

## **DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD**

At a Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board held in the Main Hall, Victoria Halls, Sinclair Street, Helensburgh on Friday, 28 June 2019 at 11.05 a.m.

**Present:** Councillors Graham Archibald Hardie, Donald MacMillan, Alastair Redman, and Richard Trail, Argyll & Bute Council; Councillors Jim Gibbons and John Jamieson, East Dunbartonshire Council; and Bailie Denis Agnew\* and Councillors Jim Brown\* and Marie McNair, West Dunbartonshire Council.

\*Arrived later in the meeting.

**Attending:** David Thomson, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; Robert Nicol, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; Joanne Thomson, Accountant; and Scott Kelly, Committee Officer, West Dunbartonshire Council.

**Also attending:** Richard Smith, Senior Audit Manager, Audit Scotland.

**Apologies:** Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Iain Paterson, Argyll & Bute Council; Councillors Denis Johnston, Stewart MacDonald and Vaughan Moody, East Dunbartonshire Council; and Councillors Jonathan McColl and John Millar, West Dunbartonshire Council. Apologies were also given on behalf of Stephen West, Treasurer; Gillian McNeilly, Finance Manager; Colin McDougall, Audit Manager; and Rosemary Nelson, Principal Administration Officer.

**Councillor Richard Trail in the Chair**

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in any of the items of business on the agenda.

Having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, the Joint Board noted that the Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer would leave the meeting during consideration of the item 'Salary of Depute Assessor & ERO 2018/19 Et Seq'.

## **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Minutes of Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board held on 1 March 2019 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

The Note of Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board Finance Working Group held on 3 May 2019 was submitted and noted.

### **NON-DOMESTIC RATING AND COUNCIL TAX VALUATION PROGRESS**

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

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

Having heard the Assessor and ERO in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed to note:-

- (1) the progress in relation to disposal of Non-Domestic Rating appeals;
- (2) the progress in relation to general maintenance of the Valuation Roll;
- (3) the progress and planning which was under way in respect of the changes to be introduced through the Non-Domestic Rating (Scotland) Bill;
- (4) the progress in relation to general maintenance of the Council Tax List; and
- (5) the progress in relation to the disposal of Council Tax proposals and appeals.

### **ELECTORAL REGISTRATION**

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

After discussion and having heard the Assessor and ERO in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed to note the content of the report.

Note: Bailie Agnew and Councillor Brown entered the meeting during consideration of this item.

### **BEST VALUE – PERFORMANCE REPORTING AND PLANNING**

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

- (a) providing an update on progress in relation to Best Value and, in particular, advising 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.

Having heard the Assessor and ERO in further explanation of the report and in answer to a Member's question, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the performance in relation to the Valuation Roll and Council Tax List KPIs for 2018/19;
- (2) to approve the Public Performance Report for 2018/19;
- (3) to approve the KPI targets for 2019/20; and
- (4) to note that the Assessor and ERO would provide Members of the Joint Board with details of the number of electors in each of the three constituent local authority areas.

### **BEST VALUE – SERVICE PLANNING**

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) seeking approval of the April 2019 update to the 2018-21 Service Plan.

Having heard the Assessor and ERO in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to approve the April 2019 update to Service Plan for the period 2018-21; and
- (2) to note that a report in relation to Equalities would be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Board.

### **BEST VALUE – CUSTOMER SERVICE UPDATE**

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) advising of:-

- (a) the results from the Customer Consultation process during 2018/19; and

- (b) the outcomes from the Complaints Procedure during 2018/19.

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

- (1) to note the positive results from the Customer Satisfaction Survey; and
- (2) to note the results from the Complaints Procedure.

### **BEST VALUE – RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

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

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

Having heard the Assessor and ERO in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, and having given individual consideration to each of the five risks detailed in the Risk Register, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to approve the Board Risk Register, including the actions shown therein and the scoring for each risk, for 2019/20; and
- (2) to note the assessment and management of risk associated with the UK's proposed withdrawal from the European Union.

### **PERSONNEL POLICIES – WELLBEING CHARTER**

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) seeking approval of a 'Wellbeing Charter' for application within the Joint Board.

After discussion and having heard the Assessor and ERO in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed to approve the Wellbeing Charter for implementation within the Joint Board.

Note: The Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer left the meeting prior to consideration of the following item.

### **SALARY OF DEPUTE ASSESSOR & ERO 2018/19 ET SEQ**

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) seeking approval of an amendment to the salary paid to the Depute Assessor and ERO for 2018/19 and thereafter.

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

- (1) to approve the increase in the Depute Assessor and ERO's salary for 2018/19 and subsequent years as detailed in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 of the report;
- (2) that the 80% relationship to the Assessor and ERO's salary be reinstated at any future appointment to the post of Depute Assessor and ERO; and
- (3) that the Assessor and ERO should liaise with West Dunbartonshire Council's Human Resources section to check whether it may be feasible for the Assessor and ERO and Depute Assessor and ERO posts to be aligned with existing pay scales and, if so, bring a report to a future meeting of the Joint Board outlining a proposal in this regard.

Note: The Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer re-entered the meeting at this point.

### **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2019**

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) presenting the draft Annual Report and Final Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2019.

After discussion and having heard the Accountant, the Assessor and ERO and the Senior Audit Manager in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report and the financial position of the Joint Board as at 31 March 2019;
- (2) to note the Draft Management Commentary and Financial Statements for the year to 31 March 2019;
- (3) to note that the audited accounts would be reported to a future meeting for approval; and
- (4) that officers should liaise with the Auditors to check if it may be feasible for the Management Commentary to be more brief in the future.

Note: Councillor McNair left the meeting during consideration of this item.

### **FUNDING WORKING GROUP**

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) advising of the progress of the Joint Board's Funding Working Group.

Having heard the Assessor and ERO in further explanation of the report, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note that the Working Group would not report to the Joint Board in September 2019; and
- (2) that, alternatively, the Working Group would meet again in December 2019 with a view to informing the budget setting process for 2020/21 and beyond.

### **ASSURANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019 FROM THE AUDIT MANAGER**

A report was submitted by the Treasurer advising of the contents of the annual Assurance Statement given in support of the Annual Governance Statement and outlining how audit assurances are obtained.

Having heard the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer in further explanation of the report, the Joint Board agreed to note the contents of the annual Assurance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2019 which were provided at Appendix A to the report.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Following discussion, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) that the next meeting of the Joint Board would be held at 12.00 noon on Wednesday, 25 September 2019 in the Council Offices, Church Street, Dumbarton;
- (2) to note that consideration would be given at that meeting to the date and venue of the subsequent meeting; and
- (3) to note the terms of the discussion which had taken place in relation to the 'Best Value – Customer Service Update' report and whether the users of the Joint Board's services should be described as 'customers' or 'users', and to leave it to the discretion of the Assessor and ERO to determine an appropriate title for this report in the future.

The meeting closed at 12.20 p.m.