

 REPORT TO EXECUTIVE			
PORTFOLIO AREA: Finance & Resources			
Date of Meeting:		28 April 2003	
Public			
Key Decision:	Yes	Recorded in Forward Plan:	No
Inside Policy Framework			

Title: RE: HOUSING BENEFIT RESOURCES
Report of: Head of Revenues and Benefits Services
Report reference: RB3/03

Summary & Recommendations:

The Executive is asked to note that the £100,000 additional Benefits grant agreed as part of the 2003/04 budget will be allocated as follows

- i. Additional Benefits assessment officers at a cost of £44,187 to £65,121 depending on experience of candidate.
- ii. Additional Auditor part time up to a maximum of £10,924 depending on experience of candidate.
- iii. The balance of up to £23,955 will be held unallocated until a report on the long term benefit resource requirements post LSVYT have been determined.

Members are recommended to release up to £76,045 as required from grant allocated to benefits administration as part of the 2003/04 budget.

Contact Officer: Peter B Mason

Ext: 7270

CITY OF CARLISLE

To: The Executive RB03/03

Date: 28 April 2003

RE: HOUSING BENEFIT RESOURCES

1. INTRODUCTION

1. At its meeting of 6 February 2003 in determining the Council's 2003/04 budget, Members agreed to allocate £100,000 of the additional unallocated DWP benefits grant of £168,000 to resource the LSVT implications on Benefits Administration.

1.2 This being subject to a further report to the Executive requesting the release of the funds.

2. RESOURCING BENEFITS POST LSVT SHORT/MEDIUM TERM

1. It is proposed to advertise both for additional assessment officers and trainee assessment officers up to 3 WTE in total. Whilst the aim is to appoint qualified assessment officers. It is probable that trainee assessment officers will be recruited. It is also proposed to recruit an additional part-time auditor to ensure enhanced performance standards are met.
2. Under the current training initiative trainee assessment officers will be given intensive training with a view to fast tracking the most able trainees into assessment officer positions over the next 18 months.

3. COST OF RECRUITING 3 ADDITIONAL TRAINEE/QUALIFIED ASSESSMENT OFFICERS

1. The cost of the above proposals in 2003/04 range from £44,187 (£50,652 at top of scale) to £51,666 (£65,121 at top of scale) depending on whether the Council is successful in recruiting experienced assessment officers plus an additional maximum of £10,924 for a part time auditor, again depending on experience i.e.

2003/04 2004/05 Top of Scale

£ £ £

Qualified 51,666 53,661 65,121

Trainee 44,187 45,141 50,652

Auditor (p/t) 10,240 10,582 10,924

4. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Executive is asked to note that the £100,000 additional Benefits grant agreed as part of the 2003/04 budget will be allocated as follows

- i. 3 Additional Benefits assessment officers at a cost of £44,187 to £65,121 depending on experience of candidates.
- ii. Additional Auditor part time up to a maximum of £10,924 depending on the experience of the candidate.
- iii. The balance of up to £23,955 will be held unallocated until an assessment of long term benefit resource requirements post LSVT have been determined.

4.2 Members are recommended to release up to £76,045 as required from grant allocated to benefits administration as part of the 2003/04 budget.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To resource implications of LSVT on Benefits Assessment.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – Additional permanent staffing of 3.5 WTE funded from additional Benefits Grant.
- Financial – The Head of Finance concurs with the recommendations.
- Legal – None.
- Corporate – if there are no details of grades in a report, then personnel's role, in these situations is to ensure that gradings are appropriate and justified from a corporate perspective.

If the gradings are to be as proposed in the original paper (October 2002) then we are OK. If not, please inform Jean Cross, Member Support & Employee Services.

- Risk Management – The risk of not doing this would be that the Council's Housing Benefits Administration performance will deteriorate and it will not meet HB.CTB performance standards by April 2005.
- Equality Issues – Jobs will be advertised with normal equality issues taken into account.
- Environmental – None.
- Crime and Disorder – None

PETER B MASON

Head of Revenues & Benefits Services

Contact Name: Peter B Mason Ext: 7270

Revenues & Benefits

Carlisle City Council

10 April 2003

PM/EL/RB03/03