



*Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute
Valuation Joint Board*

Council Offices
16 Church Street
Dumbarton
G82 1QL

14 June 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

You are requested to attend a meeting of the above Joint Board to be held in the **Pillar Hall, Victoria Halls, Sinclair Street, Helensburgh G84 8TU at 11 a.m. on Friday, 28 June 2019**

The business is as shown on the enclosed agenda.

Tea and coffee will be provided on arrival and a light buffet lunch will be provided after the meeting.

I shall be obliged if you will advise Scott Kelly (Tel. 01389 737220, email: scott.kelly@west-dunbarton.gov.uk) if you are unable to attend the meeting.

Yours faithfully,

PETER HESSETT

Clerk to the Valuation Joint Board

Distribution:-

Councillor Graham Archibald Hardie, Argyll & Bute Council
Councillor Donald MacMillan, Argyll & Bute Council
Councillor Iain Paterson, Argyll & Bute Council
Councillor Alastair Redman, Argyll & Bute Council
Councillor Richard Trail, Argyll & Bute Council
Councillor Jim Gibbons, East Dunbartonshire Council
Councillor John Jamieson, East Dunbartonshire Council
Councillor Denis Johnston, East Dunbartonshire Council
Councillor Stewart MacDonald, East Dunbartonshire Council
Councillor Vaughan Moody, East Dunbartonshire Council
Councillor Sandra Thornton, East Dunbartonshire Council
Bailie Denis Agnew, West Dunbartonshire Council
Councillor Jim Brown, West Dunbartonshire Council
Councillor Jonathan McColl, West Dunbartonshire Council
Councillor Marie McNair, West Dunbartonshire Council
Councillor John Millar, West Dunbartonshire Council

All Substitute Councillors for information

Date of issue: 14 June 2019

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

FRIDAY 28 JUNE 2019

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are invited to declare if they have an interest in any of the items of business on this agenda and the reasons for such declarations.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 7 - 16

- a) Submit, for approval as a correct record Minutes of Meeting of the Valuation Joint Board held on 1 March 2019;
- b) submit for information Note of Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board Finance Working Group held on 3 May 2019.

4 NON-DOMESTIC RATING AND COUNCIL TAX VALUATION PROGRESS 17 - 19

Submit report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer advising:

- c) the Joint Board of progress in relation to the Assessor's Non-Domestic Rating (NDR) valuation function;
- d) in particular, of the progress in relation to disposal of 2017 Revaluation appeals;
- e) of on-going activities to implement the recommendations of the 'Barclay' Review, the Non-Domestic Rating (Scotland) Bill and subsequent secondary legislation and
- f) of progress in relation to the Assessor's Council Tax valuation function.

5 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION 21 - 24

Submit report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer providing members of the Joint Board with an update on the current position in relation to Electoral Registration.

6 BEST VALUE – PERFORMANCE REPORTING AND PLANNING 25 - 34

Submit report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer:

- a) providing an update on progress in relation to Best Value and, in particular, to advise on external performance reports for the year 2018/19;
- b) seeking approval of the Public Performance Report for 2018/19 and
- c) seeking approval of the KPI targets for 2019/20.

7 BEST VALUE – SERVICE PLANNING 35 - 54

Submit report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer seeking approval of the April 2019 update to the 2018-21 Service Plan.

8 BEST VALUE – CUSTOMER SERVICE UPDATE 55 - 57

Submit report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer advising of:

- a) the results from the Customer Consultation process during 2018/19 and
- b) the outcomes from the Complaints Procedure during 2018/19.

9 BEST VALUE – RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE 59 - 77

Submit report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer:

- a) seeking approval of the Joint Board's Risk Register for 2019/20 and
- b) advising members on an assessment of the risks to the Joint Board of the UK's proposed withdrawal from the European Union.

10 PERSONNEL POLICIES – WELLBEING CHARTER 79 - 81

Submit report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer seeking approval of a 'Wellbeing Charter' for application within the Joint Board.

- 11 SALARY OF DEPUTE ASSESSOR & ERO 2018/19 ET SEQ 83 - 84**
Submit report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer seeking approval of an amendment to the salary paid to the Depute Assessor & ERO for 2018/19 and thereafter.
- 12 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2019 85 - 142**
Submit report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer presenting the Board the draft Annual Report and Final Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2019.
- 13 FUNDING WORKING GROUP 143 - 145**
Submit report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer advising of the progress of the Joint Board's Funding Working Group.
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DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

At a Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board held in the Council Chambers, 12 Strathkelvin Place, Kirkintilloch on Friday, 1 March 2019 at 11.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Graham Archibald Hardie, Iain Paterson, Donald MacMillan and Richard Trail, Argyll & Bute Council; Councillors Jim Gibbons, John Jamieson, Denis Johnston, Stewart MacDonald, Vaughan Moody and Sandra Thornton, East Dunbartonshire Council and Councillors Jim Brown, Jonathan McColl and Marie McNair, West Dunbartonshire Council.

Attending: David Thomson, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; Robert Nicol, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; June Nelson-Hamilton, Principal Administration Officer; Gillian McNeilly, Finance Manager (for the Treasurer), Joanne Thomson, Accountant and Craig Stewart, Committee Officer, West Dunbartonshire Council.

Also attending: Zahrah Mahmood, Senior Auditor and Marie McFadden, Trainee Auditor, Audit Scotland.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Alastair Redman, Argyll & Bute Council; Bailie Denis Agnew and Councillor John Millar, West Dunbartonshire Council. An apology was also given for the Treasurer, Stephen West.

Councillor Richard Trail in the Chair

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Jonathan McColl declared an interest in Item 6 'Personnel Policies, Procedures and Schemes – Updates' and advised that he would remain in the meeting but not take part in any decision thereon.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Valuation Joint Board held on 26 September 2018 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

NON DOMESTIC RATES AND COUNCIL TAX VALUATION UPDATE

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

- (a) on the progress in relation to the Assessor's Non-Domestic Rating (NDR) Valuation function, including the progress made on the disposal of 2017 Revaluation appeals;
- (b) of on-going activities consequent to the 'Barclay' Review of NDR; and
- (c) on progress in relation to the Assessor's Council Tax Valuation function.

After discussion and having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress in relation to disposal of Non-Domestic Rating appeals;
- (2) to note the progress in relation general maintenance of the Valuation Roll;
- (3) that a Non-Domestic Rates Reform Bill is expected to be published in March 2019;
- (4) the establishment of an internal Project Team to lead on Barclay implementation;
- (5) to note the progress in relation general maintenance of the Council Tax List; and
- (6) to note the progress in relation to the disposal of Council Tax appeals.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION UPDATE

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

Having heard the Assessor and electoral Registration Officer in further explanation of the report and in answer to a Member's question, the Joint Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

PERSONNEL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND SCHEMES UPDATES

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer seeking approval of the following for application within the Joint Board:-

- (a) a revised Bereavement Leave Scheme;
- (b) a revised Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy;
- (c) a revised Code of Conduct for Employees;

- (d) a revised Disciplinary Policy and Procedure; and
- (e) a new Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy.

Having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer in further explanation of the report, the Joint Board agreed to approve the above for implementation.

COUNTER FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer seeking ratification of an amended Counter Fraud and Corruption strategy.

After discussion and having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed to approve the amended Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy for implementation, as appended to the report.

LOCAL CODE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer;

- (a) advising on the completion of the Joint Board's annual Local Code of Good Governance self-assessment for 2018;
- (b) seeking approval of the Action Plan arising from the self-assessment; and
- (c) seeking approval of a Communications Strategy for application within the Joint Board.

After discussion and having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the completion of the 2018/19 self-assessment of the Joint Board's compliance with best practice in Good Governance;
- (2) to approve the 2018/19 Good Governance Action Plan; and
- (3) to approve the 2018/21 Communications Strategy.

INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE – COMPLIANCE WITH FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

A report was submitted by the Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer presenting the report of the Internal Audit of the Joint Board's compliance with Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection (DP) Legislation.

After discussion and having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer and the Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed to note the contents of the audit report and the Board's compliance with the legislation.

AUDIT SCOTLAND'S ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2018/19

A report was submitted by the Treasurer presenting Audit Scotland's Annual Audit Plan for the audit of financial year 2018/19 to the Board for information.

After discussion and having heard the Senior Auditor in answer to a Member's question, the Joint Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT PLAN

A report was submitted by the Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on progress towards complying with The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 and inform them of the Keepers Assessment Teams Progress Update Review Report.

After discussion and having heard the Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer in further explanation of the report and in answer to a Member's question, the Joint Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 JANUARY 2019 (PERIOD 10)

A report was submitted by the Treasurer advising on the progress of both the revenue budget and the capital programme for 2018/19.

An amended sheet giving an updated narrative (Paragraph 2.3 refers) was circulated at the meeting. It was noted that the unearmarked revenue reserve in Paragraph 2.2 of the report should read "0.294" and not "0.265".

After discussion and having heard Finance Manager and the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the favourable revenue variance of £0.083m (3% of the total budget); and
- (2) to note the 2018/19 budgetary position of the capital account.

DRAFT FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND REVENUE AND CAPITAL ESTIMATES 2019/20

A report was submitted by the Treasurer:-

- (a) seeking approval of the draft Financial Strategy, the revenue estimates for 2019/20 and the level of constituent authority contribution;
- (b) seeking approval of the draft Capital Estimates for 2019/20; and
- (c) requesting the Joint Board to note the indicative budget positions for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

After discussion and having heard the Treasurer in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to agree the draft Financial Strategy per Appendix 1;
- (2) to agree the draft revenue budget for 2019/20 per Appendix 2;
- (3) to agree that any surplus as at 31 March 2019 be carried forward into 2019/20, for future use and that that free reserves will continue to be held to help manage future budgets and the level of constituent authority contributions;
- (4) to note the indicative revenue budgets for 2020/21 and 2021/22 and agree that a short term Working Group should be convened to identify possible options to address the projected budget gaps;
- (5) to agree that the Working Group be comprised of Members of the Finance Sub-Committee, the three Finance Officers, the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, with substitutes permitted;
- (6) to note that a report will be brought to a future Board meeting detailing options for addressing the budget gaps as identified by the Working Group;
- (7) to agree that the 2019/20 revenue requisition is based on each council's 2018/19 GAE figures with the apportionment being as identified at 3.10.
- (8) to agree the proposed 2019/20 capital spend (as detailed in Appendix 5) to be progressed of £36,800 to be funded from available capital receipts and constituent council contributions as detailed in 3.13;
- (9) to note the indicative capital bids for 2020/21 and 2021/22 (as detailed in Appendix 5);
- (10) to note the likely slippage of spend and earmarked resources to be carried forward from 2018/19 into 2019/20 for the flexi system, the server upgrade and the pcs (anticipated to be £17,135);

- (11) to agree that the remaining unallocated capital resources (estimated at £8,035) is used to fund the 2019/20 capital programme; and
- (12) to note the indicative capital programmes for 2020/21 to 2021/22 and indicative constituent contributions, based upon current GAE allocations. Requests for final approval will be requested year on year.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Trail, Chair, took the opportunity to congratulate fellow Board Member Councillor Donald MacMillan for his award of the British Empire Medal for services to local government, in the Queen's New Year's Honours List. Members and officers warmly concurred.

The Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer informed the Board that this was the last meeting which Ms. Nelson-Hamilton, Principal Administration Officer, would attend as she would shortly be retiring from public service. On behalf of the Board, Councillor Trail, Chair, thanked Ms. Nelson-Hamilton for all her hard work, dedication and commitment over very many years and wished her well in retirement. All of the other Members present thanked Ms. Nelson-Hamilton and wished her a long and happy retirement. In response, Ms. Nelson-Hamilton thanked everyone for their kind words and remarks.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

After discussion, the Joint Board agreed that the next meeting be held on Friday, 28 June 2019 in Helensburgh.

The meeting closed at 12.25 p.m.

**DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD
FINANCE WORKING GROUP**

Note of Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board Finance Working Group held in 'The Brock' Meeting Room, Council Offices, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Friday, 3 May 2019 at 1.10 p.m.

Present: **Argyll & Bute Council:**
Councillor Richard Trail
Kirsty Flanagan, Head of Strategic Finance (via conference call)

East Dunbartonshire Council:
Councillor Vaughan Moody
Jamie Robertson, Chief Financial Officer

West Dunbartonshire Council:
Councillor Jim Brown
Gillian McNeilly, Finance Manager
Scott Kelly, Committee Officer

Valuation Joint Board:
David Thomson, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Stephen West, Treasurer to the Valuation Joint Board (West Dunbartonshire Council).

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

It was agreed that Councillor Moody be appointed as the Chair of the Finance Working Group. Accordingly, Councillor Moody assumed the Chair.

Councillor Vaughan Moody in the Chair

**TREASURER'S REPORT – REVENUE ESTIMATES 2019/20 AND INDICATIVE
ESTIMATES 2020/21 AND 2021/22**

A report was submitted by the Treasurer providing for consideration information on the current financial forecasts previously reported to the Joint Board within the Estimates 2019/20 report.

Ms McNeilly was heard in explanation of the report and it was noted in particular:-

- (a) that increasing budget gaps were projected, if no action is taken, to £292,000 in 2020/21 and to £441,000 in 2021/22; and

- (b) that the revised probable outturn for 2018/19 identified that a transfer of 74k from reserves would be required to balance the budget, a lesser figure than the 157k which had previously been estimated which would allow greater reserves to be brought forward to 2019/20.

Following discussion and questions, it was further noted:-

- (1) that an actuarial adjustment of employer pension contributions from 19.3% to 23.3% in 2018/19 had resulted in an increased annual cost of £63,000;
- (2) that further information provided by the pension fund actuary in relation to this point would be shared with members/officers of the Working Group, following the meeting;
- (3) that the full time equivalent (FTE) staffing level had reduced substantially, and across all grades, from 64 in 2006 to 50 currently, and that an increasing number of employees worked fewer than 35 hours per week;
- (4) that current staffing levels sometimes made it challenging for certain services to be covered on particular days;
- (5) that in Mr Thomson's view, overall, more employees would be needed to deliver the service in the coming years due to additional workload requirements;
- (6) that it was Ms Flanagan's understanding that the Scottish Government had committed to implementing a three-year settlement which would be announced in December 2019, and which would assist with budget certainty, but that the continuation of the government grant to the VJB, which was estimated for 2019/20 at £40,000, would not be continued beyond the current year;
- (7) that some efficiencies were expected to be made in printing and postage costs; and
- (8) that in view of the pressure on reserves, changes in income or expenditure would be needed in order for budgets to balance in future years.

**ASSESSOR AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER'S REPORT –
REVENUE ESTIMATES 2019/20 AND INDICATIVE ESTIMATES 2020/21
AND 2021/22**

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer supplementing the Treasurer's report by providing further information on the financial pressures on the Joint Board arising from Non-Domestic Rates Reform.

Mr Thomson was heard in explanation of the report and it was noted:-

- (a) that the introduction of the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill would affect the Assessor in that, by changing the revaluation cycle from 5 years to 3, more staff would be required to facilitate the new appeals process and to prepare for the next cycle;
- (b) that leisure trusts and ALEOs may be subject to inclusion on the valuation roll and that finance officers may wish to make representations to the Scottish Government in this regard, on behalf of their Councils;
- (c) that new civil penalties are to be introduced for non-provision of information relating to the valuation roll;
- (d) that Assessors would be expected to provide ratepayers with information on how rateable values had been arrived at, but that this had not yet been defined which made it difficult to predict exactly how much additional resource would be required to deliver this;
- (e) that the Barclay Review acknowledged additional resource implications for Assessors nationally and that the Financial Memorandum which accompanies the NDR(Scotland) Bill projected a significant increase in staffing costs in the coming years;
- (f) that the projections in the Financial Memorandum assumed a 25% fall in appeal volumes, which in Mr Thomson's view was unlikely;
- (g) that paragraph 3.6 of the report outlined the likely increase in costs to the Joint Board and that these figures would continue to be reviewed as the requirements of the new legislation became clearer;
- (h) that ICT systems would require to be developed or procured to meet the demands of the new legislation; and
- (i) that there was some scope to deliver savings in terms of digitisation and automation, and to reduce property costs, but that these would require short or medium term investment and would not deliver major savings.

Following discussion and questions, it was further noted:-

- (1) that discussion at the Settlement and Distribution Group may give an early indication as to whether Grant Aided Expenditure could be expected to rise in view of the resource implications of the new legislation;
- (2) that a review of the Assessors service was conducted on a rolling basis and that any future strategic review of the service would likely require the support of West Dunbartonshire Council;
- (3) that if Councils were to be asked to consider increasing their funding of the VJB they would wish to be assured that all cost-cutting measures had been considered; and

- (4) that a number of efficiency options had been considered and that Mr Thomson would circulate a paper detailing these to members/officers of the Working Group, following the meeting.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Working Group would be held after September 2019 by which time it was hoped that the budget position for future years may have become clearer.

The meeting closed at 2.40 p.m.

DRAFT

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Report by Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Valuation Joint Board – 28 June 2019

Subject: Non-Domestic Rating and Council Tax Valuation Progress**1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To advise members of the Joint Board of progress in relation to the Assessor's Non-Domestic Rating (NDR) valuation function.
- 1.2 In particular, to advise members of the progress in relation to disposal of 2017 Revaluation appeals.
- 1.3 To advise the Joint Board of on-going activities to implement the recommendations of the 'Barclay' Review, the Non-Domestic Rating (Scotland) Bill and subsequent secondary legislation.
- 1.4 To advise members of the Joint Board of progress in relation to the Assessor's Council Tax valuation function.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Assessor is required to carry out a general Revaluation of all Non-Domestic properties normally every five years. A general Non-Domestic Revaluation took effect from 1st April 2017.
- 2.2 It has previously been reported to the Joint Board that, consequent to the Revaluation, 3,568 appeals against 3,460 subjects with a total rateable value of £252,557,705 were received by the statutory deadline.
- 2.3 Appeals against entries in the 2005 and 2010 Valuation Rolls remain outstanding and require to be disposed of.
- 2.4 The Assessor is required to maintain the Valuation Roll for his area by amending it to reflect a number of circumstances including physical changes to properties. Any such change to the Valuation Roll may be appealed by relevant parties.
- 2.5 In March 2019 it was reported to the Board that a consultation on the implementation of the recommendations of the Barclay Review had closed and that the Government's response was awaited.
- 2.6 The Assessor is required to maintain the Council Tax Valuation List for his area by amending it to reflect new, altered and demolished properties. Additionally he must dispose of any proposals which are made against any entry in the Council Tax Lists.

3.0 Current Position

3.1 Non-Domestic Rating Valuation

3.1.1 2017 Revaluation

The disposal of Revaluation appeals has been a main area of work in recent months for our valuation staff and, in alignment with a series of scheduled local Valuation Appeal Committee (VAC) Hearings, good progress has been made. By the end of May, 2,222 appeals, representing 62.3% of those submitted, have been disposed of to date. Of these, 1,644 (74%) have been withdrawn or been dismissed by VAC for procedural reasons without any alteration of the value and 578 (26%) have been disposed of at an altered valuation.

3.1.2 2005 and 2010 Revaluation Cycle Appeals

Given the focus on 2017 appeals, there has only been very limited progress in relation appeals from previous revaluation cycles. Since the last Board meeting, only 1 more has been settled leaving 56 outstanding.

3.1.4 Maintenance of the Valuation Roll ('Running Roll')

In the year to March 2019, 1,048 changes were made to the Valuation Roll to reflect new, deleted and amended properties. In April and May 2019, 158 such changes to the Valuation Roll were made.

During the 2018/19 financial year, 192 running roll appeals (i.e. those relating to maintenance of the valuation roll) were received and 51 were disposed of leaving 465 outstanding at the end of March. A significant proportion of these appeals relate to the return of Shooting Rights to the Valuation Roll during 2017/18. During April and May a further 16 'running roll' appeals have been received and 33 disposed of. The outstanding running roll appeals will be disposed of in parallel with revaluation appeals, and in accordance with the statutory timetables for disposal.

3.1.5 The Barclay Review of Non-Domestic Rates

In February 2019 the Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy announced the outcome of the "Barclay Implementation" consultation and on 25 March 2019 the Scottish Government introduced the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill. This is the primary legislation facilitating the implementation of the Barclay recommendations. The main provisions which will change the NDR system include 3-yearly Revaluations, new markers on the Valuation Roll to support the Business Growth Accelerator, some properties in public parks will lose their exemption from entry to the roll, a new 2-stage proposals and appeals system and new civil penalties for non-provision of information.

The Local Government and Communities Committee of the Scottish Government has made a call for written evidence on the Bill and the SAA has made both written and oral representations to the Committee. Other oral evidence sessions will follow.

It is anticipated that stage 1 of the Bill's passage will be complete by October 2019 with stage 2 into November and stage 3 in January/February 2020, allowing the Act to be passed and various elements commenced by April 2020

Many of the operational details of the Bill will be included in secondary legislation which is likely to come forward throughout 2019 and 2020.

In recognition of the increased resource that will be required to implement the new regime the Scottish Government has made funding available to Assessors for 2019/20. Specifically DAB VJB has received £124,000 of 'Barclay' funding for the current year. No commitment has been made in respect of future years.

An internal NDR Reform Project Team was established in early 2019 and it will establish a Project Plan and Risk Register(s) to lead on delivery of the various changes referred to above. Reporting to the Management Team, the Project Team will make recommendations in relation to process, operations and ICT development requirements.

3.2 Council Tax Valuation

3.2.1 Maintenance of the Council Tax Valuation Lists

In the year to March 2019, 992 new dwellings were added to the Council Tax bringing the total number of dwellings in the Joint Board area to 145,266. Since 1 April, 158 dwellings have been added to the List and 76 have been deleted.

3.2.2 Council Tax Proposals and Appeals

During the year to March 2019, 327 proposals to change property Bands were received and 300 were disposed of leaving 191 outstanding. Since the start of April, 53 new proposals have been received and 48 disposed of.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to note:-

- (a) The progress in relation to disposal of Non-Domestic Rating appeals,
- (b) Progress in relation general maintenance of the Valuation Roll,
- (c) Progress and planning which is under way in respect of the changes to be introduced through the Non-Domestic Rating (Scotland) Bill,
- (d) Progress in relation general maintenance of the Council Tax List
- (e) Progress in relation to the disposal of Council Tax proposals and appeals,

Person to contact:

David Thomson (Assessor and ERO)

Tel: 0141 562 1260

E-mail: david.thomson@dab-vjb.gov.uk

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Report by Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Valuation Joint Board – 28 June 2019

Subject: Electoral Registration

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the members of the Joint Board with an update on the current position in relation to Electoral Registration.

2.0 Background

The report provided to the Joint Board at the last meeting on 1st March 2019 referred to the 2018 Annual Canvass, Individual Electoral Registration (IER) Funding 2018/19, Fresh Signatures for Absent Voters, Prisoner Voting and the Scottish Government Consultation on Electoral Reform.

3.0 Current Position

3.1 Register Updates/Rolling Registration

In line with the normal rolling registration update timetable, the Register as published on 1st December 2018 was updated on 3rd January, 1st February, 1st March and 1st April resulting in a total of 5,198 additions and 4,416 deletions.

The 1st May update was overtaken by the election updates for the European Parliamentary Election on 23rd May 2019 – see 3.2 for further details.

Since the revised Register was published on 1st December 2018, we have issued 7,194 individual voter registration forms as part of our duty to identify potential new electors by using other information sources.

Where the ERO believes that a person is no longer entitled to be registered he must carry out a 'Review' by writing to the elector advising of the reason for his opinion and also advise the individual that they have 14 calendar days from the date of the notice to request a hearing, otherwise their name will be removed from the register. At time of writing, 2,622 Reviews have been carried out since publication in December.

3.2 European Parliamentary Election 23rd May 2019

The date for this election was set in law on 8th April 2019.

European Citizens

On 11th April, European Parliament voter registration forms were issued to all 2,629 electors who were on the Register as 'G' voters (European nationals - entitled to vote only in Local Government & Scottish Parliamentary Elections).

We subsequently issued a further 154 declarations to those people being added to the Register for the first time as European electors.

Although the form must be completed by EU nationals who wish to vote there is no requirement on the ERO to send the electors a form. Further there is no funding made available to EROs to carry this task out. Notwithstanding that, we did issue the forms to each registered European elector with very clear instructions that the deadline for receipt of these declarations was midnight on Tuesday 7th May 2019.

Of the 2,783 declarations issued, 827 (29.7%) were returned and those electors, therefore, were entitled to cast a vote in European Parliamentary Election. This reflects a better return than the similar election in 2014 when 25.8% of 1,870 forms were returned.

There were three updates to the Register in connection with the above election on 25th April, 3rd May and 16th May 2019 resulting in a further 3,839 additions and 1,895 deletions.

The Cabinet Office provided an Information Exchange Directive giving guidance on the transfer of information between EU Member States.

We sent data to other EU countries on 3rd May and again on 13th May 2019.

Number of countries data sent to	22
Number of countries we held no data for	5
Number of electors contained in data sent	748
Number of countries we received data from	1

Only Slovenia sent details on an elector who was also registered in their own country. The elector was contacted to inform them that it would be an offence to vote twice in the same election. The elector confirmed they would not do that and that they planned to de-register in Slovenia as they are permanently resident in Scotland.

Despite social media and the press reporting significant issues in respect of the registration of European nationals, the experience on the ground was relatively muted. On the day of the election we had 11 European nationals who enquired as to why they could not vote but it was not clear that they had attended the poll. 2 formal complaints were made by electors; one claimed to have returned the form duly completed, though we have no record of its receipt and one claimed not to have received the form, though our records indicate that one was, indeed, sent.

Election Registers - General

All voter registration and absent voting timetables were complied with and the polling station registers and absent voters lists were supplied timeously to the Returning Officers.

Staff were available during polling hours to deal with any queries, both from electors and from polling station staff.

3.3 February 2019 Follow-Up of Invitations to Register (ITRs)

Household Enquiry Forms (HEFs) which are issued during the autumn canvass are used to identify potential new electors who are then sent an Invitation to Register (ITR). If an application is not made as a result of that invitation the ERO must issue up to two reminders and then arrange a personal visit. Many of the ITRs issued do

not reach the second reminder/personal visit stage until many weeks after the publication of the register in December.

