

REPORT BY ASSESSOR

SUBJECT: Non-Domestic Rating

1.0 Revaluation 2005 Appeals

Following each general revaluation the proprietor, tenant and occupier of a non-domestic property is entitled to appeal against the Rateable Value shown in the Valuation Roll (within the appropriate time limit set out in the relevant legislation).

The vast majority of revaluation appeals lodged subsequent to the 2005 revaluation have been cleared and the 14 that remain outstanding are awaiting the consideration of the Lands Tribunal for Scotland.

Revaluation 2005					
Unitary Authority	Total No. of Appeals Lodged	Disposed of	No. Outstanding	% Cleared	% Cleared at last meeting
East Ayrshire	1,079	1,073	6	99.44%	99.26%
North Ayrshire	812	807	5	99.38%	98.64%
South Ayrshire	978	975	3	99.69%	99.28%
TOTAL	2,869	2,855	14	99.51%	99.09%

2.0 Running Roll Appeals (2005 Revaluation Roll)

Running Roll appeals are lodged by proprietors, tenants and occupiers, normally as a result of changes of circumstances or changes of occupation, on an ongoing basis throughout the lifetime of the roll. The current position with Running Roll Appeals is as shown below:-

RUNNING ROLL 2005				
Unitary Authority	Total No. of Appeals Lodged	Disposed of	No. Outstanding	% Cleared
East Ayrshire	273	201	72	73.63%
North Ayrshire	364	267	97	73.35%
South Ayrshire	358	276	82	77.09%
TOTAL	995	744	251	74.77%

Similar to the position concerning revaluation appeals, provision exists for running roll appeals to be referred to the Lands Tribunal for Scotland. At the current time 30 of these running roll appeals are awaiting the Tribunal's consideration.

3.0 Non Domestic Valuation Appeal Committee Hearings

In view of the requirement to undertake the 2010 revaluation no hearings of the Local Valuation Appeal Committee for the consideration of non domestic appeals have been scheduled at this time. Consideration is now being given to scheduling hearings in the later part of the year to deal with the outstanding running roll appeals.

4.0 2010 Revaluation

Work is now well underway in preparing valuations for the next general revaluation, which is due to come into force on 1 April 2010. Provisional Rateable Values have been established for shops and offices. However, the current economic climate means that the true level of rental value is particularly difficult to determine and it is likely that a further review of the most up to date evidence will be required before these values are finalised. Work is currently underway to determine the Rateable Values of the remaining categories of subject. The target date for delivering a completed 2010 Revaluation Roll is 31 August 2009.

5.0 Valuation Roll Amendments / New Entries & KPI Performance

The update of the Valuation Roll to reflect new properties, deletions and amendments continues on an ongoing basis.

The increased incidence of Council Tax Proposals and the requirement to undertake the 5 yearly General Revaluation within a truncated timetable did, as anticipated, have a significant impact upon this key performance area during the financial year 2008/9. As a result the number of amendments undertaken within three months, which is taken to be the principal measure of performance, fell slightly below the target figure of 75% to 64.4%. Details of this and other performance measures are detailed in the Annual Performance Report.

6.0 Recommendation

That the Board notes the content of the Report.

REPORT BY ASSESSOR

SUBJECT: Council Tax

1.0 New Houses

The survey and banding of new houses for entry in the Council Tax List continues with a view to achieving or improving on performance targets.

2.0 Proposals

Proposals (appeals) to alter the valuation band allocated to dwellings are normally received in small numbers each month. Since the start of 2007 there has been a significant increase in the number of proposals lodged as a result of media attention. These proposals continue to be received on a daily basis.

In many cases these proposals are invalid because they have not been lodged within the statutory timescale. Nevertheless, each proposal is being fully investigated and in the event that any errors are discovered these will be amended within the error procedures made available to the Assessor. Unresolved invalid proposals will be referred to the Local Valuation Appeal Committee.

The current position is as shown below:-

PROPOSALS LOGGED LESS THAN 3 MONTHS OLD					
Unitary Authority	Logged	Adjusted	Withdrawn	Outstanding	Outstanding at last Meeting
East Ayrshire	37	8	1	28	19
North Ayrshire	42	1	3	38	31
South Ayrshire	29	0	1	28	19
TOTAL	108	9	5	94	69

PROPOSALS LOGGED OVER 3 MONTHS OLD					
Unitary Authority	Logged	Adjusted	Withdrawn	Outstanding	Outstanding at last Meeting
East Ayrshire	1322	455	795	72	101
North Ayrshire	1837	672	1058	107	104
South Ayrshire	2032	853	1109	70	73
Total	5191	1980	2962	249	278

3.0 Council Tax Valuation Appeal Committee Hearings

During spring 2009 two hearings of the Local Valuation Appeal Committee had been scheduled to consider outstanding Council Tax appeals. The first of these took place on 29 April 2009 and the second will take place on 3 June 2009. Discussions are now underway with the Secretary of the Committee in order to finalise dates for the autumn diet of appeals.

4.0 Recommendation

That the Board notes the content of the Report.

