

**Minute of meeting of CENTRAL SCOTLAND VALUATION JOINT BOARD
held within HILLSIDE HOUSE, STIRLING on FRIDAY 17 JUNE 2016 at
9.30 a.m.**

Councillors:

Donald Balsillie
Jim Blackwood
Margaret Brisley
Irene Hamilton
Craig Holden
Gordon Hughes
Charles MacDonald (Convener)
Adrian Mahoney
Cecil Meiklejohn
Alan Nimmo
Jim Thomson
Sandy Turner

Officers:

Elizabeth Hutcheon, Assistant to the Treasurer
Brian Pirie, Assistant to the Clerk
Jane Wanless, Assistant Assessor
Peter Wildman, Assessor and Electoral
Registration Officer

Also attending:

Ian Burns, Internal Audit, Clackmannanshire
Council
Jason Ross, Internal Audit, Clackmannanshire
Council

VJB1. MINUTES SILENCE

The Board observed a minutes silence in memory of Jo Cox, Member of Parliament for Batley and Spen who had been murdered on 16 June whilst carrying out her duties as an MP.

VJB2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillors McChord and Murray.

VJB3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

VJB4. MINUTE

The minute of the meeting held on 12 February 2016 was approved.

VJB5. DRAFT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS AT 31 MARCH 2016

The Board considered a report by the Treasurer providing the draft financial statements as at 31 March 2016.

The Board was required to prepare and submit its annual accounts to the Controller of Audit by 30 June 2016. The accounts had been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

The accounts showed a deficit of £142k for the year.

In response to a question the Assessor confirmed that budget pressures impact on service provision and on service performance.

Decision

The Board agreed:-

(1)to note the 2015/16 Draft Statement of Accounts, and

(2)to their submission to the Controller of Audit.

VJB6. RISK ASSESSMENT

The Board considered a report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer presenting a revised Risk Management Strategy.

The Board's Risk Management Strategy had been updated in 2015 to reflect the Service's revised structure. It was proposed that this remain unchanged. Minor amendments were proposed to the risk analysis for all general roles. Both the Strategy and risk analysis were presented for approval.

The main risks were:-

- lack of funding/budget cuts;
- introduction of IER and costs;
- lack of Service Level Agreement with Clackmannanshire Council;
- computer virus attacks;
- failure to retain/attract professional staff; and

- impact of Land Reform Bill.

Decision

The Board agreed:-

- (1) the Risk Strategy, and**
- (2) to note the current general risk assessment analysis for all functions.**

VJB7. HEALTH AND SAFETY GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

The Board considered a report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer presenting a Health and Safety General Policy Statement.

The General Policy Statement had been developed in consultation with staff consultation forum and would replace the current Health and Safety note. The Policy was high level and sets out the Health and Safety Framework for the Board – a suite of procedural documents, risk assessments and guidance sit below the policy.

Members of the Board sought clarification from the Assessor on the Board's lone working policy and on the impact on staff of the policy. The Assessor explained that while office staff do not work alone there are practices in place for the valuation team. He confirmed that the policy and training for staff would be reviewed.

Decision

The Board approved the Health and Safety General Policy Statement.

VJB8. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – POSTAL AND PROXY VOTE APPLICATIONS

The Board considered a report by the Internal Auditor presenting the findings of an audit of postal vote and proxy vote applications.

As part of the 2015/16 audit plan, the Board's internal auditors undertook a review of the procedures for processing of postal vote applications and the administration of the Register of Electors. This included a test sample of absent voters.

Members of the Board sought further information on the audit and in particular on the sample size used and its value (40 of 29,446 absent voters had been tested). Mr Burns confirmed that this

complied with standard practice and gave more detail on the significant assurance provided.

Decision

The Board noted the report.

VJB9. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT

The Board considered the Internal Audit report for 2015/16. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), performance Standard 2450 requires that the Internal Audit function reports on its activities annually. In terms of PSIAS the report incorporates:-

- the audit opinion;
- a summary of the work to support the opinions; and
- a statement on the conformance with the PSIAS and the results of the quality assurance and improvement programme.

The report on the activity of the Board's internal auditor was provided for consideration.

Decision

The Board noted the report.

VJB10. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN 2016/17

The Board considered a report by the Internal Auditor presenting the Audit Plan for 2016/17.

The Audit Plan for 2016/17 consisted of the presentation of the Annual Assurance report, a review of the Registers of Electors – Overseas Voters and a review of procurement/compliance with Contract Standing Orders.

Decision

The Board approved the Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2016/17.

VJB11. BEST VALUE REPORT 2016

The Board considered a report by the Assistant Assessor presenting the Board's key performance information for 2016 together with comparison information.

The Board considered a report by the Assistant Assessor presenting service performance information for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

The service performances as measured by performance indicators for valuation roll work and for valuation list work were set out.

In regard to valuation roll work, which measures the period taken to change the valuation roll, 909 changes were made during the period - of these 74% were amended within 3 months, 90% within 6 months and 10% took longer – against targets of 82%:93% and 7% respectively.

In regard to the valuation list work, the time taken to add houses to the valuation list, 1139 new entries were registered in the period, with 97% added within 3 months, 99% added within 6 months and 1% took longer – as against targets of 97%; 99% and 1% respectively.

The performance targets for 2016/17 were:-

Decision

The Board noted the continuing commitment to Best Value.

VJB12. ALCOHOL AND DRUGS MISUSE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Board considered a report by the Assistant Assessor presenting an Alcohol and Drugs Misuse Policy and Procedure for approval.

An Alcohol and Drugs Misuse Policy and Procedure, based on that of Clackmannanshire Council, had been developed in consultation with staff.

The document set out a clear policy statement together with procedures in regard to alcohol misuse and drugs misuse.

Following a question, the Assessor agreed to amend a line in the policy (on page 4, Para 2.4) in regard to the policy statement. The

sentence 'Any breach of these requirements will be dealt with...' will be amended to "...may be dealt with...".

Decision

The Board approved the Alcohol and Drugs Misuse Policy and Procedure.