Abstract: This report seeks to update the Committee on the work undertaken relating to the Brechin Contact Centre Initiative.

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the current success of the Brechin Contact Centre Initiative in achieving a number of its key objectives:

- Compilation of a database holding 211 names of people in and around the Brechin area who are interested in contact centre employment.
- The opportunity of offering training on a course specifically designed and supported by the call centre industry for all those registered.
- The information gathered has been incorporated into a package of inward investment measures to support the marketing of the Brechin Business Park as a contact centre destination.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Brechin Contact Centre Initiative was launched in October 2003 to establish a register of local people interested in contact Centre work.

2.2 The campaign targeted people throughout Angus through various marketing activities i.e. radio and newspaper advertising, jobs fairs, careers fairs and visiting local retail outlets in the Brechin area.

2.3 To date the response has exceeded all expectations with:

- 250 enquiries being logged at the Forfar JobCentre Plus office and
- 211 full applications have been returned

2.4 The initiative was launched in partnership with JobCentre Plus and with the support of Talking Tayside (Contact Centre Forum). It is the intention that the 211 applications are shared with the Talking Tayside database, which will increase the membership to approximately 400 for the Tayside area.

3 ANALYSIS

3.1 The information below looks at some of the key findings from the 211 applications received and is supplement by additional demographic information about Brechin and its surrounding area.
3.2 Not surprisingly 28% of responses (57) came from Brechin, however it is interesting to note that responses as far away as Largoward in Fife and Stonehaven in Aberdeenshire were also logged.

3.3 In total 71% of the responses were from people who live in Angus.

4 METHOD OF TRANSPORT

4.1 56% of those registered indicated that they would use their own transport to get to and from work.

4.2 63.6% of people aged 16-74 in employment or studying in Angus travel to their place of work or study by motor vehicle. This is higher than the Scottish average of 58.78%.

4.3 Of the 46,945 households in Angus only 26.43% don’t have access to one or more motor vehicles. This is considerably less than the Scottish average of 34.23%.

5 EMPLOYMENT AND HOURS WORKED
5.1 The people registered with the Brechin Contact Centre have displayed flexibility in the type of work patterns they are willing to work. Over 120 are willing to work full-time or part-time hours as and when required.

5.2 In Angus the average (mean) weekly hours worked is 30.12 for females and 43.65 hours for males.*

5.3 75% of those in employment in Angus are full-time and 25% part-time.**

5.4 Unemployment in Angus is 3.3% less than the Scottish average of 3.8%.**

5.5 There are 27,000 potential returners to the labour market in Angus and Dundee (9,000 from Angus).*

5.6 Brechin South ward has the fourth highest level of unemployment in Angus totalling 105 claimants.**

6  ITC SKILLS

6.1 From the 211 people registered on the Brechin Contact Centre database 95% claim to have computer experience.

6.2 51.3% of the Angus workforce is educated to NVQ Level 3 or higher (compared to the Scottish average of 49.7%).**

* Source: Census 2001
** Source: Scottish Executive Economic Briefing, November 2003
*** Source: Labour Force Survey, August 2003

7  FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

7.1 There is a 2-day careers awareness event planned for February for Brechin High School senior pupils, which will include a visit to a contact centre in Dundee.

7.2 There is the potential for those registered on the database to access pre-recruitment training through the Talking Tayside network in 2004. It is hoped that this will coincide with a number of large recruitment drives expected in the Dundee area early next year.

7.3 It is intended to further promote Brechin as a contact centre destination by fully utilising the information gathered by the Brechin Contact Centre Initiative.

8  FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This initiative received approval for funding from the Economic Development Revenue budget 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 (report 1168/02) and has received additional funds through the Leader + programme.

9  HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.
10 CONSULTATION

10.1 The Directors of Finance and Law & Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

11 CONCLUSION

11.1 As companies become more and more aware of the importance of staffing their facilities, it is essential to gather good demographic information for the purpose of inward investment. Historically the contact centre industry has experienced a high turnover of staff and potential problems when recruiting and retaining staff. It is hoped that the Brechin Contact Centre Initiative has proved that should a company look to locate in the area that there would be a sufficient level of people interested in contact centre work.

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

DV/FC/MM

17 December 2003

A B Watson
Chief Executive