

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL AND BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

At a meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board held in the Council Chambers, East Dunbartonshire Council Offices, Tom Johnston House, Civic Way, Kirkintilloch on Friday 10 December 2004 at 11.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Daniel Kelly, Donald MacMillan, Robin Currie and Donald McIntosh, Argyll & Bute Council; Provost Pat Steel and Councillors Rhondda Geekie, *Anne Jarvis and Margaret McNaughton, East Dunbartonshire Council; and Councillors Geoff Calvert, Gail Casey and Jackie Maceira, West Dunbartonshire Council.

* Attended later in meeting.

Attending: David Thomson, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; William Mathieson, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; Brian Byrne, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; June Nelson, Principal Administrative Officer; David Connell, Manager of Accounting; Don Findlay, Manager of Building Services; and David Rooney, Senior Administrative Officer (for the Clerk to the Board).

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Vaughan Moody and Marie McNair.

Councillor Donald MacMillan in the Chair

WELCOME TO MEETING

The Convener, Councillor MacMillan, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Provost Steel for her generosity in providing hospitality, including a festive lunch after the meeting.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board held on 18 June 2004 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Meeting of the Appeals Sub-Committee held on 17 September 2004 were submitted for information and noted.

TREASURER TO THE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer concerning the position of Treasurer to the Joint Board.

Having heard Mr. Thomson, it was noted that David Connell had been appointed to replace Lynn Bradley, who had given notice of her resignation from the post of Head of Finance with West Dunbartonshire Council, and therefore, as that Authority's new Section 95 Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Connell would assume the position of Treasurer to the Joint Board.

Mr. Thomson, on behalf of the officers and members of the Joint Board, congratulated Mr. Connell on his appointment.

PROPERTY: 235 DUMBARTON ROAD, CLYDEBANK – DEFECTIVE ROOF AREAS

A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services, West Dunbartonshire Council advising the Board of the poor condition of areas of the roof of the premises at 235 Dumbarton Road, Clydebank and recommending that an allocation for roof renewal work is included in the 2005/2006 Capital Plan.

The Joint Board agreed to note the poor condition of the existing roof covering, including the roof-lights, and to approve the inclusion of £23,000 for part re-roofing and roof-light renewal in the 2005/2006 Capital Plan.

MODERNISING GOVERNMENT FUND (MGF)

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on progress in relation to both the Scottish Assessors' MGF(2) Portal Project and the application by the Scottish Assessors' Association for MGF(3) funding to further extend and develop the portal.

Having heard Mr. Thomson it was noted that the bid for MGF(3) funding had been successful and that the Scottish Assessors Portal would now be further developed and improved over the next two years. The content of the report was otherwise noted.

2003/04 EXTERNAL AUDIT OF DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer:-

- (a) providing an update on progress in relation to the findings of Audit Scotland's 2003/2004 audits of the Joint Board's Payroll Procedures and Creditors Systems;
- (b) advising of the findings of Audit Scotland in relation to their audit of both the Joint Board's Accounts for the year 2003/04 and its Governance arrangements and seeking approval of the agreed action plan; and
- (c) seeking approval of the proposed Risk Management Strategy.

Having heard Mr. Thomson, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made in respect of implementing the Payroll and Creditors System audit Action Plans;
- (2) to approve the Action Plan agreed in respect of the 2003/04 Audit of the Joint Board; and
- (3) to approve the Risk Management Strategy.

2003/04 INTERNAL AUDIT – COUNCIL TAX VALUATION SYSTEMS

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer advising of the findings of West Dunbartonshire Council Internal Audit Section's 2003/04 audit of the Joint Board's Council Tax Valuation Systems.

The Joint Board agreed to note the contents of the audit report and the progress made in respect of the above audit Action Plans.

FINANCE

(a) Annual Report and Final Accounts for Year Ending 31 March 2004

A report was submitted by the Treasurer presenting the audited Annual Report and Final Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2004.

Having heard Mr. Connell, who advised that the Draft Report and Accounts had been submitted timeously and the auditor had issued an unqualified audit opinion, the Joint Board agreed to approve the Annual Report and Final Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2004.

(b) Revenue Estimates 2005/06

A report was submitted by the Treasurer seeking approval of the draft Revenue Estimates for 2005/06.