REPORT BY ASSESSOR

SUBJECT: Electoral Registration

1.0 Absent Vote Statistics

Listed below are the current totals held for postal, proxy and postal proxies in connection with the European Parliamentary Election to be held on 4 June, 2009:-

POSTAL VOTE STATISTICS			
Unitary Authority	Postal Votes	Proxy Votes	Postal Proxy Votes
East Ayrshire	11,151	45	2
North Ayrshire	12,792	66	3
South Ayrshire	14,261	65	9
Total	38,204	176	14

2.0 Advertising Campaign

It is intended to place adverts on buses throughout Ayrshire emphasising the need to return the annual canvass registration form.

The advertising will be along the same lines as last year when adverts appeared on the rear panel of the bus with others being placed inside the bus.

Additionally, I am looking into the possibility of advertising at train stations as well with adverts being placed at Ayr, Kilmarnock and Kilwinning train stations.

3.0 Voter Awareness Road Shows

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board staff took part in the above campaign to promote the forthcoming European Parliamentary Election on 4 June, 2009.

Along with Returning Officer staff they attended various supermarkets and colleges throughout East and South Ayrshire. Members of the public were invited to check the register and where required registration forms were issued.

Postal vote application forms were also made available to anyone who wanted to vote by post.

4.0 Rolling Registration

Appendix 1 shows the number of monthly changes that have been actioned through the Rolling Registration process.

5.0 Recommendation

That the Board notes the content of the report.

Appendix 1

MONTHLY CHANGES TO REGISTER					
Month	Unitary Authority	Additions	Deletions	Amendments	Total Changes
January 2009	East Ayrshire	332	188	150	3,333
	North Ayrshire	938	285	170	
	South Ayrshire	769	337	164	
	Total	2,039	810	484	
February 2009	East Ayrshire	99	187	31	907
	North Ayrshire	111	201	43	
	South Ayrshire	56	139	40	
	Total	266	527	114	
March 2009	East Ayrshire	135	205	43	1,312
	North Ayrshire	215	313	53	
	South Ayrshire	106	211	31	
	Total	456	729	127	
April 2009	East Ayrshire	200	261	39	1,632
	North Ayrshire	240	386	74	
	South Ayrshire	133	228	71	
	Total	573	875	184	
May 2009	East Ayrshire	183	192	24	1,259
	North Ayrshire	165	262	35	
	South Ayrshire	158	223	17	
	Total	506	677	76	

REPORT BY ASSESSOR

SUBJECT: Public Performance Report

1.0 Purpose of the Report

To update members with the performance achieved in the Board's main functions during the financial year 2008/ 2009.

2.0 Background

Within the terms of s13 of the Local Government Scotland Act 2003 it is the duty of each Local Authority to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of its functions.

3.0 Public Performance Report

The ninth annual performance report for Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board, which covers the financial year 2008/2009, is attached as **Appendix 1**. This report will be made available for inspection by members of the public at the Board's offices, public libraries throughout Ayrshire and at local Council Headquarters. The report is also available for inspection on the Board's website at www.ayrshire-vjb.gov.uk

4.0 Recommendation

That the Board note the content of the report.

REPORT BY ASSESSOR

SUBJECT: Equality Report

1.0 Purpose of the Report

To update members with the performance achieved in ensuring that the Board's duties with regard to racial, disability and gender equality are fulfilled.

2.0 Background

Within the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 and the associated codes of practice, the Board has both general and specific duties to promote equality with regard to disability and gender. Provided within each Act is provision for an annual report to summarise the steps that have been taken in the course of the previous year and the actions that have been set for the following year in order to meet those duties.

3.0 Equality Report

The Board's equality report is attached as **Appendix 3**. This report is intended to bring together the two distinct reports in one document. It is intended that a similar combined report will be published annually together with the Board's annual performance report. The report will be made available for inspection by members of the public at the Board's offices, public libraries throughout Ayrshire and at local Council Headquarters. The report is also available for inspection on the Board's website at www.ayrshire-vjb.gov.uk

4.0 Recommendation

That the Board note the content of the report.

REPORT BY ASSESSOR

SUBJECT: Capital Expenditure - Replacement Windows And Security Cameras

1.0 Purpose of the Report

To update members on the position concerning the replacement of windows within the rear block of 9 Wellington Square and to seek approval for the installation of security cameras at the rear entrance.

2.0 Background

At the Board's meeting of 18 November 2008 approval was granted to expend the sum of £72,000 to replace the windows within the rear block of 9 Wellington Square. This sum, which was provided by the Board's constituent authorities on a proportionate basis, included various allocated amounts for contingencies and day works.

The project has recently been successfully completed and it has become apparent that expenditure of these contingencies and day works has not been fully required. Although the final account has not yet been received the projected under spend on the project is anticipated to be around £11,000.

3.0 Security Cameras

In recent years a number of concerns have arisen concerning the security of both staff and property around the rear entrance to the Board's offices. Professional advice has been sought and it is recommended that a CCTV security system be installed providing coverage of this area. Provisional estimates suggest that such a system would cost in the order of £2,000 - £3,000.

4.0 Financial Implications

It is proposed that the provision of CCTV security equipment be funded from the under spend arising from the replacement windows. Therefore no further requisitions will be required from the constituent authorities. Any revenue costs will be met from within existing resources.

A further report will be submitted to the Board detailing the final expenditure on the replacement windows and making further proposals on any remaining balance at a future meeting.

5.0 Recommendation

That the Board note the position concerning the replacement windows and approve the purchase of a CCTV security system.

