

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

At a Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board held in Meeting Room 2, West Dunbartonshire Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Monday 19 December 2005 at 2.30 p.m.

Present: Councillors Robin Currie, Sidney MacDougall, Donald MacMillan and Donald McIntosh, Argyll and Bute Council; *Provost Pat Steel and Councillors Anne Jarvis and Vaughan Moody, East Dunbartonshire Council; and Councillor Geoff Calvert, West Dunbartonshire Council.

*Attended later in the meeting.

Attending: David Thomson, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; William Mathieson, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; Alistair Boyd, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; Walter Watson, Divisional Assessor; David Connell, Treasurer; Tricia O'Neill, Head of Personnel, West Dunbartonshire Council; and David Rooney, Senior Administrative Officer (for the Clerk to the Board).

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Daniel Kelly, Argyll and Bute Council, Margaret McNaughton, East Dunbartonshire Council and Jackie Maceira and Marie McNair, West Dunbartonshire Council.

Councillor Donald MacMillan in the Chair

CONVENERS REMARKS

The Convener, Councillor MacMillan, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Councillor MacMillan then offered his congratulations to Mr. Alistair Boyd, who had been appointed to the post of Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, and welcomed him to his first meeting of the Joint Board. Councillor MacMillan also extended a welcome to Mr. Walter Watson, Divisional Assessor, who was in attendance.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board held on 10 June 2005 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF RECRUITMENT PANEL

The Minutes of Meeting of the Recruitment Panel of the Valuation Joint Board held on 22 July 2005 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

RENEWAL OF INSURANCE CONTRACTS – 1 AUGUST 2005

A report was submitted by the Clerk to the Valuation Joint Board providing information on the renewal of the Joint Board's Insurance contracts on 1 August 2005.

It was agreed:-

- (1) to note and approve the arrangements which had been made with regard to property, combined liability, computer, personal accident and business travel insurances within the terms of the Long Term Agreements; and
- (2) to approve the arrangements which had been made with regard to the Death in Service cover.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO SCHEME OF DELEGATION – ASSESSOR AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER

A report was submitted by the Clerk to the Valuation Joint Board proposing an amendment to the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer's delegated powers, in respect of the upper cost ceiling on conferences and meetings, which had remained unchanged at £250 per officer since 1996.

It was agreed that the scheme of delegation be amended:-

- (1) to allow for an increase to £350 per officer in respect of the upper cost limit on attendance at conferences and meetings;
- (2) to allow approval of the attendance of an officer at a conference or meeting where the cost is in excess of the £350 limit, subject to consultation and agreement with the Convener of the Joint Board; and
- (3) to allow for a standing delegation to be made for one officer to attend the Association of Electoral Administrators Conference on an annual basis.

2005/06 CAPITAL PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer advising on progress in respect of the 2005/06 Capital Plan.

Having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the Assessor's conclusions in respect of the proposed redevelopment of 235 Dumbarton Road, Clydebank;
- (2) to note that the 'hold' on capital roofing works had been removed and that the works would now proceed as planned;
- (3) to authorise the Assessor and ERO to maintain a 'watching brief' in respect of possible redevelopment of the site in the future; and
- (4) to note the procurement and installation of computer equipment and ancillaries.

NOTE: Provost Steel entered the meeting during consideration of the above item.

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.

Having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer in relation to the proposed changes, additional duties and potential additional costs associated with the Electoral Administration Bill, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report; and
- (2) to convene a special meeting of the Valuation Joint Board, should the Electoral Administration Bill, or its secondary legislation, have a significant impact on operations and/or expenditure.

CO-ORDINATED ONLINE RECORD OF ELECTORS (CORE) PROJECT

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update of the current position in relation to the CORE project.

Having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the content of the report; and
- (2) to approve the inclusion of £16,835 in the 2006/2007 Revenue Estimates.

STAFFING & PERSONNEL MATTERS – VARIOUS

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (a) advising of a number of personnel and staffing changes which had taken place since the June Board Meeting; (b) asking the Joint Board to note the replacement of the retired Senior Administration Officer with a new post of Administration Manager; and (c) asking the Joint Board to note the forthcoming implementation of the Single Status regime.

Having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the various changes to staffing and personnel detailed in the report;
- (2) to note that the finite time taken to fill the relevant posts was likely to result in savings against salaries in the current year which were unlikely to be replicated in future years;
- (3) to note the replacement of the retired Senior Administration Officer with a new post of Administration Manager, and the reduction in salary costs accruing from that change; and
- (4) to note the forthcoming implementation of Single Status and its as yet unidentifiable, but likely, effect on costs.

