

**REPORT TO:** DSO Committee - Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2003

**REPORT ON:** Establishing a Repairs Contact Centre

**REPORT BY:** Director of Dundee Contract Services

**REPORT NO:** 714-2003

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To seek the Committee's approval to proceed with the setting up of a Repairs Contact Centre at Dundee Contract Services, 353 Clepington Road.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the City Architectural Services Officer be authorised to negotiate a Partnering Agreement with Dundee Contract Services up to a maximum price of £115,000 and that the Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) be authorised to accept the agreed maximum price after consultation with the Chief Executive.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Director of Contract Services be authorised to carry out any necessary building alterations to accommodate the Repairs Contact Centre, including the installation of telecommunication and computer hardware. This work to be carried out under the terms of the Partnership Agreement described above.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The City Architectural Services Officer has reported that the indicative cost of the new Centre would be approximately £115,000 including an allowance for professional services, but not including the cost and installation of telecommunication and computer hardware. The cost of the Contact Centre will be met from General Fund balances.
- 3.2 The annual running costs of the Centre will be borne jointly by Housing Department and Dundee Contract Services, from current revenue.

## **4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None.

## **5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The requirements of Equal Opportunities Legislation and Regulations will be taken into account both in the recruitment of Contact Centre employees and in access arrangements.

## **6. BACKGROUND**

- 6.1 The recently completed Best Value Option Appraisal on the Repairs Service has recommended that a Partnership Agreement be set up between the Housing Department and Dundee Contract Services to deliver the service. The operation of the Agreement will be overseen by a Partnership Board.
- 6.2 A key aspect of the Partnership Agreement relates to improving communications between tenants, the Housing Department and Dundee Contract Services. Failure to keep tenants informed was highlighted by tenants as a major area for improvement.
- 6.3 It is proposed that the three-way communications essential to ensure the smooth running of this complex service will be improved by the introduction of a Repairs Contact Centre.
- 6.4 Repairs Contact Centre staff will liaise directly with tenants regarding all aspects of repairs including making and changing appointments, keeping tenants informed of any delays or changes to planned works, etc.
- 6.5 They will be empowered to take ownership of repairs requested and will be responsible for progressing them to a satisfactory conclusion.
- 6.6 They will have the authority to instruct repairs up to an agreed level/value/size.
- 6.7 They will enhance the service provided to tenants through effective co-ordination of resources in both Housing and Dundee Contract Services, for both inspections and repairs.
- 6.8 There will be benefits in locating the Centre close to the Clepington Road operation and the tradesmen operating from there, which will allow the development of effective working relationships and improve the flow of information.
- 6.9 The Repairs Contact Centre will be set up to receive personal callers.
- 6.10 Repairs Contact Centre staff will play a part in gathering quality data and customer satisfaction feedback from tenants and handling complaints.
- 6.11 They will be in direct contact with tradesmen, thereby improving the flexibility and responsiveness of the service.
- 6.12 The Repairs Contact Centre will become the Emergency Repairs Centre out of hours and at weekends.
- 6.13 The Repairs Contact Centre will be managed jointly by Housing and Dundee Contract Services, the relevant responsibilities being set out in the Partnership Agreement. These responsibilities will not change without the approval of the Partnership Board.
- 6.14 The Council had a balance of £237,000 in its DLO Reserve as at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2003. This Reserve had been built up over a number of years from the surpluses generated by the DLO that had not been returned to the General Fund. The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 repealed the Compulsory Competitive Tendering Legislation and it is no longer legally possible to maintain a DLO Reserve. Accordingly, the balance on the DLO Reserve was transferred to the Council's General Fund as at 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2003. Effectively, the Contact Centre is being funded from previous surpluses generated by the DLO.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The proposal to establish a Repairs Contact Centre came from the Best Value Option Appraisal on the Repairs Service. That process involved extensive consultation between the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), the Directors of Dundee Contract Services and Housing, the City Architectural Services Officer and representatives of the Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations.

## **8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Unless stated otherwise no background papers defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1073 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.

**R P JACKSON**  
**DIRECTOR OF DUNDEE CONTRACT SERVICES**

**Date: 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2003**