REPORT BY DEPUTE ASSESSOR

SUBJECT: Staffing

1.0 Appointments

Susan Campbell has been appointed to the vacant post of Administration Officer with sectional responsibility for East Ayrshire.

This appointment is an internal appointment and in turn will create a further vacancy. However, having regard to potential changes likely to be required to facilitate the introduction of single status, it has been determined that this position should remain vacant at present.

Notwithstanding the above, in view of the number of positions currently being held vacant, it has been determined that a temporary clerical assistant should be employed for a period of 6 months to assist with the annual canvass. Arrangements are being made with the local job centre to advertise this position.

2.0 Policies and Procedures

The following policies and procedures have been updated to bring them into line with recent changes to employment legislation:

- (i) Policy & Procedure for dealing with Grievances
- (ii) Policy & Procedure for dealing with Disciplinary Procedures
- (iii) Policy & Operational Guidelines for Flexible Working*

** The above policy extends the right to request flexible working to parents of children under 17 years of age.*

3.0 Absentee Statistics

As part of our ongoing monitoring of absenteeism, shown below are the yearly percentage loss of work days since the Board was formed in 1996.

ABSENTEE STATISTICS			
Year	Percentage Loss		
	Self Certified	Medically Certificated	Total
1996	1.19%	0.77%	1.96%
1997	1.87%	2.35%	4.23%
1998	1.71%	1.38%	3.09%
1999	1.85%	1.55%	3.40%
2000	1.91%	1.45%	3.36%
2001	1.92%	3.47%	5.39%
2002	1.73%	1.11%	2.83%
2003	1.49%	0.99%	2.48%
2004	1.64%	3.23%	4.87%
2005	1.55%	0.97%	2.52%
2006	1.15%	3.07%	4.23%
2007	1.25%	1.07%	2.31%
2008	1.83%	3.00%	4.83%

5.0 Recommendation

That the Board notes the content of the Report.

Appendix 1



**AYRSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD
PERFORMANCE REPORT
2008/2009**

The Assessor for Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board is responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the Valuation List, Valuation Roll and Register of Electors for the whole of Ayrshire.

COUNCIL TAX VALUATION LIST

The Valuation List gives the address and Council Tax Band of all the houses in Ayrshire and your Council Tax bill is based on this banding.

The present Valuation List came into effect on 1st April, 1993 and contains an entry for every dwelling house and domestic garage or lockup in Ayrshire. It is most important that this list is maintained in an up-to-date way to include new houses and changes to existing entries. It is desirable that new properties are placed on the Council Tax List as soon as possible, thus avoiding large backdated bills. Equally to improve their cash flow situation the three Ayrshire Councils must minimise any delay in collecting Council Tax.

The number of changes to the Valuation list for the past two years can be seen from the table below.

Year	East Ayrshire			North Ayrshire			South Ayrshire		
	Added Entry	Deleted Entry	Amended Entry	Added Entry	Deleted Entry	Amended Entry	Added Entry	Deleted Entry	Amended Entry
2007/08	960	143	134	879	118	467	501	230	196
2008/09	648	211	138	524	183	155	224	78	104

The total number of new houses entered onto the valuation lists within the three Unitary Authorities for the years 2004/2005 up to 2008/2009 can be seen in the following table. There has been a steady increase in the number of domestic properties over each year.

Year	Total Number of Council Tax Entries	Total Number of dwellings	No. of New Entries Added
2004/2005	178,179	170,063	1,446
2005/2006	179,105	170,993	1,484
2006/2007	180,440	172,338	1,781
2007/2008	182,289	174,316	2,340
2008/2009	183,090	175,146	1,396

The Performance Measure concerned here is the speed at which new properties are added to the list.

We have based our targets on previous years achievements and the desire for continual improvement in our performance. A target of 87% of new houses entered within 3 months and a target of 96% within the first 6 months. We saw a rise in achievement for the 3 month period compared to last years performance, and also achieved 1% above target for the 6 month period.

The actual performance achieved over the past 5 years can be seen from the table below.

Year	Key Performance Indicators			
	Number	< 3 Months	3 - 6 Months	> 6 Months
2004/05	1,446	90.5%	7.6%	1.9%
2005/06	1,484	86.3%	10.6%	3.1%
2006/07	1,781	87.1%	10.9%	1.9%
2007/08	2,340	81.7%	15.8%	2.5%
2008/09	1,396	85.4%	11.7%	2.9%
Target		87.0%	9.0%	4.0%

Meeting – 9th June, 2009

VALUATION ROLL FOR NON-DOMESTIC SUBJECTS

The Valuation Roll contains an entry and value for every non-domestic property in the area. It is published after each Revaluation and is in force for five years.

Two separate Performance Indicators have been established for Non-Domestic Rating work.

1st Indicator

The first indicator measures how quickly we respond to property changes by amending the Valuation Roll. As with Council Tax payers, Rate payers who are in the main local businesses and employers, have a keen interest in having changes made as soon as possible. This is important either to reduce their rates liability or to avoid having a backdated rates bill.

The number of changes to the Valuation Roll for the past two years can be seen from the table below.

Year	East Ayrshire			North Ayrshire			South Ayrshire		
	Added Entry	Deleted Entry	Amended Entry	Added Entry	Deleted Entry	Amended Entry	Added Entry	Deleted Entry	Amended Entry
2007/08	95	120	119	122	143	151	98	101	167
2008/09	109	153	142	132	126	129	84	77	122

The actual number of Valuation Roll entries and respective rateable values can be seen from the table below, along with the number of actual alterations made to the Roll (excluding appeal settlements).