7,172 potential electors had not registered by the end of February and we carried out personal visits to 6,022 households between 15th February and 11th March.

3.4 IER Funding 2018/19 - Cabinet Office (CO) funding for offsetting the additional costs of IER)

The Justification Led Bid for additional IER funding submitted on 18th December 2018 for £18,204 was agreed and payment received on 3rd April 2019.

3.4 Fresh Signature for Absent Voters

It was previously reported that we wrote out to 11,121 absent voters who were due to refresh their signatures.

The statistics for the complete exercise are noted below:-

	Initial Issue 11/01/2019		Reminder 07/02/2019		Cancellation 27/02/2019	
	Postal	Proxy	Postal	Proxy	Postal	Proxy
ABC	4,169	10	763	1	344	
EDC	4,208	6	723	0	296	1
WDC	2,727	1	513	1	239	
TOTAL	11,104	17	1,999	2	879	1

Those electors whose Absent Vote was cancelled were offered a fresh application form.

4.0 **Preparation for the 2019 Canvass**

- 4.1 The 2019 canvass will start on 1st July 2019, with publication of the revised register by 1st December 2019.
- 4.2 The annual electoral canvass involves a series of canvass (HEF) form issues and the printing and mailing services required for the canvass are contracted to a third party. The contract with CFH Docmail Ltd has been extended for 12 months until 31st March 2020 in accordance with the initial terms of the contract.
- 4.3 This year we will use the HEF letter trialled by the Behavioural Insights Team project in 2018 which reportedly showed a channel shift away from paper returns for those EROs who piloted its use last year.
- 4.3 As alternatives to returning forms by mail, we will again offer telephone, internet and short message service/text reply options for the 2019 canvass and the internet option will permit households to report “changes” as well as “no changes” electronically.

- 4.4 A door-to-door canvass will follow for households where no return is made to the forms issued.

5.0 Canvass Reform

As has previously been reported, the Cabinet Office and Scottish Government intend to introduce legislation during 2019 which will enable reform of the annual canvass in 2020. The intention is to introduce a model which will have a data (local and national) matching step at the start of the canvass, and will then allow a mixture of email, telephone and light touch contacts where most appropriate. This will allow greater discretion for EROs to shape the canvass to activities which best suit local circumstances.

To further support this change, a series of planned data matching tests will take place during 2019/20. A project plan for test data for this process has been outlined by the Cabinet Office which includes local data matching tests in the autumn of 2019 and national data matching test in January 2020.

We have agreed to take part in our system supplier's testing of the new functionality required for the data matching as this will give us an insight into processes prior to them going 'live' and allow us the opportunity to input into any further development.

6.0 Recommendation

Members are asked to note the content of this report.

Person to contact:
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DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Report by Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Valuation Joint Board – 28 June 2019

Subject: Best Value - Performance Reporting and Planning

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Members of the Joint Board on progress in relation to Best Value and, in particular, to advise on external performance reports for the year 2018/19.
- 1.2 To seek approval of the Public Performance Report for 2018/19
- 1.3 To seek approval of the KPI targets for 2019/20.

2.0 Background

2.1 Best Value – General

By placing a formal requirement on local authorities, including Valuation Joint Boards, to 'secure Best Value', The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 created a statutory requirement to provide continuous improvement in public services.

2.2 Performance Monitoring/Key Performance Indicators

2.2.1 Performance in Valuation Functions

Assessors have, for some years now, provided measures of, primarily, Council Tax List and Valuation Roll performance to the Scottish Government. These also form the basis of the Board's Public Performance Reports. The performance targets for 2018/19 were approved by the Board at its meeting on 29 June 2018.

3.0 Progress

3.1 Performance Monitoring/Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

3.1.1 Performance in Valuation Functions

The KPIs for the Joint Board area for the year 2018/19 have been compiled and are attached (Appendix 1).

In relation to our Non-Domestic Rating function our target was achieved at 'less than 3 months' and marginally surpassed at 'less than 6 months'.

In relation to Council Tax our targets were achieved, despite a number of properties which were added to the Council Tax Valuation List retrospectively after a Valuation

Appeal Committee decided that a number of Self-Catering Units were no longer capable of use for that purpose. The outcome being that they therefore fell to be treated as dwellings.

Appendices 2(a) and 2(b) show performance over the period since the year 2009/10.

The statistics contained in Appendix 1 and our targets for the year 2019/20 have been submitted to the Scottish Assessors' Association for collation and onward transmission to the Scottish Government.

3.1.2 Public Performance Report

The above KPIs have been included in our Public Performance Report which is attached for Members' consideration (Appendix 3).

4.0 Next Steps

4.1 Performance Monitoring/Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

4.1.1 The proposed KPI targets for 2019/20 are presented today for approval (see Appendix 1). Performance will remain a regular item for consideration and scrutiny at Management Meetings.

4.1.2 The Public Performance Report for 2018/19 will, subject to the approval sought below, be posted on our website.

5.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

(a) Note the performance in relation to the Valuation Roll and Council Tax List KPIs for 2018/19.

(b) Approve the Public Performance Report for 2018/19.

(c) Approve the KPI targets for 2019/20.

Person to contact:

David Thomson (Assessor and ERO)

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Appendices

Appendix 1: KPI Statistics

Appendix 2(a): KPI trends – Valuation Roll

Appendix 2(b): KPI trends – Council Tax List

Appendix 3 – Public Performance Report

Best Value - Performance Reporting and Planning

KPI STATISTICS 2018/2019 and TARGETS 2019/20

Valuation Roll

Total No of entries as @ 1st April 2018 14,581
Total Rateable Value @ 1st April 2018 £372.69 million

During the year, 1048 amendments were made to the Valuation Roll within the following periods

Period	Actual 2017/18	Target 2018/19	Actual 2018/19	Target 2019/20
0-3 months	85%	85%	85%	86%
3-6 months	94%	94%	95%	95%

Total No of entries as @ 31st March 2019 14,972
Total Rateable Value @ 31st March 2019 £368.7million

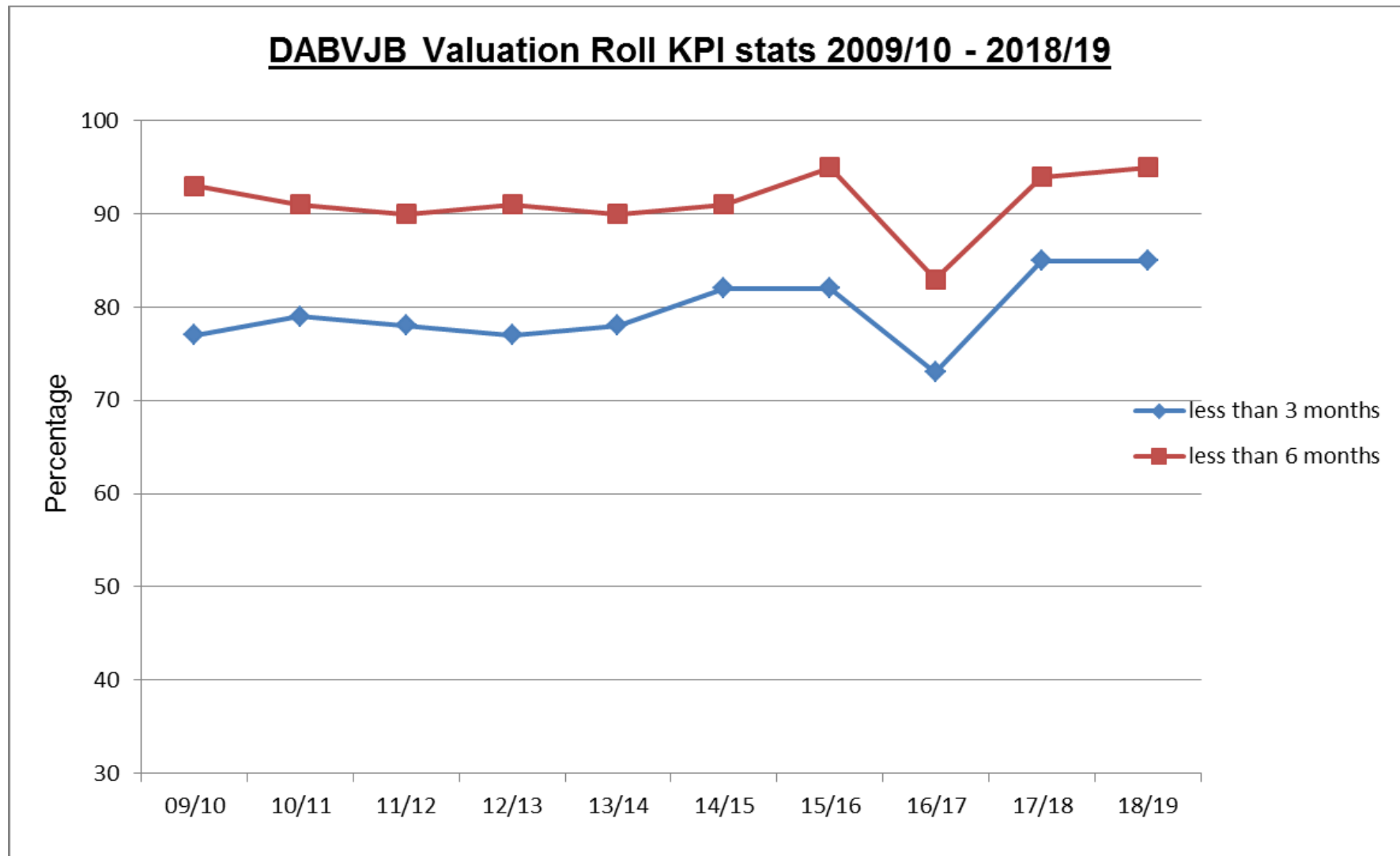
Council Tax

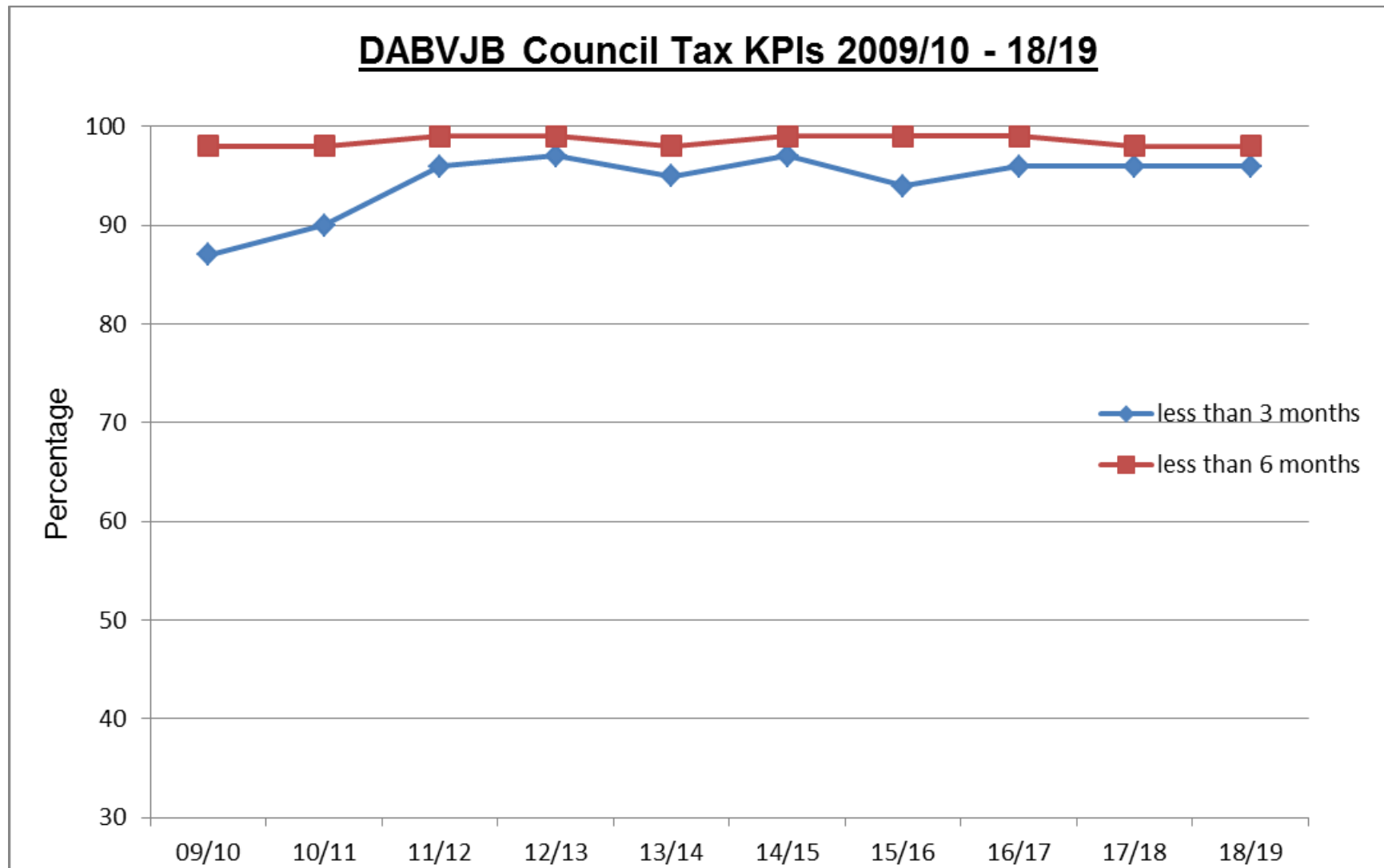
Total Number of entries @ 1st April 2018 144,773

992 new entries were added to the Valuation List within the following periods

Period	Actual 2017/18	Target 2018/19	Actual 2018/19	Target 2019/20
0-3 months	96%	96%	96%	96%
3-6 months	98%	98%	98%	98%

Total Number of entries @ 31st March 2019 145, 266





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Public Performance Report 2018/19

Kilbrannan House
CAMPBELTOWN
PA28 6JY
Phone 01586 555300
Fax 01586 552883
Textphone 07821 643267

Background

The Assessor for Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute is an independent statutory official who is responsible for the preparation and the maintenance of the Valuation Rolls and Council Tax Valuation Lists for East and West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute. The Assessor has also been appointed as the Electoral Registration Officer for these three areas and he is therefore required to prepare and maintain their Registers of Electors. The Assessor's service is conducted from two main offices located at the addresses above.

You can contact us by e-mail at assessor@dab-vjb.gov.uk

General Information

During the year to 31st March 2019, the Assessor had a full-time equivalent staff of 50.02 and a staffing budget of £2.24m. A total of 324.5 days (2.95%) were lost through illness, a slight increase from 2.3% in 2017/18.

Council Tax List

The Council Tax List contains all domestic properties showing an allocated Council Tax band which is based on the market value of the property as at 1991. The bands shown are used by the local authorities within the Joint Board's boundaries for the production of domestic Council Tax bills. As at 31st March, 2019, the Council Tax Lists for Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute contained 145,266 subjects. Of the 992 houses added to the List between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019, the time between the date of occupation/completion and the issue of the banding notice is shown in the following table. Both the 3 month and 6 month targets were achieved.

The targets which we have set for 2019/20 are 96% within 3 months and 98% within 6 months.

Year	Number	Within 3 Months		Within 6 Months	
		Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
2018/19	992	96%	96%	98%	98%
2017/18	832	95%	96%	98%	98%
2016/17	932	95%	96%	98%	99%
2015/16	1077	95%	94%	98%	99%
2014/15	1269	95%	97%	98%	99%
2013/14	1074	95%	95%	98%	98%
2012/13	1110	93%	96%	98%	99%
2011/12	988	92%	96%	98%	99%
2010/11	989	93%	90%	97%	98%

Valuation Roll

The Valuation Roll contains the rateable values of all non-domestic properties within the area. The rateable values shown are used by the Joint Board's constituent local authorities for the production of non-domestic rates bills.

As at 31st March 2019 the Valuation Rolls for Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute contained 14,972 subjects with a total rateable value of £368.7 million. Of the 1084 amendments made to the Valuation Roll between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019, the performance reflecting time between the effective date of the alteration and the issue of the Valuation Notice is shown in the following table, along with previous years' data. The performance was on the 3 months target and marginally ahead of the 6 month target.

The targets we have set for 2019/20 are 86% within 3 months and 95% within 6 months.

Year	Number	Within 3 Months		Within 6 Months	
		Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
2018/19	1084	85%	85%	95%	95%
2017/18	989	83%	85%	95%	94%
2016/17	848	83%	74%	95%	84%
2015/16	969	80%	81.9%	94%	95.4%
2014/15	950	80%	82%	94%	91%
2013/14	892	80%	78.4%	94%	90.5%
2012/13	1369	80%	78%	92%	91%
2011/12	930	80%	77.8%	92%	90.4%
2010/11	964	80%	79%	90%	91%

Electoral Registration

The Electoral Registers list the name and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote.

There were no major electoral events during 2018/19 but registers were provided for Community Council and National Park Elections, and preparations were undertaken for the May 2019 European Parliamentary Election.

At December 2018 the total electorate figure was down on the total at publication in December 2017, a pattern which tends to occur in years where there is no major electoral event.

Year	Electorate at Publication
2018	219,637
2017	222,507
2016	221,078
2015	218,668
2014/15	223,594
2013/14	221,453
2012	219,117

Rolling Registration is the process of dealing with applications for changes to the register which are not part of the canvass project. During 2018/19 there were 12,958 additions to the register and 12,300 deletions from the register. IER requires a pro-active approach to change throughout the year and we have continued use a variety of sources of information to initiate the issue of Invitations to Register.

Other Items of Note

During the year we also:

- Introduced an online Customer satisfaction survey. www.saa.gov.uk/dab-vjb/customersurvey
- Updated Policies and Procedures to comply with the new Data Protection legislation including appointing a Data Protection Officer.
- Developed a Communications Strategy to enhance openness and stakeholder engagement.
- Undertook a Progress Update Review of our Records Management Plan.
- Migrated our Website to www.saa.gov.uk/dab-vjb
- Disposed of 1,526 2017 Revaluation Appeals with the vast majority, (76%) withdrawn without any adjustment to the issued valuation.

A copy of the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer's Annual Report is available on request from either office and also online at www.saa.gov.uk/dab-vjb/best-value/annual-report-financial-statement



*Dumbartonshire and Argyll & Bute
Valuation Joint Board*

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Report by Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Valuation Joint Board – 28 June 2019

Subject: Best Value – Service Planning

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Joint Board approval of the April 2019 update to the 2018-21 Service Plan.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Service Planning on a 3-year cycle forms part of the Joint Board's Corporate Governance framework.
- 2.2 In June 2018 the Board approved a 3-year Service Plan for the period 2018-21 reflecting the strategic aims, operational and legislative requirements of the organisation over that period.
- 2.3 The Management Team also compile and use a Service Calendar which lays out the more detailed operations and tasks for the forthcoming year.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 An update to the Service Plan, which reflects the continually changing environment that the Joint Board operates within, has been agreed by the Management Team and is attached for Board Members consideration and approval (Appendix 1)
- 3.2 An Annual Calendar for 2019/20 which has been derived from the Service Plan (as updated) has also been prepared and can be made available to members on request.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 The Annual Service Calendar will be used by the Joint Board's Management Team to plan resources and monitor progress.
- 4.2 The Service Plan will be updated on an annual basis to reflect changes in legislation, policy and practice and updates will be presented to the Joint Board for approval each year.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are asked to approve the April 2019 update to Service Plan for the period 2018-21.

Person to contact:

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Appendices

Appendix 1: DABVJB Service Plan 2018-21 – 2019 Update



*Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute
Valuation Joint Board*

ASSESSOR AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER

SERVICE PLAN 2018-2021

April 2019 Update

Background

Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board is committed to a three-year Service Planning Schedule. The most recent Service Plan approved by the Joint Board covers the period 2018-2021.

As the environment in which the Board operates is constantly changing, there is a need to review the Service Plan annually. Rather than produce a fully revised Plan, however, this 'Update' includes such changes and new tasks as have occurred or been identified since approval of the main 3-year Plan. **It should therefore be read along with the main 2018-21 Service Plan.** Other than where new sections have been added, all references and numberings contained within this document refer back to the original Plan.

The Annual Calendar for 2019-20 will reflect the changes included in this Update.

PART ONE – SERVICE FUNCTION

1.0 Introduction

As at 1 April 2019, the staffing complement stands at 49.02 FTE, though a recruitment process was underway to fill one vacancy.

A number of issues referred to in the 2018-21 Service Plan have moved on and updates on the various topics are included below.

In particular, the Scottish Government has moved forward since the Barclay Report was published, having completed a formal consultation on elements of the Barclay recommendations during 2018 and published a Non-Domestic Rates Reform Bill in March 2019. This commits the government to a 3-yearly Revaluation cycle and an overhaul of the appeals system, both from 2022.

The Bill which provides the primary legislative framework, is expected to pass through its various stages in Parliament during 2019/20 with the aim of being enacted by April 2020 and implemented in a phased fashion from then. At time of writing, no timetable is known for the raft of secondary legislation which will be required to implement the full extent of change proposed.

A number of the 'Barclay' recommendations will be delivered without specific legislative provision.

In passing its 2019/20 budget, the Scottish Government committed to a review of local government funding. Specifically, it will commence a review of the Council Tax system prior to the next Scottish Parliamentary elections. This may have implications for new activities during the currency of this Service Plan.

The Cabinet Office's (CO) Moderation Programme now has a firm commitment to canvass reform with a target for implementation in autumn of 2020. This will introduce data matching as part of the annual canvass process and allow canvass activities to be better aligned with local requirement. Planning and testing for the change will take place during 2019/20.

The UK and/or Scottish Governments are currently considering or consulting on further electoral change, such as extending the franchise to (some) prisoners and, for Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government elections, to all residents of Scotland. It is also probable that overseas voting will be extended to a lifelong right. None of these initiatives have firm timetables, so for much of 2019/20 it is likely that a watching brief will be required.

At its meeting in March 2019, the Valuation Joint Board approved the establishment of a short-life working group to address the Board's funding gap. The group, which will comprise of the Members of the Board's Finance Sub-Committee, representatives of the three constituent Councils' finance departments and the Assessor & ERO, will report to the Joint Board in September 2019 in order that its findings and recommendations can be considered in setting the budgets for 2020/21 and beyond.

1.1 Valuation Roll

The total rateable value of 14,997 subjects in the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation rolls at 1st April 2019 is £368,996,344.

As at April 2019, 1,408 2017 Revaluation appeals remain outstanding and their disposal will remain a priority going forward. Running Roll appeals will be scheduled for disposal largely in parallel with Revaluation appeals.

An internal NDR Reform Project Team has been established and, during 2019/20, it will establish a Project Plan and Risk Register(s) for delivery of 3-yearly Revaluations, appeals system reform and all Barclay recommendations that are taken forward. Reporting to the Management Team, the Project Team will make recommendations in relation to process, operations and ICT development requirements. The Management Team will, however, retain responsibility for all decisions in relation to ICT procurement and people resources.

The Project Plan will, initially at least, need to be fairly high level but, as the NDR Reform Bill proceeds towards enactment and the required secondary legislation becomes known, the plan will increase in detail. ICT development will be critical in delivering the required reforms.

Funding for the forthcoming change has been incorporated into the 2019/20 budget approved by the Board and consideration will be given to the appropriate posts to be created/filled, taking account of the available training provision for surveyors, which is understood to be under review, and the government's level of commitment to funding beyond the current year.

1.2 Valuation List

At 1st April 2019 there were 145,266 properties in the Council Tax Valuation List for the Joint Board area. Proposals and appeals continue to be received and these will be disposed of as resources allow.

1.3 Electoral Register

At publication of registers on 1st December 2018, the total electorate for the Joint Board area was 219,637.

At time of writing there is significant uncertainty around the UK's departure from the EU, resulting in the possibility that elections to the European Parliament may, after all, require to be held. The developing situation is being watched closely and contingency preparations for this, or any other 'snap', electoral event have taken place, and will continue into 2019/20.

Planning for the 2020 canvass reform will take place during 2019. Local data matching tests will take place between July and December 2019 and national data matching via the Government Digital Service (GDS) will take place in January 2020. More detailed plans will be established when CO have made their intentions clearer.

In 2017 the Joint Board outsourced the majority of its print and mail requirement under a contract which, having exercised the available extension clause, will persist until May 2020. Procurement activities to seek tenders and agree a new contract will commence during 2019, on a timetable to be agreed with WDC's procurement service.

1.4 Other Functions

See above regarding the establishment of a short-life working group to review the Joint Board's funding model.

In accordance with the Board's Equalities Duties, a Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report will be published in April 2019, along with information on the gender pay gap.

PART TWO – CORE OBJECTIVES

2.1 Valuation Roll

- 2.1.5 The VOA has indicated that it has commenced engagement with ratepayers and their representatives in respect of their 2021 Revaluation of Gas Utility Subjects. Although there will be a disparity in the valuation and effective dates of Revaluations between Scotland and England, there remains a strong case for harmonisation of approach so the Assessor will retain a watching brief over developments during 2019/20 and attend such meetings as are appropriate.
- 2.1.8 See 'Part One' above re the remit and activities of the internal NDR Reform Project Team. More detail of these will crystallise as detailed requirements emerge.

2.2 Council Tax List

- 2.2.4 It is more likely that the Council Tax system will be subject to complete review than Revaluation. At this stage a watching brief will be kept on developments at governmental level and any consultations etc. will be responded to.

2.3 Electoral Register

- 2.3.3 The current political situation means that there is a risk of a 'snap' electoral event at almost any and all times. A state of readiness will be maintained and specific timetables implemented immediately following any announcement of any election or referendum.
- 2.3.6 See 'Part One' regarding canvass reform. Data matching tests will be planned provisionally as above though a watching brief of CO plans will be maintained.
- 2.3.7 The 2018 review of UK Parliamentary Boundaries will be implemented in advance of any UK Parliamentary General Election.

2.4 Corporate Governance

- 2.4.2 See above regarding the short life working group established to address the Joint Board's funding gap. Once representatives from the finance departments are known an initial meeting will be held and more detailed plans will be laid out thereafter.
- 2.4.9 The new internal NDR Reform Project Team has a similar remit and authority as the existing Working Groups and will report to the Management Team on a regular basis.

