

DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

At a Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board held in Meeting Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Friday, 22 June 2007 at 11.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Donald McMillan, Gary Mulvaney, Ronald Kinloch (Substitute) and Donald Macdonald (Substitute), Argyll and Bute Council; Councillors Anne Jarvis and Vaughan Moody, East Dunbartonshire Council; and Councillors Jim Brown and Jim Finn, West Dunbartonshire Council.

Attending: David Thomson, Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer; William Mathieson, Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer; June Nelson, Principal Administration Officer; David Connell, Treasurer; and David Rooney, Senior Administrative Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Donald McIntosh, Ellen Morton and Vivien Dance, Argyll and Bute Council; Councillors Rhondda Geekie, John Jamieson and Gillian Renwick, East Dunbartonshire Council; and Councillors David McBride and Craig McLaughlin, West Dunbartonshire Council. Apologies were also intimated on behalf of Mr. Alistair Boyd, Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer and Mr. Don Findlay, Manager of Technical Services.

WELCOME TO MEETING, INTRODUCTIONS AND OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Thomson, Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Joint Board following the local government elections in May 2007. Mr. Thomson introduced himself, Mr. William Mathieson, Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer and Ms. June Nelson, Principal Administration Officer. Mr. Thomson advised that the other Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, Mr. Alistair Boyd, was unable to attend the meeting. Messrs. David Connell, Treasurer and David Rooney, Senior Administrative Officer, were also introduced by Mr. Thomson.

Mr. Thomson made reference to the paper providing an introduction for Board Members to the valuation functions and duties of the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer that had been circulated with the meeting papers. Mr. Thomson indicated that comments or queries from Members were welcomed and he asked if Members would find it helpful to receive presentations or briefing papers, visit the Board's offices, etc. It was noted that Members considered that it would be beneficial to have a training seminar.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

A report was submitted by the Clerk to the Valuation Joint Board providing details of the Members appointed to the Joint Board by the constituent authorities following the local government elections in May 2007.

It was agreed to note the position with respect to the membership of the Valuation Joint Board.

APPOINTMENT OF CONVENER AND DEPUTE CONVENER

Mr. Thomson invited nominations for the appointment of Convener. Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor McMillan, nominated Councillor Moody. The Board unanimously agreed that Councillor Moody be appointed Convener and Councillor Moody assumed the Chair.

The Convener, Councillor Moody, then requested nominations for the position of Depute Convener. Councillor McMillan, seconded by Councillor Brown, nominated Councillor Finn. The Board unanimously agreed that Councillor Finn be appointed Depute Convener.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO SUB-COMMITTEES, ETC.

The Board considered the appointment of Members to Sub-Committees, etc.

After consideration it was agreed:-

- (1) that the Convener and Depute Convener be appointed to each of the Sub-Committees and the Recruitment Panel; and
- (2) that one additional Member be appointed to each of the Sub-Committees, etc. as follows:

Appeals Sub-Committee	Councillor Donald McMillan
Property Sub-Committee	Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Complaints Sub-Committee	Councillor Donald McIntosh
Recruitment Panel	Councillor Ellen Morten

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board held on 8 December 2006 were submitted for information and noted.

REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS, FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND DELEGATED POWERS OF ASSESSOR AND ERO

A report was submitted by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer seeking approval of (a) a number of amendments to the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and (b) the approach to review of the Delegated Powers of the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer.

Having heard the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, who advised that the proposed amendments were minor in nature, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to approve the amended Financial Regulations and Standing Orders as set out in the appendices to the report; and
- (2) to approve review of the Delegated Powers following settlement of the Pay Modernisation/Single Status process, and submission of a report to the Joint Board for approval at a future date.

INSURANCE PORTFOLIO

A report was submitted by the Clerk to the Valuation Joint Board providing information on the arrangements for group life, property, combined liability, computer, personal accident and business travel insurances for the Valuation Joint Board.

The Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to delegate authority to the Clerk to the Valuation Joint Board to renew the Insurance Contracts on an annual basis with a view to securing cover which represents and maintains best value for the Board; and
- (2) to approve the arrangements which had been made with regard to the Death in Service cover.

PAYMENT OF VALUATION APPEALS PANEL SECRETARIES' EXPENSES

A report was submitted by the Treasurer to the Valuation Joint Board concerning a proposed schedule of Fees and Allowances payable to the secretaries of the Valuation Appeals Panel with effect from 1 July 2007.

The Valuation Joint Board agreed to approve the reimbursement of Assistant Secretaries' Fees and Expenses in accordance with the notes detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

PAY MODERNISATION AND SINGLE STATUS

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel Services, West Dunbartonshire Council providing an update on the progress of the pay modernisation agenda and the implementation of the Single Status Agreement.

