



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Minute of Meeting

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board.

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 16 August 2019	14:00	Inverclyde Council, Municipal Buildings, Clyde Square, GREENOCK, PA15 1LZ

Present

Councillor Paul O’Kane (East Renfrewshire Council); Councillor Graeme Brooks, Councillor Colin Jackson, Councillor Tommy McVey and Councillor Innes Nelson (all Inverclyde Council); and Councillor Tom Begg, Councillor Jacqueline Cameron, Councillor Kenny MacLaren, Councillor Mags MacLaren, Councillor John McIntyre, Councillor Bill Brown (substitute for Councillor Jim Sharkey) and Councillor Andy Steel (all Renfrewshire Council).

Chair

Councillor Paul O’Kane, Depute Convener, presided.

In Attendance

K Crawford, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, J Murgatroyd, Assistant Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer and L Hendry, Assistant Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (all Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board); A MacArthur, Head of Finance and E Currie, Senior Committee Services Officer (both Finance & Resources, Renfrewshire Council); and S Afzal and P Bonfanti (both Audit Scotland).

Additional Item

The Depute Convener intimated that there was an additional item of business in relation to membership of the Joint Board which had not been included in the notice calling the meeting. The Depute Convener, being of the opinion that the item which is dealt with at item 13 below, was urgent in view of the need to advise members of the position, authorised its consideration.

Apologies

Councillor Angela Convery (East Renfrewshire Council); and Councillor Audrey Doig and Councillor Jim Sharkey (both Renfrewshire Council).

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1 Minute

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Board held on 31 May 2019.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report

There was submitted a revenue budget monitoring report by the Treasurer in respect of the Joint Board for the period 1 April to 19 July 2019.

The report intimated that gross expenditure was currently £17,000 under budget and income was on target. There had been no budget adjustments since the start of the financial year, however, the financial schedule reflected updated budget figures that included Barclay funding of £200,000.

It was anticipated that the Joint Board would underspend by £92,000 by the end of the financial year resulting in a temporary contribution to reserves. This underspend was expected due to delayed recruitment of key posts funded by Barclay implementation monies and was expected to be drawn down from reserves during 2020/21.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

3 Audit Report on the Annual Accounts 2018/19

Under reference to item 3 of the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Board held on 31 May 2019 there was submitted a report by the Treasurer relative to the audited annual accounts for the Joint Board 2018/19.

The report intimated that The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 required the Joint Board to prepare and publish annual accounts that were subject to external audit. Section 10 of the Regulations required the Joint Board to consider any report made by the appointed auditor before deciding whether to sign the audited accounts.

The findings of the Joint Board's appointed auditor, Audit Scotland, formed Appendix 1 to the annual audit report, and confirmed their opinion that the annual accounts were free from material misstatement and presented a true and fair view of the Joint Board's financial position at 31 March 2019.

The unaudited annual accounts 2018/19 were reported to the Joint Board at its meeting held on 31 May 2019 and owing to a revision in pension estimates there was an

increase in net liabilities in the balance sheet of £0.251 million in the audited annual accounts, which formed Appendix 2 to the report.

DECIDED:

(a) That the findings of the 2018/19 audit as contained in the external auditor's annual audit report, which formed Appendix 1 to the report, be noted; and

(b) That the 2018/19 audited annual accounts for the Joint Board, which formed Appendix 2 to the report, be approved for signature.

4 Barclay Review: Update

There was submitted a report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer relative to developments and expenditure arising from the Barclay Review.

The report intimated that a review of staffing had been undertaken to allow the Joint Board to deliver the new requirements following the Barclay recommendations. Two spaces had been secured at Edinburgh Napier University for BSc in Construction and the Built Environment with funding from Skills Development Scotland through the Graduate Level Apprenticeship Scheme and two spaces had been secured at the City of Glasgow College for a two-year course leading to an HNC in Construction Management.