2.5 Accountability

All as per the 2018-21 Service Plan. The scope, content and timing of any audit will be agreed with the relevant audit team.

2.6 Best Value

- 2.6.1 The Electoral Commission are known to be reviewing the performance regime which will apply following canvass reform. A watching brief will be adopted and input to the development of relevant metrics will be made, if the opportunity arises. Any clear indication of requirements will be planned for and implemented as required.
- 2.6.4 Following a review of the Customer Satisfaction process which was implemented in April 2018, it was agreed that we would return to an approach whereby a sample of recent users of service would be invited to make a return. The success of this, along with a new internal process for recording returns will be kept under review.

2.7 Equal Opportunities

- 2.7.3 An Equalities Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report will be published in April 2019, along with information on the gender pay gap

2.8 Staffing and Personnel Matters

- 2.8.3 Staffing levels and structures will be reviewed to balance the competing issues of the move the 3-yearly Revaluations and the need to address future budget gap.

2.9 Finance and Budgeting

- 2.9.2 The Member/officer short-life working group referred to above will meet early in 2019/20 and as required to ensure that conclusions are reached and recommendations made to the Joint Board in September 2019. The budget process for future years will take account of such changes as are approved by the Joint Board.
- 2.9.3 The procurement process to award a new print and mail contract in the spring of 2020 will commence during 2019, on a timetable to be agreed with WDC's procurement service.
- 2.9.5 Training in financial procedures and systems shall be provided, as are required, to the newly appointed Principal Admin Officer.

2.10 Information Technology

- 2.10.2 A review of the Joint Board's network structure and systems is under way. Following the conclusion of this process, new servers will be procured and installed in line with the provision made in the approved capital budget.
- 2.10.3 The .PSN secure network is being superseded in 2019 and the Board, under the direction and advice of WDC's ICT service, will need to implement such alternative security systems as are required.
- 2.10.4 The DSAs which are in place with the education authorities for provision of 'attainer' information will be reviewed early in 2019/20.

2.10.6 The Assessor's 'Progress' system is likely to form the main database upon which the required developments to deliver 3-yearly Revaluations and appeal system changes will be carried out. More detail on the proposed approach will be laid out as the legislative requirements become clearer.

2.10.8 The Halarose/ldox EROS system will be developed to comply with canvass reform (including data matching tests) and other proposed electoral registration reforms. Suppliers are currently working with governments in relation these reforms and it is expected that updates to the system will be delivered in time for implementation.

2.11 Freedom of Information

All as per the 2018-21 Service Plan.

2.12 Key Partnerships

2.12.4 During 2018 the SAA revised its consultative framework to respond to the recommendations in the Barclay Report. This framework now includes the Scottish Ratepayers Forum, the Scottish Rating Surveyors Forum and the Scottish Business Rating Group, all of which have slightly different scope and remit.

2.12.7 The Cabinet Office will lead on the Canvass Reform Project and many of the changes will be delivered through development of electoral management systems (EMS) so close ties with the CO and EMS suppliers will be maintained.

2.13 Records Management

All as per the 2018-21 Service Plan.

2.14 Miscellaneous

2.14.3 In early 2019 Internal Audit issued a report on the Joint Board's compliance with Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. In line with the agreed Action Plan the Joint Board's Information Asset Register and Business Classification & Retention of Documents document will now be reviewed annually.

PART THREE

KEY ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Key To Business Objectives

The codes in the table below relate each Activity and Outcome contained in Part Three of the Service Plan to the relevant Business Objective(s) within the Joint Board's **Mission, Vision and Commitments** Statements.

Number	Business Objective
1	Compile the Valuation Roll
2	Compile the Council Tax Valuation List
3	Compile the Electoral Register
4	Maintain the Valuation Roll
5	Maintain the Council Tax Valuation List
6	Maintain the Electoral Register
	All of the above are underpinned by the aim of providing these services in a high quality, effective and responsive manner.
7	Listening and responding to Stakeholders needs
8	Valuing staff and providing them with opportunities to develop and contribute
9	Reacting innovatively to change
10	Treating all stakeholders in a fair, consistent manner and in accordance with equal opportunities requirements
11	Striving for continuous improvement in all aspects of service delivery
12	Ensuring that we are accessible and accountable to stakeholders
13	Pro-actively planning workloads and deploying resources
14	Using 'plain English'

3.1 THE VALUATION ROLL

Where there is no narrative in this section please see original 2018-21 Service Plan.

3.1.1 Maintenance of the Valuation Roll

3.1.2 2017 Revaluation Appeals/3.1.3 Running Roll Appeals (to include 3.1.5 Gas Utility)

See separate schedules of VAC Hearing dates for 2019

3.1.4 Valuation Appeal Committee Hearings

See separate schedules of VAC Hearing dates for 2019

3.1.6 Revaluation 2005 and 2010 – Lands Tribunal Appeals

3.1.7 Valuation Evidence – General

3.1.8 The Barclay Review and NDR Reform (including preparation for Revaluation 2022)

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(h)	Prepare for and implement the new '70-day letting rule' for self-catering subjects in line with forthcoming legislation (no longer expected before 2020)	4,5,9,10,12,13	Assessor	Dependent on legislation
(i)	Prepare for and enter currently exempt commercial subjects situated in public parks into the valuation roll (No longer expected before 2020)	4,5,9,10,12,13	Assessor	Dependent on legislation
(j)	Hold NDR Reform Project Team meetings	1,4,8,9,11,12,13	Depute Assessor	TBC
(k)	Create Project Plan with timetables, resources, milestones etc, in line with SAA Project Plan	1,4,8,9,11,12,13	NDR Reform Project Team	Summer 2019
(l)	Create and maintain Project Risk Registers including any actions required	1,4,8,9,11,12,13	NDR Reform Project Team	Summer 2019
(m)	Develop specifications required for ICT development	1,4,8,9,11,12,13	NDR Reform Project Team	Various timescales
(n)	Develop ICT systems as required by specifications	1,4,8,9,11,12,13	Analyst/Programmer	Various timescales
(o)	Test and implement ICT system developments in accordance with relevant test plans	1,4,8,9,11,12,13	NDR Reform Project Team/all staff	Various timescales
(p)	Report progress to Management Team	1,4,8,9,11,12,13	Depute Assessor	See MTM cycle

3.2 THE COUNCIL TAX VALUATION LIST

A watching brief will be maintained on developments at government level – no specific update or actions known at this time.

3.3 THE ELECTORAL REGISTER

3.3.1 Annual Register of Electors

The publication of new registers takes place by 1st December based on an annual canvass which extends from July– November. For planning purposes, a working start date of 1st July will be adopted. Note that 1st December falls on a Sunday which may require overtime or other arrangements to be required to allow publication on that day.

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(y)	A copy of the register will be taken at the start of the canvass to allow data matching tests to be completed	3,6,7,9,11,13	ERO/PAO	June 2019

3.3.2 Maintenance of Register of Electors

3.3.3 Elections/Electoral Events

Contingency planning has commenced for the possibility of a European Parliamentary election on 23 May 2019, though it is not clear if this will proceed. This has included revision of template letters, testing data to be merged with letters to European electors, poll card data etc. Any actions required in the 2019/20 year, including interim publications, provision of registers to ROs etc will be detailed in a separate election timetable/plan should the need to conduct this, or any other, election/electoral event come to fruition.

3.3.6 Modernising Electoral Registration Programme/ Canvass Reform

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(e)	A copy of the register will be taken at the start of the canvass to allow data matching tests to be completed	3,6,7,9,11,13	ERO/PAO	June 2019
(f)	Arrange for receipt of consolidated local data sets (Including Council Tax), ensure file formats are appropriate and up-load to Tellus	3,6,7,9,11,13	PAO	By June 2019
(g)	Carry out local data matching tests as required	3,6,7,9,11,13	PAO	July – November Details TBC
(h)	Carry out national data matching tests in accordance with CO requirements and timetable	3,6,7,9,11,13	PAO	January 2020

(i)	Use results of above tests to plan approach to 2020 canvass.	3,6,7,9,11,13	ERO/PAO	January – June 2020
(j)	Use results of above tests to estimate costs of 2020 canvass	3,6,7,9,11,13	ERO/PAO	February 2020

3.3.7 Boundary Changes

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(b)	Implement the outcomes of the 2018 review of UK Parliamentary constituencies	3,6,7,9,13	ERO/PAO	As required by any 'snap' UKPE
(b)	Implement Review of Polling Districts and Places in EDC	3,6,7,9,13	ERO/PAO	December 2019 or before if required

3.4 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

3.4.1/3.4.2 Valuation Joint Board Meetings

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(a)	Agree timetable for Valuation Joint Board Meetings (which incorporates meeting to receive and approve the audited financial statements before their final certification and submission to the Accounts Commission)	7,12,13	Assessor/Board/ Clerk to DAB VJB	Provisionally 28 June 2019
(b)(f)	Current Convenor prefers <u>not</u> to have Agenda meetings	7,13	No action	
(h)	Confirm Constituent Councils' Finance Officer representation on funding Short-Life Working Group.	1-6,7,9,11,12,13	Treasurer	April 2019
(i)	Initiate meeting of funding Short-Life Working Group.	1-6,7,9,11,12,13	Treasurer/Assessor	Early 2019/20
(j)	Consider options to address budget gap and make recommendations to Valuation Joint Board	1-6,7,9,11,12,13	Short-Life Working Group.	September Board meeting
(k)	Take cognisance of SLWG recommendations and Joint Board decisions in respect of budget gap in preparing 2020/21 et seq budget estimates	1-6,7,9,11,12,13	Treasurer/Assessor	September 2019 – February 2020

3.4.3 Probity and Propriety

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(d)	Review Codes of Conduct for officers of the Valuation Joint Board. (Amended March 2019)	7,12,14	Assessor	Annually in March

3.4.8 Performance Management, Planning & Reporting

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(i)	Maintain an awareness of developments in relation to EC Performance regime for Canvass reform. Input into any consultation and plan for implementation	3,6,7,9,10,11,12,13	ERO/PAO	As required
(n)	Collate and submit statistics for SAA Annual Report	7,9,10,11,12,14	Assessor/ERO	April annually

3.4.9 Internal Working Groups

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(i)	Plan for and deliver NDR Reform including the 2022 Revaluation and appeal reform	1,3,7,8,9,11,12,13	NDR Reform Project Team	As required

3.5 ACCOUNTABILITY

All as per the 2018-21 Service Plan.

3.6 BEST VALUE

All as per the 2018-21 Service Plan, but note above re the development of a new EC Performance Regime for the reformed canvass.

3.7 EQUALITIES

All as per the 2018-21 Service Plan, but note the following

3.7.1 Encouraging Equal Opportunities and Ensuring Compliance and 3.7.3 Equalities Reporting

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(g)	Report/Publish progress against 'stated 'Outcomes', mainstreaming of equalities actions and gender pay-gap information	8,11	Depute	April 2019 and every 2 years

3.8 STAFFING AND PERSONNEL MATTERS

3.8.1 Development and Review of Personnel Policies

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(e)	Review Health and Safety Policy (last reviewed April 2018)	7,8,10,11,14	H & S Committees	Annually in April

3.8.3 Staffing Review

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(h)	Review staffing in light of changing external factors – specifically review staffing structures to balance the competing issues of the move to 3-yearly Revaluations and the need to address future Budget gap	7,9,11,12,13	Management Team	Continually, but specifically after SLWG has reported.
(i)	Recruit to fill vacant post(s), specifically to fill vacant Admin Officer post in Campbeltown	1,2,4,5,8,13	Management Team	Commence in April 2019
(j)	Review staff complement in WDC's HR system (add new and remove obsolete and unfunded posts)	7,9,13	Depute Assessor	Annually in March

3.8.5 Health & Safety Policy

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(a)	Review of Health and Safety Policy (last reviewed April 2018)	7,8, 10,11,14	Depute/ H&S Committees	Annually in April
(f)	Complete and implement Stress Risk Assessments	7,8,11,13,14	H & S Committees	Only as appropriate/ necessary

3.9 FINANCE AND BUDGETING

3.9.2 Budget Preparation

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(a)	Review of probable out-turn along with operational, staffing, training and all other requirements will be extended to include a consideration of the recommendations of the Short-Life Working Group and the subsequent decisions of the Joint Board	8,9,11,12,13	Assessor/Depute/ PAO	Annually in November - January

3.9.3 Financial Procedures

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(c)	Review List of Approved Signatories to reflect change of PAO	12	Assessor	April 2019 and annually or at any change of signatories
(e)	Ensure that all instances of procurement comply with Procurement Procedures. Specifically that the preparations for the renewal of the print & mail contract commence in accordance with WDC procurement timetables (up to 9 months notice required) and agreed procedures	9,10,11,12,13	Assessor	From August 2019

3.9.5 Training

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(b)	Identify any training requirements resulting from changes to procedures or personnel. Specifically in relation to change in PAO.	7,8,9,11,12,13	Assessor/ Depute	April 2019 and as required
(c)	Provide, arrange or facilitate training and instruction as identified above.	7,8,11,12,13,14	Assessor/ Depute	ASAP following April 2019 and as required

3.10 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

3.10.1 Business Systems Support

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(g)	Liaise with WDC regarding any specific projects where their input is required. Specifically for 19/20:- Upgrade operating systems from Windows 7 to Windows 10, and Implement new GIS software roll-out	7,8,9,11,12,13	Depute Assessor/ Systems Officers	As required Various - TBC with WDC Quarter 1, 19/20 - TBC with WDC

3.10.2 ICT Asset Management

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(a)(b)(e) (g)	Complete review of network structure and performance prior to procuring servers and hardware in line with the 2019/20 capital budget approval. This to include a consideration of the contingency arrangements for the EMS.	1-6,7,8,9,11,12,13	Depute Assessor/ WDC ICT	Summer 2019

(h)	Procure and install new flexi-time system including new server (if required)	7,9,11,12,13	Depute Assessor	During 2019/20
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3.10.3 PSN (Accreditation)

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(a)	Confirm any requirements of the replacement to the existing .PSN network service and implement as appropriate	1-6,7,9	Depute Assessor / as directed by WDC	Spring 2019

3.10.4 Data Protection

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(d)	Revise DSAs with constituent Council Education Departments for provision of 'attainer' data.	3,6,7,9,12	ERO/PAO	Spring 2019

3.10.6/3.10.7 Assessors Progress System

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(c)	Maintain and further develop system to meet agreed business requirements of internal working groups and Management Team. Specifically to develop the system to meet the requirements of NDR Reform, Barclay recommendations and appeal reform in accordance with specifications provided by NDR Reform Project Team	1,2,4,5,7,8,9,11,13	Depute, Systems Officer, Analyst/Programmer	Ongoing As agreed by Project Team
(d)	Maintain and further develop system outputs to enable delivery of agreed data to SAA Portal – particularly in respect of changes required for NDR Reform, Barclay recommendations , appeal reform and widened provision of Summary Valuations	1.2.4.5.7,8,9,11,12, 13	Depute, Systems Officers, Analyst/Programmer	As per Portal project plans

3.10.8 EROS II Electoral System

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(d)	(Where appropriate, test and) Implement upgraded versions of EROS, specifically to implement data matching test , canvass reform and other electoral registration reforms	3,6,8,9,10,11,13	PAO/Systems Officers	Normally ASAP on receipt. Enhancements are likely in advance of data match tests July 2019 and Jan 2020
(f)	Provide training for changes to system and processes – particularly in line with above (d) changes	3,6,7,8,9,10,11,13	PAO	As required

3.10.9 Satellite Systems

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(a)	A review of the use and functionality of Rental Questionnaire databases and the management of Revaluation Returns of Information will be part of the scope of the NDR Reform Project Team's considerations	1,4,7,8,9,11,13	DAs to lead on any change required	During 2019

3.10.10 Assessors Portal Project

See 3.10.6/3.10.7 (d) above regarding changes likely to be necessary to deliver NDR Reform and Barclay requirements.

3.11 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

All as per the 2018-21 Service Plan.

3.12 KEY PARTNERSHIPS

3.12.1 Support Services West Dunbartonshire Council

No change from Service Plan but note the following commitment:-

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(m)	Review Service Level Agreement in liaison with Treasurer and service delivery representatives	7,9,10,11,13,14	Assessor	By February 2020

3.12.3 Scottish Assessors Association

As per Service Plan but note that from 23 May 2019 the Assessor will no longer be a member of the SAA Executive Committee. 3.12.3(c) "Attend Executive Committee meetings" will therefore no longer apply.

3.12.4 Scottish Assessors Association Partners

In light of the comment at 3.12.3, above, reference to the Assessor attending Harmonisation meetings at 3.12.4(a) will no longer apply. Similarly, the Assessor will not personally attend meetings referred to at (c) Scottish Government Departments, (i) Ratepayers Forum and (j) Scottish Business Rating Group.

3.12.7 Cabinet Office

There is little substantive change to the Service Plan but the impending canvass reforms merely raise the need to ensure that liaison is maintained with CO and that all CO publications and project updates are read, understood and, where necessary, acted upon.

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(g)	Attend specific Canvass Reform Event in Birmingham	3,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13	PAO	September 2019

3.12.9 External Suppliers

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(a)	Procure new contract for printing and mailing of mail, including canvass stationery.	3,10,11,12,13	Assessor/ PAO/ WDC Procurement	Start ~August 2019 to ensure contract awarded in time for May 2020
(f)	Liaise with EROS II Customer Account Manager and Idox/Halarose staff to ensure delivery of change required for implementing canvass reform and other legislative changes.	3,6,7,8,9,10,11,13	PAO/Admin Manager	Ongoing/ As Required

3.13 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

As per Service Plan 2018-21.

3.14 MISCELLANEOUS

3.14.1 Consultations

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(b)	Provide input/responses to any Cabinet Office consultation or request during development of Canvass Reform plans	3,6,7,9,11,12,13	ERO/PAO	As required
(c)	Provide feedback, through the SAA where appropriate, on the draft NDR Reform Bill and the related secondary legislation.	4,7,11,12,13	SAA/Assessor	April 2019 – March 2020 (and beyond for secondary legislation)

3.14.3 Data Protection

Item	Description	Objective(s)	Ownership	Date/Recurrence
(f)	Review Information Asset Register and Business Classification & Retention of Documents document	1-6,7,9,12,13	Depute Assessor	Annually in April

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Report by Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Valuation Joint Board – 28 June 2019

Subject: Best Value – Customer Service Update

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise members of the results from the Customer Consultation process during 2018/19.
- 1.2 To advise members of the outcomes from the Complaints Procedure during 2018/19.

2.0 Background

2.1 Customer Satisfaction Survey

A key component of Best Value is consultation with stakeholders. A satisfaction survey of recent users of the Joint Board's services has been in place for some years.

2.2 Complaints Procedure

The Joint Board operates a Complaints Procedure which is in line with the Public Sector Ombudsman's Model Complaints Handling Procedure.

3.0 Progress

3.1 Customer Satisfaction Survey

For some years recent users of the Joint Board's services have been randomly sampled and issued with questionnaires seeking their perception of the service provided to them. In April 2018, and with a view to streamlining and modernising the system and increasing the number of returns made, we implemented a new on-line customer satisfaction system. Relevant outgoing was amended to include an invitation to complete the survey.

The attempt to drive service users on-line was, however, not successful and, in October 2018, we returned to sampling recent service users and inviting them to make submissions. Following this change we saw an upturn in responses both in paper format and on-line.

A summary of the results is provided below and these show that:-

- By far the majority of our stakeholders (94%) find us professional, courteous and helpful.
- 60% of queries or transactions are completed at the first point of contact and only 7% of matters are not concluded to the satisfaction of the stakeholder.
- Most users of Joint Board services (93%) are satisfied with the information and/or advice provided to them.
- High satisfaction levels are being maintained on a year-to-year basis, as is shown in the summary below.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Survey Return Rate	28%	27%	21%	18%	19%	21%	N/A
Was the person with whom you communicated professional, courteous and helpful?	97%	98%	99%	97%	97%	99%	94%
Was the matter brought to a satisfactory conclusion immediately?	58%	55%	67%	62%	68%	62%	60%
Was the matter brought to a satisfactory conclusion?	98%	96%	97%	96%	97%	97%	93%
Are you satisfied with the quality of the information or advice given to you?	96%	96%	97%	94%	97%	96%	93%

No Customer Satisfaction forms were requested in alternative languages, Braille or other formats.

A breakdown of the returns which indicated relevant protected characteristics is shown below.

Characteristic	Category	Percentage	Characteristic	Category	Percentage
Race	White	98%	Age	16-21	3%
	Non-white	2%		22-30	7%
Gender	Male	48%		31-40	7%
	Female	52%		41-50	17%
Disability	Disabled	16%		51-60	20%
	Able-bodied	84%		61-65	12%
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	97%		66-70	16%
	Other	3%		70+	19%
Marital status	Married	57%			
	Never Married	13%			
	Other	30%			

Sample sizes within the various equalities groups were too small to draw firm conclusions about service delivery across the protected characteristics but the results are monitored by management with any apparent variations within any of the

groups with protected characteristics being followed up to ensure that we are carrying out our functions in a fair and equitable manner.

Qualitative comments provided by service users are used by Management to either commend staff or investigate areas and procedures that might be improved upon.

3.2 Complaints Procedure

The Joint Board operates a Complaints Procedure which is in line with the Public Sector Ombudsman's Model Complaints Handling Procedure.

There were a total of 18 Complaints received during 2018/19, compared to 14 in 2016/17 and 15 in 2017/18, with 17 relating to Electoral Registration. 9 complaints were resolved at the Frontline Resolution stage with 9 being escalated to the Investigation stage. One Investigation relating to the Assessor's actions and handling of personal data was carried out by the Legal Services Department of West Dunbartonshire Council. No complaints were referred to the Ombudsman.

The main area of complaint within Electoral Registration was around the annual canvass, a process that is largely prescribed in legislation, and the total number of complaints should be viewed in the context of the issue of over 235,000 canvass forms and reminders.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 Results of both the Customer Satisfaction Survey and the Complaints Procedure will continue to be used by the Management Team, where possible, to identify further improvement action.

5.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (a) Note the positive results from the Customer Satisfaction Survey.
- (b) Note the results from the Complaints Procedure.

Person to contact:
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DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Report by Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Valuation Joint Board –28 June 2019

Subject: Best Value – Risk Management Update

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Board approval of the Joint Board's Risk Register for 2019/20.
- 1.2 To advise members on an assessment of the risks to the Joint Board of the UK's proposed withdrawal from the European Union.

2.0 Background

Annual Risk Review

- 2.1 Risk Management and Planning form vital parts of both the Best Value and Performance Management process and the Joint Board's Governance framework.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 29 June 2018, the Joint Board approved an updated Risk Strategy and associated Risk Management Procedures.
- 2.3 The Joint Board's Risk Management Strategy requires that the Risk Registers and Action Plans are revised annually.

EU Withdrawal Risk

- 2.4 Audit Scotland made a recommendation that public bodies should complete an assessment of the risk of the UK's proposed withdrawal from the European Union, as originally scheduled on 29 March 2019, in accordance with a template provided by them.

3.0 Progress

Annual Risk Review

- 3.1 The Management Team reviewed all risks in February 2019 and the revised Board Risk Register is presented (See Appendix 1) for approval today. Risks relating to the planned move to a 3-yearly Non-domestic rates revaluation cycle along with significant change to the appeals process and the potential for significant electoral change were significantly updated reflecting such details as had become known over the preceding year.

- 3.2 Members should note that officers also utilise an Operational Risk Register and Risk Action Plan for the management of more day-to-day, operational, matters along with other process or project specific Risk Registers.
- 3.3 The Operational Risk Register and Risk Action Plan can be made available to members on request.

EU Withdrawal Risk

An assessment of the risk to the Joint Board of the UK's proposed withdrawal from the European Union was carried out in December 2018 and has been reviewed at subsequent Management Team meetings. A copy of the current version is attached at Appendix 2.

The assessment allowed the Management Team to conclude that the risks to the Joint Board were generally low and could be managed or mitigated. The subsequent extensions to the UK's membership did introduce the need for the UK to take part in elections to the European Parliament on 23 May 2019. As this was an unplanned event, it did constitute an additional burden on our registration service but the resources and training required for any electoral event were in place and the additional work was managed, albeit at a marginal additional cost

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 The Management Team will continue to review changes to the risks and risk levels contained in the Risk Registers and will monitor progress against any outstanding actions on an ongoing basis.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are asked to:-

- (a) Approve the Board Risk Register, including the actions shown therein, for 2019/20.
- (b) Note the assessment and management of risk associated with the UK's proposed withdrawal from the European Union.

Person to contact:

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Board Risk Register

Appendix 2 – EU Withdrawal Risk Register



*Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute
Valuation Joint Board*

BOARD RISK REGISTER 2019

Version Control

Version	Originator	Summary of Changes	Date
2019 v0.1d	David Thomson	Draft of MT Annual Review outcome	20 February 2019
2019 v0.2d	David Thomson	MT feedback on v0.1d	11 March 2019
2019 MT	David Thomson	MT approval	18 March 2019

Introduction

At its meeting in June 2014 the Valuation Joint Board commented that their preferred approach to Risk would be for the Board to see, and approve, a Strategic Risk Register which highlighted the main areas of risk to the Board. At that same meeting the auditors present confirmed that a change towards a more strategic Risk Register would also be their recommendation for reporting to the Joint Board.

Thus the approach taken by the Management Team at annual reviews since 2015 has been to identify and include all the main strategic risks in a 'Board Risk Register'. Other risks are contained in an Operational Risk Register. Further, a number of additional registers continue to be maintained for specific functional areas such as those listed below.

Specific Risk Registers
Annual Electoral Canvass
Rolling Registration
Electoral Integrity
Electoral Awareness
Eros Electoral Management System

This document constitutes the Board Risk Register for 2019/20 but, for consideration of the Board's full Risk Management Regime, reference should also be made to the Risk Management Strategy, the Operational Risk Register and these other documents referred to above.

Additionally, and specific to the current year, the Management Team had previously considered the risks to the Joint Board of the UK's departure for the European Union. In this case a format as proposed by Audit Scotland was used and the conclusion reached was that 'Brexit' posed a low direct risk to the Joint Board's operations and activities. As a result, no further reference to the matter is contained within this Strategic Risk Register. The Management Team will, however, keep the matter under constant review.

