

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL AND BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

At a meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board held in Committee Room 2, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton at 11.00 a.m. on Friday, 13 December 2002.

Present: Councillors John Stirling, Robin Currie and Donald McIntosh, Argyll & Bute Council; Provost Robin McSkimming and Councillors Alex Hannah, Rhondda Geekie* and Keith Moody, East Dunbartonshire Council; and Councillor Ian McDonald, West Dunbartonshire Council.

* Arrived later in meeting.

Attending: 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, Principal Administrative Officer; Eric Walker, Treasurer; David Connell, Manager of Accounting; Glynis Morgan, Senior Accountancy Assistant; Gerry McInerney, Head of Personnel; Peter Rudzinski, Support Section Head, Information Services; Don Findlay, Manager of Building Services; Allan Donaldson, Surveyor; and David Rooney, Senior Administrative Officer (for the Clerk to the Board).

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Alasdair Blair, Argyll & Bute Council; and Councillor Mary Campbell, West Dunbartonshire Council.

Councillor Keith Moody in the Chair

VARIATION TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

After hearing the Convener, Councillor Moody, the Board agreed to vary the Order of Business and to take Item 3 b) on the agenda, under the heading "Chief Officer Salaries Agreement – CO/136", as the last item of business with all officers with the exception of the Head of Personnel and the Senior Administrative Officer being excluded.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board held on 14 June 2002 were submitted and approved.

PERSONNEL

(a) Single Status Update

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel, West Dunbartonshire Council advising of developments within the Single Status Agreement.

After hearing the Head of Personnel, the Joint Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

(b) Race Equality Scheme

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel, West Dunbartonshire Council asking the Joint Board to approve the establishment of a Race Equality Scheme.

After hearing the Head of Personnel and following discussion, the Joint Board agreed to approve the Race Equality Scheme and to adopt West Dunbartonshire Council's Ethnic Monitoring Policy. It was noted that the document would now be endorsed by the signatures of the Convener and the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer.

Note: Councillor Geekie entered the meeting during consideration of the above item.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

(a) Valuation Joint Board Systems

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

It was agreed to note:-

- (i) that various enhancements had been made to the Electoral Registration system to reflect legislative changes required by The Representation of the People (Scotland) (Amendment) Regulations 2002;
- (ii) that the Valuation Joint Board has its own web pages and will eventually be using and controlling its own web site;
- (iii) that the Assessor was using PCs and peripheral equipment which were more than four years old and that this equipment should be replaced on a rolling basis;

- (iv) that the communications link between Campbeltown and Dumbarton requires to be upgraded, both in the short term and long term; and
- (v) that the Valuation Joint Board should consider the recruitment of a computer programmer to assist Information Services in the enhancements required to the Assessor's systems, at a cost of approximately £25,000 per annum.

(b) Information and Communication Technology Access Security – E-mail and Internet Security Policy for Employees and Other Agents

A report was submitted by the Head of Information Services, West Dunbartonshire Council providing an update on discussions which had been taking place between the Assessor and Information Services, Personnel, Internal Audit and Legal & Administrative Services of West Dunbartonshire Council over a Minute of Agreement on this policy.

It was agreed to note:-

- (i) that the Minute of Agreement had been finalised;
- (ii) that West Dunbartonshire Council had hosted a seminar for senior Assessor's staff to explain the policy and to answer any questions; and
- (iii) that West Dunbartonshire Council's E-mail and Internet Security Policy for Employees and Other Agents had been issued by the Assessor to his Officers for the Consent Form to be signed, and all forms had been returned.

MODERNISING GOVERNMENT FUND (2)

A report was submitted by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer advising the Board of a corporate bid to MGF(2) by the Scottish Assessors' Association, seeking approval for the participation of the Assessor to Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board in the bid and inviting confirmation of funding in the Budgets for 2003 & 2004.

