



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Notice of Meeting and Agenda Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board.

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 15 September 2023	14:00	East Renfrewshire Council (Council HQ), Council Headquarters, Eastwood Park, Rouken Glen Road, Giffnock, G45 6UG

MARK CONAGHAN
Clerk

Membership

Councillor Audrey Doig (Convener): Councillor Paul Cassidy (Depute Convener)

Councillor Annette Ireland, Councillor Andrew Morrison, Provost Mary Montague and Councillor David Macdonald (East Renfrewshire Council); Councillor Graeme Brooks, Councillor Paul Cassidy, Councillor James Daisley and Councillor Innes Nelson (Inverclyde Council); and Councillor Graeme Clark, Councillor Audrey Doig, Councillor Kevin Montgomery, Councillor Sam Mullin, Councillor Bruce MacFarlane, Councillor Kenny MacLaren, Councillor Mags MacLaren and Councillor Andy Steel (Renfrewshire Council).

Hybrid Meeting

Please note that this meeting is scheduled to be held in the Council Chambers, East Renfrewshire Council. However, it is a hybrid meeting and arrangements have been made for members to join the meeting remotely should they wish.

Further Information

This is a meeting which is open to members of the public.

A copy of the agenda and reports for this meeting will be available for inspection prior to the meeting at the Customer Service Centre, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley and online at <http://renfrewshire.cmis.uk.com/renfrewshire/CouncilandBoards.aspx>

For further information, please email
democratic-services@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Members of the Press and Public

Members of the press and public wishing to attend the meeting should report to the customer service centre where they will be met and directed to the meeting.

Items of business

Apologies

Apologies from members.

Declarations of Interest and Transparency Statements

Members are asked to declare an interest or make a transparency statement in any item(s) on the agenda and to provide a brief explanation of the nature of the interest or the transparency statement.

- | | | |
|-----------|--|----------------|
| 1 | Minute | 5 - 16 |
| | Minute of meeting of the Joint Board held on 26 May 2023. | |
| 2 | Annual Audit Report on the Audited Annual Accounts 2022/23 | |
| | Report by Treasurer. (not available - copy to follow). | |
| 3 | Budget Monitoring | 17 - 20 |
| | Report by Treasurer. | |
| 4 | Scheme of Delegation - Amendment | 21 - 22 |
| | Report by Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer. | |
| 5 | Electoral Registration Update Report | 23 - 26 |
| | Report by Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer. | |
| 6 | Performance Report | 27 - 30 |
| | Report by Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer. | |
| 7 | Progress Update Review Report - Records Management Plan | 31 - 46 |
| | Report by Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer/Public Records Scotland Act Assessment Team. | |
| 8 | Non-domestic Proposals and Appeals | 47 - 58 |
| | Report by Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer. | |
| 9 | Non-domestic Rates Reform Update | 59 - 62 |
| | Report by Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer. | |
| 10 | Property Report | 63 - 64 |
| | Report by Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer. | |

- | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------------|
| 11 | Corporate Risk Register | 65 - 86 |
| | Report by Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer. | |
| 12 | Communications Strategy | 87 - 102 |
| | Report by Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer/ | |
| 13 | Date of Next Meeting | |
| | Note that the next meeting of the Joint Board will be held at 2.00 pm on 17 November 2023 in the offices of Inverclyde Council. | |



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Minute of Meeting Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board.

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 26 May 2023	14:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present

Councillor Annette Ireland, Provost Mary Montague and Councillor David Macdonald (East Renfrewshire Council); Councillor Paul Cassidy (Inverclyde Council); and Councillor Graeme Clark, Councillor Audrey Doig, Councillor Jim Paterson (substitute for Councillor Bruce MacFarlane), Councillor Kenny MacLaren, Councillor Mags MacLaren and Councillor Andy Steel (Renfrewshire Council).

Chair

Councillor Audrey Doig, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

R Nicol, Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, L Hendry, Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer and J Dell, Divisional Assessor (all Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board); C McCourt, Head of Finance & Procurement, A McMahon, Chief Auditor, E Currie and E Gray, both Senior Committee Services Officers, T McGowan, Senior Accountancy Assistant and D Pole, End User Technician (all Renfrewshire Council).

Apologies

Councillor Andrew Morrison (East Renfrewshire Council); Councillor Graeme Brooks and Councillor James Daisley (Inverclyde Council) and Councillor Bruce MacFarlane and Councillor Mullin (Renfrewshire Council).

Declarations of Interest

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

Additional Item

The Convener intimated that there was an additional item of business in relation to the Robertson Centre Office which had not been included in the notice calling the meeting. The Convener, being of the opinion that the item which is dealt with at item 15 below, was urgent, authorised its consideration.

