

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 18 DECEMBER 2001**

#### **CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY – NEW PROJECT, CUMNOCK**

##### **Report by the Director of Development Services**

### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** To inform Committee of the successful outcome of a bid led by Development Services to secure a new data processing centre for the Child Support Agency (CSA), in Cumnock as one of two new projects in Scotland. The new project will support 170 jobs initially, but this is expected to grow thereafter.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The CSA is the major UK Government agency for clearing and processing child maintenance payments. The Council became aware, as a result of the restructuring of the CSA's activities in the UK that there was an opportunity to bid for one of two proposed facilities.

### **3 THE PROJECT**

- 3.1** The challenge was to find accommodation and provide a training package that could compete on national basis.

In view of the difficult trading circumstances being experienced by the textile sector in the UK and Cumnock in particular, it was decided at an early stage to target the project to that area.

The requirement was to find at least 10,000 square feet of office type accommodation that could support around 170 staff on a two shift basis.

### **4 CUMNOCK FACILITY**

- 4.1** As a result of our property search we were only able to find a former industrial unit, of the size that the CSA required.

The Council discussed matters with Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire who supported our bid for the unit and we jointly appointed design consultants to carry out a feasibility study into the convertibility of the unit as well as producing an artists impression of how it would look when it was complete.

These papers as well as the supporting pre-start and training and recruitment package provided by Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire and the Employment Service were fed to the CSA's appraisal team. Development Services staff, during the appraisal period, dealt with a whole host of enquiries on the project ranging from IT infrastructure to staff/skills availability in the local labour market.

## **5. POLICY IMPLICATION**

- 5.1** The project accords with the Council Plan in attracting inward investment jobs to the area as well as regenerating vacant industrial property to alternative use.

## **6. PROJECT OUTCOME**

- 6.1** The appraisal team of the CSA have now secured agreement that the Cumnock site represents value for money and has been tested with other geographic locations for the project.

The new project will open in May 2002 and employ initially 170 staff, although this is expected to grow.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** This project is consistent with policy. The attraction of source sector jobs to area such as Cumnock is critical element of the Council Plan.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1** No financial contribution is required from the Council towards the project.

## **9. RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1** That the Committee note the positive outcome to the project.

**Stephen Chorley**  
**Director of Development Services**

DH/CF  
10/12/01

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Nil**

For further information, please contact Robert Paton 57(6142)

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**AGENDA**