The Board agreed:-

- (a) to the participation of the Assessor in "Definitive National Addressing for Scotland" (DNA – Scotland) as referred to in the report; and

- (b) to the inclusion of sums of £5,500 and £6,000 in the budgets for 2003/04 and 2004/05 respectively, as the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board contribution to the MGF(2) bid made by the Scottish Assessors' Association.

FINANCE

(a) Annual Report and Final Accounts for Year Ending 31 March 2002

A report was submitted by the Treasurer advising of the detailed Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2002 which had now been audited.

Having heard the Treasurer, the Valuation Joint Board agreed:-

- (i) to approve the Annual Report and Accounts;
- (ii) to note the Auditor's 'Report to Members'; and
- (iii) to record the appreciation of the Treasurer in relation to the assistance which had been provided by his and the Joint Board's staff over the year.

(b) Revenue Estimates 2003/2004

A report was submitted by the Treasurer presenting the draft Revenue Estimates for 2003/04.

Having heard the Treasurer, it was agreed:-

- (i) to approve the draft Revenue Estimates for 2003/04; and
- (ii) that the requisition on the Constituent Councils would be based on each Council's relevant Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) figures as in previous years and as indicated in Appendix 3 to the report.

(c) Capital Estimates 2003/04

A report was submitted by the Treasurer presenting the draft Capital Estimates for 2003/04.

Having heard the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer and following discussion, it was agreed:-

- (i) to approve the 2003/04 Capital Plan of £40,580, subject to the proviso that no expenditure be incurred on the CCTV project detailed in Appendix 2 to the report without the prior approval of the Convener or Depute Convener of the Board; and
- (ii) that the requisition on the Constituent Councils would be based on each Council's relevant Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) figures as in previous years and as indicated in Appendix 3 to the report.

PROPERTY

(a) Insurance Portfolio

A report was submitted by the Clerk to the Joint Board providing an update on the arrangements regarding the Group Life, Property, Combined Liability, Computer and Personal Accident/Travel Insurances for the Valuation Joint Board.

The Joint Board agreed to note and approve the arrangements which had been made with regard to Property, Combined Liability, Computer and Personal Accident/Travel Insurances and Death in Service cover.

(b) Occupation by Greater Glasgow Primary Care NHS Trust of part of 235 Dumbarton Road, Clydebank.

A report was submitted by the Director of Economic, Planning & Environmental Services, West Dunbartonshire Council informing the Board of the current position regarding the occupation of part of 235 Dumbarton Road, Clydebank by Greater Glasgow Primary Care NHS Trust.

After discussion the Board agreed:-

- (i) to note the current position whereby the Trust was now due to vacate the property with effect from 1 February 2003 and to authorise West Dunbartonshire Council Estates Section to commence with marketing the property for let under its normal marketing arrangements with immediate effect;
- (ii) to grant delegated authority to West Dunbartonshire Council Estates Section in consultation with the Assessor to grant a lease of the property based on the Council's standard terms and conditions at a market rental for a period not exceeding five years with all costs incurred by West Dunbartonshire Council being reimbursed to the Council; and

- (iii) to note that the Assessor will apply for rates relief when the property is vacated.

(c) 235 Dumbarton Road, Clydebank – Heating, Planned Maintenance and Building Security

A report was submitted by the Director of Commercial and Technical Services, West Dunbartonshire Council advising of progress to date in respect of heating system improvements and proposals for planned maintenance work to the building and general building security.

Having heard the Manager of Building Services, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (i) to note the progress made with the heating improvement work and that the completion date for the Phase One remedial work and the replacement of radiators forming part of Phase Two of the heating improvement work would now be 15 December 2002, that is, one week later than indicated in the report; and
- (ii) to approve the proposals and cost information relating to planned maintenance and building security projects.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

A report was submitted by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer providing the Joint Board with an update on the current position on Electoral Registration.

After hearing the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer and following discussion, the Joint Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

The Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer emphasised the importance of Councillors wishing to be supplied with copies of the Register responding to the letters sent to them, and the Convener recommended that members of the Board should remind their colleagues of this arrangement.

