



*Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute
Valuation Joint Board*

Council Offices
16 Church Street
Dumbarton
G82 1QL

6 March 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM

With reference to the agenda for the meeting of the Valuation Joint Board being held in the **Pillar Hall, Victoria Halls, Sinclair Street, Helensburgh G84 8TU at 11 a.m. on Friday, 6 March 2020**, which was issued on 25 February 2020, please be advised that Councillor Trail, Chair, has agreed that the undernoted Note of Meeting be considered as an additional item of business.

Yours faithfully,

PETER HESSETT

Clerk to the Valuation Joint Board

Note referred to:-/

14 NOTE OF MEETING OF FINANCE WORKING GROUP

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Submit for information, the Note of Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board Finance Working Group held on Friday, 6 December 2019.

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
Baillie 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: 6 March 2020

**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 'Ballantines' Meeting Room, Council Offices, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Friday, 6 December 2019 at 10.00 a.m.

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

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

West Dunbartonshire Council:
Stephen West, Treasurer
Joanne Thompson, Accountant
Craig Stewart, Committee Officer

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

Councillor Vaughan Moody in the Chair

NOTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Note of Meeting of the Working Group held on 3 May 2019 was submitted for information and noted.

**REVENUE POSITION AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2019 AND
INDICATIVE ESTIMATES 2020/21**

A report was submitted by the Treasurer to the Valuation Joint Board providing an update on the Treasurer's report dated 3 May 2019, current revenue position as at 31 October 2019 and the indicative budget position for 2020/21.

After discussion and having heard the relevant officers in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Working Group agreed:-

- (1) to note the terms of the discussion that had taken place, particularly around 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;

- (2) to note the main continued areas of discussion which were historic cost pressures, efficiencies and the long term financial projections;
- (3) to note that there were a number of assumptions within the draft 2020/21 estimates, these assumptions (e.g. Barclay Review Funding) may lead to additional burdens if they do not come to the conclusion anticipated;
- (4) to note, alternatively, other factors including additional grant funding, may be identified which would have a positive effect on the current projections;
- (5) to note that officers would continue to monitor on an ongoing basis and update the Board and the Financial Strategy as appropriate;
- (6) otherwise to note the projected outturn for the current financial year;
- (7) to note that the improved reserve position; and
- (8) to note the requirement to consider the information presented for future years and a strategy over the next three financial years.

BUDGET GAP – OPERATIONAL UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on the issues affecting the Joint Board's current and projected budget gaps, including the pressures on the Joint Board arising from Non-Domestic Rates Reform.

After discussion and having heard the relevant officers in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Working Group agreed:-

- (1) to note the terms of the discussion that had taken place, particularly around the forecast financial position of the Board, the burdens being faced by the Board currently and into the future, along with a view to agreeing a longer term financially sustainable position;
- (2) to note the terms of the discussion that had taken place, particularly around the financial challenges faced by the Board and the efficiencies made in recent years and future pressures arising primarily from the proposed changes to the Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) system;
- (3) to note the update on the progress of the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill and the financial implications arising therefrom;
- (4) to note the update on the progress of changes to the Electoral Registration system and their potential effects;
- (5) to note the information on miscellaneous other matters affecting the financial position of the Joint Board;

- (6) to note that implementing NDR Reform continued to present challenges and that its financial effects are significant. The financial position of the Joint Board was therefore very dependent upon 'direct' funding by the Scottish Government continuing;
- (7) to note the position regarding miscellaneous issues affecting Joint Board Finances, including additional 'fidelity guarantee' insurance that had to be taken out as a result of the incumbent insurer's unwillingness to accept the Joint Board's ICT security arrangements;
- (8) otherwise to note that the net financial effects of changes to the annual electoral canvass remained unclear and will largely be dependent upon the public response to the new system;
- (9) to note that the Assessor & ERO would continue to monitor the development of legislation and implement change in as efficient a manner as possible; and
- (10) to note that the Assessor & ERO would also continue to seek improvements to the long-term financial sustainability of the Joint Board as and when opportunities for making savings arose.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Working Group would be held in March 2020, when details of the local government financial settlement became clear.

The meeting closed at 10.45 a.m.