

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL MEETING - 7 MARCH 2002**

**REQUEST FOR GRANT ASSISTANCE - SCOTTISH LOW PAY UNIT**

**Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider a request for funding from the Scottish Low Pay Unit.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Since 1998, grant funding for the Unit has been considered through the Social Work Committee.
- 2.2 The Social Work Committee, at its meeting held on 2 May 2000, referred future applications from the Unit to the Development Services Committee as main contact, at that time, in support of the Citizen's Advice Bureau.
- 2.3 As the work of the Unit impinges on various departments within the Council, it is considered that future applications should be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee.

**3. REQUEST FOR GRANT ASSISTANCE**

- 3.1 An application for grant assistance for 2001/2002 has been received from the Unit.
- 3.2 The Unit was set up in 1988 and is an independent organisation and a Company Ltd by guarantee. The Unit is based in Glasgow but covers the whole of Scotland. The aims of the organisation are to:-
- (i) set the highest possible standard of pay and conditions in entry level jobs and to improve the job security associated with those jobs; and
  - (ii) assist workers in overcoming the barriers that prevent them moving off the minimum wage and into jobs with secure but modest incomes.
- 3.3 For the past few months the Unit have been involved in various projects which build on the aims of campaigning for fairness at work and ensuring low paid workers have access to their rights. In August the Unit launched a new report looking at average earnings, entry level wages and low pay across Scotland. Also during August the Unit launched a new "Check your Rights" Campaign which involved distributing over 15,000 rights cards to workers across Scotland and is the first part of a Campaign strategy designed to guarantee workers are better informed about all of their rights. Also as part of this strategy, the Unit ran a Holidays Rights Campaign in September, a Minimum

Wage Take-Up Campaign in October and re-launched the updated Employment Rights Pack in January 2002.

**3.4** To this end, the Unit have requested a contribution of £4,267.33 calculated at a pro-rata share for the Council at £35.18 per thousand population.

**3.5** The application has also been assessed and a favourable response has been received.

#### **4. FUTURE FUNDING OF THE UNIT**

**4.1** Although support is recommended for this year, it is felt that with developments in the introduction of the Minimum Wage and, in general terms potential overlap/duplication of the work carried out by other organisations operating in the area to which the Council already provide funding, i.e. the Citizens Advice Bureau, it may be appropriate to review the arrangements for future funding of the Unit.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** The recommended level of grant can be accommodated from within the existing budget held by the Policy and Resources Committee.

#### **6. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** Supporting the grant application promotes the Council's commitment to fighting poverty by increasing income.

#### **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**7.1** It is recommended that Council:-

- (i) consider making payment of a grant of £4,267.33 to the Scottish Low Pay Unit for the financial year 2001/2002;
- (ii) that a review on future funding for the work of the Unit be considered at a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, in light of the Services provided more locally by the Citizens Advice Bureau; and
- (iii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

Fiona Lees  
Depute Chief Executive/  
Director of Corporate Resources

25 February 2002  
JA/ST

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Application and associated supporting information received from the Scottish Low Pay Unit.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers relative to this report should contact Julie Armstrong, Principal Administrative Officer, on Telephone Number (01563) 576147. Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Fiona Lees, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources on (01563) 576019.

**Implementation Officer: Julie Armstrong, Principal Administrative Officer**

**AGENDA**