Methodology

The Assessor's Management Team is responsible for the annual review of the Board's Risk Registers and Action Plans, with the Board's approval being sought for the 'Board Risk Register' on an annual basis. The Management Team takes collective ownership of the risks identified. Ownership of, and responsibility for, mitigating actions are identified in Action Plans.

At or before annual review workshops, managers, using their business experience and knowledge, identify the internal and external factors affecting, or likely to affect the service provision of DABVJB.

Once risks have been identified they are systematically and accurately assessed. This process requires managers to judge:

- The probability of an event occurring
- The potential severity of the consequences should such an event occur

These can be evaluated using the definitions in the table over:-

<u>Likelihood</u> - “Probability of a risk event occurring” 1. Unlikely but could happen (Low) 2. Likely to happen (Medium) 3. Very likely or already happening (High)	<u>Impact</u> - “Severity of the consequences should such an event occur” 1.This will cause some problems but could be managed (Low) 2.This will cause significant delay or interruption to our services (Medium) 3. This could cause our services to fail (High)
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The likelihood and severity/impact scores will then be used to identify overall risk using the following Risk Matrix:-

I M P A C T	3	4	7	9
	2	2	5	8
	1	1	3	6
		1	2	3
		LIKELIHOOD		

‘**Risk Score**’ in the tables below represents the extent of the risk (taken from the above table) to the Valuation Joint Board that would arise in an uncontrolled world i.e. if no actions were/had been taken to mitigate the risk.

‘**Residual Risk**’ in the tables below represents the extent of the **real** risk (also taken from the above table) to the Valuation Joint Board having taken the steps and/or mitigating actions included in the ‘Controls’ column.

It should be noted that, in the tables below, **it is the ‘Residual Risk’ which represents the real current risk to the Joint Board**. To emphasise this, the Residual Risk will be coloured coded as follows:-

Residual Risk Score	Traffic Light indicator of risk	Nature of Residual Risk
1, 2 or 3	Green	Low Risk
4, 5 or 6	Amber	Medium Risk
7, 8 or 9	Red	High Risk

The removal or closure of certain risks is also part of the review process.

Once the Risk Registers are completed, Action Plans, which contain the person responsible for carrying out the action and the target date for completion, are completed. Progress against Action Plans is reviewed regularly at Management Team Meetings and formally recorded in revised versions of the Action Plan and any actions taken during any year being included as ‘Controls’ in subsequent registers.

Board Risk Register

Operational Area		All Functions			
<u>Risk Title/Description</u>					
Failure to comply with Legislation, including:-					
(a) Council Tax					
(b) Electoral Registration					
(c) Rating Valuation					
(d) Best Value, Health & Safety, Freedom of Information, Equalities, Records Management, Data Protection etc					
Significant change is currently proposed as a consequence of:-					
(a) The proposed NDR Reform Bill, including the move to 3-yearly Revaluations					
(b) Electoral Canvass Reform					
(c) Additional changes to the electoral registration process including the extension of the right of overseas electors to remain registered, prisoner registration and extension of the franchise for certain elections to all residents of Scotland.					
The uncertainties that such change brings, when combined with the ongoing restrictions on local government funding, must increase the risk of failure to deliver statutory functions in the medium term.					
Further, the implications of the Scottish Government's commitment to review local government funding, and in particular to reform Council Tax, are unknown at this time.					
Likelihood	3	Impact	3	Risk Score	9
<u>Controls</u>					
(a) <u>Council Tax</u>					
Professional staff, checking procedures, authorising signatories. Performance targets, monitoring and reporting. Regular supply of planning and development information from councils and sales info from RoS. Audit and control systems. Staff training and shadowing. Tailor made IT system. Review of procedures such as survey method, timetables for amendment of lists by Valuation Group. Retain copies of existing legislation and monitor all new legislation. Membership of SAA Domestic Subjects Committee. Awareness of relevant cases. Council Tax Staff Guide in place.					
(b) <u>Electoral Registration</u>					
Appropriate staff, checking procedures, authorising signatories. Performance targets, monitoring and reporting. Audit and control systems. Staff training and shadowing. Tailor made IT system with input restrictions. Review of procedures such as canvass method by Electoral/Admin working group. Retain copies of existing legislation and monitor all new legislation. Membership and active involvement in SAA Electoral Registration Committee and AEA. Additional staff during canvass as required. Input to new legislation. Liaison with Electoral Commission. Compliance with ER legislation and good practice confirmed by internal audits in 2013 and 2017.					
(c) <u>Rating Valuation</u>					
See CT legislation above. Collection of necessary rentals, costs etc. Involvement in variety of SAA Committees and application of SAA Practice Notes. Provide sufficient training. Monitor progress of running roll monthly. All relevant Revaluation appeal processes in place. NDR Reform Project Team established internally.					
(d) <u>Best Value, Health & Safety, Freedom of Information, Equalities, Records Management, Data Protection etc</u>					
Relevant Policies and processes are in place. Training and induction have been provided as appropriate and regular reports are provided to the Management Team and Joint Board as appropriate.					
Alternative language, translation, Braille etc facilities available. Customer Service appropriately monitored. Operational targets and monitoring in place.					
Compliance with Local Government Model Publication Scheme and Guide to Information revised to include Open Data.					
In line with above, much more information is now published on a pro-active basis.					

Fire Risk Assessments in force (and reviewed regularly). Fire and smoke detectors, intruder alarm system installed, routinely maintained and tested. Fire/evacuation drills completed. H&S Risk Assessments reviewed annually. Induction procedures in place. Lone Working arrangements in place with Red Alert phones in use by staff on survey. Training provided in First Aid, Asbestos Awareness and Violence in the Workplace policies. Trained First Aiders in place. Annual PAT tests completed. H&S Task register in place. Core Training Plan created for all staff.

Approved Records Management Plan in place.

Awareness and training in relation to new Data Protection Regulation which came into effect in 2018. New Data Protection Policy in place along with Data Audit, Data Breach procedures, Subject Access Request procedure and Privacy Impact Assessment process. DPO appointed. DSAs in place. Internal Audit of Data Protection and Freedom of Information structures and procedures concluded that the Board were generally compliant

Records Management Plan in place and Progress Update Review completed in 2018.

Likelihood	1	Impact	3	Residual Risk	4
Action	Resp Person		Target Date	Progress	
(a) Council Tax					
Ensure survey records are current	DAs		Ongoing		
(b) Electoral Registration					
Maintain links to SAA, Scottish Government, AEA, Scotland Office, Electoral Commission, EMB and CO re changes in legislation. Respond to consultations etc.	ERO/ PAO		Ongoing		
Continue to review budgetary provision, including availability of government grants.	ERO		October		
(c) Rating Valuation					
Continue to dispose of Revaluation appeals.	Assessor/ DAs		Ongoing	Note dependencies on progress of SAA colleagues	
Prepare for NDR Reform	Assessor/NDR Reform Project Team		Ongoing		
(d) Best Value, Health & Safety, Freedom of Information, Equalities etc					
All policies and procedures, including Core Training, to be subject to regular reviews	Assessor/ Man Team		As required		
Effect the Records Management Improvement Action Plan	Depute Assessor		Ongoing		
Complete Annual Core Training	All Staff		Annually		
Continue to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act (2018), including implementation and review of Data Sharing (DSA) and Data Processing Agreements (DPA). In particular:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">Update Personal Data Audit, andReview Data Retention Schedule in line with Internal Audit requirements.	Assessor/ Depute Assessor		Ongoing		
	Depute Assessor		March 2019		
Publish Equalities Mainstreaming report taking account of progress to delivery of outcomes and new reporting requirements	Depute Assessor		April 2019		

Operational Area		All Functions			
Risk Title/Description					
Current and expected future local government settlements, with static or reduced funding, bring a number of related financial risks and/or risk of failure to meet statutory duties or maintain service/performance levels , particularly in light of the changes to the NDR and Electoral Registration functions referred to in the risk above.					
Whilst the additional costs of Individual Electoral Registration have been reduced slightly, they are still significant. The UK Government has committed to (reducing) levels of funding until reform takes place in 2020 but there is a real risk that the amount of grant provided does not cover actual expenditure and/or is less than included for in budget estimates. The excess space at 235 Dumbarton Road remains vacant resulting in non-remunerative overhead costs.					
An annual budget gap remains in estimates projected for 2019/20 and beyond					
Note also the resource implications of disposing of the 2017 Revaluation appeals.					
Likelihood	3	Impact	3	Risk Score	9
Controls					
Financial Regulations and Standing Orders in place and updated. Liaison with Treasurer and constituent councils, Statutory requirement to fund Assessor and ERO. Budget monitoring reports to MTM in line with audit recommendations. Commitment by Cabinet Office to fund 'additional' IER costs (in decreasing amounts) until 2020/21. Procurement processes aligned with WDCs. Scottish Government (draft) budget commitment to provide NDR Reform funding to Assessors in 2019/20. Joint procurement of IS systems and services through WDC. Using 'We-Buy' procurement system and other approved procurement frameworks. Inflation considered in budget process. Planned delays in recruitment where appropriate etc. Various money saving changes made including outsourcing the majority of our print and mail requirements. Advance planning of processes and resources. Retirements and resignations used as opportunities to restructure/reduce costs. Board approval of use of reserves. Voluntary Early Retirement/Severance (VER/S) scheme in place with criteria which require the VJB to consider financial viability and service provision. Staff have been released under this scheme with significant year-on-year savings. Complete review of budgetary need undertaken in preparation for 2019/20 budget. Door-to-door canvass reduced to one visit per household.					
Likelihood	3	Impact	3	Residual Risk	9
Action		Resp Person	Target Date	Progress	
Legal advice if necessary.		Assessor	As required		
Continue to closely monitor budget spend and cost of various processes.		Assessor/ Man Team	Ongoing		
Implement further structural changes as required.		Assessor/ Man Team	As required		
Continue to consider each budget line for cut in budgetary planning. Continue to include inflationary uplift in budget process where appropriate.		Assessor	Annually, prior to February	Full consideration given to operational requirements in drafting the proposed 2019/20 budget along with indicative budgets for following years. Accrued surplus to be used to offset expenditure in forthcoming years.	

Implement a short-life working group to review options to address the budget gaps	Joint Board/ Assessor & ERO	From March 2019	
Planned delays in recruitment and retention of vacancies where necessary.	Assessor/ Man Team	As required	Various vacancies vs complement already exist.
Continue to review and plan processes in advance	Man Team	Ongoing	
Meet with Finance Officers of constituent Councils	Assessor/ERO	As required	
Take actions arising from any such meeting	Assessor/ERO	As required	
Seek new tenants for vacant part of 235 Dumbarton Road, Clydebank	Assessor/ERO	Ongoing	
Consider options for further sweep for VER/S	Assessor/ERO	Ongoing	
Submit Justification led Bid(s) for IER funding	Assessor/ERO	As required	Bid submitted in December 2018 for 2018/19 financial year
Continue to monitor effect on service provision/performance arising from VER/S staff losses.	Assessor/ERO/ Man Team	Ongoing	
Continue to lobby Scottish Government for funding to deliver NDR Reform in future years	Assessor	Ongoing	Probably through SAA
Continue to lobby UK and Scottish Governments, as appropriate for funding to deliver NDR and Electoral Reform as detailed elsewhere.	ERO	Ongoing	Probably through SAA

Operational Area		All Functions			
Risk Title/Description					
<p>Subsequent to the Barclay Review of NDR, the Scottish Government's is committed to a Non-Domestic Rating (NDR) Reform Bill which will introduce a number of very significant changes to the NDR system. Two of the main changes are:-</p> <p>(a) the move to a 3 yearly Revaluation cycle, with a valuation date 1 year in advance, and</p> <p>(b) significant change to the appeals system including the introduction of a 2-stage proposals and appeals process.</p> <p>The Barclay Report also noted a number of areas where Assessors across Scotland should act to provide more transparency and consistency of approach. If Assessors fail to do so the proposed action is that that their statutory powers be transferred from local independent Assessors to the Scottish Assessors Association.</p> <p>Separate risks specific to NDR Reform and the implementation of 3-yearly Revaluations are now included in the Operational Risk Register and, as detailed proposals emerge form draft primary and secondary legislation, additional, specific risks will be added to that Register. Board Members should, however, remain aware of the far-reaching implications, including financial implications, of the change to 3-yearly Revaluations.</p> <p>Any major change to the role of the Assessor is likely to have implications for the post of ERO.</p>					
Likelihood	3	Impact	2	Risk Score	8
Controls					
<p>Statutory functions met continually, in line with statutory requirements and established methodologies.</p> <p>Expected Performance Standards are regularly met or surpassed.</p> <p>Customer satisfaction is at high levels.</p> <p>SAA and Assessor input to consultative groups and draft legislative proposals. SAA meetings with Government officials in respect of development of policy and both primary and secondary legislation.</p> <p>SAA Issues Log and Action Plan in place and being actively considered/monitored at regular meetings of the Association.</p> <p>Internal NDR Reform Project Team established to deliver reforms.</p> <p>Government committed to council tax for the life of this Parliament.</p>					
Likelihood	3	Impact	2	Residual Risk	8
Action	Resp Person		Target Date	Progress	
Input to consultations, comment on draft legislation, formally and/or informally, via SAA. Maintain high profile and ongoing liaison with Government and officials, through SAA, IRRV and RICS. Lobby government etc as required.	Assessor		Ongoing		
React to any legislation and government policy requirements arising from any of the above.	Assessor/ Joint Board		As req'd		
Continue to promote professionalism, performance levels (including KPI areas of function) and customer satisfaction.	All Staff		Ongoing		
Maintain good relationships with constituent councils.	Assessor/ ERO		Ongoing		
Deal with 2017 Revaluation appeals in a professional, open and transparent way.	All valuation		Ongoing		

	staff		
Implement change required arising from SAA Issues Log and Action Plan to improve consistency and transparency	Assessor	As/when identified	
Ensure that funding is made available for the additional requirements of NDR Reform	Joint Board/ Assessor/ Constituent Councils	Ongoing	See proposal to establish a short-life working group to review budget gaps.
Review resources, including personnel and ICT, required to deliver reform.	Assessor/ NDR Reform Project Team	Ongoing	

Operational Area		All Functions			
<u>Risk Title/Description</u>					
VJB is very dependant for delivery of its statutory functions and its day to day operations on various uses of ICT. Failure of these systems presents a significant risk to the operations of the Assessor and ERO.					
The various NDR and Electoral Registration Reforms referred to in various places in the Risk Register will increase the need for ICT development and system change. Other specific ICT-related risks on the immediate future relate to the need to upgrade operating systems of both clients/devices and servers from 'Windows 7' to 'Windows 10' and the ending of the national PSN Network contract.					
Likelihood	3	Impact	3	Risk Score	9
<u>Controls</u>					
Systems are tested and robust. SLA with WDC to provide support, in particular for e-mail, internet access, security etc Systems and data are backed-up. Back-ups stored off-site. Risk Registers and action plans exist and are regularly reviewed Staff trained and user manuals available Security controls, requirement for passwords and protocols are all in place. Contract in place covering supply and maintenance of EMS software. Maintenance and support arrangements are in place and a rolling programme of hardware replacement. ESCROW agreement covers Electoral Management System Paper/alternate procedures could be implemented for several functions Current versions of software in use Business Continuity Procedure in place and regularly reviewed. Contingency arrangements with Government Digital Service tested. Regular liaison meetings with WDC Task Manager used to log issues and keep track of progress towards resolution. Knowledge base created as a resource to help resolve issues. Regular IT Team meetings, which are minuted and reported to the Management Team. Board approved IT Strategy IT team members and WDC support staff are made aware of critical timetables etc. High speed fibre communications installed to Campbelltown office, with appropriate maintenance service levels.					
Likelihood	2	Impact	3	Residual Risk	9*
Action		Resp Person	Target Date	Progress	
Maintain and keep current all of the above		Assessor/ Depute Assessor	Ongoing		
Implement the upgrade from 'Windows 7' to 'Windows 10'		Depute Assessor	Summer 2019	Timetable will be dependent upon WDC migration plan	
Seek funding for the upgrade from 'Windows 7' to 'Windows 10'		Assessor	March 2019		
Manage transition from secure PSN to alternative arrangement		Depute Assessor	Summer 2019		

***Note:** Residual Risk score of 9 reflects the short periods during which the Windows upgrade and the change away from the PSN supplier will take place. Generally the risk would be low.

Operational Area		Electoral Registration			
Risk Title/Description					
<p>Planned changes to the Electoral Registration system currently include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) Reform of the Annual Electoral Canvass (UK Government/Cabinet Office)(b) Extension of overseas residents electoral registration rights (UK Government/Cabinet Office)(c) Introduction of voting and registration rights to certain prisoners (Scottish Government)(d) The extension of the franchise for certain elections/electoral events to all residents of Scotland <p>As can be seen above, the devolution of legislation governing Electoral Registration for Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government elections could result in divergence in legislative provision from the UK, operational complexity, EMS/GDS development requirement, additional cost, and elector confusion.</p> <p>As issues crystallise they will be added to relevant Risk Registers, if necessary.</p>					
Likelihood	3	Impact	2	Risk Score	8
Controls					
<p>Input into consultations.</p> <p>Electoral Management System (EMS) suppliers have a commercial requirement to provide systems which are compliant with legislation. EMS suppliers are engaging with both governments in relation to developing requirements and draft legislation.</p> <p>Scottish Government and CO recognise the risk arising from legislative divergence and have committed to working together to minimise divergence.</p>					
Likelihood	3	Impact	1	Residual Risk	6
Action		Resp Person	Target Date	Progress	
Monitor draft legislation and make comments as appropriate		ERO	Ongoing		
Maintain liaison with EMS suppliers to inform development		ERO/PAO	As required		
Implement legislation timeously		ERO/PAO	As required		
Continue to attend SAA, AEA meetings, workshops etc		ERO/PAO	As required		
Complete Canvass Reform data match testing in accordance with Cabinet Office requirement		ERO/PAO	To be confirmed		

Appendix 2 - DABVJB EU WITHDRAWAL – RISK ASSESSMENT

The risks associated with the UK's withdrawal from the EU were considered by the DABVJB Management Team at its meeting on 2 October 2018 and the following represents the conclusions reached at that meeting along with further consideration of the Audit Scotland framework for self-assessment carried out subsequent to that meeting.

Issue to be addressed	Expected Action	DABVJB Position	Actions required
PEOPLE AND SKILLS			
How is the audited body communicating with staff about the potential impact of EU withdrawal and preparing to support any employees who may be affected?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audited body is communicating with staff regularly on the potential implications of EU withdrawal for the organisation, the services it delivers and people's roles. • The audited body knows how many non-UK EU national staff it directly employs (if any). • The audited body is taking action to support staff who may be affected by EU withdrawal. This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o communicating up-to-date information about the rights of EU nationals to live and work in the UK after March 2019, and the next steps employees may need to take if they wish to continue working in the UK o provision of tailored advice through drop-in sessions o signposting to other forms of support. 	Given the low risk attributed to the impact (see below) there has been little requirement to communicate any issues to staff. Specifically, the VJB does not employ any non-UK (EU) staff members.	<p>Provide an assurance to staff that the risks of the withdrawal have been considered</p> <p>Completed</p>
Which parts of the workforce (sectors/skills/services/regions) are most at risk from the impact of EU withdrawal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audited body knows what departments / service areas / regions non-UK EU national staff work in. • The audited body has assessed the potential impact of any reductions in its workforce in these areas on service delivery. • Any risks to the workforce arising from EU withdrawal are reflected in risk registers and actions to mitigate these risks are in operation. • The audited body has considered any potential workforce risks in the context of any wider retention and recruitment pressures. 	The VJB does not employ any non-UK (EU) staff members so the risk to current staff is non-existent. Given the historically low levels of non-UK (EU) staff in the VJB's workforce, there is no expectation of any future pressures on retention and recruitment. Access to College and University training courses might even improve if fewer EU residents take places on courses.	

How is the audited body reflecting the implications of EU withdrawal in its long-term workforce planning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of risks to the workforce as a result of EU withdrawal is being used to inform long-term workforce planning. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Key workforce planning documents reflect risks to the workforce and include plans to respond. o Actions to mitigate workforce risks are being discussed by the relevant people (e.g. consideration at the Board, committees, management teams). o Modelling of potential changes and analysis of the impact of different scenarios 	See above – no long term effects are expected.	
What are the workforce implications for the third sector and private organisations that provide services in partnership with the audited body or on its behalf? (This may be NOT APPLICABLE for some public bodies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audited body has asked partners in the third and private sectors to identify how many non-UK EU national staff they employ and / or are directly involved in providing services on the audited body's behalf. • Potential risks to service delivery by third and private sector partners are reflected in risk registers. • The audited body has sought assurance from third and private sector partners about how they are mitigating these risks. 	This is not applicable as the VJB does not act in partnership with the third sector or private organisations	
How is the audited body reflecting the implications of EU withdrawal on the workforce in its local area in its economic strategies? (This may be NOT APPLICABLE for some public bodies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic impact assessments have been carried out to identify overall exposure to the local workforce from EU withdrawal. • The audited body has identified the sectors / businesses / areas that may be most affected by EU withdrawal. • Economic strategies reflect any identified risks and plans to mitigate them are in operation (e.g. plans to attract and retain people to work in specific sectors / with specific skills). 	This is not applicable - The format of the local workforce does not directly affect the functions of the VJB. Any reduction in non-UK (EU) residents may marginally reduce the administration of maintaining the Electoral Register.	
FINANCE			
What level of funding does the audited body, and its partners, receive from the EU and through which funding streams (if	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audited body understands what EU funding it receives (if any), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o how much o when and over what time period o what it funds 	<p>This is not applicable - No direct or indirect funding is provided to VJB from EU.</p> <p>Any EU funding of constituent</p>	

any)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o how it is delivered • The audited body knows what EU funding its partners 	councils should not affect the funding of the VJB.	
What financial risks are associated with any changes after the UK has left the EU, during any transition period and beyond?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audited body has assessed the potential impact of EU withdrawal on its funding and finances and identified any risks to the audited body, the services it provides and service users This may include exposure to increased costs, for example, due to changes in exchange rates. • Any financial risks arising from EU withdrawal are reflected in risk registers and actions to mitigate these risks are in operation 	See above – no direct or indirect funding issues arise.	Note that the failure to leave the EU as planned has resulted in the VJB incurring the costs of preparations for the EU parliamentary elections. These were, however, manageable.
How is the audited body reflecting the implications of EU withdrawal in its long-term financial planning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of financial risks arising from EU withdrawal are being used to inform long-term financial planning. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Key financial planning documents reflect any risks and include plans to respond. o Ongoing actions to mitigate financial risks are being discussed by the relevant people (e.g. consideration at the Board, committees, management teams). o Modelling of potential changes and analysis of the impact of different scenarios 	<p>See above – no direct or indirect funding issues arise.</p> <p>Potential general effects on wider economy are included as issues to be considered in the VJB's Long Term Financial Strategy.</p>	
<p>How is the audited body capitalising on opportunities to access alternative funds or redesign replacement funding streams?</p> <p>(This may be NOT APPLICABLE for some public bodies)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audited body has identified the products and services sourced from the EU that are vital for the operation of the organisation and service delivery (e.g. food, medicine, medical equipment, building supplies). • The audited body has undertaken modelling / scenario planning of the potential impact of any changes to the cost and /or accessibility of products and services. • The audited body has contingency plans for potential outcomes (e.g. an increase in costs or the need to find alternative supplies of specific products and services). 	This is not applicable unless significant new funding opportunities arise.	
RULES AND REGULATIONS			
What are the potential implications of changes to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audited body has identified the products and services sourced from the EU that are vital for the 	No direct trade or customs issues arise.	

trade and customs rules on the audited body's supply chains and the cost and availability of products and services?	<p>operation of the organisation and service delivery (e.g. food, medicine, medical equipment, building supplies).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audited body has undertaken modelling / scenario planning of the potential impact of any changes to the cost and /or accessibility of products and services. • The audited body has contingency plans for potential outcomes (e.g. an increase in costs or the need to find alternative supplies of specific products and services). 	All resources used by VJB should be available from domestic markets.	
What EU regulations/legislation are directly relevant to the audited body's role, such as monitoring compliance (if any)?	The audited body knows which EU regulations / legislation directly apply to the operation of the organisation or the services it provides (if any) (e.g. procurement rules, recognition of professional qualifications, environmental regulations, food safety standards).	All European rules that are known to affect the VJB have been translated into existing UK Law, Scots Law or professional standards and regulations. Otherwise, the EU(Withdrawal)Act is likely to catch any other are of relevant regulation. RICS designation unaffected	Confirm with Treasurer if any change to financial regulations or practices will be necessary. Confirm any expected changes with WDC Procurement team.
What impact would potential changes to regulations/legislation have on how the audited body delivers services and on its service users?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audited body has assessed the potential impact of changes to EU regulations / legislation on service delivery and service users under different scenarios. • Any risks to service delivery or service users arising from changes to EU regulations / legislation are reflected in risk registers and actions to mitigate these risks are in operation. • Operational and service delivery plans reflect any risks and include plans to respond, and this is being discussed by the relevant people (e.g. consideration at the Board, committees, management teams). 	No risks are known to arise.	The requirement to prepare for the European Parliamentary elections has resulted in additional work – but this was managed.
<p>How is the audited body capitalising on opportunities to streamline or improve the regulatory environment?</p> <p>(This may be NOT APPLICABLE for some public bodies)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audited body is engaging in discussions on the regulatory environment in areas it has an interest in. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o speaking to other public bodies / organisations o participating in forums/ working groups to share views and make recommendations o providing evidence to the Scottish/UK Parliament on ways to streamline or improve the regulatory environment. 	No changes to the VJB's regulatory regimes are expected.	