In relation to a point which was raised by Councillor Geekie, it was noted that the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer would arrange for reminder letters to be sent to all Community Councils concerning their entitlement to receive copies of the full Register of Electors and the restrictions on the use of information in the Register which apply to Community Councils.

REVALUATION 2000 – PROGRESS

A report was submitted by the Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on progress with the disposal of appeals arising from the non-domestic Revaluation 2000.

It was agreed that the information contained in the report on the progress made to date be noted and welcomed by the Board.

BEST VALUE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

(a) General Progress

A report was submitted by the Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on progress with Best Value, as delegated to the Assessor and staff, and also providing further information on the latest Best Value related development, Performance Management Planning.

Having heard Mr. Mathieson, Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, it was agreed to note the content of the report and that further progress would be reported in due course.

(b) Complaints Procedure

A report was submitted by the Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on the Complaint Procedures approved by the Board in December 2000.

Having heard the Convener and Councillor Stirling, it was agreed:-

- (i) to note the content of the report and to establish a Sub-Committee to deal with any formal complaints which may be referred to the Joint Board; and
- (ii) that Councillor Moody, Convener, representing East Dunbartonshire Council, Councillor McLaughlin, Depute Convener, representing West Dunbartonshire Council, and Councillor Stirling, representing Argyll & Bute Council, be appointed to serve on the Sub-Committee.

RETURN OF PUBLIC UTILITIES TO CONVENTIONAL RATING

A report was submitted by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer advising of the possible formal arrangements being considered by the Scottish Executive to return public utilities to conventional rating.

Having heard the Convener and the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, the Board agreed to note the content of the report and to authorise the Assessor to maintain his present level of commitment to the Scottish Assessors' Association and Scottish Executive in matters relating to prescribed industries.

It was also noted that funding may be provided by the Scottish Executive specifically for the purposes of meeting the cost of the exercise.

Note: All remaining officers, with the exception of the Head of Personnel and the Senior Administrative Officer, were requested to leave the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

PERSONNEL

Chief Officer Salaries Agreement – CO/136

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel, West Dunbartonshire Council asking the Joint Board to approve salary increases for the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer and his Deputies in accordance with the implementation of the MacIntosh review of Chief Executives' salaries.

Having heard the Head of Personnel and after extended discussion, it was agreed:-

- (i) to establish a fixed salary for the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer based on Chief Official Spinal Column Point 42 and to confirm the consequential 75% relationship between the salaries of the Assessor and his Deputies; and
- (ii) to approve the implementation of the revised salaries with effect from 1 April 2002 in accordance with the terms of Circular CO/136.

Note: The various officers who had been excluded from the meeting during consideration of the above item were readmitted at this point and advised of the decision of the Board.

CONVENER'S REMARKS

After hearing the Convener, Councillor Moody, it was noted that it was unlikely that a further meeting of the Joint Board would be required prior to the Local Government Elections in May 2003 and that this may, therefore, be the last meeting of the present Board.

Councillor Moody advised that it was not his intention to stand in the forthcoming Elections and he suggested that as the position of Convener of the Joint Board had been held by a member of East Dunbartonshire Council since May 1999, and previously by a member of West Dunbartonshire Council, and the responsibility was normally shared between the constituent Councils, members of Argyll & Bute Council may wish to consider taking on the position of Convener of the Board when new appointments are made following the Elections.

Mr. Wilson took the opportunity to express his appreciation to the members of the Board for their commitment and the assistance which they had provided, and to his own staff for their efforts, without which the business of the Board could not be so satisfactorily completed.

Councillor Stirling then requested that the gratitude of the members of the Board be recorded in relation to the work which had been undertaken by the Convener, the Depute Convener and the officers of the Valuation Joint Board and West Dunbartonshire Council over the previous four years.

The meeting closed at 1.10 p.m.