Year	Total Number of Valuation Roll entries	Total Rateable Value	No. of Alterations to the Valuation Roll
2003/04	13,372	£246,644,728	1,312
2004/05	13,245	£247,663,196	1,116
2005/06	13,320	£252,913,528	1,423
2006/07	13,423	£253,685,194	1,351
2007/08	13,383	£256,455,253	1,116

Meeting – 9th June, 2009

2008/09	13,356	£252,887,445	1,074
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Meeting – 9th June, 2009

We have based our targets on previous years achievements and the desire for continual improvement in our performance. A target of 75% of alterations entered within 3 months was set for the year 2007/08, and a target of 91% within the first 6 months. Although the number of alterations within the Valuation Roll fell, this was countered by an increase in workload for preparation for the 2010 Revaluation. The Board also went through a period of staff changes which had an effect on the achieved performance.

The actual performance achieved over the past 5 years can be seen from the chart below.

Year	Key Performance Indicators			
	Number	< 3 Months	3 - 6 Months	> 6 Months
2004/05	1,116	72.5%	16.8%	10.8%
2005/06	1,423	68.4%	17.5%	14.1%
2006/07	1,351	71.7%	16.9%	11.5%
2007/08	1,116	68.1%	18.6%	13.3%
2008/09	1,074	64.4%	18.7%	16.9%
Target		75.0%	16.0%	9.0%

2nd Indicator

The second indicator measures the amount of Rateable Value lost from the Valuation Roll as a result of appeal settlements within each financial year.

The number of Revaluation Appeals settled within the respective years along with the targets and actual performance on appeal loss can be seen from the table below.

Appeal Settlement			
Year	No of Settled Appeals	Loss Target	Loss Achieved
2006/07	1,539	1.10%	0.21%
2007/08	409	1.10%	0.24%
2008/09	252	1.10%	1.30%

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

There are many external factors out-with the control of the Registration Officer which can influence the return percentage of canvassed properties and the 2008/09 canvass was the eighth complete postal canvass for the five Scottish constituent areas.

The table below shows the return for the Joint Board area for 2007/08 and 2008/09

Constituency	No of Properties Canvassed		Positive Response		% Achieved	
	2007/08	2008/09	2007/08	2008/09	2007/08	2008/09
AYR	33,861	33,768	29,359	28,313	86.7%	83.85%
CUNNINGHAME NORTH	35,921	36,345	30,140	29,589	83.9%	81.41%
CUNNINGHAME SOUTH	29,956	30,085	24,690	24,161	82.4%	80.31%
CARRICK, CUMNOCK & DOON VALLEY	38,092	38,344	33,182	32,555	87.1%	84.90%
KILMARNOCK & LOUDOUN	36,984	37,588	31,407	31,325	84.7%	83.34%
Total	174,814	176,130	148,678	145,943	85.0%	82.86%

The total number of forms issued increased, however the percentage return decreased slightly in comparison with the previous year. These figures constitute a total return of just under 83% for the Joint Board Area. Using secondary information available the return percentage was increased to just under 95%.

In an effort to provide alternative means of registering for the annual canvass Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board followed up previous year's successful telephone registration system, and internet registration which allowed people with no changes to their registration to respond via a free phone telephone line or secure internet site.

Meeting – 9th June, 2009

No of Properties Canvassed 2008/2009		Positive Response			% Achieved		
		Postal	Telephone	Internet	Postal	Telephone	Internet
Constituency							
AYR	33,861	16,318	9,196	2,799	48.3%	27.2%	8.3%
CUNNINGHAME NORTH	35,921	17,486	9,234	2,869	48.1%	25.4%	7.9%
CUNNINGHAME SOUTH	29,956	13,536	8,319	2,306	45.0%	27.7%	7.7%
CARRICK, CUMNOCK & DOON VALLEY	38,092	19,567	10,389	2,599	51.0%	27.1%	6.8%
KILMARNOCK & LOUDOUN	36,984	17,774	10,590	2,961	47.3%	28.2%	7.9%
Total	174,814	84,681	47,728	13,534	48.1%	27.1%	7.7%

For further information on these performance figures or any aspect of the responsibilities of the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board contact :-

William Sommerville FRICS
Assessor for AVJB,
9 Wellington Square,
Ayr. KA7 1HL

Telephone 01292 612539
email:- avjb@south-ayrshire.gov.uk
website:- www.ayrshire-vjb.gov.uk



Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Disability Equality Scheme
& Gender equality Scheme
Annual Report 2009

Foreword

I remain of the view that equality of opportunity and good race relations are fundamental components of a civilised society and I am committed to eliminating discrimination in all its forms.

This is the second annual report produced by Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board concerning our Disability Equality and Gender Equality Schemes. This report seeks to combine the previously separate reports which were published annually and is being issued at this time in conjunction with the Board's Annual Public Performance Report. It is intended that a similar combined report will be issued each year.

In the course of the last year we have built upon equality issues that have been placed at the heart of the Board's decision making process. We continue to consider equalities issues at our monthly management meetings. Our equalities group continues to review the practices and procedures followed in the exercise of the Board's responsibilities with regard to Non-Domestic Rates, Council Tax and Electoral Registration. These and other actions are reported on in more detail below and I intend to ensure that we continue to deliver on the proposals and action plans within our scheme by monitoring and auditing our performance and reporting on progress to Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board and citizens of East, North and South Ayrshire.

