

AYRSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 16th September 2008 at 10.35 a.m. within County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr.

Item 1 - Sederunt.

Present:

East Ayrshire Councillor: Andrew Filson.

North Ayrshire Councillors: Robert Barr, Andrew Chamberlain and John Moffat.

South Ayrshire Councillors: Douglas Campbell (Chair), Ian Douglas and Ian Fitzsimmons.

In Attendance: William Sommerville, Assessor; Alastair Kirkwood, Depute Assessor; Eileen Howat, Treasurer; Ruth Donaghy, East Ayrshire Council; William Pollock, Administration Manager, South Ayrshire Council (for Clerk); and Avril Gerrish, Committee Administrative Officer, South Ayrshire Council.

Also in

Attendance: Asif A. Haseeb, Audit Scotland (External Auditor); Pauline Gillen, Audit Scotland (External Auditor);

Apologies:

Councillor Alan Brown, East Ayrshire Council;
Councillor Tom Cook, East Ayrshire Council;
Councillor William Crawford, East Ayrshire Council;
Councillor William Menzies, East Ayrshire Council;
Councillor Elisabeth Marshall North Ayrshire Council;
Councillor Alan Munro, North Ayrshire Council;
Councillor Ryan Oldfather, North Ayrshire Council;
Councillor Andy Campbell, South Ayrshire Council; and
Councillor Mike Peddie, South Ayrshire Council.

Item 2 – Minutes of Meeting held on 17th June 2008.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Board held on the 17th June 2008 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

Item 3 – Matters Arising.

Item 9 – IRRV Conference.

The Assessor reported that he had attended the IRRV Conference at Crieff Hydro on 3rd and 4th September 2008.

Item 4 - Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board –Accounts for Financial Year to 31st March 2008.

There was submitted (circulated) a report dated 9th September 2008 by the Treasurer

- (1) advising
 - (a) that Audit Scotland had undertaken its audit of accounts of the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, and the Code of Audit Practice approved by Audit Scotland for the financial year to 31st March 2008; and
 - (b) that the draft financial statement for the financial year to 31st March 2008 and the proposed independent auditor's report were attached to the report for information;
- (2) outlining key issues as identified by the Auditors in the report as follows:-
 - (a) that there were no qualifications to the audit certificate;
 - (b) that presentational adjustments had been agreed with Audit Scotland and these had been incorporated into the attached accounts and changes have been agreed with the Auditor to reflect the Board's ability to show a balance on the general fund would be incorporated in the 2008/09 accounts; and
 - (c) that the accounts showed an accumulated surplus of £179,324 for use by the constituent authorities and that the Board had already committed to using £131,007 to meet expenditure in 2008/09 and £30,000 to meet the costs of implementing single status and changes to electoral administration and proposals for the use of the remaining £18,317 would be presented to the Board when considering the 2009/10 Revenue Budget; and
- (3) reporting that the Annual Report to Members would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board on 11th November 2008.

Decided: to instruct the Treasurer to sign the accounts and submit copies to Audit Scotland by 30th September 2008.

Item 5 – Revenue Monitoring Report 2008/09 – Period to 31st August 2008.

There was submitted (circulated) a report dated 9th September 2008 by the Treasurer

- (1) advising that the Revenue Estimates for 2008/09 had been approved by the Board on 15th January 2008;
- (2) detailing the income and expenditure for the period to 31st August 2008 compared to the approved Revenue Estimates and outlining an underspend of £43,647;
- (3) proposing to increase both income and expenditure budgets to reflect the £22,270 funding received for data standards; and
- (4) anticipating that the overspend in Valuation Panel expenses could be met from the underspend in employee costs.

Decided:

- (a) to approve the contents of the report; and
- (b) to instruct the Treasurer
 - (i) to provide updated figures to the next meeting; and
 - (ii) to reflect the additional income/expenditure in relation to data standards in the budget.

Item 6 – Non-Domestic Rating.

There was submitted (circulated) a report dated September 2008 by the Assessor outlining the current position with reference to Non-Domestic Rating.

Decided: to note the position.

Item 7 – Council Tax.

There was submitted (circulated) a report dated September 2008 by the Assessor

- (1) advising that the survey and banding of new houses was continuing with a view to achieving or improving on the performance targets; and
- (2) outlining the current position on clearing appeals as detailed in the report.

Decided: to note the position.

Item 8 – Electoral Registration.

There was submitted (circulated) a report dated September 2008 by the Assessor

- (1) advising
 - (a) that the registration forms for this year's canvass had been issued in the last week of August 2008;
 - (b) that reminder forms would be issued at appropriate stages with a door to door visit being carried out later in the cycle; and
 - (c) that a combination of the use of Board staff and interested staff members from each of the three authorities would carry out that exercise; and
- (2) reporting
 - (a) that advertising on buses within Ayrshire had been arranged as a means to assist with the publicity surrounding the annual canvass;
 - (b) that Electoral Commission posters had also been distributed to Libraries and Schools; and

- (c) on proposals regarding the creation of an Election Management Board with membership consisting of the thirty-two Returning Officers for Scotland together with the fifteen EROs.

Decided: to note the position.

Item 9 - Exclusion of Press and Public.

The Board resolved, in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item of business on the agenda on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information in terms of paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

Item 10 – Structural Change.

There was submitted (circulated to members only) a report dated September 2008 by the Assessor

- (1) advising that following a structural review of the Valuation staff it had been determined that the current structure was no longer providing best value for the Board; and
- (2) seeking approval
 - (a) to delete one post from the structure; and
 - (b) for the revised structure as shown in Appendix 4 of the report.

Decided: to approve

- (i) the deletion of the post; and
- (ii) the revised structure as contained in Appendix 4 of the report.

Item 11 – Gender Equality Scheme.

There was submitted (circulated) a report dated September 2008 by the Depute Assessor

- (1) outlining the current position concerning the Board's Gender Equality Scheme; and
- (2) reporting that the Gender Equality Scheme Annual Report for 2008 was attached to the report.

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

Item 12 – Staffing.

There was submitted (circulated) a report dated September 2008 by the Depute Assessor outlining the current staffing position to date.

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

Item 13 – Establishment of an Appeals Panel.

The Assessor informed the Board of the requirement to establish an Appeals Panel to provide adequate arrangements for possible future decisions to be made outwith the normal cycle of Board meetings.

Decided:

- (1) to establish an Appeals Panel comprising of one Elected Member from each of the three constituent authorities who had preferably had training on conducting Appeals but training would be arranged if required if this were not the case; and
- (2) that Councillors Douglas Campbell and John Moffat and a Member from East Ayrshire Council be appointed to serve on the Appeals Panel as and when required.

Item 14 – Distribution of Board Papers.

The Assessor sought approval from the Board to send out electronic mail from time to time on specific subjects relating to the Joint Board.

Decided: to agree that mail could be sent out electronically to Members of the Board.

Item 15 – Any Other Competent Business.

(1) Website.

The Assessor advised the Board that the Auditor had suggested that all Reports for meetings should be placed on the website.

Decided: to request that the Assessor submit a report on this matter for consideration to the next meeting of the Board on 11th November 2008.

(2) Replacement Windows – Capital Budget.

The Assessor reported that tenders had been received for replacement windows at the Board's Office in Wellington Square, Ayr and had been higher than anticipated, but negotiations were still ongoing and that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board on 11th November 2008 outlining the position.

Item 16 - Date of Next Meeting.

The Board noted that the next meeting would take place in Cunninghame House, Irvine on 11th November 2008 at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting ended at 11.35 a.m.