value Reviews and the reports had been approved by the Best Value Sub-Committee.

(a) ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES

The Director referred to the staffing levels of the Architectural Services division pointing out that staffing levels had remained the same as 1996 (104). This was in spite of increased turnover from £30m to £39m. Although capital and revenue budgets had been subject to severe constraints over the past few years, there had been increased funding through lottery awards, additional government funding (Heating Initiative) and projects such as the Morgan Academy reinstatement and Schools PPP. Twelve members of staff were funded from external funding initiatives.

The expertise of the Architectural Services division had provided significant external tendering savings for the City Council and the City Architectural Services Officer was in demand as an advisor on partnering issues. The Director pointed out a slight imbalance in the staffing levels - there were two or three too many Quantity Surveyors and not enough Quantity Surveying Technicians. This imbalance would be addressed when the opportunities arose.

The City Architectural Services Officer stated that his division had been able to maintain quality and the number of present staff was sufficient. The Heating for All posts were on a fixed three year basis.

The Working Group agreed that the City Architectural Services Officer would review his Division's structure in relation to qualified/unqualified staff ratios, as and when posts become vacant, and report back to the Personnel Committee.

(b) ADMINISTRATION

The Director referred to the Administration division paper. The staff numbers had reduced since 1996 from a starting point of 106.4 FTE to 89.7 posts at December, 2000 and 89.1 posts at December, 2001. During that period workloads had increased and performance targets had been improved at every opportunity. Some vacant posts had not been filled, eg in Keyboard Services because of IT improvements. Job sharing was more widely used. The core services provided by the division were wide ranging and included -

- Committee Services
- Archives
- Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- Licensing
- Emergency Planning
- Support to Children's Panel
- Operation of the District Court for the City of Dundee

The Registrar's Section had pioneered the use of alternative Council premises for civil marriage venues. As changes take place, it may be necessary to look again at staffing levels.

The District Court had processed 2458 cases sitting for 871 hours in 2001/02. Although the workload had remained high, staffing numbers had reduced by one (11.1%).

The Committee Services Team was small and provided a range of services at a much lower cost than comparable Councils. More meetings were processed with fewer staff than the Councils with whom they were benchmarked.

The Licensing Section, in addition to dealing with electoral registration, processed applications for 59 different licences although the staff numbers were small. For benchmarking purposes the average time to process an application in Dundee was 1.87 hours with similar sized authorities averaging 3.25 hours.

A list of key areas of activity and achievement had been included with the paper.

(c) LEGAL SERVICES

The Legal Services division had 27 FTE staff at December, 2000 and 26 FTE at December, 2001. The workload continued to increase and it had only been possible to reduce staffing as a result of increased productivity of the remaining staff. Four legal teams had been reduced to three and better use was being made of administrative back-up to reduce the use of solicitors. Best Value exercises had shown in-house costs to compare favourably with external costs. Sealed bids had been invited from external Solicitors and the in-house costs were approximately half of the external costs. Whilst the work of the division was not always visible to the general public, the division was

involved with all of the Council's services and carried out a great deal of work benefiting the public. Examples of the work carried out were detailed with the paper.

(d) CONCLUSION

Members expressed their appreciation of the frankness of the Director of Support Services and agreed the structures and staffing numbers for the Administration, Legal and Architectural Services Divisions, subject to the City Architectural Services Officer reviewing staff ratios as and when posts become vacant.

9.2.12 Chief Executive Including Corporate Planning, Public Relations, IT and Personnel and Management Services

(a) CORPORATE PLANNING

The Director of Corporate Planning reported that Corporate Services (covering Chief Executive's and Corporate Planning) had 14.7 FTE staff at December 2000 and 14.2 FTE at December 2001.

The core service of Corporate Planning addressed two specific areas - it was responsible for production of the Corporate Plan and the Member Support Unit which provided a full secretarial service to all elected members of the Council. Other areas of responsibility included organising Council Employee and Consumer Surveys and providing policy advice and information and corporate co-ordination of Council activities on a demand led basis at the direction and discretion of the Chief Executive. Health had also become a major area of involvement with a Public Health Improvement Officer based within the Unit and more recently a Senior Health Promotional Worker on secondment from the Health Board for two and a half days per week. In addition both Best Value and Community Planning had continued to make demands on the division. The Council's successful application for the Better Neighbourhood Management Fund had led to the establishment of a Manager for a Young Persons Project as well as matrix management with the Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department of the BNSF Neighbourhood Project. In addition, Tayside Police had asked for a Local Authority Liaison Officer to be located within the division. This would be occurring within the next two months.