How is the audited body planning for the possibility that the UK Government and the EU fail to reach an agreement on arrangements for the UK's exit from the EU?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audited body has identified and prioritised the risks to the organisation and the services its delivers if the UK and the EU fail to reach an agreement on arrangements for the UK's exit from the EU (i.e. a 'no deal' scenario). • The audited body has contingency plans in place that identify the immediate action that will need to be taken in the event of a 'no deal' scenario. This may include identifying how resources will be diverted to manage any immediate risks. • Ongoing contingency planning is being actively discussed by the relevant people (e.g. consideration at the Board, committees, management teams). 	Overall the assessment of effects/risk of the EU withdrawal is very low and could be dealt with within the scope of existing risk mitigation actions and business continuity plans.	See above re holding of EUP election. Timetables known, liaison and planning with ROs ongoing. Election delivered with no major effect on VJB staff and resources and with few issues in respect of the actual poll.
OPERATIONS			
Has the audited body considered any direct or indirect effects on its service provision and/or operations of the UK's withdrawal from the EU?		<p>If there is an effect on general economic circumstances there is a possibility that the VJB could receive a significant number of 'material change of circumstances' appeals.</p> <p>If the withdrawal is extended beyond 29th March 2019, there may be a requirement to provide registers and otherwise administer the arrangements for an EU Parliamentary Election</p>	<p>Monitor general economic effects. Receive and dispose of appeals in line with existing procedures. Consider resource implications in general workforce planning.</p> <p>Guidance to be sought from EC and CO (though SAA). Implement existing preparations and timetables if necessary. Use existing overtime budget if necessary</p> <p>This risk came to fruition But the challenge was met and the election delivered.</p>

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Report by Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Valuation Joint Board –28 June 2019

Subject: Personnel Policies – Wellbeing Charter

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Members approval of a 'Wellbeing Charter' for application within the Joint Board:-

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At its meetings in September 2018 and March 2019 the Joint Board approved a range of new and updated personnel policies including:
- An updated Attendance Management Policy
 - Updated Maternity, Special Leave, Bereavement and Carers Leave Schemes
 - A new Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy
- 2.2 As members will be aware, the Valuation Joint Board generally aligns its Personnel Policies with West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC). When WDC made changes to their policies on similar subjects, and to emphasise the partnership arrangement between employer and employees, it introduced a Wellbeing Charter.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The Valuation Joint Board's Management Team has agreed a similar Wellbeing Charter for application within the Joint Board and it is attached at Appendix 1 for Members consideration.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are asked to approve the Wellbeing Charter for implementation within the Joint Board.
-

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Appendix 1: DABVJB Wellbeing Charter



*Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute
Valuation Joint Board*

EMPLOYEE WELLBEING CHARTER

As your employer, **we promise...**

- You will be treated fairly, with dignity and supported to achieve a healthy balance between home and work
- To genuinely care about you and value the role you play within our organisation
- To support you to remain at work or to return to work, keeping you informed and explaining all decisions taken about you
- To apply our policies and procedures consistently, whilst taking into account your individual circumstances
- To ensure managers are available for you at work and during any absence should you need to discuss your wellbeing
- To keep you informed of anything that affects your job, if you are absent
- To invest in training and support for your managers to ensure they are properly trained to support you

In return, we ask that **you...**

- Ask for help when you need it and are open with your manager about your health and wellbeing
- Take the time to understand the Attendance Management Policy and are clear on what you are expected to do, should you become unwell
- Consider and explore options such as Flexi Leave, Special Leave and Carers Leave as alternatives to sickness absence, where appropriate
- Make yourself available to attend meetings with your manager and occupational health

Together **we can...**

- Ensure we get the benefit of your skills and knowledge by supporting you to remain at work
- Work together to do our best for our stakeholders by maximising our attendance
- Benefit from developing healthy workplaces and practices

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Report by Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Valuation Joint Board – 28 June 2019

Subject: Salary of Depute Assessor & ERO 2018/19 et seq

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Joint Board approval of an amendment to the salary paid to the Depute Assessor & ERO for 2018/19 and thereafter.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The salaries of staff within the employment of the Joint Board are reviewed annually in accordance with the national agreements of the Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employees.

- 2.2 In March 2019 an agreement was reached on pay awards for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2021 on the following terms:-

- 2018/19 an increase of 3.5% (capped at £80,000, on or above which a flat rate of £1600 applied).
- 2019/20 an increase of 3%
- 2020/21 an increase of 3%

The above terms were applied to all staff for 2018/19 and 2019/20 with the exception of the Depute Assessor & ERO.

- 2.3 At its meeting in November 2009 the Joint Board agreed that the salary applicable to the post of Depute Assessor and ERO should be set at 80% of the Assessor & ERO's salary.

3.0 Issue

- 3.1 The Depute Assessor & ERO's salary was £76,822 at 31 March 2017. Applying the above agreement should have resulted in an annual increase of £2,689 to £79,511.
- 3.2 Applying the agreed relationship of 80% of the Assessor & ERO's salary, however, resulted in the increase being 'capped' at £1,280. Thus the Depute Assessor received £1,409 less than he would have been entitled to receive under the Scottish Joint Council agreement. Further the increase applied was less than the amount for the grades of senior employees (earning over £80,000) which was £1,600.

4.0 Proposal

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Joint Board agree that the nationally agreed increase of 3.5% be applied to the salary of the Depute Assessor for 2018/19. This will result in a salary of £79,511 which is 81.4% of the Assessor's salary for 2018/19.
- 4.2 It is proposed that subsequent pay awards should be applied in accordance with the agreement arrived at by the Scottish Joint Council.
- 4.3 It is further recommended that the 80% relationship to the Assessor & ERO's salary be reinstated at any future appointment to the post of Depute Assessor & ERO.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are asked to approve:-
 - (a) the increase in the Depute Assessor & ERO's salary for 2018/19 and subsequent years as detailed at 4.1 and 4.2 above.
 - (b) That the 80% relationship to the Assessor & ERO's Salary be reinstated at any future appointment to the post of Depute Assessor & ERO.

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DUNBARTONSHIRE and ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Report by Treasurer

Valuation Joint Board - 28 June 2019

**Subject: Draft Annual Report and Final Accounts for Year Ending
31 March 2019**

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to present to Members of the Board the draft Annual Report and Final Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2019.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 (the accounts regulations) came into force on 10 October 2014. These Regulations introduced:
- (a) Best practice of the draft Annual Report and Final Accounts being reported to the Board for formal consideration prior to submission to the Accounts Commission by 30 June each year; and
 - (b) The notice of public right to inspect and object to the Financial Statements to commence no later than 17 June 2019 with the accounts available for inspection by 1 July 2019.
- 2.2** A Balance and Reserve Policy was approved by the Board at its meeting in November 2012. The Board's Prudential Reserve Policy is to retain a prudential target of 2% of net expenditure (£52,223) or £100,000 whichever is higher.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The draft Annual Report and Final Accounts for year ended 31 March 2019 are appended to this report.
- 3.2** The Management Commentary (pages 2 to 20) consists of an annual report from the Assessor and the Treasurer on matters of interest including financial and non-financial performance during the year, service changes and developments, impact on financial climate and risks, provisions and contingencies.
- 3.3** The Annual Governance Statement is included on pages 26 to 29. This Statement assures stakeholders on how the Board directs and controls its

functions and how it relates to communities which will enhance transparency and scrutiny of the Board's activities.

3.4 Members' attention is drawn to the Statement of Responsibilities on page 25.

3.5 The Management Commentary summarises the financial position of the Board. The Board's 2018/19 budget was constructed to break even using £0.156m of balances. However the Board completed the year with a further contribution to the funds brought forward of £0.001m and did not need to access reserves. This contribution, together with the unused planned use of £0.156m, results in an overall underspend against budget in-year of £0.157m. The main variances are shown in the table below:

Spend Area	Variance	Comments
	£000	
Employee	(59)	This underspend is mainly due to non-filling of vacancies.
Property	(26)	This underspend is mainly due to lower than anticipated expenditure on rates, energy and accommodation costs.
Supplies & Services	(49)	This underspend is across a number of headings (such as machine lease, computer licences, telephones, printing & stationery).

3.6 As at 31 March 2019, the Board held usable reserves as noted below:

	£000	£000
Capital reserves:		
Earmarked		25
Revenue reserves:		
Earmarked	162	
Prudential Target	100	
Unearmarked	290	552
Total usable reserves		577

3.7 The Joint Board recognises the difficult financial climate facing public services and has continued to seek efficiencies where possible. The level of requisition made by the Board for 2018/19 remained the same as 2017/18. Given the forecast reduction in funding for local government into the future it is anticipated that levels of funding may be challenging going forward into 2019/20 and beyond and management have commenced planning for this to ensure ongoing service delivery reflecting the increasing workload to the Board.

3.8 The Board on 1 March 2019 agreed to set up a Member/ Officer Working Group to consider the forecast financial position of the Board, the burdens

being faced by the Board currently and into the future, with a view to agreeing a longer term financially sustainable position.

3.9 The purpose of this short life working group is:

- (a) To ensure that the VJB is being as efficient as possible and has considered all potential approaches to cost saving (which maintain level/quality of service); and
- (b) To consider the future funding levels given the significant change arising from Barclay and other future changes, cost pressures, etc.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 The finances of the Board have been closely managed during 2018/19 allowing a better financial position to be recorded than had been planned. This will assist, along with ongoing consideration of further efficiencies, to allow a planned approach to any future funding restrictions on the Board.

4.2 Members are requested to:

- (i) note the contents of the report and the financial position of the Board as at 31 March 2019;
- (ii) note the Draft Management Commentary and Financial Statements for the year to 31 March 2019; and
- (iii) note that the audited accounts will be reported to a future meeting for approval.

.....
Stephen West
Treasurer
Date: 4 June 2019

Person(s) to Contact: Gillian McNeilly, Finance Manager
West Dunbartonshire Council
Telephone (01389) 737194

Appendix: Draft Annual Accounts for year ended 31 March 2019



*Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute
Valuation Joint Board*

DRAFT

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

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JOINT BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICIALS AS AT 31 MARCH 2019

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL

Councillor Richard Trail (Convenor)
Councillor Graham Archibald Hardie
Councillor Alastair Redman
Councillor Iain Paterson
Councillor Donald MacMillan, BEM

EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Councillor Vaughan Moody (Vice Convenor)
Councillor John Jamieson
Councillor Jim Gibbons
Councillor Sandra Thornton
Councillor Stewart MacDonald
Councillor Denis Johnston

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Councillor John Millar
Councillor Jonathan McColl
Councillor Jim Brown
Councillor Marie McNair
Bailie Denis Agnew

OFFICIALS

David Thomson (Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer)
Robert Nicol (Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer)
Peter Hissett (Clerk)
Stephen West (Treasurer)

MANAGEMENT COMMENTARY

GENERAL SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board is an independent local government body which was established by The Valuation Joint Boards (Scotland) Order 1995. We professionally compile and maintain the Valuation Rolls, Council Tax Valuation Lists and Registers of Electors for the Argyll & Bute, East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire council areas.

OUR AIMS

Building on our established professionalism, we aim to provide high quality, transparent, effective and responsive services to all of our stakeholders.

COMMITMENTS

Within the constraints of the increasingly tight public finance regime, we are committed to:

- Consulting our stakeholders, and listening and responding to their views;
- Valuing staff and providing them with opportunities to develop and contribute;
- Reacting innovatively to change;
- Encouraging innovation and recognising achievement within the organisation;
- Treating all stakeholders, including staff, in a fair, consistent manner and in accordance with our Equalities requirements;
- Striving for continuous improvement in all aspects of service delivery;
- Ensuring that we are accessible and accountable to stakeholders;
- Pro-actively planning workloads and deploying resources efficiently;
- Using language which is easy to understand; and
- Working with our partners in the Scottish Assessors' Association (SAA) to ensure transparency and Scotland-wide consistency of approach to service delivery.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report comprises the Joint Board's Management Commentary and Annual Accounts in relation to the 2018/19 financial year.

The main purpose of this Management Commentary is to inform all users of the accounts and to help them assess how the Joint Board perform their duty to promote the success of the Valuation Joint Board (VJB). This Management Commentary also summarises the functions and activities of the office of the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) over the past year and provides information on the performance levels achieved in carrying out the statutory duties of the organisation.

The requirements governing the format and content of local authorities' annual accounts (under s106 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 joint boards and committees are classed as local authorities) are contained in The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the "Code").

2018/19 was another busy year for the Assessor and ERO functions and the Board's employees.

During the early part of the financial year the main focus of our Non-Domestic Rating efforts was the disposal of 2017 Revaluation appeals, a process which was carried out in parallel with general maintenance of the Valuation Roll.

Subsequent to the Barclay Review of Non-domestic Rating (NDR) the Scottish Government carried out a public consultation, entitled "Barclay Implementation: A consultation on non-domestic rates reform", from 25th June to 17th September 2018 to seek views on the specific details of how the legislation underpinning several of the Barclay Review recommendations will work in a number of areas.

This culminated in the publication of the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill in March 2019, the effects of which will be significant on the Assessor's service.

In relation to our Council Tax functions, the number of new dwellings added to the Council Tax Lists was up on recent years and levels of proposals received were within the range expected on a year-on-year basis.

The annual electoral register was published on 1st December 2018 and a republication of the registers for West Dunbartonshire was effected at 1st February 2019 reflecting the Council's completion of the statutory Review of UK Parliamentary Polling Districts and Places.

There were no major or national elections during 2018/19 but registers were provided for Community Council and National Park elections. Towards the year end planning got under way for the European Parliamentary Elections to be held in May 2019.

Various reforms of the electoral registration function were consulted on during the year with future changes expected to affect the annual electoral canvass, the franchise for Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government elections (including voting rights for some prisoners) and boundary reviews.

The Management Team continues to be the main forum for decision making within the organisation. It met regularly throughout 2018/19 to manage statutory functions and operations, and develop, implement and monitor policies and strategies.

2.0 GENERAL PROGRESS IN RELATION TO STATUTORY FUNCTIONS

2.1 NON-DOMESTIC RATING

Aims

- To carry out a general revaluation, currently every 5 years;
- To timeously compile and maintain the Valuation Roll in accordance with the relevant legislation, to take account of new properties, properties which should no longer be entered in the roll, properties which have been altered, changes to the parties shown in the Roll and other changes arising from statute or other decisions of the Courts;
- To issue Valuation Notices to the appropriate parties shown in the Valuation Roll;

2.1 NON-DOMESTIC RATING (Cont'd)

- To consolidate or improve upon the time taken between the date on which amendments to the Valuation Roll are effective and the date on which the Valuation Notice is issued;
- To publish the annual Valuation Roll, make it available to the rating authority, the Keeper of Records and other interested parties; and
- To deal with appeals by discussion with ratepayers or their agents, or by hearing of appeals before the appropriate valuation appeal bodies.

2017 Revaluation

The 2017 Revaluation came into effect on 1st April 2017 based on a valuation date of 1st April 2015. Arising from that Revaluation 3,568 appeals were submitted against the values of 3,460 subjects, reflecting an appealed Rateable Value (RV) of £252,557,705. The statutory date for disposal of these appeals by Valuation Appeal Committees is 31st December 2020 and this is a priority for staff at this time.

During the 2018/19 financial year 1,526 appeals were disposed of, with 367 (24.0%) resulting in a value adjustment and 1,159 (76.0%) being withdrawn or disposed of without any adjustment. In all, to date, 2,135 (59.8%) Revaluation appeals have been disposed of, with 540 (25.3%) resulting in an adjustment to the value and 1,595 (74.7%) resulting in no adjustment.

Maintenance of the Valuation Roll

Throughout the year, professional and technical staff have been involved in the routine updating of the Valuation Roll to take account of additions, alterations and deletions. 1048 amendments were made to the Valuation Roll during the year. The reduction in RV during the year arises primarily from appeal adjustments and a merger of mobile telecommunications network subjects.

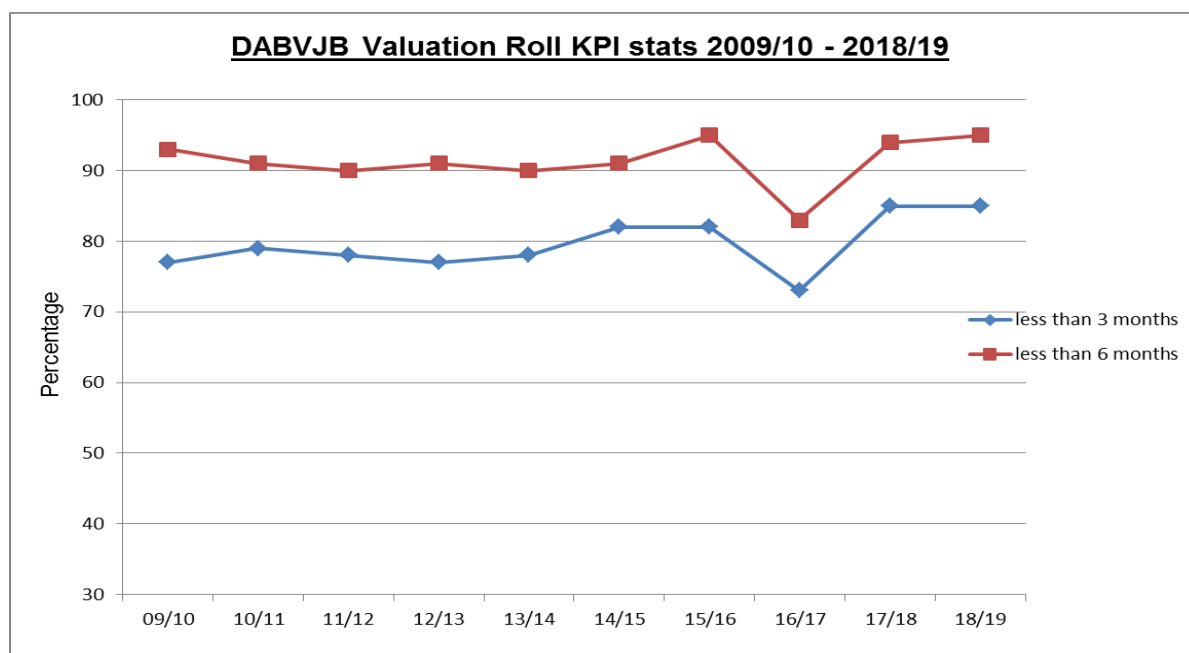
Total No of entries @ 1st April 2018	14,581
Total Rateable Value @ 1st April 2018	£372.7million
Total Number of entries @ 31st March 2019	14,972
Total Rateable Value @ 31st March 2019	£368.7million

The national Key Performance Indicator in relation to non-domestic valuation has been defined as the time taken from the date on which amendments to the Valuation Roll are effective to the date a Valuation Notice in respect of that change is issued. The following table sets out the targets and actual performance information for 2018/19 compared with the actual figures for 2017/18:

Period	Actual 2017/18	Target 2018/19	Actual 2018/19			
			Argyll & Bute	West Dunbartonshire	East Dunbartonshire	VJB Area
0-3 months	85%	85%	88%	67%	85%	85%
3-6 months	9%	9%	8%	19%	11%	10%
>6 months	6%	6%	4%	14%	4%	5%

Thus our target was achieved at 'less than 3 months' and marginally surpassed at 'less than 6 months'. Our performance over the period since 2009/10 is shown over and this illustrates that our performance in 2018/19 was the best we have recorded since the start of the performance regime.

2.1 NON-DOMESTIC RATING (Cont'd)



The chart further illustrates that our performance in relation to Valuation Roll maintenance has improved since the dip which occurred prior to 2017 Revaluation.

Lands Tribunal – 2005 and 2010 Appeals

Appeals which have been referred to the Lands Tribunal are of a complex nature or are likely to have national implications. 2018/19 saw some limited progress in relation to disposal of these and, at 31 March 2019, 9 appeals remain outstanding from the 2005 cycle (13 at March 2018) and 48 appeals from the 2010 cycle (59 at March 2018).

It is expected that appeals will continue to be disposed of through 2019/20 and that few, if any, of these appeals will require local cases to be presented at the Lands Tribunal.

2017 Running Roll Appeals

During the year 192 running roll appeals (i.e. not related to the Revaluation) were received and 51 were disposed of leaving 465 outstanding. A significant proportion of these appeals relate to the return of Shooting Rights to the Valuation Roll during 2017/18. These running roll appeals will be disposed of in parallel with revaluation appeals, prior to December 2020.

Barclay Review and Non-Domestic Rating Reform

The 2017 Report of the Barclay Review of Non-domestic Rates (“the Barclay Review Report”) contained 30 individual recommendations on how the rates system in Scotland could be reformed. The Scottish Government accepted the vast majority of the recommendations and added further measures to support investment and economic growth.

Subsequently, the Scottish Government ran a three month public consultation, “Barclay Implementation: A consultation on non-domestic rates reform”, from 25th June to 17th September 2018 to seek views on the specific details of how the legislation underpinning several of the Barclay Review recommendations would work in a number of areas. The Assessor contributed to that consultation both through the SAA and by way of a direct submission.

In February 2019 the Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy announced the outcome of the consultation exercise and confirmed the provisions that would be included in the draft Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill.

2.1 NON-DOMESTIC RATING (Cont'd)

Barclay Review and Non-Domestic Rating Reform (Cont'd)

On 25 March 2019 the Scottish Government introduced the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill which contains several of the provisions required to implement Barclay recommendation albeit further secondary legislation will be required to effect much of the detail.

The main changes to the NDR system included in the Bill, which affect the Assessor, are:-

- (a) Revaluations are to be effective every 3 years from 2022;
- (b) The Valuation Roll will be required to mark new and improved properties to assist in the application of the "Business Growth Accelerator";
- (c) Certain properties located in public parks will be entered into the valuation roll for the first time;
- (d) The current appeals system will be replaced by a 2-stage proposals and appeals process;
- (e) New civil penalties are to be introduced for non-provision of information; and
- (f) Assessors will be required to provide ratepayers with certain information on how their Rateable Values have been arrived.

As well as providing more detail on the operation of the above, secondary legislation is expected to include a requirement to check that Self-Catering Units are actually let for 70 days in any year. It is also expected that the Scottish Government will separately require that there is much increased consultation with ratepayer representatives on valuation methods in advance of each Revaluation.

As many of the details of the forthcoming legislation are not yet known it remains difficult to be precise in projecting the specific consequences of the legislation. Notwithstanding this current lack of clarity and detail, it is clear that delivery of 3-yearly Revaluations and the various other miscellaneous changes can only be achieved through significant investment in people and development of ICT systems.

An internal NDR Reform Project Team was established in early 2019 and, during the coming year, it will establish a Project Plan and Risk Register(s) for delivery of 3-yearly Revaluations, appeals system reform and all Barclay recommendations that are taken forward. Reporting to the Management Team, the Project Team will make recommendations in relation to process, operations and ICT development requirements. The Management Team will, however, retain responsibility for all final decisions in relation to ICT procurement and people resources.

2.2 COUNCIL TAX

Aims

- To maintain the Valuation List in accordance with the relevant legislation, to take account of new properties, properties which should no longer be entered in the List, properties which have been altered and sold, and other changes arising from statute or other decisions of the Courts;
- To issue Banding Notices to the appropriate parties;
- To improve upon the time taken between the date that amendments to the Valuation List are effective and the date the Banding Notices are issued;
- To publish the Valuation List, make it available to the billing authority, the Keeper of Records and other interested parties;
- To deal with proposals/appeals by discussion with ratepayers or their agents, or by hearing of appeals before the appropriate valuation appeal courts; and
- To keep property records up to date to take account of alterations.

Maintenance of Valuation List

The year to 31st March 2019 saw 992 additions to the Council Tax List and a net increase in the number of dwellings shown in the Council Tax List as follows:

Total Number of entries @ 1st April 2018	144,773
Total Number of entries @ 31st March 2019	145,266

2.2 COUNCIL TAX (Cont'd)

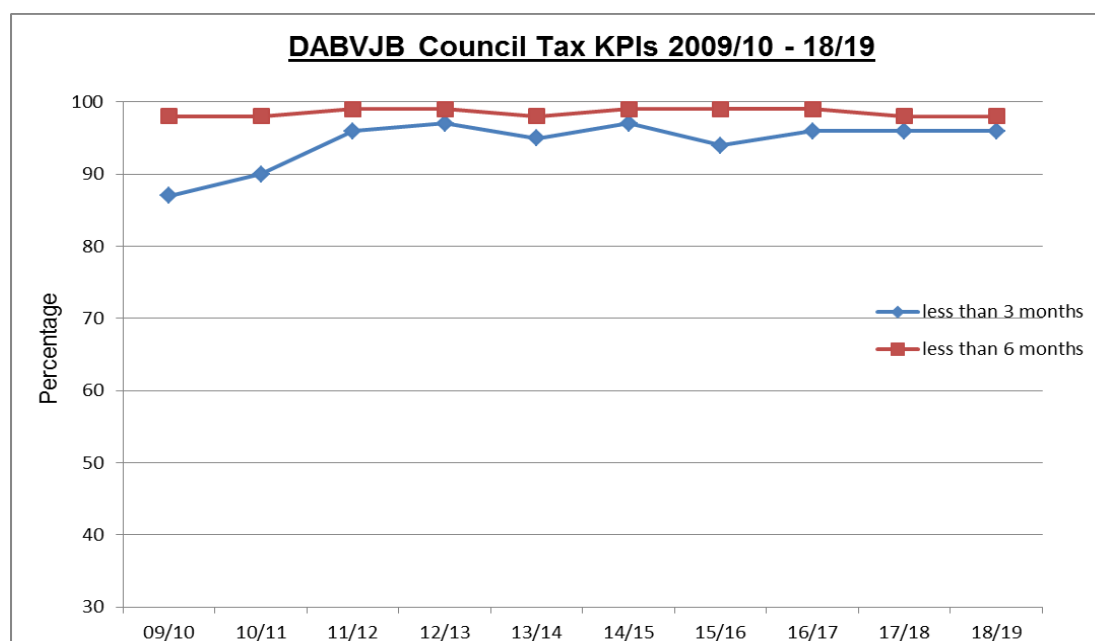
Maintenance of Valuation List (Cont'd)

The national Key Performance Indicator in relation to Council Tax has been defined as the time taken from the date on which additions to the Valuation List are effective to the date a Banding Notice in respect of that new entry is issued. The following table (over) sets out the target and actual performance information for 2018/19 compared with the actual figures for 2017/18:

Period	Actual 2017/18	Target 2018/19	Actual 2018/19			
			Argyll & Bute	West Dunbartonshire	East Dunbartonshire	Whole VJB Area
0-3 months	96%	96%	93%	98%	98%	96%
3-6 months	2%	2%	3%	2%	1.5%	2%
>6 months	2%	2%	4%	0%	0.5%	2%

Thus our targets were achieved, despite a number of properties which were added to the Council Tax Valuation List retrospectively after a Valuation Appeal Committee decided that a number of Self-Catering Units were no longer capable of use for that purpose. The outcome being that they therefore fell to be treated as dwellings.