Having heard the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, who advised that Mr. Paul McGowan, Pay Modernisation Project Manager, had been unable to attend the meeting, the Joint Board agreed to note the current position in relation to implementation of the Single Status Agreement and Pay Modernisation.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

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

Having heard the Principal Administration Officer and the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note that the Scottish Assessors Association had participated in the enquiry which was being carried out on behalf of the Scottish Executive by Mr. Ron Gould with regard to the problems that had occurred in relation to the Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government elections on 3 May 2007;
- (2) to note that as the management of the elections was the function of the Returning Officer, it would be inappropriate for the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer to offer any comments in response to questions on that subject from Members;
- (3) to note that difficulties were being experienced with respect to the recruitment of staff to carry out the 2007 Canvass, particularly in the Oban and Tarmachan areas and that any assistance from Members in this regard would be welcomed; and
- (4) to otherwise note the content of the report.

NON-DOMESTIC RATING AND DOMESTIC COUNCIL TAX VALUATION PROGRESS

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

- (a) of progress in relation to the Assessor's Non-Domestic Rating Valuation function;
- (b) of matters relating to the funding of the Assessor's statutory designation for the Scottish gas networks; and

- (c) of progress in relation to the Assessor's Council Tax Valuation function.

The Joint Board agreed to note:-

- (1) the progress in relation to disposal of Revaluation appeals and Council Tax proposals,
- (2) the progress in relation to maintenance of the Valuation Roll and the Council Tax Valuation Lists; and
- (3) the possible requirement for an additional requisition to be made to the constituent authorities to defend the gas utility valuations.

BEST VALUE & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING – UPDATE

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

- (a) providing an update on progress in relation to Best Value; in particular, reporting on Key Performance Indicators for the year 2006/07, and advising of the current position with Performance Management and Planning (PMP); and
- (b) advising of the results from the Customer Consultation process during 2006/07.

Having heard the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer in further explanation the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the performance in relation to the KPIs for 2006/07;
- (2) to approve the KPI targets for 2007/08, subject to the proposed targets in relation to amendments to the Valuation Roll of 78%, 12% and 10% being amended to 80%, 15% and 5%;
- (3) to note the ongoing involvement of the Management Team in performance management and planning; and
- (4) to note the positive results from the Customer Satisfaction Survey.

AUDITS OF THE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

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

- (a) providing an update on progress in relation to the Audit Action Plans previously approved by the Board; and
- (b) advising of progress in respect of the 2006/07 internal audit of the Valuation Joint Board's valuation functions.

Having heard the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer in answer to Members' questions Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress in respect of the audits of financial and Electoral Registration systems,
- (2) to note the content of the draft, interim internal audit of valuation systems, including the proposed actions; and
- (3) that the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer would present the completed internal audit report on Non-Domestic Rating and Council Tax valuation systems to the next regular meeting of the Joint Board.

SCOTTISH ASSESSORS' WEB PORTAL

A report was submitted by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on progress in relation to the Scottish Assessors' Association, Improvement Service/Customer First/MGF(3) funded, 'Assessors' Portal Project'.

Having heard the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, who advised that the web portal was a very good source for Assessor and Electoral Registration information, the Joint Board agreed to note the content of the report.

GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

A report was submitted by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer seeking approval of a draft Gender Equality Scheme.

Having heard the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, who advised that the Scheme was intended to cover a three-year period commencing 29 June 2007, the Joint Board agreed to approve the Gender Equality Scheme.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW PERSONNEL POLICIES

A report was submitted by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer seeking approval of proposed Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and a Policy on Dignity at Work.

Having heard the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, the Joint Board agreed to approve the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and the Policy on Dignity at Work.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME CHANGES AND
DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL & BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD'S
POLICY ON DISCRETIONS**

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

- (a) updating the Joint Board on the considerable regulatory changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme by virtue of the 'Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 1998' and the Local Government (Discretionary Payments and Injury benefits) (Scotland) Regulations 1998; and
- (b) seeking approval for a revised Policy on Discretions which identifies Board discretions in respect of early leavers, flexible retirement, augmentation of benefits, shared cost AVCs and election to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Having heard the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, who advised that approval of the revised Policy on Discretions would bring the Joint Board in line with the position in West Dunbartonshire Council, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note the changes to the Pension Scheme; and
- (2) to approve the amended Policy on Discretions.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING SEMINAR

Having heard the Convener, Councillor Moody, it was agreed that subject to appropriate accommodation being available, the next meeting of the Valuation Joint Board would be held on Friday, 7 December 2007 at 11 a.m. at the headquarters of East Dunbartonshire Council, Tom Johnston House in Kirkintilloch.

It was also agreed that the Introductory Training Seminar for Members, referred to earlier in the meeting, would be held on Friday, 28 September 2007 at 11 a.m. in the Assessor's offices at 235 Dumbarton Road, Clydebank. It was noted that if there was a specific aspect of the functions of the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer that Members would wish information or an update on, they should contact Mr. Thomson and appropriate arrangements would be made.

The meeting closed at 11.47 a.m.