1 Minute

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Board held on 24 February 2023.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 Internal Audit Engagement - Risk Management

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to the audit of the Joint Board's risk management arrangements.

The report intimated that in line with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, Internal Audit must communicate the results of each engagement to the Joint Board. It was noted that the Chief Auditor would submit summary reports of completed audit engagements to the Joint Board on the conclusion of each engagement for formal consideration by members in line with best practice.

The summary for the internal audit review of risk management arrangements, completed in February 2023, was appended to the report and detailed the overall assurance rating and the number of recommendations in each risk category.

DECIDED: That the summary for the internal audit review of the Joint Board's risk management arrangements, appended to the report, be noted.

3 Internal Audit Annual Report 2022/23

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to the Internal Audit Annual Report on the Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board 2022/23.

The report intimated that the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards required that the Chief Auditor prepare an annual report on the internal audit activity's purpose, authority and responsibility, as well as performance relative to its plan. The report required to also provide an audit opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control system of the audited body.

The Annual Report for the Joint Board was attached as an appendix to the report and outlined the role of internal audit, the performance of the internal audit team and the main findings from the internal audit work undertaken in 2022/23 and contained an audit assurance statement.

DECIDED: That the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2022/23 be noted.

4 **Unaudited Annual Accounts 2022/23**

There was submitted a report by the Treasurer relative to the unaudited Annual Accounts for the Joint Board 2022/23, a copy of which were appended to the report. The report intimated that the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 would be submitted to Azets in advance of the statutory deadline of 30 June 2023. It was noted that the Joint Board had ended the 2022/23 financial year with a surplus of income over expenditure of £175,000.

The report advised that the management commentary within the accounts provided an overview of the Joint Board's financial performance during 2022/23, together with a summary of risks and the outlook for the future.

The report further advised that The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 required the Joint Board to prepare and publish a set of accounts, including and Annual Governance Statement, by 30 June each year. The unaudited accounts were required to be formally considered by the Joint Board with the Annual Governance Statement being formally approved at this time. Once considered, the accounts would be subject to external audit by Azets by 30 September 2023 and the report advised that the 2022/23 audited Annual Accounts would be submitted to the meeting of the Joint Board scheduled to be held on 15 September 2023 for approval and signing by the Convener, the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer and the Treasurer, in accordance with the regulations.

On behalf of the Joint Board, the Convener thanked staff for the work undertaken in preparation of the unaudited Annual Accounts.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the unaudited Annual Accounts for 2022/23 be noted;
- (b) That the Annual Governance Statement be approved; and
- (c) That the final budget monitoring and reserves position for 2022/23 be noted.

5 **Electoral Registration Update Report**

Under reference to item 5 of the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Board held on 24 February 2023, there was submitted a report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on work taken within electoral registration, legislation and electoral events.

The report advised that work continued on processing all registration applications, including postal, proxy and voter authority certificates in line with the statutory timetable. Since publication of the Register on 1 December 2022, monthly updates had been published, resulting in 5,222 additions to and 3,495 deletions from registers.

In relation to the 2023 canvass, the report intimated that the canvass would commence on 3 July 2023 and that the revised register would be published on 1 December 2023 and that National data matching of the register to the records of DWP would take place in early June 2023 with local data matching following. The report advised that where a response was required, there would be a range of options for the elector to utilise, including internet, phone and mail. The final stage of the canvass would be a household visit to those households where no response had been received. A Voter ID leaflet had been prepared in conjunction with other Scottish EROs and the Electoral Commission and this would be issued with canvass communications.

In relation to the Elections Act 2022, the report advised that the Act received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022 with the provisions of the Act coming in force at various times. It was noted that the main provisions that would impact the Joint Board would be the requirement for voter ID and changes to the absent voting application process for UK Parliamentary elections, and changes to the eligibility to be registered as an overseas elector. The final statutory instruments on voter identification were made on 22 December 2022 and came into force on 16 January 2023 and that online and paper applications could now be made for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) which was required if an elector wished to vote in person and did not have an approved form of photo ID; that a new ERO portal for processing these applications had been created by the UK Government and staff had undertaken training in its use; that to date, over 100 applications had been received for VACs; that funding of £8,791 had been received in 2022/23 for implementing voter identification and that funding of £9,509 had been received in 2023/24; that secondary legislation in relation to the changes to the franchise for overseas electors had been delayed and it was now expected to be laid before Parliament late 2023/early 2024 with changes taking effect in the early part of 2024; that secondary legislation in relation to changes to absent vote applications had been delayed and the likely implementation date was now October 2023; and that it had been intimated that funding would be provided by the UK Government for these new burdens during 2023/24, however no indication of the level of funding had been received.