William Sommerville
Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer
Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Introduction:

The Board's Disability Equality Scheme was introduced in December 2006 and the Gender Equality Scheme in June 2007. Each sets out the makeup of the Board and its responsibilities, aims and objectives. Each also identifies both the general and specific duties placed upon the Board by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Gender Equality Act 2006 and the actions that the Board intend to take to meet these requirements.

The purpose of this report is to summarise the steps that have been taken in the course of the last year and the actions that have been set for the following year. For convenience this report is structured according to the action plan set out in the Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme:

Disability Equality Report

Information ingathered and actions taken:

The action points noted within the Board's Disability Scheme and the steps taken to fulfil these actions are set out below:

1.0 Review the physical characteristics 9 Wellington Square including disabled access and disabled toilet provision:

As previously reported, following a review of the premises it has been considered that although the Listed, Georgian, Town House fronting Wellington Square has stairs at the entrance which make it unsuitable for disabled access, access provision to the rear block from Mews Lane is adequate. A disabled parking space, disabled toilet and a disabled reception area are available within the rear block.

Some deficiencies were noted in the signage provision and arrangements have been made to replace these signs – see action point 1.1.2.

On further analysis it was determined that the painted markings identifying the disabled parking space were worn and ineffective. These have been repainted – see action point 1.1.3.

Following staffing changes an opportunity was identified to create a private interview room suitable for wheel chair users adjacent to the disabled access. This opportunity has been taken and the interview room is now available for use – see action point 1.1.4.

1.2 Review provision for effective communication with disabled persons, including loop access, access to internet and written communications:

As previously reported a portable hearing loop has been purchased and installed at the public reception to assist hearing aid users. This portable loop can be moved to the rear disabled reception area or to interview rooms on request. Arrangements have now been made to ensure that the hearing loop is tested annually – see action point 1.2.2.

Also as previously reported, the Board's website has been improved to include speech enabled facilities together with facilities to increase text font size. Resources with regard to the provision of material in braille or by audio tapes are available on request through South Ayrshire Council's Disability Resource Centre and AVJB staff have been made aware of this facility. The ingathering of statistics has commenced to identify the extent of usage of these facilities – see action point 1.2.4.

Through the equalities group various items of written correspondence are being reviewed to ensure that these meet required standards concerning font size etc. And this is considered to be an ongoing exercise - see action point 1.2.5.

1.3 Review statistics for the monitoring of applications for employment and promotion, application for & receipt of training, grievances, disciplinary procedures and termination of employment:

The statistics ingathered in connection with employment and promotion, recruitment grievances, disciplinary procedures and termination of employment have been reviewed and are considered to be satisfactory. These statistics are as set out in the equalities monitoring statement attached as Appendix 2. To assist with this process a questionnaire has been issued to all staff to identify, among other equality issues, their disability status.

The Board has made arrangements to ingather statistics concerning requests for training, the approval of requests and the satisfaction level of training delivered to disabled employees. These statistics are being collated and monitored – see action point 1.3.2. Furthermore, the Board's staff training feedback questionnaire has been amended to include questions designed to identify any disability issues – see action point 1.3.4.

Although not commonly necessary, any instances concerning, grievances, or disciplinary action will be monitored closely to identify whether disability is a relevant factor.

2.0 Review the practices and procedures followed in exercising the Valuation Roll, Council Tax and Electoral Registration functions against the priorities, problems and views expressed to the Board's constituent Councils:

As previously reported, an equalities group has been established within the Board. This group will review the practices and procedures adopted by the Board in the exercise of its functions in relation to the Valuation Roll, Council Tax and Electoral Registration.

Notwithstanding that the functions of the Board are primarily property based; the group is keen to investigate whether further actions may be targeted towards improving the service provision to disabled persons with regard to Electoral Registration. To this end the equalities group will, together with the Electoral Management Group, review best practice as operated by colleague Electoral Registration Officers. The group will report on its findings towards the end of 2009 – see action point 2.1.

3.0 Ensure that the impact of any new/amended practices and procedures is considered by the management team as part of regular management meetings:

As previously reported, management meetings continue to take place among the senior managers within the Board on a monthly basis. As proposals for new / amended working practices are brought forward to the Management Group these are considered in the light of equality issues. The Depute Assessor reports on action taken / new initiatives required with regard to equality issues.

4.0 Investigate potential disability equality training and, if available, assess relevance & requirement:

As previously reported it is intended to provide training to all staff in the dual aspects of Respect at Work and Equality Issues. There has been some delay in providing this training caused by the requirement to undertake a revaluation of all no-domestic subjects within a truncated timescale. However, this training has been rescheduled and will now take place over the summer of 2009 – see action point 4.1..

More detailed training concerning equality issues and responsibilities will be provided to managers see action point 4.2.

5.0 Review the effectiveness of staff surveys, staff interviews, staff networks, complaints procedure and customer surveys in identifying the effect the Board's policies and procedures have on disabled people:

The staff survey, staff interview, complaints procedure and customer survey have been reviewed. Where appropriate new questions dealing with equality issues have been introduced and arrangements have been made to analyse the information ingathered to identify any equality issues that may arise – see action points 5.1, 5.2 & 5.3

6.0 Review the Action Plan and prepare an Equality Monitoring Statement annually:

The Board's action plan has been updated and this is attached as Appendix 1. Where appropriate new action points have been added to the plan. The Board's equality monitoring statement is attached as Appendix 2.