Interviews had been held for the four posts, two trainee valuers and two trainee technicians, to allow the successful candidates time to enrol in the relevant courses. All costs for the four posts would be met from the money allocated to the Barclay funding.

Work was underway with other Assessors' offices to design and procure the new IT valuation system and it was anticipated that this system would be operational in 2020.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

5 Corporate Risk Register

There was submitted a report by the Assistant Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer relative to the Joint Board's Corporate Risk Register, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The report intimated that the Corporate Risk Register had been reviewed in line with the Joint Board's agreed review cycle.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

6 Electoral Registration: Update

There was submitted a report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on electoral issues facing the Joint Board.

The report provided information on the European Parliamentary Election; the migration to a new Electoral Management System (EMS); the Referendums (Scotland) Bill; the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill; and the introduction of a new style canvass.

The report thanked staff for their continuing hard work and diligence.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

7 Contracts and Complaints: Update

The Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer submitted a report relative to the award of contracts and complaints received.

The report intimated that there had been no new contracts awarded since the last meeting of the Joint Board and that the contract for the new Disaster Recovery System was expected to be put out to tender in early September 2019. This contract was the subject of a separate report which was considered at item 8 of this Minute.

There had been one complaint received in connection with the European Election and this had been resolved at front line resolution stage.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

8 Disaster Recovery Service Contract: Update

There was submitted a report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on the procurement of a suitable Disaster Recovery System.

The report intimated that Renfrewshire Council's procurement team were progressing this contract and the timeline indicated that a go-live date for tenders would be mid August 219 with the award expected by mid September 2019.

It was noted that once the system was in place, the critical recommendations from Internal Audit's report would be met and the Joint Board would be in a position to allow further moves to e-copies of files and remove the need for paper based records, which had both the advantage of ensuring records were not destroyed by fire or flood and allowed electronic records management to be fully operational for all scanned paperwork and files.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

9 Trade Union Facility Time Reporting

There was submitted a report by the Assistant Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer relative to trade union facility reporting.

The report intimated that The Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 required public sector employers who had full time equivalent employee numbers of more than 49 to publish information relating to facility time taken by union representatives.

Although the Joint Board was not, at present, legally required to publish this information, as the number of full time equivalent staff was below the required level, it had been considered appropriate to voluntarily publish the information in the interests of transparency.

The Joint Board recognised that it was to the mutual benefit of the Joint Board and its employees that they were represented by trade unions. The Joint Board was

committed to the principle of collective bargaining at both national and local level and recognised the important role of trade unions in promoting and developing good employee relations and health and safety practices.

Data had been collated under the new regulation and information relating to facility time for 2017/18 and 2018/19 was appended to the report.

The Joint Board noted the importance of trade unions and facility time and thanked trade union officials for the work undertaken.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

10 Performance Report

There was submitted a report by the Assistant Assessor & Assistant Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on the current performance and workload issues facing the Joint Board.

The report detailed the performance in Council Tax and non-domestic valuation against set targets. In relation to Council Tax valuation, for the period 1 April to 30 June 2019, it was noted that the addition of new houses to the Valuation List and the deletion of demolished houses remained a priority with the time taken to enter new houses into the Valuation (Council Tax) List exceeding the target of 95% within three months and narrowly missing the target of 99.50% within six months. This slight dip in performance of less than 1% did not give cause for concern as the new functional based workforce had only been in place since December 2018. In addition, a number of the new properties added to the Valuation (Council Tax) List had not been identified to the Joint Board until the dwellings had been occupied for a period of time.

The report also detailed the average number of days taken to add a house in each constituent authority area between 1 April and 30 June 2019 which was within the target of 38 days and also the number of deletions from the Valuation (Council Tax) List between 1 April and 30 June in 2018 and 2019 by constituent authority area.

The report set out the time taken to make statutory amendments to the Valuation Roll, excluding appeal settlements and amendments to the prescribed entries, between 1 April and 30 June 2019 by constituent authority area, which exceeded the targets of 80% to be actioned within three months and 95% within six months.