PAY MODERNISATION AND SINGLE STATUS

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel, West Dunbartonshire Council (a) providing an update on the progress of pay modernisation and the implementation of the Single Status Agreement and outlining key issues in relation to Equal Pay; and (b) recommending a level of budgetary provision for pay modernisation and implementation of the Single Status Agreement.

Having heard the Head of Personnel, and Mr. Mathieson, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the current position in relation to implementation of the Single Status Agreement and Pay Modernisation; and
- (2) to note that an increase of 1.5% to the paybill was being proposed in the 2006/07 Revenue Estimates to support implementation of revised pay and grading frameworks in accordance with the Single Status Agreement.

FINANCE

(a) Annual Report and Final Accounts for Year Ending 31 March 2005

A report was submitted by the Treasurer presenting the audited Annual Report and Final Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2005.

Having heard the Treasurer, who advised that the auditor had issued a clean audit opinion in relation to the accounts, the Joint Board agreed to approve the Annual Report and Final Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2005.

(b) Audit Scotland's Final Audit Report to Members 2004/2005

A report was submitted by the Treasurer advising of Audit Scotland's report on the audit of the Joint Board's accounts 2004/2005.

Having heard the Treasurer, who advised that the report by Audit Scotland highlighted a number of points, as detailed in paragraph 3.3 of the report, it was agreed that the report and the matters which had been highlighted be noted.

(c) Revenue Budgetary Control Report : Period 7 (2005/06)

A report was submitted by the Treasurer advising of the budgetary performance of the Revenue Account for the period to 15 November 2005.

Having heard the Treasurer, the Joint Board agreed to note the budgetary position outlined in the summary report.

(d) Revenue Estimates 2006/2007

A report was submitted by the Treasurer seeking approval of the draft Revenue Estimates for 2006/07.

Having heard the Treasurer, who advised that the Heads of Finance of the constituent authorities had been consulted in relation to the draft Revenue Estimates and no adverse comments had been received, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to approve the draft Revenue Estimates for 2006/2007; and
- (2) that the budget be apportioned to the constituent authorities on the basis of their Grant Aided Expenditure figures, as indicated in Appendix 3 to the report.

(e) Capital Estimates 2006/07

A report was submitted by the Treasurer seeking approval of the draft Capital Estimates for 2006/07.

Having heard the Treasurer and Mr. Mathieson, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to approve the 2006/07 Capital Plan of £23,330; and
- (2) that the requisition from the constituent Councils be based on each Council's relevant Grant Aided Expenditure figures as indicated in Appendix 1 to the report.

MODERNISING GOVERNMENT FUND/CUSTOMER FIRST

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on progress in relation to the Scottish Assessors' Association MGF(2) and MGF(3) Assessors' Portal Projects.

Having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, the Joint Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

NON-DOMESTIC RATING: 2005 REVALUATION

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer advising of progress in relation to the 2005 Revaluation.

Having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the number of appeals received in respect of the 2005 Revaluation;
- (2) to note that appeal discussions had commenced and that a programme of local Valuation Appeal Committee Hearings was scheduled for 2006 to dispose of these appeals within the statutory timetable;
- (3) to note the effect of the Non-Domestic Rating (Valuation of Utilities)(Scotland) Amendment Order 2005; and
- (4) to approve that the Assessor pursues settlement of the utility subjects appeals in co-operation with the Valuation Office Agency, as appropriate.

BEST VALUE

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on progress in respect of the Public Performance Reporting (PPR) requirements of the statutory Best Value regime.

Having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the enhanced content/format of the 2004/05 Public Performance report; and
- (2) to note the various channels used for publication of the report.

RISK MANAGEMENT

A report was submitted by the Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on progress with the preparation of a Disaster Recovery Plan.

Having heard Mr. Mathieson, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made to date with the preparation of a Disaster Recovery Plan; and
- (2) to approve the temporary delay in the finalisation of a formal plan to allow liaison with West Dunbartonshire Council's Risk Management Advisor and Contingency Planning Officer.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Valuation Joint Board would be held on Friday, 9 June 2006 at 11.00 a.m. in West Dunbartonshire Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton.

COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

The Convener, Councillor MacMillan, concluded the meeting by thanking Mr. Thomson and his staff for their work over the last year and he wished all present a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year.

Mr. Thomson responded in appropriate terms on behalf of the officers.

The meeting closed at 3.05 p.m.