Gender Equality Report

Information ingathered and actions taken:

The action points noted within the Board's Disability Scheme and the steps taken to fulfil these actions are set out below:

1.0 To ensure that equality issues are considered in decision making by the Management of the Board:

As previously reported, management meetings continue to take place among the senior managers within the Board on a monthly basis. As proposals for new / amended working practices are brought forward to the Management Group these are considered in the light of equality issues. Equality issues have been added as a specific agenda item and the Depute Assessor reports on action taken / new initiatives required with regard to equality issues. See action point 1.0, 1.1 & 1.2.

An equalities group has been established within the Board. This group has begun to review the practices and procedures adopted by the Board in the exercise of its functions in relation to the Valuation Roll, Council Tax and Electoral Registration. It will also consider what additional steps, if any, may be adopted to promote equality issues.

2.0 Ensure staffing policies and procedures are updated to incorporate best practice with regard to gender issues:

Regular updates on the latest changes to best practice as regards staffing policies are provided by the Human Resources department of the Board's lead authority, South Ayrshire Council. Where appropriate existing AVJB policies are revised or new policies are introduced – see action points 2.0, 2.1 & 2.2.

3.0 To raise knowledge and understanding of gender issues by employees of the Board:

As previously reported it is intended to provide training to all staff in the dual aspects of Respect at Work and Equality Issues. There has been some delay in providing this training caused by the requirement to undertake a revaluation of all no-domestic subjects within a truncated timescale. However, this training has been rescheduled and will now take place over the summer of 2009 – see action point 3.1.

More detailed training concerning equality issues and responsibilities will be provided to managers see action point 3.2.

4.0 To review the effectiveness of staff surveys, staff interviews, staff networks, complaints procedure and customer surveys to identify the effect the Board's policies and procedures have on gender groups.

The staff survey, staff interview, complaints procedure and customer survey have been reviewed. Where appropriate new questions dealing with equality issues have been introduced and arrangements have been made to analyse the information ingathered to identify any equality issues that may arise – see action points 4.1, 4.2 & 4.3

5.0 To annually report on the actions taken towards achievement of these objectives.

The Board's action plan has been updated and this is attached as Appendix 1. Where appropriate new action points have been added to the plan. The Board's equality monitoring statement is attached as Appendix 2.

Conclusion:

Significant progress has been made in the course of the last year with regard to both disability and gender equality issues, but it is recognised that more requires to be done. New action points have been added to the action plan and these will be addressed over the coming year.

Publication:

This report will be published in conjunction with the Board's Annual Performance Review. Copies will be available from the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer at 9 Wellington Square, Ayr, KA7 1HL and from the Board's website at www.ayrshire-vjb.gov.uk Translation will be made available on request using the services of "Language Line" or other translation services.

Appendix 1

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan

Action No.	Task	Start Date	End Date	Owner	Status
1.0	Ingather details of the priorities, problems and views expressed by representative groups of persons to the constituent Councils.	Dec-06	Apr-07	Depute Assessor	Complete
1.1	Review the physical characteristics of 9 Wellington Square including disabled access and disabled toilet provision:	Dec-06	Apr-07	Depute Assessor	Complete
1.1.2	Upgrade signage to disabled parking and access from Mews Lane	Oct-08	May-09	Principle Admin Officer	Complete
1.1.3	Repaint markings around disabled parking space	Oct-08	May-09	Principle Admin Officer	Complete
1.1.4	Create interview room adjacent to disabled access suitable for wheelchair users.	Oct-08	May-09	Principle Admin Officer	Complete
1.2	Review provision for effective communication with disabled persons, including: loop access, access to internet and written communications.	May-07	Jul-07	Depute Assessor	Complete
1.2.1.	Install portable hearing induction loop in reception area.	May-07	Jul-07	Depute Assessor	Complete
1.2.2.	Make arrangements for annual testing of induction loop.	May-07	Jul-07	Depute Assessor	Complete
1.2.3	Upgrade AVJB web site to include Browse-aloud speech enabled facility & variable font size facilities.	May-07	Jul-07	Depute Assessor	Complete

Action No.	Task	Start Date	End Date	Owner	Status
1.2.4.	Make arrangements for the ingathering of statistics concerning the extent of use of the induction hearing loop, braille and audio tapes.	Oct-08	May-09	P.A	Complete
1.2.5.	Review written correspondence to ensure these meet required standards concerning font size etc.	Apr-08	Dec-09	Equalities Group	Ongoing
1.3	Review statistics for the monitoring of applications for employment and promotion, application for/receipt of training, grievances, disciplinary procedures and termination of employment.	May-07	Jul-07	Depute Assessor	Complete
1.3.1.	Issue staff questionnaire to identify disability equality status of existing staff	Apr-08	Jun-08	Depute Assessor	Complete
1.3.2.	Ingather statistics concerning requests for training, approval of training requests and satisfaction level of training delivered to disabled employees	Apr-08	N/A	Depute Assessor	Ongoing
1.3.4.	Amend staff training feedback questionnaire to identify disability equality concerns with regard to the provision of training.	Apr-08	Jun-08	Depute Assessor	Complete
2.0	Review the practices and procedures followed in exercising the Valuation Roll, Council Tax and Electoral Registration functions .	May-07	N/A	Equalities Group	Ongoing
2.1.	Review best practice as operated by colleague EROs with regard to maximising the service provided to disabled persons with regard to Electoral Registration..	May-07	Dec-09	Equalities Group	Ongoing