The pattern of performance over a longer period is shown below:



Proposals and Appeals

During the year 327 (284 in 2017/18) proposals to change property Bands were received and 300 were disposed of, leaving 191 outstanding at the end of the year.

2.3 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

Aims

- To timeously compile and maintain the Electoral Register in accordance with the relevant legislation;
- To deal promptly with all new applications to register under Rolling Registration;
- To deal with all claims and objections relating to the Register;
- To deal with applications for absent votes, collect and securely store Personal Identifiers and maintain relevant Absent Voters lists;
- To produce, and make available for sale, copies of the Electoral Register in accordance with statutory arrangements;
- To encourage Electoral Registration in the three constituent Council areas; and
- To support the efficient running of elections within the Joint Board area.

Electoral Registration and Publication of the Register

2018/19 was the third full year under the new 'Business-as-usual' Individual Electoral Registration (IER) regime. Initially we received £47,818 in funding from the Cabinet Office's Modernising Electoral Registration Programme to cover the additional costs that the IER regime introduced and subsequently we received a further £18,204 following a 'Justification Led Bid' application process.

Our annual canvass commenced on 1 July with the issue of Household Enquiry Forms (HEFs). Changes notified on returned HEFs are used to initiate the issue of an Invitation to Register (ITR) or other relevant documentation. The canvass is thus a multi-stage process for each individual applicant or elector. The Cabinet Office has recognised the over-prescriptive nature of the canvass process since the introduction of IER and are planning to change the process again in 2020 – see below.

The requirement to issue ITRs both during and outwith the annual canvass period removes the distinction between the two processes, thereby making reporting directly on the canvass much more difficult.

Notwithstanding the above, we issued the following HEFs, including reminders, during the canvass period with the majority of the 2nd reminders being issued via a door-to-door canvass as follows:

Council Area	Initial issue	1 st Reminder	2 nd Reminder	% age Return
Argyll & Bute	48,528	16,998	10,479	87%
East Dunbartonshire	46,806	18,407	11,181	86%
West Dunbartonshire	45,235	22,758	16,286	73%
VJB Total	140,569	58,163	37,946	82%

The total response rate of compares well with previous canvass returns.

Year	Canvass return
2018	82%
2017	80%
2016	81%
2015	75%

Notably, the percentage return of forms at the initial issue stage was up from 51% in 2017 to 59% and this reduces the administration and cost of the remainder of the canvass. The persistently low return rates for West Dunbartonshire, compared to the other two council areas, are a source of concern and WDC have completed some analysis of returns at a postcode level to see if there was any pattern or useful information that could help and/or support our decision-making for future canvassing in the WDC area.

2.3 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION (Cont'd)

Several methods of making returns are provided to electors and a summary of the returns is shown below:

Method of Response	2017 Canvass		2018 Canvass	
	No of Returns	% age return	No of Returns	% age return
Post	52,425	37.43%	54,347	38.66%
Electronic (web/phone/SMS)	42,993	30.70%	45,432	32.32%
Phone/Email contact	3,045	2.18%	2,935	2.09%
Door-to-door canvass	6,648	4.75%	6,075	4.32%
Verified as second home/long term empty	5,615	4.01%	5,231	3.72%
Returned/Empty/ Other	619	0.44%	1,308	0.93%
Total	111,345	79.51%	115,328	82.04%

Notably, the growth in the use of electronic returns has started to slow and we will look to encourage a more significant channelshift toward these services for future canvasses.

During the canvass period there were 6,912 electors added to the registers for the Joint Board area and 9,501 deletions. This resulted in a total electorate of 219,637 at publication on 1st December split as follows:

Local Authority	Electorate
Argyll & Bute	67,295
East Dunbartonshire	67,662
West Dunbartonshire	84,680

The total electorate figure is down on the total at publication in December 2017, a pattern which tends to occur in years where there is no major electoral event.

Year	No of Electors
2018	219,637
2017	222,507
2016	221,078
2015	218,668
2014	223,594
2013	221,453
2012	219,117
2011	217,065
2010	216,433
2009	215,460

The full Electoral Register can only be provided for certain limited statutory purposes, while the 'Open Register' (also known as the 'Edited Register') can be sold to anyone for any purpose. At the end of the 2018 canvass the percentage of electors who had opted out was as follows:

Year	Electors Opted out
2018	45.4%
2017	42.0%
2016	39.3%
2015	33.4%
2014	26.0%
2013	13.5%
2012	19.5%
2011	21.0%
2010	27.2%
2009	25.3%

2.3 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION (Cont'd)

Absent Voters

Generally, the trend in numbers of absent voters on the register over time has tended to be upwards but this trend appears to have been reversed since IER was introduced.

Year	No of Absent Voters
2018	34,110
2017	35,918
2016	37,764
December 2015	38,376
February 2015	34,525
2014	27,176
2012	29,501
2011	29,076
2010	27,365
2009	24,899

Rolling Registration

Rolling Registration is the process of dealing with applications for changes to the Register which take place outwith the canvass period. During 2018/19 there were 12,958 Additions to the register and 12,300 Deletions made through the rolling registration process.

Historically, the annual canvass provided significantly more change to the registers than rolling registration but the above illustrates that is no longer the case.

IER requires a pro-active approach to change throughout the year and we have continued to use sources such as Council Taxpayer records, Education Authority data and house sales information to initiate the issue of ITRs.

Electoral Performance

Our self-assessment is that we are compliant with each of the Electoral Commission's published performance standards albeit we are continually updating and reviewing how we comply. The EC requests evidence of compliance from a sample of EROs, annually, based on their own assessment of risk, and we were not asked to make such a submission during 2018/19.

Alongside the Performance Standards regime, the EC and the Cabinet Office have developed an extensive suite of reports on registration activity and register accuracy and completeness. Various reports were submitted to these bodies both during the annual canvass and immediately following publication of the registers.

Electoral Events

There were no major or national elections during 2018/19 but registers were provided for Community Council and National Park elections. Towards the year end planning got under way for European Parliamentary Elections to be held in May 2019.

Canvass Reform

A joint policy statement was issued by the UK, Welsh and Scottish Governments on 5 October 2018. The governments sought views on a new model for future canvasses which will have a data (local and national) matching step at the start of the canvass, and will then allow a mixture of email, telephone and light touch contacts where most appropriate. This will allow for greater discretion for EROs to shape the canvass to activities which best suit their local circumstances. The consultation closed on 30 November 2018 and, the VJB Management Team provided input to the Scottish Assessors Association response.

The Scottish, Welsh and UK governments are now working together to amend the legislation and guidance governing the annual canvass by autumn 2019. This timetable is set to allow sufficient time for the redesign, development and testing of Electoral Management Systems, for guidance to be revised and training delivered in time for the revised model to be used for the 2020 autumn canvass.

2.3 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION (Cont'd)

Miscellaneous Electoral Matters

A Scottish Government Electoral Reform Consultation closed on 29 March 2018 and the consultation analysis report was published on 12 October. Areas where reform is expected include extending the power of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland, extension of the franchise for Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections to everyone resident in Scotland, changes to the process for Local Government Boundary reviews, restrictions to one vote only at local government elections and changes to ballot paper layouts, though a number of these issues are likely to be subject to further consultation.

Separately, the Scottish Government consulted on the possibility of extending the franchise for Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government election to include some prisoners. The ERO contributed to an SAA response to the consultation which closed in March 2019. The SAA response concentrated on the administrative and practical issues arising from the proposals rather than on the principles of prisoner voting. The outcome of the consultation is, as yet, unknown.

3.0 GENERAL PROGRESS IN RELATION TO OTHER MATTERS

3.1 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

IT and Computer Provision

The Valuation Joint Board's IT Strategy, provides direction and focus for the Joint Board as technology advances and the requirement for changes in processes continues. The strategy:

- Supports the day to day business of the Board;
- Assists in the delivery of a high quality service;
- Identifies the competencies required for ICT support and development; and
- Helps maintain partnerships with stakeholders.

Computers and IT systems continue to be maintained and upgraded as required to meet operational needs and in accordance with the recommendations from West Dunbartonshire Council's ICT Service. During the year we installed 2 PCs and 9 laptops to replace obsolete devices.

A review of the Board's network infrastructure and business continuity arrangements was commenced in partnership with WDC and this will conclude during 2019/20.

Our Electoral Management System was upgraded several times throughout the year to provide functionality improvements and ensure continued compliance with requirements.

A new online customer satisfaction system which was developed to replace existing procedures was implemented from April 2018 and, although the web interface was fully functional, the attempt to drive service users on-line was not successful. We therefore returned to sampling recent service users and invited them to make submissions, following which we saw an upturn in responses both in paper and on-line. A new complaints recording system was also developed and implemented.

In conjunction with West Dunbartonshire Council our IT team have also been involved in the identification of a suitable Geographic Information System (GIS) replacement.

Scottish Assessors Association Web Site

Throughout the year, staff continued to actively participate in the Project's Management Committee, Project Team and Working Group to enhance the SAA web portal (www.saa.gov.uk). This provides single point access to Valuation Roll, Council Tax List and Electoral Registration information on an all-Scotland basis.

Through publication of the SAA Issues Log, Contact List and Barclay Action Plan, the site has been instrumental in helping to deliver the improved transparency required by the Barclay Review. It has also been used for the first time as the vehicle for stakeholder consultations.

3.1 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (Cont'd)

The major piece of work for the project during 2018/19, however, was the planning for, and early stages of migration of, the sites to a new database and content management system (CMS). These changes should permit more options and flexibility when procuring hosting, support and development contracts in the future.

3.2 BEST VALUE

Key Performance Indicators and Public Performance Reporting

Performance in respect of Valuation Roll and Council Tax Key Performance Indicators is reported above. Our 2017/18 Public Performance Report was published during 2018/19 on our web site (www.saa.gov.uk/dab-vjb/).

Performance Management and Planning

The Management Team continues to be the main forum for planning and management of performance. In accordance with our Performance and Management Planning process, the following improvement actions were taken, or were ongoing, during 2018/19:

- A revised Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy was approved by Joint Board and implemented along with the introduction of a new Business Irregularities Procedures specific to the Valuation Joint Board;
- A new Data Protection Policy was approved and implemented, along with associated Data Audit, Data Breach procedures, a Subject Access Request procedure and a Privacy Impact Assessment process. Contracts, including those with data processors, have been reviewed. A Data Protection Officer was appointed and appropriately trained. New Privacy Notices were implemented across all areas of function including internal personnel data. This all resulted in a positive report being issued following an Internal Audit of Data Protection and Freedom of Information procedures;
- An annual self-assessment against the CIPFA/Solace “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework” was carried out with the resultant Action Plan approved by Joint Board;
- A Communications Strategy was developed and approved to enhance openness and stakeholder engagement;
- Written definitions of the roles of Clerk and Treasurer were developed and approved by the Joint Board;
- An assessment of the risks associated with the UK’s withdrawal from the EU was completed allowing risks or uncertainties arising from the planned withdrawal to be considered and managed/mitigated as required;
- The Risk Management Strategy was revised and approved by Joint Board;
- Several Personnel/HR-related Policies, including a revised Code of Conduct for officials, were updated and approved by the Board during 2018/19, ensuring alignment with current best practice and the support structures of West Dunbartonshire Council; and
- The Financial Strategy, which covers a 10 year period and presents a number of scenarios, was updated and presented to the Board.

The above represent real commitments to the Best Value regime and to continuous improvement. The current financial restrictions have imparted an efficiency driven ethos in many of our operations, but we will continue to strive to provide improving services.

Audit

During the year Internal Audit completed a review of, and reported on, our compliance with Freedom of Information and Data Protection Legislation.

The report on concluded that the systems examined in relation to compliance with Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation were working effectively. A number of opportunities to strengthen internal controls were identified, however, and the agreed actions have either been effected or will be in the early part of the 2019/20 financial year.

The finances of the Joint Board for 2017/18 were audited by Audit Scotland and the report concluded that the financial statements of the Joint Board were properly prepared and give a true and fair view. Expenditure and income were presented in accordance with applicable enactments and guidance. An unqualified auditor’s report was issued.

3.2 BEST VALUE (Cont'd)

Audit Scotland will also carry out the 2018/19 audit and they completed initial investigations into systems during the year. An Audit Plan was completed which identified the main areas where they will direct scrutiny, as follows:

- Ensure that controls are in place to ensure that management cannot override financial controls;
- Ensure that systems are in place to prevent and detect fraud in relation to expenditure;
- Investigate and evaluate the risk of material misstatement in the financial statements;
- A Review of the financial sustainability of the Joint Board; and
- Evaluate the risk of failure to deliver on Barclay requirements due to insufficient resources

Customer Satisfaction

For some years, users of the Joint Board's services were randomly sampled and issued with questionnaires to seek their perception of the service provided to them. In April 2018 we introduced a new web-based survey form and added a short invitation to provide feedback on many of our outgoing items of correspondence. The aims of this change were to:

- (a) streamline the administration of the system;
- (b) encourage a 'channel shift' to on-line returns, thereby enabling automated analysis and reporting; and
- (c) increase the number of service users providing us with feedback.

Over the first 6 months of the year, however, the returns were much reduced on previous years so in October we reverted to sampling recent users and issuing them with a questionnaire. Total returns for the year were, however, down on previous years.

A summary of the results for the year is provided below. These show that:

- By far the majority of our stakeholders (94%) find us professional, courteous and helpful;
- 60% of queries or transactions are completed at the first point of contact and only 7% of matters are not concluded to the satisfaction of the stakeholder;
- Most users of Joint Board services (93%) are satisfied with the information and/or advice provided to them; and
- Very high satisfaction levels are being achieved on a year-to-year basis.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Survey Return Rate	28%	27%	21%	18%	19%	21%	N/A
Was the person with whom you communicated professional, courteous and helpful?	97%	98%	99%	97%	97%	99%	94%
Was the matter brought to a satisfactory conclusion immediately?	58%	55%	67%	62%	68%	62%	60%
Was the matter brought to a satisfactory conclusion?	98%	96%	97%	96%	97%	97%	93%
Are you satisfied with the quality of the information or advice given to you?	96%	96%	97%	94%	97%	96%	93%

3.2 BEST VALUE (Cont'd)

Customer Satisfaction (Cont'd)

No Customer Satisfaction forms were requested in alternative languages, Braille or other formats. A breakdown of the returns which indicated the relevant protected characteristics is shown below:

Characteristic	Category	%age	Characteristic	Category	%age	Characteristic	Category	%age
Race	White	98%	Age	16-21	3%	Marital status	Married	57%
	Non-white	2%		22-30	7%		Never Married	13%
Gender	Male	48%		31-40	7%		Other	30%
	Female	52%		41-50	17%			
Disability	Disabled	16%		51-60	20%			
	Able-bodied	84%		61-65	12%			
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	97%		66-70	16%			
	Other	3%		70+	19%			

Sample sizes within the various equalities groups were too small to draw firm conclusions but the results are monitored by management with any apparent variations within any of the groups with protected characteristics being followed up to ensure that we are carrying out our functions in a fair and equitable manner.

Complaints Procedure

The Joint Board operates a Complaints Procedure which is in line with the Public Sector Ombudsman's Model Complaints Handling Procedure.

There were a total of 18 Complaints received during 2018/19, compared to 14 in 2016/17 and 15 in 2017/18, with 17 relating to Electoral Registration. 9 complaints were resolved at the Frontline Resolution stage with 9 being escalated to the Investigation stage. One Investigation relating to the Assessor's actions and handling of personal data was carried out by the Legal Services Department of West Dunbartonshire Council. No complaints were referred to the Ombudsman.

The main area of complaint within Electoral Registration was around the annual canvass, a process that is largely prescribed in legislation, and the total number of complaints has to be viewed in the context of the issue of over 230,000 canvass forms.

3.2 BEST VALUE (Cont'd)

Financial Performance

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This account covers the day to day operational expenditure of the Joint Board and is shown on page 31 of the Annual Accounts. On an accounting basis the deficit on the provision of service for the financial year reported in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is £0.358m. However this takes account of adjustments between the accounting and funding basis of (£0.359m) and the in-year surplus of £0.001 as shown in the table below:

	Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	Statutory Adjustments	Actual	Budget	Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Employee Costs	2,401	(260)	2,141	2,200	(59)
Property Costs	100	0	100	126	(26)
Transport Costs	41	0	41	45	(4)
Supplies & Services	242	0	242	291	(49)
Payments to Other Bodies	35	0	35	45	(10)
Support Services	125	0	125	125	0
Depreciation & Amortisation	11	(11)	0	0	0
Other Costs (Interest; Pensions)	89	(88)	1	0	1
Total Expenditure	3,044	(359)	2,685	2,832	(147)
Requisition Income	(2,611)	0	(2,611)	(2,611)	0
Grant Income	(66)	0	(66)	(60)	(6)
Rental Income	(2)	0	(2)	(2)	0
Sales, Fees & Charges	(7)	0	(7)	(3)	(4)
Total Income	(2,686)	0	(2,686)	(2,676)	(10)
(Surplus)/Deficit for the year	358	(359)	(1)	156	(157)

The main budget variances are shown below:

Spend Area	Variance	Comments
	£000	
Employee	(59)	This underspend is mainly due to non-filling of vacancies.
Property	(26)	This underspend is mainly due to lower than anticipated expenditure on rates, energy and accommodation costs.
Supplies & Services	(49)	This underspend is across a number of headings (such as machine lease, computer licences, telephones, printing & stationery).

3.2 BEST VALUE (Cont'd)

Balance Sheet

The balance sheet is shown on page 34 and features an assessed pension fund liability of £4.821m based on the valuation of the fund at 31 March 2019. This results in the Board's Balance Sheet showing a net liabilities position. Further information on the pension fund is provided in note 4 on pages 45 to 48 and the valuation states that assets held at the valuation date were sufficient to cover only 82% of the accrued liabilities. It is considered appropriate that the Annual Accounts should follow a 'going concern' basis of accounting. Statutory arrangements with the constituent local authorities mean that the financial position of the Board remains assured.

The pension scheme net liability has increased by £1.681m as advised by the appointed actuaries, and this is mainly as a result of the movement in the discount rate. The appointed actuaries remain of the view that the asset holdings of Strathclyde Pension Scheme and the contributions from employees and employers together with planned increases in employer' contributions provide sufficient security and income to meet future pension liabilities.

General Reserves

At their Board meeting on the 16 November 2012, the Board approved a Balance and Reserves Policy. The Board's Prudential Reserves Policy is to retain a prudential target of 2% of net expenditure i.e. constituent authority requisition level (18/19 £52,223) or £100,000, whichever is higher.

Funds held in excess of the prudential target can be spent or earmarked at the discretion of Board Members on behalf of the constituent authorities.

As at 31 March 2019 the Board held total usable reserves of £0.577m (of which £0.025m relates to unapplied capital reserves) with the remaining balance comprising revenue reserves of £0.552m. A proportion of this is identified as an earmarked balance (£0.162m) and once this has been accounted for leaves £0.390m of general reserves for future use (including £100,000 prudential reserve above).

The Joint Board recognises the difficult financial climate facing public services and has continued to seek efficiencies where possible. The level of requisition made by the Board for 2018/19 remained the same as 2017/18. Given the forecast reduction in funding for local government into the future it is anticipated that levels of funding may be challenging going forward into 2019/20 and beyond and management have commenced planning for this to ensure ongoing service delivery reflecting the increasing workload to the Board.

Provisions and Contingencies

The Joint Board is not aware of any eventualities which may have a material effect on the financial position of the Joint Board, and has made no provisions for such eventualities.

Group Annual Accounts

The Joint Board has been determined to have an "associate" relationship with each of its constituent authorities and, as such, the Joint Board's results have been consolidated into each authority's group income and expenditure Annual Accounts.

3.2 BEST VALUE (Cont'd)

Risk Management

The Joint Board's Risk Management Strategy and Procedures were revised and approved by the Joint Board in June 2018. Risk Registers and Action Plan are revised annually. Inclusions in the Board Risk Register during the year were:

- The potential for the Joint Board or its statutory officials to fail to meet their respective statutory duties;
- The financial and service performance risks associated with static or reduced funding levels, particularly in light of new and increasing duties and responsibilities;
- The risks arising from the reform of Non-Domestic Rates arising from the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill and other 'Barclay' requirements;
- The dependency of the Joint Board on ICT for delivery of its statutory functions and service delivery; and
- Planned changes to the Electoral Registration system including canvass reform, the possible extension of the right of overseas electors, the introduction of voting rights for (some) prisoners and the extension of the franchise for some polls to all residents of Scotland..

All risks have planned actions to mitigate or minimise the risk and progress against these actions is regularly monitored at Management Team meetings.

Separately, and in line with recommendations from Audit Scotland, an assessment of the risk to the Joint Board of the UK's proposed withdrawal from the European Union as originally scheduled on 29 March 2019, was carried out in December 2018. This allowed the Management Team to conclude that the risks to the Joint Board were generally low and could be managed or mitigated. The subsequent extensions to the UK's membership did introduce the need for the UK to take part in elections to the European Parliament on 23 May 2019. As this was an unplanned event, it did constitute an additional burden on our registration service but the resources and training required for any electoral event are in place and the risks should be manageable, albeit at a marginal additional cost.

3.3 EQUALITIES

The Joint Board's Management Team is committed to ensuring equality in all that it does.

Arising from the Specific Duties which were established by the Scottish Government subsequent to The Equality Act 2010, the Joint Board established that its stated Equality 'Outcomes' are as follows:

- We are seen as an inclusive equal opportunities employer where all staff feel valued and respected; and
- Our Services meet the needs of, and are accessible to all members of our community and our staff treat all service users, clients and colleagues with dignity and respect.

The number of staff who identified themselves as having a disability has increased significantly since the base line survey, thereby indicating progress against the first stated Outcome.

As indicated above, our Customer Satisfaction results are inconclusive in respect of service provision across the protected characteristics in 2018/19. Looking at results over a longer period, however, indicates that we are providing fair and equitable services to all parts of our communities.

3.4 STAFFING MATTERS

Development and Training

The Board's Staff Development and Training procedures provide for a structured and strategic provision of training and development opportunities for all members of staff. Each employee reviews their training needs with their line manager on an annual basis and the resultant Training and Development Plan is used to inform the provision of training throughout the year.

In 2018/19 training was provided through externally sourced courses, in-house training events and e-learning facilities in a range of subjects including various aspects of Electoral Registration, process management ("Lean 6-Sigma"), Attendance Management, preparing for an electoral event (including security of the poll) and data protection. A 'Core' training programme has been established and this requires staff to complete refresher training in various topics.

3.4 STAFFING MATTERS (Cont'd)

Formal training is ongoing for four Trainee Valuers, two of whom are undergoing their Assessment of Professional Competence. One member of staff is currently undertaking the final year of a distance learning course for the Association of Electoral Administrators 'Certificate' level qualification.

Personnel Policies

During the year, and in line with the approach in West Dunbartonshire Council, the Board also approved the following for implementation:

- (a) A revised Attendance Management Policy and Procedure;
- (b) A new Maternity Leave Scheme;
- (c) A new Special Leave Scheme;
- (d) A new Carers Leave Scheme;
- (e) A revised Bereavement Leave Scheme;
- (f) A revised Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy;
- (g) A revised Code of Conduct for Employees;
- (h) A revised Disciplinary Policy and Procedure; and
- (i) A new Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy.

Voluntary Early Retirement and Voluntary Severance

In June 2016, and in recognition of the funding gaps being projected in the Board's indicative budgets, the Joint Board agreed that the Assessor should consider offering staff Voluntary Early Retirement/Severance (VER/S) on similar terms to those prevailing in West Dunbartonshire Council.

In August 2018 four members of staff expressed an interest in leaving the Joint Board's service through VER. The criteria for release were not met in any of these cases, though one staff member did proceed to retire without accessing the VER scheme. Two subsequent expressions of interest remain outstanding or under consideration.

3.5 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Joint Board's 'Guide to Information' was updated and maintained as required with relevant documents available from <https://www.saa.gov.uk/dab-vjb/download/2239/>

A 'business as usual' approach has been taken to the majority of requests for information received, but in the calendar year to December 2018, 58 requests which specifically referred to the Freedom of Information Act were received. This compares to 21 requests in 2017.

Three requests received related to Electoral Registration, a function which is not currently covered under the FoI legislation. However, in the spirit of applying best practice, these requests were responded to as if they had been covered by the legislation, with one request being answered in full and two requests were refused. There were 49 requests relating to Non-Domestic Rating, 47 of which were made by the same company or individuals employed by the same company. Much of the information requested was information that would have been made available during the appeals process. Two requests related to our Council Tax functions and 4 were of a general nature or crossed over our statutory functions.

All requests were answered within the statutory timescales with the average response time being just over 16 days. There were no requests for Reviews. Dealing with requests took over 45 hours of staff time and no fees were charged.

We now provide quarterly reports on requests received and their outcomes to the Information Commissioner.

3.6 DATA PROTECTION

Both the Joint Board and the Assessor & ERO have always had firm commitments to the proper storage and secure processing of personal data but the additional requirements of the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which came into effect in May 2018, meant that all processes, procedures and practices relating to personal data had to be reviewed.

3.6 DATA PROTECTION (Cont'd)

To meet the new requirements of the GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018), a new Data Protection Policy was approved by the Joint Board and implemented along with the associated Data Audit, Data Breach procedures, Subject Access Request procedure and Privacy Impact Assessment process. Contracts, including those held with data processors, were reviewed. A Data Protection Officer was appointed and all Privacy Notices were reviewed.

As previously agreed with the internal auditor, an audit of our compliance was carried out. The scope of the audit was expanded to include our compliance with Freedom of Information legislation. The positive report received following the audit is referred to above.

3.7 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

In February 2016, and in accordance with the requirements of The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011, the Keeper of the Records approved the Joint Board's Records Management Plan (RMP) and agreed an improvement action plan which the Board continued to implement throughout 2018/19.

Under sections 5(1) & (2) of the Act the Keeper may only require a review of an authority's agreed RMP five years after the date the plan was agreed. The Keeper has, however, developed a voluntary Progress Update Review (PUR) mechanism to allow authorities to demonstrate progress towards completion of any action plan and to receive constructive advice on ongoing developments.