The Members Support Unit had undergone changes after the last local Council elections and it was noted that there had been an increasing demand from Elected Members for personal secretarial services with particular problems regarding cover during holidays as other Departments within the Council had less flexibility to provide cover and help to meet any demand during these periods.

The Staffing Watch figures had remained fairly static. An addition to the establishment was the BNSF Co-ordinator now in post.

Looking to the future, particular areas of difficulty identified within the Corporate Planning Department were Community Planning where with Angus and Perth and Kinross Councils have appointed specific officers within the Chief Executive's Department to address community planning and also in relation to IT and Audit demands which would become far more onerous under the new Local Government Act.

The Director stated that there were no surplus staff within Corporate Planning and the Chief Executive's Departments.

The Chief Executive pointed out that there was a case for appointing additional staff - for example, the Council needed to bid for Health monies but had only one officer for health related matters.

(b) PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Director of Public Relations stated that his Division's staff was 20.1 FTE posts at December 2000 and 21.1 FTE at December 2001.

The externally funded dundee.com Project Manager post was vacant and funding would cease from March 2003. The dundee.com site was running successfully without any staff resources. The objectives of his Division were to communicate Council policies and services to the public and advise the public what to do when things went wrong. The department provided written material to the media. Three Best Value external quotations had shown that in-house costs were roughly half of those provided in the private sector. The Director was satisfied that the level of service was being maintained. The present staffing level was satisfactory.

(c) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Head of Information Technology reported Staffing Watch figures of 86 for December 2000 and 89 for December 2001. This was due to the creation of 10 new posts to support the NGFL Investment in schools and in particular the new school networks set up throughout the City. During the year five posts had been saved through restructuring. The staff included one temporary member paid from external funding. There had been a large increase in the volume and use of IT equipment with Council services becoming more and more dependent on IT. Technology was always changing and changes to legislation were constantly providing new challenges and new work. The existing systems required to be sustained and maintained. The Council installed 729 desk top units, 603 printers and 38 file servers during the last financial year and currently supported over 7,500 desk tops. The Council's ICT Strategy promoted the use of the Internet, departmental intranets and web-based technology to meet the Government target of all relevant services being delivered electronically by 2005. This and other major projects required considerable staff resources and the current staffing resources were not adequate to satisfy the requirements of all departments and projects were prioritised every six months. If the workload continued to increase extra resources would be required if commitments and targets were to be met.

(d) PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The Director of Personnel and Management Services reported staffing levels as follows:-

	December 2000	December 2001	November 2002
Department General	39.3	38.1	37.2
Employment Disability Unit	<u>10.5</u>	<u>14.0</u>	<u>11.0</u>
TOTAL	<u>49.8.</u>	<u>52.1</u>	<u>48.2</u>

The comparison showed a continuing downward trend for the Department General (staffing complement in April 1996 was 46.0 FTE). The Working Group was asked to note that the new post of Council Health and Safety Co-ordinator would be filled in the

near future. The Employment Disability Unit staffing figures fluctuate according to the amount of external funding it could attract from year to year. At November 2002 only one employee was temporary.

When a vacancy arose, the Director considered whether it should be filled or if the work could be reallocated. The Director placed a high priority on the development of staff and of the existing staff, approximately 30% had been promoted during their time in the department.

Whilst no posts were externally/jointly funded, work was carried out for bodies such as Tayside Police, Tayside Road Bridge Board and the Tayside Valuation Joint Board generated income according to the amount of work undertaken.

The Employment Disability Unit was established by Tayside Regional Council and at reorganisation the three new authorities agreed that it should continue as a joint enterprise with financial contributions. The Employment Disability Unit enjoyed a high reputation, both in this country and abroad.

The Director identified that there had been three main areas for savings - Management Services, Senior Management and Central Administration. He referred to significant new challenges - single status and health and safety. Under the Single Status Agreement a job evaluation exercise involving 6,000 employees had to be completed by March 2004 although this was not likely to happen. The appointment of a Health & Safety Co-ordinator would ensure that the Council met its obligations.

The department had completed individual Best Value Reviews for the majority of its services and in all of these reviews benchmarking exercises had shown that the quality and cost of the services provided compared favourably with other authorities.

In response to questions, the Director stated that he had sufficient staff at present. The department continued to try to tailor solutions for other Council departments. Support from other departments was welcome.