Action No.	Task	Start Date	End Date	Owner	Status
3.0	Ensure that the impact of any new/amended practices and procedures is considered by the management team as part of regular management meetings. Undertake impact assessment of any policy decision which is considered to be of high relevance.	Jan-07	N/A	Management	Ongoing
4.0	Investigate potential disability equality training and, if available, assess relevance & requirement.	May-07	Dec-07	Depute Assessor	Complete
4.1	Provide training in Respect at Work and Equality Issues to all AVJB staff.	Apr-08	Jun-09	Depute Assessor	Ongoing
4.2.	Provide detailed training in equality issues and responsibilities to managers.	Jun-09	Dec-09	Depute Assessor	Ongoing
5.0	Review the effectiveness of staff surveys, staff interviews, staff networks, complaints procedure and customer surveys in identifying the effect the Board's policies and procedures have on disabled people.	May-07	Dec-07	Depute Assessor	Complete
5.1.	Amend staff questionnaire to highlight disability equality concerns staff may have.	Apr-08	Jun-08	Depute Assessor	Complete
5.2.	Amend customer feedback questionnaire to identify disability equality concerns customers may have.	Apr-08	May-09	Depute Assessor	Complete
5.3.	Amend customer complaint form to identify disability equality concerns customers may have.	Apr-08	Jun-08	Depute Assessor	Complete
6.0	Review the Action Plan and prepare an Equality Monitoring Statement annually.	Feb/March	N/A	Depute Assessor	Ongoing

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan					
Action No.	Task	Start Date	End Date	Owner	Status
1.0	Ensure that equality issues are considered in decision making by the management of the Board.	Jun-07	N/A	Depute Assessor	Ongoing
1.1	Add gender equality as an agenda item at monthly management meetings.	Jun-07	Jun-07	Depute Assessor	Complete
1.2	Ensure policy decisions take due account of gender equality issues. Undertake impact assessment of any policy decision which is considered to be of high relevance.	Jun-07	N/A	Management Team	Ongoing
2.0	Ensure staffing policies and procedures are updated to incorporate best practice with regard to gender issues.	Jun-07	N/A	Depute Assessor	Ongoing
2.1.	Update flexible working policy to incorporate extension to parents and carers of children up to 17 years of age.	Apr-09	Jun-09	Depute Assessor	Complete
2.2.	Update maternity and paternity policy to incorporate updated allowances.	Apr-09	Jun-09	Depute Assessor	Complete
3.0	Investigate potential gender equality training and, if available, assess relevance & requirement.	May-07	Dec-07	Depute Assessor	Complete
3.1.	Provide training in Respect at Work and Equality Issues to all AVJB staff.	Apr-08	Jun-09	Depute Assessor	Ongoing
3.2.	Provide detailed training in equality issues and responsibilities to managers.	Jun-09	Dec-09	Depute Assessor	Ongoing

Action No.	Task	Start Date	End Date	Owner	Status
4.0	Review the effectiveness of staff surveys, staff interviews, staff networks, complaints procedure and customer surveys in identifying the effect the Board's policies and procedures have on disabled people.	May-07	Dec-07	Depute Assessor	Complete
4.1.	Amend staff ---- questionnaire to highlight gender equality concerns staff may have.	Apr-08	Jun-08	Depute Assessor	Complete
4.2.	Amend customer feedback questionnaire to identify gender equality concerns customers may have.	Apr-08	Jun-08	Depute Assessor	Complete
4.3.	Amend customer complaint form to identify gender equality concerns customers may have.	Apr-08	Jun-08	Depute Assessor	Complete
5.0	Review the Action Plan and prepare an Equality Monitoring Statement annually.	Feb/March	N/A	Depute Assessor	Ongoing



EQUALITY MONITORING STATEMENT 2008

Breakdown of Employees by Ethnicity

White - Scottish	White – English	White – Welsh	White – Irish	White - British	White – Other	Asian or Asian British – Other	Black or Black British – Other	Other	Unknown	Not Recorded	TOTALS
50				1	1						52

Breakdown of Employees By Gender

<u>Female</u>	Male	<u>TOTALS</u>
31	21	52

Breakdown of Employees By Disability

<u>Not Disabled</u>	Disabled	Not Recorded	<u>TOTALS</u>
52	0	0	52

Applicants for Employment/Promotion

<u>Applicants For Employment</u>		Total No:- 17	
<u>Gender</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Proportion (%)</u>	
Male	10	58.8	
Female	7	41.1	
<u>Ethnic Origin</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Proportion (%)</u>	
<u>White Scottish</u>	16	94.1	
<u>White English</u>			
<u>White Welsh</u>			
<u>White Irish</u>			
<u>Other White British</u>			
<u>Any Other White Background</u>	1	5.8	
<u>Any Mixed Background</u>			
<u>Indian</u>			
<u>Pakistani</u>			
<u>Bangladeshi</u>			
<u>Chinese</u>			
<u>Any other Asian Background</u>			
<u>Caribbean</u>			
<u>African</u>			
<u>Any other Black Background</u>			
<u>Any Other Background</u>			
<u>Unknown</u>			
<u>Disability</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Proportion (%)</u>	
<u>Disabled</u>			
<u>Not disabled</u>	17	100	
<u>Not Known</u>			

