

## **Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board**

At a meeting held on Friday 23rd June 2000 in the Council Chamber, Kilmory, Lochgilphead.

**Present:** Councillors George Freeman, Ronald Kinloch and Moyra Stewart, Argyll & Bute Council; Provost Robin McSkimming and Councillors Alan Brown, Anne Cameron, Rhondda Geekie and Keith Moody, East Dunbartonshire Council; and Councillors Mary Campbell and Craig McLaughlin, West Dunbartonshire Council.

**Attending:** Christine Mackay (for the Clerk to the Board); Duncan Wilson, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; William Mathieson, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; Brian Byrne, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; June Nelson, Senior Administrative Officer; Eric Walker, Treasurer, Peter Rudzinski (for Head of Information Services), and David Connell, Chief Accountant, (all West Dunbartonshire Council);

**Apologies:** Councillors E. McTaggart, J. Stirling, J. McCallum, I. Robertson and Andrew White.

### **Councillor Keith Moody in the Chair**

### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting of 14th January 2000 were submitted and approved.

### **CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE APPEALS COMMITTEE**

It was noted that the West Dunbartonshire nominations to the Appeals Committee were Councillors Mary Campbell and Iain Robertson.

### **CAPITAL PLAN 2000/2001**

There was submitted a report by the Treasurer updating members in relation to the 2000/2001 capital plan position.

Mr Walker advised the meeting that, due to restricted capital resources, West Dunbartonshire Council had been unable to agree to contribute its share of £10,655, and that it would not be in a position to consider the matter further until its next meeting in September.

Mr Wilson emphasised the necessity of receiving funding for the purchase of the 2 new UNIX Servers as contained in the Plan, and drew the attention of the Board to the content of the report submitted by West Dunbartonshire Council's Head of Information Services.

After considerable discussion, the Board agreed to

- (1) instruct Mr Walker, in his capacity as Treasurer to the Board, to request West Dunbartonshire Council to reconsider its contribution as soon as possible;
- (2) instruct Mr Walker to confirm the position in writing to Councillors Moody, McLaughlin and Kinloch as soon as a decision had been made by West Dunbartonshire Council;
- (3) request a report to be submitted to the next meeting containing the up-to-date position at that time; and
- (4) to defer any decision on a course of action until the next meeting.

### **CAPITAL PLAN 1999/2000**

There was submitted a report by the Depute Assessor which detailed progress with the capital Plan for 1999/2000 in respect of those items which had been carried forward into 2000/2001.

Having heard Mr Mathieson, the Board agreed

- (1) that the various outstanding items should be completed during the course of 2000/2001; and
- (2) that a further report which would identify the final net underspend should be submitted to a future meeting of the Board.

### **PROPERTY MATTERS**

#### **(a) Title Deeds/User Agreements etc.**

There was submitted a report by the Clerk to the Board advising members of progress in respect of the formalisation of the lease by the Board to the Greater Glasgow Health Board (GGHB) of the Chiropody Unit forming part of the premises at 235 Dumbarton Road, Clydebank.

Having heard Mr Wilson, the Board noted the position. If satisfactory progress towards a conclusion is not made, the Convener asked Mr Wilson to write to him, to enable him to contact the Chairman of the Health Board.

#### **(b) Fire Precautions - 235 Dumbarton Road**

There was submitted a report by the Depute Assessor which gave details of the current position in respect of various alterations which had been identified as necessary in order to meet Fire Regulations.

Having heard Mr Mathieson, the Board agreed to note the position and consider its effect on the final net underspend referred to in the report on the capital Plan 1999/2000 referred to in the previous item.

**(c) Property Security**

There was submitted a report by the Depute Assessor which listed various incidents of vandalism experienced since the end of April 2000 both in 235 Dumbarton Road and Bolgam Street.

Having heard Mr Mathieson give further details of these incidents, the Board agreed to

- (1) note the position;
- (2) approve
  - (i) that the situation would be monitored; and
  - (ii) that if further problems were encountered, that the matter would be brought to the attention of the Property Committee in order that additional security measures might be considered.

**COMPUTER AND OTHER SYSTEMS USED BY  
VALUATION JOINT BOARD STAFF**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Information Services of West Dunbartonshire Council providing an update on the computer and other systems currently used by the Valuation Joint Board.

