

## REPORT

AGENDA ITEM No. 12

To : <b>HOUSING &amp; TECHNICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>		Subject : <b>HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2001 IMPROVEMENT/REPAIRS GRANTS APPOINTMENT OF A TEMPORARY GRANTS OFFICER</b>
From : <b>DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICES</b>		
Date : <b>8 October 2002</b>	Ref: <b>TMcK/IMcM/AMcS</b>	

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the appointment of an additional Grants Officer for a six-month period to assist with the additional work resultant from implementation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The provisions of Part 6 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 are likely to be implemented in full as from 1 April 2003, subject to the agreement of Scottish Ministers. These provisions represent a radical reshaping of the system for the provision for Improvement and Repair Grants, including the introduction of a national Test of Resources for applicants.
- 2.2 A considerable volume of additional work will be required around the changeover period, in terms of dealing with new grant applications and in processing the transitional arrangements for existing applications where the works are not started or are in progress at the changeover date. In addition, it would be beneficial from a service delivery viewpoint to modify the grant processing system to ensure that all grant applicants following the changeover receive a home visit and inspection of their property by a Grants Officer within a short timescale of their application being received, compared with the current arrangements whereby the home visit only occurs when funding becomes available. Extra staff resources would be required to handle the backlog of inspections to facilitate this change.
- 2.3 Given the additional resources of £0.5M recently approved for 2002-04, and the work involved in preparing for the new system, the existing staff complement within the Grants Section will be fully employed over the next twelve months. It would not be practicable or cost-effective to utilise overtime to achieve the additional workload. It is therefore proposed that an additional Grants Officer (AP3/4) be appointed on a temporary basis for a six-month period from approximately January to June 2003.
- 2.4 The costs involved, approximately £5,000 in each financial year, would be funded from anticipated additional income from fees and charges on the revenue budget for the Section.
- 2.5 This proposal does not address the issue of staffing resources to operate the new Test of Resources or for grants and private sector work generally in the long-term, which will be the subject of a report to a subsequent Committee.

**3. Corporate Considerations**

3.1 The necessary consultations have been undertaken with regard to any financial or personnel issues related to this proposal.

**4. Recommendation**

4.1 It is recommended that Committee

- a) approve the appointment of a temporary Grants Officer (AP3/4) for a six month period
- b) remit this report to the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub-Committee for consideration.

**5. Background Information**

5.1 Available within the Housing and Property Services Department.



 **Thomas McKenzie**  
**Director Of Housing And Property Services**