(e) CONCLUSION

The Working Group agreed the staffing numbers and structures for the Chief Executive's Department, Corporate Planning, Public Relations, Information Technology and Personnel and Management Services.

9.3 Staffing Watch Returns

As indicated above individual Departments' Staffing Watch returns were examined in some detail by the Working Group. The review exercise appeared to indicate that departments were not over-staffed, and it could be said under-staffed in some areas.

A Joint Report submitted by the Director of Corporate Planning and Personnel and Management Services reviewed the various factors that affected Dundee City Council's Staffing Watch returns including population changes, finance and outsourcing as well as methodological issues.

9.3.1 Population

Dundee's population levels are continuing to decline and as has been demonstrated in previous reports to the Council declining population does not necessarily mean a concomitant decline in demand for Council services.

Although the recently announced census figures will assist in improving Dundee's ratio of employees against population by a factor of approximately 1.0 General Register Office for Scotland (GRO) current predictions are that Dundee's population will continue to diminish and this will have a continuing adverse affect on the calculation of the city's staffing watch return in the order of + 0.7 per annum.

9.3.2 Finance and Outsourcing

In regard to financial and outsourcing of work a report by the Director of Finance indicated that the use of Dundee Contract Services as an in-house contractors saved the Council approximately £2,920,427 in financial year 2001/2002. In addition there are also other services provided by Architects, Engineers, Revenues Division, Media and Social Work which are provided in-house and have met Best Value criteria saving the authority money. The Director of Finance confirms that the total additional cost of purchasing architectural, surveying, engineering, DLO and DSO services externally would be approximately £4.5m per annum. This would equate to an additional £98 on the Council Tax i.e. an increase of 9.1% over the current level.

The total number of staff employed by the DLO, DSOs, Architects and Engineers is approximately 1120 and equates to approximately 7.7 employees in the staffing watch figures. In addition these services have a positive affect on the Dundee economy with local employees spending money locally.

9.3.3 Methodology

Possible areas where reductions in the full-time returns could be achieved were examined in some detail. Recommendations agreed by the Working Group for implementation by the Director of Personnel and Services included adjustment to the recording and counting of staff involved in sickness cover, sessional staff, relief staff, trainees, supply and temporary cover and where there are joint arrangement with other local authorities and public bodies.

Although the Council had a substantial number of externally funded posts, approximately 450, which are included in the Staffing Watch return and which penalises the Council for its success in attracting extra funding, especially in areas needed to address deprivation, the Working Group decided that these posts would continue to be included in the Staffing Watch returns.

10 FURTHER ACTION AND CONCLUSIONS

It was also agreed by the Working Group that the Director of Corporate Planning should write to COSLA enclosing copies of previous correspondence and the COSLA response, indicating that members were still very concerned that no progress had been made in respect of this issue.

Members also felt that every effort should be made to explain the City Council's position to the general public when the Scottish Staffing Watch figures were published.

Alex Stephen
Chief Executive

Date 15 January 2003

Appendix 1

Joint Staffing Watch Returns - December 2000 and December 2001

Service Group	December 2000		December 2001	
	Total No. of Staff	Total No. of Full Time Equivalent Staff	Total No. of Staff	Total No. of Full Time Equivalent Staff
Corporate Services	64	56.8	63	56.1
Central Support Services	657	617	684	641.1
Planning and Economic Development	139	132.5	134	130.8
Education - Teachers	1,827	1,636.7	1,804	1587.5
Other Staff	1,203	888.3	1,220	902.4
Social Work	1,696	1,432.1	1,777	1,495.1
Housing	419	403.6	377	361.7
Roads and Transport	218	151.1	221	152.4
Arts, Sport & Leisure	308	218.4	357	276.3
Libraries, Museums & Galleries	254	206.3	277	218.1
Trading Standards	36	32.6	39	34.6
Environmental Standards	132	126.2	142	136.1
DLO/DSO	976	953.1	926	902.7
Police and Related Services	0	0	0	0
Fire Services	0	0	0	0
Staff of District Court	8	7.9	8	8
Other Staff	44	33.8	44	32.0
Total of all Staff	7,981	6,896.4	8,073	6,934.9

Note: In a number of departments/services, the staffing figures which appear in the narrative differ from those which appear in this appendix. These apparent anomalies arise as a result of service groupings not matching the Council's departmental configuration and the calculation of full-time equivalents.