

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 28 AUGUST 2001

EXPANSION OF THE EAST AYRSHIRE ACTION TEAM FOR JOBS

Report by the Director of Development Services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the expansion of the Department of Work and Pensions, Employment Service, East Ayrshire Action Team for Jobs.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1** On 12 July 2000 the Government, through the Employment Service, announced the establishment of the East Ayrshire Action Team pathfinder.
- 2.2** The Action Team was established on the basis that relatively small geographical areas can experience very diverse and localised employment conditions and that by providing a more flexible and innovative approach, jobless people may be able to access a wider range of employment opportunities.
- 2.3** The Employment Service chose to target the Action Team within the postcode areas KA1-4 (Shortlees and Riccarton) and KA18-3 (Muirkirk, Logan, Lugar, Netherthird and Craighens).
- 2.4** Since its establishment the Action Team has worked closely with East Ayrshire Council and its partners to provide suitable local office locations and to develop further innovative employment support services. To date the Team has assisted over 500 local people into work or training.

3 ADDITIONAL AREAS

- 3.1** Since the original announcement the Council has made representations to the Government seeking extensions of the scheme to other areas of high unemployment in East Ayrshire.
- 3.2** Following consultation with Ministers, the Department for Education and employment (now the Department of Work and Pensions) have now added the following postcode areas within East Ayrshire which will become operational from 15 October 2001:

KA18-4	New Cumnock
KA3-1	Altonhill, Hillhead and Longpark
KA3-2	Onthank
KA6-7	Dalmellington, Drongan, Patna, Stair, Rankinston and Dalrymple

- 3.3** This goes a long way to meeting the Council's representations although not all areas of high unemployment will be covered.
- 3.4** The Employment Service will be seeking suitable accommodation within these communities and discussions are under way between the Action Team Manager and Economic Development staff to identify appropriate locations.
- 3.5** The Employment Service will also be discussing the arrangements for launching the project with East Ayrshire Council Corporate Resources, Communications Section.
- 3.6** This is the first expansion of the Action Team for Jobs and it is hoped that other postcode areas suffering relatively high unemployment will be included in the future.

4 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** There are no legal implications.

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The support to jobless people through the Action Team for Jobs will contribute to the East Ayrshire Council plan to reduce the unemployment rate within East Ayrshire.

6 FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** There are no financial or personnel implications.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1** That the Committee:

- (a) welcome the extension of Employment Service's Pathfinder Action Team for Jobs;
- (b) agree to collaborate with the Employment Service to ensure that the maximum benefit from the scheme is achieved; and

- (c) note that the Employment Service have indicated that the scheme may be rolled out to further areas of high unemployment once the current extension has been established.

Stephen Chorley
Director of Development Services

SC/TM/JR
20 August 2001

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information on the contents of this report contact Tom Merry, Senior Projector Advisor, on 01563 554611.

Implementation Officer: Tom Merry

AGENDA