A PUR submission, which took the form of a self-assessment against each of the elements in the RMP, was made to the Keeper's Assessment Team in October 2018. In December 2018 the Keeper approved the Joint Board's PUR and noted that the Board continues to take its records management obligations seriously and that significant progress had been made in relation to the action plan.

3.8 PARTNERSHIPS

The Valuation Joint Board is actively involved in several partnerships with one of the most significant of these being the senior staff's membership of the Scottish Assessors' Association. The Association is constituted to facilitate a consistency of approach in the administration of the non-domestic rating valuation, council tax and electoral registration services across Scotland. It works through a series of Committees and associated Working Groups, which report to regular plenary sessions that are attended by representatives from all Assessors' offices.

Valuation Joint Board staff are represented in the Association in all of its Category Committees, in working groups and as authors of Practice Notes which are used to implement all-Scotland approaches to the valuation of various subject types. The co-operation and co-ordination of the Association is of critical importance in the completion, and defence, of a Revaluation.

During 2018/19 the Association made a submission to the Scottish Government's "Barclay Implementation: A consultation on non-domestic rates reform" and subsequently provided information and advice during the drafting of the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill. It will also be used as a consultative body as the Bill makes its way through the various Parliamentary Committee stages in 2019/20. A project manager has been established to lead on the role the SAA might take in successful delivery of NDR reform and the Barclay requirements. Consequent to the Barclay Review recommendations, the SAA published its first Annual Report on the 2017/18 year in June 2018.

The SAA also collated a response to the Scottish Government's Consultation Paper on Prisoner Voting.

The SAA continued to liaise with the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) in England and Wales, the Northern Ireland Land & Property Services Agency (NILPS) and the Republic of Ireland Valuation Office (IVO) in matters of common interest.

The planning for, and provision of, Electoral Registration services is assisted by guidance received from the Electoral Commission and the Electoral Management Board of Scotland and by representation within the Association of Electoral Administrators. The Cabinet Office has also become an important stakeholder in respect of further modernisation of Electoral Registration services.

The Valuation Joint Board obtains all of its 'back-office' functions including human resources, legal support, ICT support and financial services from West Dunbartonshire Council under a Service Level Agreement. Thanks are due to all of the WDC officials who support the Joint Board.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The major focus on the NDR valuation side of our operations 2018/19 was disposal of Revaluation appeals. Good progress was made in this regard, particularly in the early months of the year. Progress later in the year was hindered somewhat by the dependency on others in the Scottish Assessors Association taking 'lead cases' in a variety of property categories. Notwithstanding that, by the end of March 2019, 2,135 appeals, representing 59.8% of those submitted, had been disposed of. This compares exactly with progress at the similar time following the 2010 Revaluation.

Despite the focus on appeal disposal, our performance in relation to maintenance of both the Valuation Roll and Council Tax Lists was maintained at high levels.

The IER system is now well established. The annual canvass return was up on last year, albeit the lower rates of return in the West Dunbartonshire area continue to be a source of concern, and the register was published on 1st December as is required by statute.

There was a vacancy on the Board at the start of the year but I am pleased to report that West Dunbartonshire Council nominated Bailie Denis Agnew to complete our complement of Members. Our congratulations go to Cllr Donald MacMillan, BEM on the award of the Medal of the Order of the British Empire to him for his services to local government in the 2019 New Year Honours List.

Thanks are due to all staff and management for their endeavour, effort and co-operation throughout the year. Similarly, thanks are due to the Joint Board, and in particular, the Convenor and Vice Convenor for their continued support.

Councillor Richard Trail
Convenor of the Board
Date: 28 June 2019

David Thomson
Assessor and Electrical Registration Officer
Date: 28 June 2019

Stephen West
Treasurer
Date: 28 June 2019

REMUNERATION REPORT

Introduction

The remuneration report has been prepared in accordance with the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014. These Regulations require various disclosures about the remuneration and pension benefits of the Board and senior employees. All information disclosed in the tables 1-5 of the Remuneration Report will be audited by Audit Scotland. The other sections have also been reviewed by Audit Scotland to ensure that they are consistent with the Financial Statements.

Arrangements for Remuneration

The Board sets the remuneration levels for senior officers. Its role is to ensure the application and implementation of fair and equitable systems for pay and for performance management within the guidelines of and as determined by the Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Government. In reaching its decisions, the Board has regarded the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified people to exercise their different responsibilities.

The remuneration of senior employees is set by reference to national arrangements. The Board does not pay bonuses or performance related pay. Chief Officers receive business mileage and subsistence allowances in accordance with amounts either agreed nationally by the Scottish Joint National Council (SJNC) or as approved locally by the Board. Chief Officers are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The scheme is described in the Pension Benefits section.

Remuneration

The term *remuneration* means as defined by the Regulations noted above, gross salary, fees and bonuses, allowances and expenses, and costs in relation to Early Retiral and Voluntary Severance. It excludes pension contributions paid by the Board. Pension contributions made to a person's pension are disclosed as part of the pension benefits disclosure.

Table 1: Remuneration of Senior Employees

Name	Position at 31/03/19	Year ended 31 March 2019		2017/18
		Salary, Fees & Allowances £000	Total Remuneration £000	Restated Total Remuneration £000
David Thomson	Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer	98	98	96
Robert Nicol	Depute Assessor & ERO	78	78	77

Notes

1. The term *senior employee* means any Board employee:
 - Who has responsibility for the management of the board to the extent that the person has the power to direct or control the major activities of the board (including activities involving the expenditure of money), during the year to which the Report relates, whether solely or collectively with other persons; or
 - Who holds a post that is politically restricted by reason of section 2(1) (a), (b) or (c) of Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (4); or
 - Whose annual remuneration, including any remuneration from a local authority subsidiary body, is £150,000 or more.

REMUNERATION REPORT (Cont'd)

Remuneration of Employees receiving more than £50,000

The Board's employees receiving more than £50,000 remuneration for the year were paid the following amounts. In accordance with the disclosure requirement of the Regulations, the information in the table shows the number of employees in bands of £5,000. This information includes the senior employees who are subject to the fuller disclosure requirements in the tables above.

£	Number of Employees	
	2018/2019	Restated 2017/2018
55,000 to 59,999	2	2
75,000 to 79,999	1	1
95,000 to 99,999	1	1
Total	4	4

Pension Benefits

The LGPS 2015 is a career average pension scheme. This means that pension benefits from 01/04/2015 are based on pensionable pay with inflation added. Pension is accrued at a rate of 1/49 of pensionable pay for each scheme year. Pension benefits can be accessed from age 60 but are reduced if taken earlier than Normal pension Age (State Pension Age). Pension benefits accrued before 1 April 2015 are protected and are based on final pay on retiring.

From 1 April 2009, a five tier contribution system was introduced with contributions from scheme members being based on how much pay falls into each tier. This is designed to give more equality between the cost and benefits of scheme membership. Table 3 provides information on these tiered contribution rates.

Table 3: Contribution Rate

The tiers and members contributions rates for 2018/19 whole time pay	Contribution rate 2018/19
On earnings up to and including £21,300	5.50%
On earnings above £21,300 and up to £26,100	7.25%
On earnings above £26,100 and up to £35,700	8.25%
On earnings above £35,700 and up to £47,600	9.50%
On earnings above £47,600	12.00%

If a person works part-time their contribution rate is worked out on the whole-time pay rate for the job, with actual contributions paid on actual pay earned. There is no automatic entitlement to a lump sum. Members may opt to give up (commute) pension for lump sum up to the limit set by the Finance Act 2004. The accrual rate guarantees a pension based on 1/49th of pay from 1 April 2015. Prior to this the accrual rate guarantees a pension based on 1/60th of final pensionable salary and years of pensionable service. Prior to 2009 the accrual rate guaranteed a pension based on 1/80th and a lump sum based on 3/80th of final pensionable salary and years of pensionable service.

The value of the accrued benefits has been calculated on the basis of the age at which the person will first become entitled to receive a pension on retirement without reduction on account of its payment at that age; without exercising any option to commute pension entitlement into a lump sum; and without any adjustment for the effects of future inflation.

REMUNERATION REPORT (Cont'd)

Pension Benefits of Senior Employees

Table 4 : In-year contributions and accrued benefits

Name	For year to 31 March 2019			For year to 31 March 2018		
	In-year	Accrued pension benefits		In-year	Accrued pension benefits	
	contribution	Pension	Lump Sum	contribution	Pension	Lump Sum
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
David Thomson	21	46	86	19	44	85
Robert Nicol	17	29	45	15	27	44

1. The LGPS is a career average pension scheme. This means that pension benefits from 1 April 2015 are based on pensionable pay with inflation added. Pension is accrued at a rate of 1/49 of pensionable pay for each scheme year. Pension benefits can be accessed from age 60 but are reduced if taken earlier than Normal Pension Age (State Pension Age). Pension benefits accrued before 1 April 2015 are protected and are based on final pay on retiring.
2. The lump sum, which is automatically paid when the person retires for service up to 31 March 2009, is three times his or her annual pension and is tax-free. There is no automatic lump sum for service after 31 March 2009. Members may opt to give up (commute) pension for lump sum up to the limit set by the Finance Act 2004.
3. The value of the accrued benefits in the above tables has been calculated on the basis of the age at which the person will first become entitled to receive a full pension on retirement without reduction on account of its payment at that age; without exercising any option to commute pension entitlement into a lump sum; and without any adjustment for the effects of future inflation. The pension age for members of the LGPS is 65.
4. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the person has accrued as consequence of their total local government' service, and not just their current appointment.
5. The Local Government (Discretionary Payments and Injury Benefits) (Scotland) Regulations 1998 make provision for authorities to make discretionary payments to local government employees to pay compensation for premature retirement. There were no discretionary payments made to senior employees during the year.

Exit Packages

There were no exit packages during financial year's 2018/9 and 2017/18.

REMUNERATION REPORT (Cont'd)

Trade Union Facility Time

Facility Time generates benefits for employees, managers and the wider community from effective joint working between union representatives and employers.

Details of the Facility Time within Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board during the year to 31 March 2019 are shown in the table below.

Table 5: Trade Union

Trade Union Officials	Trade Union Representative
0	1
Percentage of Time Spent on Facility Time	
Percentage	Employees
Less <1	1
1 – 50%	0
51% - 99%	0
100%	0
Total cost of facility time	
£100	
Total pay bill	
£2,099,151	
Percentage of Pay Bill Spent on Facility Time	
0.005%	
Paid TU Activities	
100%	

Councillor Richard Trail
Convenor of the Board
Date: 28 June 2019

David Thomson
Assessor and Electrical Registration Officer
Date: 28 June 2019

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Boards Responsibilities:

The Board is required:

- to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Board, that officer is the Treasurer and
- to manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.

I can confirm that the Draft Annual Accounts were approved for signature by the Board at its meeting on 28 June 2019

Signed on behalf of Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board

Councillor Richard Tail
Convenor of the Board
Date: 28 June 2019

The Treasurer's Responsibilities:

The Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of the Board's Draft Annual Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code).

In preparing the Draft Annual Accounts, the Treasurer has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent; and
- complied with the local authority Code.

The Treasurer has also:

- kept proper accounting records which were up to date; and
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

I certify that the Draft Annual Accounts give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Board at the reporting date and the transactions of Board for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Stephen West
Treasurer
Date: 28 June 2019

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Annual Governance Statement is included within the Annual Accounts to assure stakeholders on how the Board directs and controls its functions and how it relates to communities which will enhance transparency and scrutiny of the Board's activities.

Scope of Responsibility

Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Board also has a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are carried out.

In discharging this overall responsibility, elected members and senior officers are responsible for implementing effective arrangements for governing the Board's affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The Board has approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance (the Code), and also relies on the governance arrangements of West Dunbartonshire Council which are consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Framework.

The above code explains how Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board aims to deliver good governance and reviews the effectiveness of these arrangements on an annual basis.

Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework, published by CIPFA in association with Solace in 2007, set the standard for local authority governance in the UK. This was reviewed and replacement framework was issued in 2016: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (CIPFA/Solace, 2016) to apply to annual governance statements prepared for the financial year 2016/17 onwards.

While the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework is written in a local authority context, most of the principles are applicable to the Joint Board and the recommendation of our external auditors was that the Joint Board should include this process as part of its overall approach to governance.

In accordance with a Code of Good Governance which was approved by the Joint Board in March 2018, a self-assessment against the above CIPFA framework was completed and an Action Plan agreed. The Management Team regularly monitor progress against the actions in the Action Plan. The Local Code of Good Governance and the Action Plan can be found at:

https://www.saa.gov.uk/dab-vjb/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/dlm_uploads/2018/03/2018-03-02-Document-Pack-VJB-as-circulated.pdf

The Board has also put in place a system of internal financial control designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. Internal controls cannot eliminate risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal financial control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the board's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (Cont'd)

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Board is directed and controlled. It also describes the way it engages with, accounts to its stakeholders.

Within the overall control arrangements the system of internal control is intended to ensure that assets are safeguarded, transactions are authorised and properly recorded, and material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period. It is based on a framework of regular management information, financial regulations, administrative procedures and management supervision.

The overall control arrangements include:

- comprehensive budgeting systems;
- regular reviews of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts;
- setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- clearly defined capital expenditure guidelines; and
- an effective Internal Audit service.

Review of Effectiveness

The Joint Board has a responsibility for ensuring the continuing effectiveness of its governance framework and its system of internal financial control. West Dunbartonshire Council's Audit and Risk Manager produces an annual audit plan based on a risk assessment of the Council's and Valuation Joint Board's systems and processes. The audit plan is approved by the Audit Committee of the Council. This Committee meets regularly and receives reports from the Audit and Risk Manager. The Joint Board's external auditors also attend. The Audit and Risk Manager produces an annual report on the work carried out by Internal Audit during the year. This report contains a view on the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control.

The Internal Audit service operates in accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The Audit and Risk Manager meets regularly with chief internal auditors of other authorities and staff within the Internal Audit Service are appropriately trained.

Our review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control is informed by:

- the work of managers within both the Joint Board and West Dunbartonshire Council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the financial control framework;
- the work undertaken by West Dunbartonshire Council's Internal Auditors during the year to 31 March 2019;
- the assessment of risk completed during reviews of the strategic audit plan;
- reports issued by the Valuation Joint Board's External Auditors and other review bodies; and
- knowledge of the Valuation Joint Board's governance, risk management and performance monitoring arrangements.

Through West Dunbartonshire Council, the Board's financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on The Role of Chief Financial Officer in Local Government 2010.

We are satisfied that the Valuation Joint Board has in place a sound system of internal financial control and that appropriate mechanisms are in place to identify any areas of weakness and to take appropriate action. This is corroborated by an Annual Assurance Statement prepared by the Audit and Risk Manager stating that reasonable assurance can be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the Joint Board's internal control system in the year to 31 March 2019.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (Cont'd)

Annual Performance

Examples of developments which have led to significant improvement in arrangements for control, governance or risk management within the Joint Board during 2018/19 include:

- A revised Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy was approved by Joint Board and implemented along with the introduction of a new Business Irregularities Procedures specific to the Valuation Joint Board.
- A new Data Protection Policy was approved and implemented, along with associated Data Audit, Data Breach procedures, a Subject Access Request procedure and a Privacy Impact Assessment process. Contracts, including those with data processors, have been reviewed. A Data Protection Officer was appointed and appropriately trained. New Privacy Notices were implemented across all areas of function including internal personnel data. This all resulted in a positive report being issued following an Internal Audit of Data Protection and Freedom of Information procedures.
- An annual self-assessment against the CIPFA/Solace “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework” was carried out with the resultant Action Plan approved by Joint Board.
- A Communications Strategy was developed and approved to enhance openness and stakeholder engagement.
- Written definitions of the roles of Clerk and Treasurer developed and approved by the Joint Board.
- An assessment of the risks associated with the UK's withdrawal from the EU was completed allowing risks or uncertainties arising from the planned withdrawal were considered and managed/mitigated as required.
- The Risk Management Strategy was revised and approved by Joint Board.
- Several Personnel/HR-related Policies, including a revised Code of Conduct for officials, were updated and approved by the Board during 2018/19, ensuring alignment with current best practice and the support structures of West Dunbartonshire Council.
- The Financial Strategy, which covers a 10 year period and presents a number of scenarios, was updated and presented to the Board.

The following areas were identified by the Assessor for further improvements in 2019/20:

- A Member/Officer Short-Life Working Group has been established to consider the options available to address the structural funding gap. The SLWG will report to the Board in September 2019 and any conclusions agreed by the Board will be factored into the budget estimates and service planning processes for 2019/20 and thereafter.
- Reviews of the Joint Board's 'Information Asset Register' and 'Business Classification & Retention of Documents' will be completed to ensure improved compliance with best practice in relation to Data Protection and Records Management.
- To ensure that proper budgetary and procurement procedures are followed, induction and other training will be provided to the newly appointed Principal Administrative Officer.
- A complete review of our ICT network structures and performance, including the contingency arrangements for the Board's electoral management system, will be completed and proposed improvements implemented to ensure that systems are compliant with WDC's recommendations and appropriate levels of business continuity are assured.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (Cont'd)

Annual Performance (Cont'd)

- To ensure compliance with future statutory requirements, consideration will be given to the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill and all related secondary legislation being considered by the Scottish Parliament. The recently established internal project team will develop and deliver the systems and process changes required to meet the duties and powers contained in the proposed NDR (Reform) Act 2020.
- To ensure compliance with future statutory requirements, consideration will be given to the Cabinet Office's Project Planning documents and emerging legislation. The VJB will take part in data matching and other test during 2019/20 to enable planning and budgeting for the forthcoming changes.

Assurance

On the basis of the assurance provided, we consider the governance and internal control environment operating during 2018/19 to provide reasonable and objective assurance that any significant risks impacting on the achievement of our principal objectives will be identified and actions taken to avoid or mitigate their impact. Systems are in place to continually review and improve the governance and internal control environment and action plans are in place to address identified areas for improvement.

Councillor Richard Trail
Convenor of the Board
Date: 28 June 2019

David Thomson
Assessor and Electrical Registration Officer
Date: 28 June 2019

Stephen West
Treasurer
Date: 28 June 2019

INTRODUCTION TO ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Annual Accounts comprise the following primary statements:

- Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement;
- Movement in Reserves Statement;
- Balance Sheet;
- Cashflow Statement; and
- Summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from constituent authority contributions.

Movement in Reserves Statement

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Board, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure) and other reserves. The surplus or (deficit) on the provision of services line shows the true economic cost of providing the Board's services, more details of which are shown in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement. The net increase/decrease before transfer to earmarked reserves line shows the statutory general fund balance before any discretionary transfers to or from earmarked reserves undertaken by the Board.

Balance Sheet

The balance sheet shows the value as at the balance sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Board. The net assets of the Board (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Board. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first of the category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Board may use to provide services, subject to any statutory limitations on their use (for example the capital receipts reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure). The second category of reserves is those that the Board is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the revaluation reserve), where accounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the movement in reserves statement line 'adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

Cash Flow Statement

The cash flow statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Board during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Board generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the authority are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the authority. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Board's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the Board.

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

2017/18			2018/19
Net			Net
Expenditure		Notes	Expenditure
£000			£000
	Income		
(10)	Customer Receipts		(9)
	Expenditure		
2,462	Employee Costs	2	2,401
113	Property Costs		100
47	Transport Costs		41
243	Supplies & Services		242
44	Payment to Other Bodies		35
128	Support Services		125
22	Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment	2/6/7	11
3,049	Net Cost of Service		2,946
(2,611)	Revenue Contributions	15	(2,611)
(70)	Government Grants	16	(66)
(13)	Capital Contributions		0
(2,694)	Other Operating Income		(2,677)
355	Net Operating Expenditure		269
0	Interest Payable		1
194	Net Interest on the net defined benefit liability/(assets)	4	88
194	Finance and Investment Income and Expenditure		89
549	(Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services		358
(4,711)	Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability/(assets)	4	1,332
(4,711)	Other Comprehensive (Income) & Expenditure		1,332
(4,162)	Total Comprehensive (Income) & Expenditure		1,690

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

2018/19

	Usable Reserves		Unusable Reserves				Total Reserves £000
	Fund Balance £000	Capital Requisition Unapplied Account £000	Capital Adjustment Account £000	Revaluation Reserve £000	Pension Reserve £000	Statutory Mitigation Account £000	
Opening Balance as at 1 April 2018	551	29	607	35	(3,140)	(17)	(1,935)
Movements in Reserves							
Surplus or (Deficit) on provision of Services	(358)	0	0	0	0	0	(358)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	0	0	0	0	(1,332)	0	(1,332)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(358)	0	0	0	(1,332)	0	(1,690)
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis							
Depreciation/Impairment	11	0	(11)	0	0	0	0
Pension Scheme Adjustment	349	0	0	0	(349)	0	0
Net Transfer to or from earmarked reserves required by legislation	(1)	0	0	0	0	1	0
Capital requisitions unapplied adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	0	(4)	4	0	0	0	0
Total Statutory Adjustments	359	(4)	(7)	0	(349)	1	0
Increase/Decrease in Year	1	(4)	(7)	0	(1,681)	1	(1,690)
Balance at 31 March 2019	552	25	600	35	(4,821)	(16)	(3,625)
Total Usable		577	Total Unusable				(4,202)

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

2017/18

	Usable Reserves		Unusable Reserves				Total Reserves £000
	Fund Balance £000	Capital Requisition Unapplied Account £000	Capital Adjustment Account £000	Revaluation Reserve £000	Pension Reserve £000	Statutory Mitigation Account £000	
Opening Balance as at 1 April 2017	493	16	629	35	(7,254)	(16)	(6,097)
Movements in Reserves							
Surplus or (Deficit) on provision of Services	(549)	0	0	0	0	0	(549)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	0	0	0	0	4,711	0	4,711
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(549)	0	0	0	4,711	0	4,162
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis							
Depreciation/Impairment	22	0	(22)	0	0	0	0
Pension Scheme Adjustment	597	0	0	0	(597)	0	0
Net Transfer to or from earmarked reserves required by legislation	1	0	0	0	0	(1)	0
Capital requisitions applied to fund capital expenditure	(13)	13	0	0	0	0	0
Total Statutory Adjustments	607	13	(22)	0	(597)	(1)	0
Increase/Decrease in Year	58	13	(22)	0	4,114	(1)	4,162
Balance at 31 March 2018	551	29	607	35	(3,140)	(17)	(1,935)
Total Usable		580	Total Unusable				(2,515)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2019

31 March 2018				31 March 2019
£000	Notes			£000
638	6	Property, plant and equipment		633
4	7	Intangible Assets		2
<u>642</u>		Total Long Term Assets		<u>635</u>
685	8	Short Term Debtors		682
<u>685</u>		Current Assets		<u>682</u>
(122)	10	Short Term Creditors		(121)
<u>(122)</u>		Current Liabilities		<u>(121)</u>
(3,140)	4	Net Pensions Liability		(4,821)
<u>(3,140)</u>		Long Term Liabilities		<u>(4,821)</u>
<u>(1,935)</u>		Net Assets/(Liabilities)		<u>(3,625)</u>
		Represented by:		
580	11/12	Usable Reserves		577
(2,515)	13	Unusable Reserves		(4,202)
<u>(1,935)</u>		Total Reserves		<u>(3,625)</u>

The unaudited Financial Statements were issued on 28 June 2019.

Stephen West
Treasurer
28 June 2019

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

2017/18 £000		2018/19 £000
	Operating Activities	
(2,682)	Grants	(2,677)
(10)	Sale of goods and rendering of services	(9)
<u>(2,692)</u>	Cash Inflows from Operating Activities	<u>(2,686)</u>
2,037	Cash paid to and on behalf of employees	2,141
667	Other payments for operating activities	540
<u>2,704</u>	Cash Outflows from Operating Activities	<u>2,681</u>
<u>12</u>	Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities	<u>(5)</u>
	Investing Activities	
0	Purchase of Assets	4
(12)	Other receipts from investing activities	0
<u>(12)</u>	Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities	<u>4</u>
	Financing Activities	
0	Interest Payable	1
<u>0</u>	Net Cash Flows from Financing Activities	<u>1</u>
<u>0</u>	Net (Increase)/Decrease in Cash and Cash Equivalents	<u>0</u>
0	Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	0
0	Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	0
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>

NOTES TO THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Note 1 - Accounting Policies

1. General Principles

The Draft Annual Accounts summarise the Board's transactions for the 2018/19 financial year and its position at the year end of 31 March 2019. The Board is required to prepare Annual Accounts by the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 1985. Section 12 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 requires they be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 ("the Code") and the Service Reporting Code of Practice, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The accounting convention adopted in the Annual Accounts is principally historic cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of Property, Plant and Equipment and financial instruments.

2. Accruals of Income and Expenditure

Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place, not simply when payment is made or received. In particular:

- Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the Board can measure reliably the percentage of completion of the transaction and when it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the Board;
- Expenses in relation to services received are recorded as expenditure when the services are received, rather than when payment is made;
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption, they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet based upon materiality;
- Interest payable on borrowings and receivable on investments is accounted for on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument, rather than on cash flows fixed or determined by the contract; and
- Where income and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where there is evidence that debts are unlikely to be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and charged to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

3. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours.

Cash equivalents are investments that mature in three months or less from date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known cash amounts, with insignificant risk of change of value.

Investments held by the Board comprise solely of short term surplus funds held within the bank balances. All deposits are held in sterling. The carrying amount is the outstanding principal receivable.

Bank balances are included in the Balance Sheet at the closing balance in the Board's financial ledger and include cheques payable not yet cashed.

Note 1 - Accounting Policies (Cont'd)

4. Changes in Accounting policies, Estimates and Errors

IAS 8 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors requires disclosure of information on the expected impact of new accounting standards that have been issued but are not yet effective. These have been reviewed and are not deemed to be significant for the financial statements.

Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, events or conditions on the Board's financial position or performance. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively by adjusting opening balances and comparative figures, as if the new policy has always been applied.

There has been a redistribution of costs within the CIES. The pension's interest cost within the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services has increased with a corresponding reduction in actuarial (gains) or losses on pension assets and liabilities in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. Essentially, the expected return on schemes assets that was credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services has been replaced with an equivalent figure using the discount rate.

Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for prospectively, i.e. in the current and future years only.

Material errors discovered in prior period figures are corrected retrospectively by amending opening balances and comparative figures.

5. Charges to Revenue for non-current assets

Services are debited with the following amounts to record the cost of using or holding fixed assets during the year:

- Depreciation, attributable to the assets used by the Board;
- Revaluation and impairment losses, where there is no accumulated gain in the Revaluation Reserve; and
- Amortisation of intangible fixed assets.

The Board is not required to raise funds to cover depreciation, revaluation or impairment losses. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisations are replaced by the revenue provision by an adjustment within the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

6. Intangible assets

Expenditure on non-monetary assets that do not have physical substance but are controlled by the Board as a result of past events (e.g. computer software and/or software licences) is capitalised when it is expected that future economic or service benefits will flow from the asset to the Board.

Assets are measured originally at cost and only revalued where the fair value of the asset can be determined by reference to an active market.

Where an intangible asset has a finite useful life, the depreciable amount of an intangible asset is depreciated over its useful life in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. An asset is tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset might be impaired – any losses recognised are posted in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any gain or loss arising on the disposal or abandonment of an intangible asset is recognised in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services when the asset is derecognised.

Note 1 - Accounting Policies (Cont'd)

6. Intangible assets (Cont'd)

Where expenditure qualifies as capital for statutory purposes, amortisation, impairment losses and disposal gains and losses are not permitted to have an impact on the Board's balance and are therefore reversed out in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and the Capital Receipts Reserve.

7. Property, Plant and Equipment

Assets that have physical substance and are held for the supply of goods and services, either directly or indirectly, and that are expected to be used during more than one financial year are classified as Property, Plant and Equipment.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of property, plant and equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Board and the cost of the asset can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains, but does not add to the asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential, is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

Measurement

Initially measured at cost, comprising of:

- Purchase price;
- Any costs associated with bringing the asset to the location or condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management; and
- The initial estimate of costs for dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located to its original state.

Where property, plant or equipment are acquired in exchange for a non-monetary asset or assets, or a combination of monetary and non-monetary assets, the cost of the acquired item shall be measured at fair value unless there is no economic substance to the exchange transaction, or the fair value of neither the asset received nor the asset given up can be reliably measured. The acquired item is measured at fair value even if the Board cannot immediately derecognise the asset given up. The acquired item is measured at the carrying amount of the asset given up if it is not measured at fair value.

Assets are then carried in the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- Other buildings – fair value. Where there is no market based evidence of fair value because of the specialised nature of the asset and the asset is rarely sold, depreciated replacement cost is used as an estimate of fair value; and
- Plant and equipment and other non-property assets – fair value. Where assets in this class have either short useful lives or low values (or both), depreciated historical cost is considered to be a proxy for fair value where the useful life is a realistic reflection of the life of the asset and the depreciation method provides a realistic reflection of the consumption of the asset class.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at fair value are re-valued regularly to ensure their carrying amount is not materially different from the fair value at the year end, as a minimum every 5 years.

Note 1 - Accounting Policies (Cont'd)

7. Property, Plant and Equipment (Cont'd)

Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains.

Where decreases in value are identified, the revaluation loss is accounted by:

- Balance of revaluation gains for the asset in Revaluation Reserve – the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the total gain); or
- No balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve – the carrying amount is written down in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The Revaluation Reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2007, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

Impairment

Assets are assessed at the end of each financial year for evidence in impairment or a reduction in value. Where indications exist and any possible differences are estimated to be material, the recoverable amount on the asset is estimated and where this is less than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognised for the shortfall.

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for by:

- Balance of revaluation gains for the asset in Revaluation Reserve – the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the total accumulated gains); or
- No balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve – the carrying amount is written down in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where an impairment loss is reversed subsequently, the reversal is credited in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, up to the amount of the original loss, adjusted for depreciation that would be charged if the loss had not been recognised.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on all property, plant and equipment over their useful economic lives, with an exception made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (i.e. non depreciating land).

The useful lives of assets, as estimated and advised by a suitably qualified officer, are as follows:

- Other buildings* 20-60 years straight line
- Vehicles, plant, equip 5-10 years straight line
- Intangibles 5-10 years straight line

* Including components such as structure, mechanical and electrical, etc.

Where an item of property, plant and equipment assets has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately.

Revaluation gains are also depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current depreciation charged on assets and the depreciation that would be chargeable based upon historic cost being transferred each year from the Revaluation Reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Note 1 - Accounting Policies (Cont'd)

8. Employee Benefits

Benefits payable during employment

Short term employee benefits (i.e. fall due within 12 months of the year-end), such as wages and salaries, paid leave, paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits for current employees are recognised as an expense in the year in which the employees render service to the Board. An accrual is made against the services in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Service for the costs of holiday entitlement and other forms of leave earned by the employee but not taken before the year end and which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. Any accrual made is required under statute to be reversed out of the General Fund balance by a credit to the Statutory Mitigation Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision made by the Board to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept a voluntary termination package in exchange for those benefits. Termination benefits do not provide the Board with future economic benefits and consequently they are recognised on an accruals basis immediately in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when the authority is demonstrably committed to provision of the termination benefits.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, they are treated as pension costs for the purpose of the statutory transfer between the Pension Reserve and the General Fund of the amount by which the pension costs calculated in accordance with the Code are different from the contributions due under the pension scheme regulations. In the Movement in Reserves Statement appropriations are required to and from the Pension Reserve to remove notional debits and credits for termination benefits related to pension's enhancements and replace them with the cost of the cash paid, including any amounts due and not paid at the year end.

Post-Employment Benefits

Employees of the Board are members of The Local Government Pensions Scheme, administered by Glasgow City Council.

The scheme provides defined benefits to members earned as employees of the Board. The Local Government scheme is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme:

- The liabilities of the pension fund attributable to the Board are included within the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method (i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based upon assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, projection of earnings for current employees, etc;
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices using a discount rate of 4.3% (based upon the indicative return rate on long dated high quality corporate bonds);
- All assets are at bid value and are split into Quoted Prices in Active Markets and Prices not quoted in Active Markets, they are now shown in the notes in more detail; and
- Split by Equity Securities, Debt Securities, Private Equity, Real Estate, Investment Funds, Derivatives, Cash.

Note 1 - Accounting Policies (Cont'd)

8. Employee Benefits (Cont'd)

- The change in the net pensions liability is analysed into six components:
 - Current service cost – the increase in liabilities as result of years of service earned this year – allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employee worked;
 - Past service cost – the increase in liabilities arising from current year decisions whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement;
 - Net Interest expenses – the expected increase in the present value of liabilities during the year as they move one year closer, less the fair value of plan assets debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement;
 - Gains/losses on settlements and curtailments – the result of actions to relieve the Board of liabilities or events that reduce the expected future service or accrual of benefits of employees – debited/credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement;
 - Actuarial gains and losses – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – debited to the Pensions Reserve; and
 - Contributions paid to the local government pension fund – cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the Fund to be charged with the amount payable by the Board to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated in accordance to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement this means that there are appropriations to and from the Pension Reserve to remove any notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with the cash paid or payable at the year end, to the pension fund and pensioners. The negative balance that arises on the Pension Reserve measures the beneficial impact on the Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits earned by employees.

Discretionary Benefits

The Board also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the local government pension scheme

Note 1 - Accounting Policies (Cont'd)

9. Events after the reporting period

Events after the reporting period are those events (both favourable and unfavourable) that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the Annual Accounts are authorised for issue. Two types have been identified:

- Those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Annual Accounts are adjusted to reflect this; and
- Those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Annual Accounts are not adjusted to reflect this. However, if the event is material, a disclosure is made within the notes of the nature and financial effect.

10. Operating Leases

Board as Lessee

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense. Charges are made on a straight line basis over the life of the lease, even if it does not match the pattern of payment.

Board as Lessor

Where the Board grants an operating lease over an asset, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Credits are made on a straight line basis over the life of the lease, even if it doesn't match the pattern of payment.

11. Provisions, contingent liabilities and contingent assets

Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Board an obligation, either legal or constructive, as a result of a past event that results in a probable outflow of resources and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of that obligation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year the Board becomes aware of the obligation and measured at the best estimate at the Balance Sheet date, taking account of relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year. Where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits is now required; the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the Board a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events, not wholly within the control of the Board. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but are disclosed as a note to the accounts, unless the possibility of an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits or service potential is remote.

Note 1 - Accounting Policies (Cont'd)

11. Provisions, contingent liabilities and contingent assets (Cont'd)

Contingent assets

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the Board a possible asset whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Board.

Contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefits.

12. VAT

VAT payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from HM Revenue and Customs. VAT receivable is excluded from income.

13. Reserves

Reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the General Reserve Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then appropriated back into the General Reserve Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against requisition income for the expenditure.

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets and retirement benefits and these reserves do not represent usable resources for the Board.

Note 2 – Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The analysis of income and expenditure on the face of the comprehensive income and expenditure statement is that specified by the Service Reporting Code of Practice. However decisions about resource allocation are taken by the Board on the basis of reports that are prepared on a different basis from the accounting policies used in the financial statements. In particular:

- no charges are made in relation to capital expenditure (whereas depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses in excess of the balance on the revaluation reserve and amortisations are charged to the Board in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement); and
- the cost of retirement benefits is based on cash flows (payments of employer's pension's contributions) rather than current service cost of benefits accrued in the year.

The difference between the employee costs figure and the figure reported in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement is due to accounting adjustments for pensions and holiday pay accrual as detailed in the table on page 44. These costs are year -end adjustments that are offset by corresponding transfers to the Balance Sheet and the Movement in Reserves Statement. None of the other rows within the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement would be altered in the Expenditure and Funding Analysis and therefore have not been included in the table on page 44.

Note 2 – Expenditure and Funding Analysis (Cont'd)

2018/19

	Net Chargeable to the General Fund £000	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis £000	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £000
Employee Costs	2,141	260	2,401
Depreciation	0	11	11
Total	2,141	271	2,412

2017/18

	Net Chargeable to the General Fund £000	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis £000	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £000
Employee Costs	2,058	404	2,462
Depreciation	0	22	22
Total	2,058	426	2,484

Note 3 – Operating Leases

Board as Lessor

The Board leases out property under operating leases to provide suitable affordable accommodation Alpha Pets. Alpha Pets lease was due to end on the 14 April 2016; however the company and the Board have a tacit relocation agreement.

The minimum lease payments in future years are:

31 March 2018 £000		31 March 2019 £000
2	Not later than one year	2
0	Later than one year and not later than five years	0
0	Later than five years	0
2		2

Note 3 – Operating Leases (Cont'd)

Board as Lessee

The Board has acquired a number of photocopiers, scanner and letter openers by entering into operating leases.

The future minimum lease payments due under non-cancellable leases in future years are:

31 March 2018		31 March 2019
£000		£000
5	Not later than one year	5
9	Later than one year and not later than five years	4
0	Later than five years	0
14		9

Note 4 – Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers, the Board makes contributions towards the cost of post-employment benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Board has a commitment to make the payments that needs to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

The Board participates in the Strathclyde Local Government Pension Scheme, which is a defined benefit statutory scheme, operated as Strathclyde Pension Fund, and administered by Glasgow City Council in accordance with the Strathclyde Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 1998. This is a funded scheme, meaning that the Board and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions' liabilities with investment assets. The employers' contribution rate is set by the Fund actuaries following valuation. The employer contribution rate for 2018/19 is set at 19.3% and 2017/18 was 19.3%. In 2018/19, the Board paid an employer's contribution of £0.316m (2017/18 £0.271m).

In addition, the Board is responsible for all pension payments relating to added years' benefits which it has awarded together with the related increases. Strain on the Fund costs are charged in year for any early retirals. There was no Severance or Strain on the Fund Payments during financial year 2018/19 (2017/18: £0).

The Board fully complies with the international accounting standard (IAS 19) concerning the disclosure of information on pension. IAS 19 states that although the pension benefits will not be payable until the employee retires; the Board has a commitment to make these payments and must disclose the cost of this in its accounts at the time employees earn their future entitlements.

The Board recognised the cost of retirement benefits in the reported cost of services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However the charge that the Board is required to make against its budget is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post-employment/retirement benefits is reversed out of the general fund via the movement in reserve statement. The following transactions have been made in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement and the general fund balance via the movement in reserves statement during the year.

Note 4 – Defined Benefit Pension Schemes (Cont'd)

2017/18 £000		2018/19 £000
	Net cost of services	
590	Current service cost	586
92	Past service cost (including curtailments)	0
682		586
	Financing and investment Income and Expenditure	
194	Net Interest	88
194		88
876	Total post-employment benefit charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the provision of Services	674
(386)	Return on plan assets	(687)
	Actuarial gains and losses arising on changes in financial	
(1,369)	Assumptions	2,018
17	Changes in demographic assumptions	0
(2,973)	Actuarial gains and losses arising on experience assumptions	1
(3,835)	Total post-employment benefit charged to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement	2,006
	Movement in Reserves Statement	
(876)	Reversal of net charges made to surplus of deficit for post-employment benefits	(674)
	Actual amount charged against the General Fund balance in the year	
279	Employer contributions payable to Scheme	325

Pension Assets and Liabilities (Cont'd)

The underlying assets and liabilities for retirement benefits attributable to the Board as at 31 March 2019 are as follows:

	2018/19 £000	2017/18 £000
Fair value of plan assets	22,409	21,221
Present Value of defined benefit obligations	(26,986)	(24,127)
Net (liabilities)/assets in the Strathclyde Pension Fund	(4,577)	(2,906)
<u>Present Value of Unfunded Liabilities</u>	(244)	(234)
Pre Local Government Reorganisation		
Net pension asset/(liability)	(4,821)	(3,140)

For the Strathclyde Local Government Pension Scheme at 31 March 2019 the Board has a net liability £4.577m and for the unfunded liabilities a net liability of £0.244m. The Board's net liability of £4.821m at 31 March 2019 reflects the future obligations to fund retirement benefits. This represents an increase in the net liability of £1.681m compared to the position at 31 March 2018.

The expected return on assets is based on long term future expected investment return for each asset class as at the beginning of the period. The expected rate of return is 5.9% as at 31/03/19, this is a decrease from 6.0% as at 31/03/18.

Liabilities are valued on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method which assesses the future liabilities of the fund discounted to their present value. The rate used to value liabilities is the basis of long dated high quality corporate bonds.

Note 4 – Defined Benefit Pension Schemes (Cont'd)

The movement during the year on the defined obligation is noted as:

2017/18		2018/19
£000		£000
27,673	Opening balance	24,361
590	Current service cost	586
92	Past service cost (including curtailments)	0
723	Interest cost	660
100	Contributions by Members	97
(1,369)	Actuarial gains/losses in financial assumptions	2,018
(2,973)	Other Experience	1
(8)	Estimated unfunded benefits paid	(9)
(484)	Estimated benefits paid	(484)
17	Changes in demographic assumptions	0
24,361		27,230

The movement during the year regarding the fair value of the employer's assets is noted as:

2017/18		2018/19
£000		£000
20,419	Opening balance	21,221
386	Expected return on assets	687
529	Interest Income	572
100	Contributions by Members	97
271	Contributions by employer	316
8	Contributions in respect of unfunded benefits	9
(8)	Estimated unfunded benefits paid	(9)
(484)	Estimated benefit paid	(484)
21,221		22,409

The Valuation Joint Board's share of the pension funds asset at 31 March 2019 comprised:

Asset Category	31 March 2019			31 March 2018		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets £000	Prices not Quoted in Active Markets £000	Total £000	Quoted Prices in Active Markets £000	Prices not Quoted in Active Markets £000	Total £000
Equity Securities	5,169	14	5,183	4,895	13	4,908
Debt Securities	703	0	703	666	0	666
Private Equity	0	2,678	2,678	0	2,536	2,536
Real Estate	0	2,029	2,029	0	1,921	1,921
Investment funds and unit trusts	7,356	2,194	9,550	6,966	2,078	9,044
Derivatives	0	0	0	1	0	1
Cash and Cash Equivalent	1,154	1,112	2,266	1,092	1,053	2,145
Totals	14,382	8,027	22,409	13,620	7,601	21,221

Pension Assets and Liabilities (Cont'd)

Asset and Liability Matching Strategy (ALM)

The main fund (Fund 1) of Strathclyde Pension Fund does not have an asset and liability matching strategy (ALM) as this is used mainly by mature funds. The Fund does match, to the extent possible, the types of assets invested to the liabilities in the defined benefit obligation. As is required by the pensions and investment regulations, the suitability of various types of investment has been considered, as has the need to diversify investments to reduce the risk of being invested into narrow a range. The Fund invests in equities, bonds, properties and in cash.

The principal actuarial assumptions used at the balance sheet date are as follows:

31/03/2018		31/03/2019
6.0%	Expected rate of return	5.9%
2.4%	Inflation/pension increase rate	2.5%
3.6%	Salary increase rate	3.7%
2.7%	Discount rate	2.4%

Mortality

Based on these assumptions, the average future life expectancies at the age of 65 are:

	Males	Females
Current pensioners	21.4 years	23.7 years
Future Pensioners	23.4 years	25.8 years

Sensitivity Analysis

The estimation of defined benefit obligation is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions. The sensitivity regarding the principal assumptions used to measure the schemes liabilities are set out below

	Approximate % increase to Employer Liability	Approximate monetary Amount (£000)
Rate for discounting fund liabilities (0.5% decrease)	10%	2,780
Rate of salary increase (0.5% increase)	2%	638
Rate of pension increase (0.5% increase)	8%	2,070

The total employer contributions expected to be made to the Local Government Pension Scheme for 2018/19 is £316,000.

Note 5 – External Audit Costs

In 2017/18 the Board incurred the following fees relating to external audit in respect of external audit services undertaken in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice:

2017/18 £000		2018/19 £000
7	Fees payable for external audit services	7
7		7

Note 6 – Property, Plant and Equipment

Movements in costs or values	Land & Buildings £000	Plant & Equipment £000	Total £000
1 April 2017	621	142	763
Additions	0	0	0
31 March 2018	621	142	763
Additions	0	4	4
31 March 2019	621	146	767
Movements in depreciation and impairment			
1 April 2017	(3)	(101)	(104)
Depreciation charge	(5)	(17)	(22)
31 March 2018	(8)	(118)	(12)
Depreciation charge	(3)	(5)	(8)
31 March 2019	(11)	(123)	(133)
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2018	614	24	638
At 31 March 2019	610	23	633

Revaluations

The Board carries out a rolling programme that ensures that all property, plant and equipment required to be measured at fair value is re-valued at least every five years. All valuations were carried out by West Dunbartonshire Council's Internal Valuer. Valuations of land and buildings are carried out in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

Note 7 – Intangible Assets

The Board accounts for its software as intangible assets, to the extent that the software is not an integral part of a particular IT system and accounted for as part of the hardware item of property, plant and equipment. The intangible assets include purchased licences.

All software is given a finite useful life, based on assessments of the period that the software is expected to be of use to the Board. The useful lives assigned to software licences are: 5-10 years. The carrying amount of intangible assets is amortised on a straight-line basis

The movement on Intangible Asset balances during the year is as follows:-

2017/18		2018/19
£000	Balance at start of year:	£000
9	Gross carrying amount	9
(3)	Accumulated amortisation	(5)
6	Net carrying amount at start of year	4
0	Additions	0
(2)	Amortisation for the period	(2)
4	Net carrying amount at end of year	2
	Comprising:	
9	Gross carrying amounts	9
(5)	Accumulated amortisation	(7)
4		2

Note 8 – Debtors

2018/19 £000		2018/19 £000
5	Other Entities and Individuals	9
680	Other Local Authorities	673
685		682

Note 9 – Cash and Cash Equivalents

The balance of cash and cash equivalents is made up of the following elements:

2017/18 £000		2018/19 £000
0	Imprest	0
0		0

Note 10 – Creditors

2017/18 £000		2018/19 £000
4	Central Government Bodies	6
101	Other Entities and Individuals	100
17	Other Local Authorities	15
122		121

Note 11 – Balances & Reserves

At their Board meeting on the 16 November 2012, the Board approved a Balance and Reserves Policy. The table below details the movement on revenue reserves this year.

	£000
Opening Balance at 1 April 2018	551
Gains/(Losses) on the fund	1
Closing Balance at 31 March 2019	552

The revenue reserves balance stands at £0.552m on 31 March 2019, of which £0.162m has been applied to balance the 2019/20 budget, leaving an unearmarked balance of £0.390m.

Note 12 – Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing

The total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year is shown in the table below, together with the resources that have been used to finance it.

2017/18 £000		2018/19 £000
12	Contributions from Authorities	0
17	Unapplied Capital contributions b/forward	29
Capital expenditure incurred during the year:		
0	Upgrade PC's	(4)
0	Servers	0
0	Purchase of Building	0
29	Unapplied Capital contributions c/forward	25

Note 13 – Unusable Reserves

31 March 2018		31 March 2019
£000		£000
607	Capital Adjustment Account	600
35	Revaluation Reserve	35
(3,140)	Pension Reserve	(4,821)
(17)	Statutory Mitigation Account	(16)
(2,515)	Total Unusable Reserves	(4,202)

Capital Adjustment Account

The capital adjustment account absorbs the timing difference arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions. The account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation/impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement (with reconciling postings to the revaluation reserve to convert fair value figures to a historical cost basis). The account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Board as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement.

The account contains revaluation gains accumulated on property, plant and equipment before 1 April 2007, the date that the revaluation reserve was created to hold such gains. The movement in reserve statement provides detail of the source of all the transactions posted to the account.

Revaluation Reserve

The revaluation reserve contains the gains made by the Board arising from increases in the value of its property, plant and equipment (and intangible assets). The balance is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

- re-valued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost;
- used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation; or
- disposed of and the gains are realised.

The reserve contains only revaluation gains accumulated since 1 April 2007, the date that the reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance on the capital adjustment account.

Pension Reserve

The pension reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Board accounts for post-employment benefits in the comprehensive income and expenditure as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However statutory arrangements requires benefits earned to be financed as the Board makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pension for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the pensions reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Board has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

Statutory Mitigation Account

The statutory mitigation account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the general fund balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year, e.g. annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31 March. Statutory arrangements require that the impact on the general fund balance is neutralised by transfers to or from this account.

Capital Requisition Unapplied Account

The capital requisition unapplied account represents capital contributions from the constituent authorities which have not yet been spent.

Note 14 – Contingent Assets & Liabilities

The Board has not identified any Contingent Assets and Liabilities.

Note 15 – Contributions from Authorities

Revenue		Revenue
2017/18		2018/19
£000		£000
1,275	Argyll & Bute Council	1,281
642	East Dunbartonshire Council	642
694	West Dunbartonshire Council	688
2,611		2,611

Note 16 – Government Grants

The Board received a total of £66,022 of government grants in 18/19 to continue with the delivery of Individual Electoral Registration.

2017/18		2018/19
£000		£000
70	Cabinet Office	66
70		66

Note 17 – Related Parties

It is a requirement of the Code that material transactions with related parties (i.e organisations which the Board can influence or be influenced by) should be disclosed. The Board forms Group Accounts with three local authorities, namely West Dunbartonshire Council, East Dunbartonshire Council and Argyll & Bute Council. Sums paid by the local authorities to the Board are detailed in Note 15.

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Report by Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Valuation Joint Board –28 June 2019

Subject: Funding Working Group

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of the progress of the Joint Board's Funding Working Group.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At its meetings in March 2019 the Joint Board agreed:

- (a) the draft revenue budget for 2019/20 and noted the indicative revenue budgets for 2020/21 and 2021/22,
- (b) to convene a short term Working Group to identify possible options to address the projected gaps within these budgets,
- (c) that the Working Group be comprised of Members of the Finance Sub-Committee, the three constituent Councils' Finance Officers and the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, with substitutes being permitted.
- (d) that a report should be brought to the September 2019 Board meeting detailing options for addressing the budget gaps as identified by the Working Group.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The Working Group met on 3 May 2019 and a Minute of the meeting is presented to the Board separately for today's meeting.
- 3.2 The Treasurer to the Joint Board presented a report detailing information regarding the current financial forecasts.
- 3.2.1 The Group was advised that the provisional 2018/19 outturn position was better than had been expected at the point of setting the 2019/20 budget and that this would help the Board's reserves.
 - 3.2.3 It was noted that the Board's current Prudential Reserve equated to almost 4% of the budget whereas Councils often set reserves in the range of 2-4%.
 - 3.2.4 It was expected that the Scottish Government would provide a 3 year settlement to Local Government in its December 2019 budget.

3.3 The Assessor & ERO presented a report which provided further information regarding the financial pressures on the Joint Board arising from Non-Domestic Rates reform.

3.3.1 It was noted that £124,000 of funding has been provided for 2019/20 to assist with the additional resources required to deliver the changes being introduced by the Non-Domestic Rating (Scotland) Bill and other 'Barclay' recommendations.

3.3.2 The Financial Memorandum to the Bill indicates an increasing funding requirement beyond 2019/20 but no commitment has been made to providing funding beyond the current year.

3.3.3 The Assessor advised that he had received 'expressions of interest' in Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) which, if the relevant criteria were met, might assist with reducing the projected expenditure on salaries.

3.3.4 The Assessor confirmed that, as the requirements of NDR Reform became clearer, it may be possible to revise the projected additional expenditure required to deliver these.

3.3.5 It was noted that various efficiency options had been considered including digitisation of work and documents, shared services and sharing of property. A brief paper summarising these was subsequently shared with the members of the Working Group.

3.4 In light of the 2018/19 outturn being better than expected and there being the potential to achieve efficiencies through VER, the Working Group concluded that no immediate action was required. Instead the group would reconvene in December when the Local Government settlement for 2020/21 and beyond was expected to be known. Further the requirements of, and funding for, NDR reform may be better understood at that time.

3.5 In the meantime the Assessor & ERO was encouraged to continue to review services with a view to achieving further efficiencies.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to note:-

(a) that the Working Group will not report to the Board in September,

(b) that, alternatively, the Working Group will meet again in December 2019 with a view to informing the budget setting process for 2020/21 and beyond.

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