It was proposed that the Depute Convener consult with the Convener regarding the Joint Board being measured on statutory adjustments that were not notified timeously to the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer by interested parties and which were included in the performance targets submitted to the Scottish Government. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

(a) That the report be noted; and

(b) That it be noted that the Depute Convener would consult with the Convener regarding the Joint Board being measured on statutory adjustments that were not notified timeously to the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer by interested parties and which were included in the performance targets submitted to the Scottish

Government; and

(c) That following these discussions, a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Board to be held on 22 November 2019.

11 Non-domestic Appeals

There was submitted a report by the Assistant Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer advising on the appeal process and progress on disposal of revaluation appeals and running roll appeals received since the 2017 revaluation.

The report intimated that a five-yearly revaluation process had been introduced by The Valuation and Rating (Scotland) Act 1956 and this required the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer to value, or revalue, all the lands and heritages in the valuation area. These valuations were totally fresh and need bear no relation to the value applied in the preceding seven years.

The revaluation brought with it a fresh right of appeal which had to be exercised within a six-month period starting from 1 April in the year of the revaluation or within six months of the date of issue of the Valuation Notice, whichever was the later. These appeals must be disposed of within time limits prescribed in the Timetable Order which currently stated by the end of the third year following revaluation, this being 31 December 2020.

The report provided information in relation to negotiation of appeals; the Local Valuation Appeal Committee; revaluation appeals; the disposal of 2017 revaluation appeals; the disposal of running roll appeals; and disposal of other outstanding appeals.

The appendix to the report detailed the number of appeals received, processed, disposed of and outstanding by constituent authority and the Joint Board area as a whole as at 30 June 2019.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

12 Changes to Dates of Meetings 2020 to 2022

Under reference to item 12 of the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Board held on 31 May 2019 there was submitted a report by the Clerk relative to meetings of the Joint Board scheduled to be held in January and August 2020, 2021 and 2022.

The report intimated that at the meeting of this Joint Board held on 30 June 2017 it was decided that meeting dates be agreed for the five-year term from 2017 to 2022 and that meetings of this Joint Board be held at 2.00 pm on 18 August and 17 November 2017; 19 January, 1 June, 17 August and 23 November 2018; 18 January, 31 May, 16 August and 22 November 2019; 17 January, 29 May, 21 August and 20 November 2020; 15 January, 28 May, 20 August and 19 November 2021; and 21 January and 10 June 2022.

At the meeting of this Joint Board held on 31 May 2019 it was decided that meetings of the Joint Board scheduled for January and August 2020, 2021 and 2022 be now held in February and September of those years and that the Clerk submit a report to the next meeting of the Joint Board detailing the dates and venues for these rescheduled meetings.

The rescheduled dates were detailed in section 1.4 of the report. To facilitate meetings

of the Joint Board being held from time to time in each constituent authority area, the report proposed that powers be granted to the Clerk, in consultation with the Convener, to arrange a meeting or meetings of the Joint Board at venues in the area covered by the Joint Board.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Joint Board approve the rescheduled dates for meetings of the Joint Board as detailed in section 1.4 of the report; and

(b) That authority be granted to the Clerk, in consultation with the Convener, to arrange a meeting or meetings of the Joint Board in venues in the area covered by the Joint Board.

13 Membership

Members were advised that East Renfrewshire Council had intimated that Councillor Danny Devlin had resigned his position on the Joint Board.

It was noted that the Clerk would contact East Renfrewshire Council regarding this vacancy.

DECIDED:

(a) That it be noted that Councillor Danny Devlin had resigned his position on the Joint Board; and

(b) That it be noted that the Clerk would contact East Renfrewshire Council regarding this vacancy.

14 Date of Next Meeting

DECIDED: That it be noted that the next meeting of the Joint Board would be held at 2.00 pm on 22 November 2019 in the offices of Renfrewshire Council, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley.