

## **2 CONSUMER DIRECT - A NATIONAL CONSUMER ADVICE HELPLINE (AN331-2002)**

The Committee is asked to note the planned introduction of a national [UK] consumer advice helpline, Consumer Direct. The helpline, to be commissioned by the Department of Trade and Industry, will be rolled out on a regional contact centre basis.

Funding to implement the service nationally was announced in the Chancellors Spending Review on 15th July with funding of £30m for the period to March 2006.

One such contact will be set up to provide the service in Scotland and bids are currently being invited by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Such a contact centre may involve partnership working with other agencies, and may bring up to sixty new jobs to the area where it is located.

The Environmental and Consumer Protection Department's Trading Standards Section and Economic Development Department are working together to investigate the viability of Dundee City Council submitting a bid to manage the Scottish contact centre.

The deadline for submission of bids to the Department of Trade and Industry is March 2003 and a full report will be prepared for approval before that date, if it is practicable for Dundee City Council to proceed.