

PORTFOLIO:

CORPORATE RESOURCES

Report of
Portfolio Holder:

**COUNCILLOR
MRS J GEDDES**

KEY DECISIONS

All key decisions are as in the minutes of Executive decisions.

NON KEY DECISIONS

None made.

CUSTOMER CONTACT

Explorations into the value of entering into partnership with a private sector organisation are continuing. Three potential partners have been longlisted and Council Officers and Members have visited their Customer Contact reference sites. These visits have proven valuable in:

- providing different perspectives of various aspects of Customer Contact Centre operations
- demonstrating examples of good practice which are relevant whether the service is delivered in-house or through partnership
- highlighting the added value which partnership working can bring to local authorities

Second visits are now being undertaken to look at Revenues and Benefits processing and are involving staff from the relevant sections within Carlisle City Council.

Alongside the visits, Consultants have been engaged to assist the project group in exploring the options i.e.

- working in partnership to both deliver and operate the Customer Contact Centre and Revenues & Benefits administration
- strategic partnership to build and provide the infrastructure for the Customer Contact Centre and operated in-house
- all in-house

A report will be presented on 7th June 2003 recommending the way forward including any funding/costing implications.

ACCOMODATION SPACE PLANNING

The Commercial & Technical Business Unit are coming together on one site at Bousteads Grassing which, in turn will enable accommodation changes in the Civic Centre to be progressed. Mike Battersby will communicate new telephone extension numbers to all Members in due course.

The temporary reception desk on the ground floor together with the relocation of all other reception desks to the ground floor will be facilitated by the

temporary relocation of the Conservative Group Office to 9th floor. We hope to have receptions up and running by April / May 2003.

The audio visual equipment will be installed in the Council Chamber in March 2003. This will enable both the Authority and members of the public to have a much improved facility for conferences and presentations. The Development Control process, which takes place in the Council Chamber will also be enhanced by this equipment.

MEMBER SUPPORT AND EMPLOYEE SERVICES UNIT

Mr David Williams will take up his appointment as Head of Members Support and Employee Services on 18 February 2003. The whole Business Unit including myself as Portfolio Holder will meet on 26 February 2003 to begin the 'coming together' process, the Unit will share information about current services, customers and workloads and to identify expectations and anxieties.

Mr Alan Cain, interim Personnel Officer left at the end of January 2003 and the department is in the process of appointing a further interim Personnel Officer to support the personnel function for the next three months.

Jean Cross is continuing to do well and as yet no indication of a return date.

The new Health and Safety Manager, Mr Arup Mahji will take up his appointment on 03 March 2003. This appointment date will enable a ~~3~~¹-month handover period before the retirement of Brian Lennon.

To date Carlisle City Council has one member of staff who has been called up for military service. This will cause some minor inconvenience in the relevant department, although the post will be covered fully and the service will not be disrupted in the long term. A claim will be made on the Ministry of Defence to cover the financial aspect of this call up.

NORTH WEST EMPLOYERS ORGANISATION

I attended a meeting of the Executive Board of the North West Local Authority Employers Organisation on Wednesday 12 February 2003, when decisions were made on the future funding of the organisation.

New members, which may include Housing Associations now that housing stock transfer is taking place in many authorities, may be a new source of income. There will be a need to balance the core duties of the organisation with income related work in the form of conferences and consultations.