Having heard Mr. Connell, who advised that the estimates had previously been circulated to the Chief Financial Officers of the three constituent authorities and that no issues had been raised, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to approve the draft Revenue Estimates for 2005/2006; and
- (2) that the requisition on the constituent authorities be based on each Council's relevant Grant Aided Expenditure figures as indicated in Appendix 3 to the report.

(c) Capital Estimates 2005/06

A report was submitted by the Treasurer seeking approval of the draft Capital Estimates for 2005/06.

Having heard Mr. Connell, who advised that the estimates had previously been circulated to the Chief Financial Officers of the three constituent authorities and that no issues had been raised, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to approve the 2005/06 Capital Plan of £32,910; and
- (2) that the requisition on the constituent authorities be based on each Council's relevant Grant Aided Expenditure figures as indicated in Appendix 1 to the report.

(d) Revision of Financial Regulations

A report was submitted by the Treasurer seeking approval for a number of amendments to the Joint Board's Financial Regulations.

Having heard Mr. Connell, the Joint Board agreed to approve the revised financial regulations.

**VALUATION JOINT BOARD INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS**

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on the computer and other technology systems used by the Valuation Joint Board and advising in particular of progress in relation to capital projects.

Having heard Mr. Thomson it was noted that the server to facilitate the upgrade of the messaging system used by Valuation Joint Board staff had now been installed and only one of the 15 PCs which had been replaced during September and October remained for charitable or community use. The content of the report was otherwise noted.

REVALUATION 2000 & 2005 – PROGRESS

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on the final stages of disposal of appeals arising from the non-domestic Revaluation 2000 and on preparations for the next Revaluation in 2005.

Having heard Mr. Thomson, who advised that the designation of the Assessor for Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute as the assessor for the valuation of the Gas Utilities had still not been confirmed, the Joint Board agreed to note the progress in relation to both Revaluations.

NOTE: Councillor Jarvis entered the meeting during consideration of the following item.

BEST VALUE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING – UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer:-

- (a) providing an update on progress in relation to Best Value;
- (b) advising on progress in relation to Key Performance Indicators for the year 2004/05; and
- (c) advising of the current position with Performance Management and Planning (PMP).

The Joint Board agreed to note the content of the report.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on the current position with respect to Electoral Registration.

After discussion the Joint Board agreed to note the content of the report.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

A report was submitted by the Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act 2002 and seeking approval of the Freedom of Information Policy.

After discussion the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the content of the report; and
- (2) to approve the attached Freedom of Information Policy.

RETURN OF UTILITIES TO CONVENTIONAL RATING

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on progress in relation to the valuation of the gas utility for Scotland and seeking approval for a change to the appropriation of Scottish Executive grant provided in respect of that duty.

After hearing the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer and Mr. Connell, Manager of Accounting, it was noted that a balance of £35,000 of the grant of £50,000 from the Scottish Executive remained unspent, as it had proved possible to complete the valuation of the gas utility for Revaluation 2005 without the requirement to recruit an additional valuer, and there was no requirement to report back to the Scottish Executive in relation to this matter.

After extended discussion, Councillor McIntosh moved, seconded by Councillor MacMillan:-

- (1) that it be noted that the grant in respect of the valuer post remains unspent in 2004/05; and
- (2) that approval be given for the accrual of the balance of the allocated grant until it is specifically required to meet appeal expenses in connection with the valuation of the gas utility; such expenses only to be incurred after consultation between the Assessor and the Treasurer and to be reported to the first meeting of the Joint Board thereafter.

As an amendment, Councillor Calvert, seconded by Councillor Maceira, moved:-

- (1) that it be noted that the grant in respect of the valuer post remains unspent in 2004/05; and
- (2) that approval be given for the accrual of the balance of the allocated grant, subject to the Scottish Executive being advised that the Joint Board had not required to use the grant for its intended purpose and was now seeking permission for virement of the balance of the grant.

On a vote being taken, three Members voted for the amendment and eight Members voted for the motion. The motion was accordingly declared carried.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Having heard the Convener, Councillor MacMillan, it was provisionally agreed that the next meeting of the Valuation Joint Board would be held on Friday, 10 June 2005 in Dunoon.

COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

Councillor MacMillan concluded the meeting by thanking all members and officers for their assistance and hard work over the last year and wished all present a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year.

The meeting closed at 12.20 p.m.