M Rudzinski gave a brief summary of the paper and emphasised the importance both of replacing the current UNIX servers with new ones to host the Assessor's computer system and also of the new UNIX servers being installed timeously to cope with the changes required due to Electoral Registration legislation. These proposed replacements were included in the Capital Plan 2000/2001, which is dependent on receiving the relevant contributions from all three councils.

After discussion, the Board

- (1) noted that
  - (i) the Survey Logging System currently in use in the Campbeltown office would be introduced to the Clydebank Office;
  - (ii) a Document Imaging System would be purchased to provide full and continuous disaster recovery of the Assessor's files; and
  - (iii) the use of Bar Codes would be introduced into the production of 'A' forms to speed up processing of the forms when they are returned; and

- (2) agreed to instruct the Assessor and the Head of Information Services to liaise on obtaining the new servers as soon as budgetary difficulties were removed

### **BEST VALUE**

There was submitted a report by the Depute Assessor advising members that a response to the submission sent to the Scottish Executive in October 1999 was still awaited, as was the case with all the Joint Boards in Scotland.

The Board agreed to note the position.

### **REVALUATION 2000**

There was submitted a report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer informing members that Revaluation Notices had been issued at the end of March 2000, along with an explanatory leaflet produced by the Scottish Executive and that the three councils' Rates Demand Notices had been issued approximately two weeks later, with another explanatory leaflet from the Scottish Executive.

Having heard Mr Wilson give details of an appeals logging system which had been developed with assistance from the Information Services Section of West Dunbartonshire Council, the Board agreed to note the position.

### **ELECTORAL REGISTRATION**

There was submitted a report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Office advising members that

- (a) The Representation of the People Bill had received Royal Assent on 9th March 2000 and detailing discussions between staff in the Assessor's office and officers from the Information Services section of West Dunbartonshire Council on changes requiring to be made to the current computer systems to cope with the new legislative requirements;
- (b) as a result of these discussions, it will be possible to accommodate the necessary changes to the system in house;
- (c) a pilot postal canvass will be organised in the Strathkelvin and Bearsden Constituency (Part) and the Coatbridge and Chryston Constituency (Part) which will enable staff in the Clydebank office to gain valuable experience in handling increased volumes of mail in advance of moving to a full postal solution in 2001; and
- (d) the Scottish Executive had as yet made no response to the representations by the Scottish Assessors' Association regarding the additional financial burden being placed on councils and

Joint Boards as a result of the inevitable increased costs arising from the transfer to a fully postal canvass.

Having heard Mr Wilson in further explanation of the report, the Board agreed

- (1) to note the content of the report;
- (2) to instruct Mr Wilson to proceed as necessary with essential preparations relating to the Representation of the People Act 2000 as it affects the Electoral Registration function for the area administered by the Joint Board; and
- (3) that Mr Wilson should draft appropriate letters for the Convener to write regarding funding to the Scotland Office, to COSLA, and to the Chief Executives of the Board's Constituent Councils, requesting them to write independently to the Scotland Office supporting the principle of separate funding.

#### **LANDS TRIBUNAL CASE - 15TH AND 16TH MAY 2000**

There was submitted a report by the Depute Assessor containing details of the decision of the Lands tribunal on an appeal by Campsie Spring Scotland Ltd against an entry in the Valuation Roll in respect of ground at Glorat Estate, Lennoxton.

Having heard Mr Mathieson explain the situation in more detail, the Board agreed to

- (1) note the content of the report; and
- (2) endorse Councillor Moody's commendation for the due diligence shown by Mr Mathieson in pursuance of the case.

#### **ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

##### **(a) Query from Councillor Kinloch**

Having heard Councillor Kinloch seek clarification on a matter regarding the charging of water rates to premises which had a water meter installed, Mr Walker undertook to investigate the matter and send clarification to Councillor Kinloch.

##### **(b) Valedictory**

Councillor Moody, on behalf of the Joint Board, extended best wishes for the future to Mrs Mackay on her retirement and thanked her for her work for the Board.

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed to hold the next meeting in Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Friday 15th September 2000 at 11.00 a.m., unless an earlier meeting is considered to be necessary in order to deal with the outstanding 1999/2000 Capital Plan items.