

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

PERSONNEL AND PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 21 NOVEMBER 2000

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING ACCOUNTS

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Sub-Committee of the introduction of Individual Learning Accounts (ILA's) by the Scottish Executive and to seek the Sub Committee's support for a proposed initial response by the Council to their introduction.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Individual Learning Accounts are now available in Scotland, forming a key part of the Scottish Executive's lifelong learning agenda. ILA's are intended to
- ◆ enable people to have a personal stake, with greater control, in their personal development
 - ◆ raise individuals' aspirations and expectations of the benefits which learning can create
 - ◆ contribute towards creating a better equipped workforce, well capable of adapting to changing economic conditions.
 - ◆ provide a mechanism to help employers encourage their employees to learn
 - ◆ package incentives to help people pay for learning for their personal development
 - ◆ inform employees of a wide range of learning opportunities.
- 2.2 ILA's are available to **everyone**, aged over 18 and resident in Scotland. They offer a contribution of £150 from the Scottish Executive against a minimum contribution of £25 from the individual account holder.
- 2.3 Employers are encouraged to support their employees' development by promoting ILA's in the workplace. Employers **may** make a contribution to their employees' ILA's but may **not** pay the employees' minimum contribution (£25) on their behalf.
- 2.4 ILA's can be used for a huge range of learning opportunities. (There is a small number of specified exceptions.) They can be used to meet the costs of tuition, examination fees, course registration, course materials etc.

3. PROPOSED COUNCIL SUPPORT

- 3.1 Employers cannot open ILA's on behalf of employees. Only individuals can open ILA's. Further, employers cannot specify the training which employees should undertake. This is an individual choice but employers and employees can work

together to agree a programme of learning of mutual benefit, although ILA's cannot be used to 'subsidise' the Council's training plan. ILA's are for additional learning of the **employees'** choice.

- 3.2** It is proposed that the Council's involvement should be limited to promoting ILA's to the whole workforce in a publicity leaflet, attached as an **appendix** to this report and the provision of any additional advice and support from Training and Development staff.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** The Council is committed to a culture of continuous learning among all its employees. The Council is committed to providing a wide range of learning opportunities to all its employees to acquire the skills, knowledge and qualifications necessary for these purposes. To this end, the Council offers positive and continued support to enable all employees to maximise their potential.

- 4.2** Current training provision in support of these commitments includes

- ◆ In-house, in-service training, including training in support of Council policies and procedures, training to develop the individual etc.
- ◆ IT desk top applications training
- ◆ Health and Safety training
- ◆ Management Development
- ◆ Professional and Vocational training (FE etc. qualifications)
- ◆ Apprenticeship training

In addition, all Council employees (and Members) are able to access evening classes at both Ayr College and Kilmarnock College at half the normal class fee by dint of their employment with the Council. Promotion of ILA's, by the Council, to its employees would be an important and consistent addition to the Council's practical demonstration of its commitment to continuous learning among its employees.

- 4.3** ILAs support these policy commitments and current training and development provision.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** There are no additional costs for the Council arising from this proposal as any notional costs associated with the provision of information and advice will be met from within existing resources.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** None.

7. OTHER ISSUES

- 7.1** Only Learning Providers contracted to the Scottish University for Industry (SUI) can provide training opportunities which can be funded by individuals through their ILA's. The SUI have confirmed that the Training and Development team meet the contractual requirements as a Learning Provider for ILA's.
- 7.2** The Head of Personnel is currently seeking further information on this in order to be able to make a considered proposal to this Sub-Committee, in due course. However, it is strongly proposed that the promotion of ILA's to the Council's workforce should **not** be delayed pending clarification of this matter.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1** It is recommended that the Sub-Committee:
- a) approve the promotion of Individual Learning Accounts to the whole of the Council's workforce by distributing the attached flier with payslips as soon as practicable;
 - b) ask the Head of Personnel to provide a future report on employee response and any proposals for the Council's extended involvement with Individual Learning Accounts; and
 - c) otherwise note the contents of the report.

Fiona Lees,
Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources.
eb/eb
30 October 2000.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Individual Learning Accounts - a guide for employers.
2. Individual Learning Accounts - a guide for everyone.
3. Individual Learning Accounts - August 2000 update.
4. Individual Learning Accounts - the new way to get into learning.

Anyone wishing further information should contact Eoghan Baird, Training and Development Manager (01563 555276).

AGENDA