

Minute of Meeting of the Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board held within Hillside House, Stirling on Friday 17 February 2017 at 9.30 a.m.

Councillors:

Margaret Brisley
Kenneth Earle
Gordon Hughes
Charles MacDonald (Convener)
Adrian Mahoney
Corrie McChord
Rosie Murray
Derek Stewart
Jim Thomson
Graham Watt

Officers:

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

VJB35. Apologies

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillors Meiklejohn, Nimmo, Stalker and Turner.

VJB36. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were intimated.

VJB37. Minute

The minute of the meeting held on 18 November 2016 was approved.

VJB38. Draft Revenue Budget 2017/18

The Board considered a joint report by the Treasurer and Assessor presenting the draft Revenue Budget for 2017/18.

The Board's draft Revenue Budget for 2017/18 was set out, together with the net requisitions for each of the constituent authorities.

The proposed budget was £2,584,370. The funding was £2,464,520 assumption.

In terms of the anticipated funding settlement this represented a gap of £119,850 which it was proposed would be met from uncommitted reserves. In 2015 the Assessor undertook a review of the Board's reserves. The usable reserve at 31 March 2016 was projected to be £880,800. It was proposed to fund the budget shortfall from reserves and to provide the constituent authorities with a refund. Given the projected indicative funding gap to 2020 it was proposed that the minimum uncommitted reserve level was increased to 6% of net revenue expenditure, equating to £274,960 in 2017/18.

The report set out the proposed budget, changes from the 2016/17 budget, indicative funding for 2018/19 and the requisitions from the three constituent authorities.

Decision

The Board agreed:-

- (1) the Valuation Joint Board's Revenue Budget for 2017/18, as detailed in appendix A of the report.**
- (2) to increase the minimum level of reserves to 6% of net revenue expenditure.**
- (3) to create Spend to Save and Property Maintenance Funds from reserves to allow the Board to reduce expenditure in future years; and**
- (4) to requisition the constituent authorities for their share of the net expenditure as set out below:-**

	Requisition
	£
Falkirk	1,214,515
Stirling	868,990
Clackmannanshire	381,015
Total	2,464,520

VJB39. Report on Mail and Printing Contract

The Board considered a report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer seeking the Board's authority to enter into an agreement with the Royal Mail for printing and postage services.

The report set out a recommendation from the Assessor to enter into a call off contract with the Royal Mail for physical and hybrid mail and scheduled/regular bulk mail until 30 September 2019 at a cost of £420,000. In terms of standing orders, the Board's approval was required.

Decision

The Board agreed to authorise the Assessor to enter into a call off contract with Royal Mail until 30/09/2019.

VJB40. Records Management Policy

The Board considered a report by the Assistant Assessor presenting a Records Management policy for approval.

A policy for the creation, management and disposal of records was presented. Previously, the Board's records management had been incorporated within Falkirk Council's records management policy. The draft policy would ensure that the Board had its own policy to allow it to meet its duty in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994 and the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 to ensure that records created by the Board are properly managed.

Decision

The Board approved the draft Records Management Policy as appended to the report.

Councillor Thomson joined the meeting during consideration of the previous item.

VJB41. Revaluation 2017 Update Report

The Board considered an update report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer on progress with the 2017 Non Domestic Revaluation Programme.

The Assessor was required to revalue the Rateable Value of non domestic properties every 5 years and produce a new Valuation Roll.

The previous revaluation had been 2010, and the 2015 revaluation was postponed by the Scottish Government.

The Rateable Value was the Assessor's opinion of the property's rental value, taking into account various statutory assumptions and were based on rental levels two years prior to the revaluation date (1 April 2015).

The process would result in both increases and decreases to Rateable Values and would impact differing ways to various sectors such as the hospitality trade and retail properties.

The Assessor explained the process – in particular the notification and appeals process. Although appeals would be considered by the Assessor, the final determination would be through an independent Valuation Appeal Panel.

Members expressed concern at the potential increase to Rateable Value, in particular, small businesses (such as pubs) and their ability to absorb increases given the difficult trading environment. The Assessor confirmed that, while efforts would be made to consider and where possible reach a solution, if he considered his valuation to be correct the final recourse was to the Panel and this process could take 3 years. In the meantime the tenant would be expected to meet the higher value.

Members expressed concern that this could result in small businesses going out of business. The Assessor explained his statutory duty in this process and emphasised the need for him to be fair, consistent and impartial.

Members discussed support offered to Local Authorities by the Scottish Government as part of its budget settlement and indicated that they would pursue the matter of support through their Local Authorities.

Decision

The Board noted the report.

Councillor Murray joined the meeting during consideration of the previous item.

VJB42. Convener's Remarks

The Convener stated that this was the final meeting of the current Board before the Local Government elections in May 2017. He thanked members for their commitment and support and thanked the Assessor, Depute Assessor, Clerk and Treasurer for the professional advice

VJB43. Exclusion of Public

RESOLVED in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the meeting the press and

public for the following items of business on the ground that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 11 and 12 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the said Act.

VJB44. Minutes

- (a) The minute of the special meeting held on 15 July 2016 was approved; and
- (b) The minute of the special meeting held on 7 October 2016 was approved.