<u>Selected for Interview</u>		Total No:- 6	
<u>Gender</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Proportion (%)</u>	
Male	2	33.3	
Female	4	66.6	
<u>Ethnic Origin</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Proportion (%)</u>	
<u>White Scottish</u>	6	100	
<u>White English</u>			
<u>White Welsh</u>			
<u>White Irish</u>			
<u>Other White British</u>			
<u>Any Other White Background</u>			
<u>Any Mixed Background</u>			
<u>Indian</u>			
<u>Pakistani</u>			
<u>Bangladeshi</u>			
<u>Chinese</u>			
<u>Any other Asian Background</u>			
<u>Caribbean</u>			
<u>African</u>			
<u>Any other Black Background</u>			
<u>Any Other Background</u>			
<u>Unknown</u>			
<u>Disability</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Proportion (%)</u>	
<u>Disabled</u>			
<u>Not disabled</u>	6	100	
<u>Not Known</u>			

<u>Successful Appointments</u>		Total No:- 1	
<u>Gender</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Proportion (%)</u>	
Male			
Female	1	100	
<u>Ethnic Origin</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Proportion (%)</u>	
<u>White Scottish</u>	1	100	
<u>White English</u>			
<u>White Welsh</u>			
<u>White Irish</u>			
<u>Other White British</u>			
<u>Any Other White Background</u>			
<u>Any Mixed Background</u>			
<u>Indian</u>			
<u>Pakistani</u>			
<u>Bangladeshi</u>			
<u>Chinese</u>			
<u>Any other Asian Background</u>			
<u>Caribbean</u>			
<u>African</u>			
<u>Any other Black Background</u>			
<u>Any Other Background</u>			
<u>Unknown</u>			
<u>Disability</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Proportion (%)</u>	
<u>Disabled</u>			
<u>Not disabled</u>	1	100	
<u>Not Known</u>			

<u>Applicants For Promotion</u>		Total No:- 6
Gender	<u>Number</u>	Proportion (%)
Male		
Female	6	100
<u>Ethnic Origin</u>	Number	Proportion (%)
<u>White Scottish</u>	6	100
<u>White English</u>		
<u>White Welsh</u>		
<u>White Irish</u>		
<u>Other White British</u>		
<u>Any Other White Background</u>		
<u>Any Mixed Background</u>		
<u>Indian</u>		
<u>Pakistani</u>		
<u>Bangladeshi</u>		
<u>Chinese</u>		
<u>Any other Asian Background</u>		
<u>Caribbean</u>		
<u>African</u>		
<u>Any other Black Background</u>		
<u>Any Other Background</u>		
<u>Unknown</u>		
<u>Disability</u>	Number	Proportion (%)
<u>Disabled</u>		
<u>Not disabled</u>	6	100
<u>Not Known</u>		

<u>Selected for Interview</u>		Total No:- 6
Gender	Number	Proportion (%)
Male		
Female	6	100
<u>Ethnic Origin</u>	Number	Proportion (%)
<u>White Scottish</u>	6	100
<u>White English</u>		
<u>White Welsh</u>		
<u>White Irish</u>		
<u>Other White British</u>		
<u>Any Other White Background</u>		
<u>Any Mixed Background</u>		
<u>Indian</u>		
<u>Pakistani</u>		
<u>Bangladeshi</u>		
<u>Chinese</u>		
<u>Any other Asian Background</u>		
<u>Caribbean</u>		
<u>African</u>		
<u>Any other Black Background</u>		
<u>Any Other Background</u>		
<u>Unknown</u>		
<u>Disability</u>	Number	Proportion (%)
<u>Disabled</u>		
<u>Not disabled</u>	6	100
<u>Not Known</u>		

<u>Successful Appointments</u>		Total No:- 2
Gender	<u>Number</u>	Proportion (%)
Male		
Female	2	100
<u>Ethnic Origin</u>	Number	Proportion
<u>White Scottish</u>	2	100
<u>White English</u>		
<u>White Welsh</u>		
<u>White Irish</u>		
<u>Other White British</u>		
<u>Any Other White Background</u>		
<u>Any Mixed Background</u>		
<u>Indian</u>		
<u>Pakistani</u>		
<u>Bangladeshi</u>		
<u>Chinese</u>		
<u>Any other Asian Background</u>		
<u>Caribbean</u>		
<u>African</u>		
<u>Any other Black Background</u>		
<u>Any Other Background</u>		
<u>Unknown</u>		
<u>Disability</u>	Number	Proportion
<u>Disabled</u>		
<u>Not disabled</u>	2	100
<u>Not Known</u>		

Breakdown of Leavers by Ethnicity

White - Scottish	White – English	White – Welsh	White – Irish	White – Other	Asian or Asian British – Other	Black or Black British – Other	Other	Unknown	Not Recorded	TOTALS
5										5

Breakdown of Leavers By Gender

Female	Male	TOTALS
2	3	5

Breakdown of Leavers By Disability

Not Disabled	Disabled	Not Recorded	TOTALS
4	1	0	5