The report advised that the Scottish Government consultation on Electoral Reform closed on 15 March 2023 and that the Scottish Assessors' Association had submitted a response on behalf of all Scottish EROs. It was expected that the Scottish Government would publish the responses and an analysis report over the summer months.

In relation to procurement, the report intimated that the procurement process for the Print and Mail Contract had been undertaken with the assistance of Renfrewshire Council's Corporate Procurement Unit, by conducting a direct award (call-off contract) under the Scottish Government Postal framework agreement Lot 2. Critiqom Limited was the sole supplier and the call-off contract would be for a period of three years with the option to extend for a further 12 months and an anticipated total contract value not exceeding £650,000.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted; and

(b) That the Print and Mail Contract procurement, referenced at paragraph 7.1 of the report, be approved.

6 Non-domestic Rates Reform Update

Under reference to item 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Board held on 24 February 2023, there was submitted a report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to developments and expenditure arising from the Barclay Review.

In relation to staffing, the report advised that a Principal Valuer and three Trainee Valuers had been recruited since the last meeting of the Joint Board. A vacancy for a Valuer/Senior Valuer remained and this would be advertised on an ongoing basis

In relation to the 2023 Non-domestic Revaluation, the report advised that staff continued to address any representations received to the Draft Valuation Roll and finalised Revaluation Roll and that in line with statutory requirements, the 2023 Revaluation Roll had been delivered to local authorities on 15 March 2023 with Revaluation Notices issued to all proprietors, tenants and occupiers on 29 March 2023; that a substantial update on the Assessors portal was made on 1 April 2023 to publish the Revaluation Roll with just under 90% of the published values across East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire showing the make up of the valuation online; that the Assessors Portal had published over 100 Practice Notices detailing how properties should be valued and that staff had authored a number of these Practices Notices and contributed to many others; and that aggrieved proprietors, tenants and occupiers could now submit a proposal against the new Revaluation entry on the Assessors portal.

In relation to changes to the appeals system, the report advised that the transfer of the Local Appeal Committees into the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service took place on 1 April 2023; that The Valuation (Proposals Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2022, The Valuation Timetable (Scotland) Order 2022, The Valuation Roll and Valuation Notice (Scotland) Order 2022, The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland Local Taxation Chamber (Rules of Procedure) Regulations 2022 and The Upper Tribunal for Scotland (Local Taxation Rules of Procedure 2022 had been laid in the Scottish Parliament in mid-December 2022 and that The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Transfer of Functions of Valuation Appeals Committees) Regulations 2023 were made on 21 February 2023, these Orders and Regulations provided details on the new two stage proposal/appeals process that came into force on 1 April; 2023; that upgrades to the SAA portal to allow submission of proposals online had been made and that staff were engaging with the SCTS to ensure the smooth transfer of existing appeals from 1 April 2023; and that the Scottish Government had recently opened a consultation on whether the statutory disposal deadline of 31 December 2023 for Non-domestic appeals be extended.

In relation to self-catering properties, it was noted that the legislation changed with effect from 1 April 2022 and that the Assessor had requested the required evidence from each operator and that those who failed to respond or who did not fulfil the new criteria would have the entry in the Valuation Roll deleted and an entry made within the Council Tax list.

In relation to information gathering powers, it was noted that the processes would be kept under review and the Scottish Government would be advised of any monies due to them via the Consolidated Fund.

The report further intimated that development of the IT valuation system continued with the aim of going live at a suitable time for service delivery.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

7 **Performance Report**

Under reference to item 8 of the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Board held on 24 February 2023, there was submitted a report by the Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on the current performance and workload issues facing the Joint Board together with the Valuation Roll and Council Tax performance statistics for April 2022 to March 2023.

The report detailed the performance in Council Tax and Non-domestic Valuation against set targets. In relation to Council Tax valuation, 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 narrowly missing the target of 95% within three months and meeting the target 97% within six months, by achieving 92.93% and 97.03% respectively.

The report also detailed the average number of days taken to add a house in each constituent authority area in the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and also the number of deletions from the Valuation (Council Tax) List between 1 April and 31 March during 2021/22 and 2022/23.

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 2022 and 31 March 2023 by constituent authority area, which did not meet the targets of 50% to be actioned within three months and 75% within six months, by achieving 43.54% and 70.20% respectively. The report advised that not meeting these targets did not give the Senior Management Team any cause for concern as the valuation staff had been heavily involved in carrying out the statutory duty of valuing all non-domestic properties with the Joint Board's constituent areas for the 2023 Revaluation which had been extremely resource intensive in meeting the deadline to provide the Revaluation Rolls to the relevant billing authorities of 15 March 2023.

In relation to performance targets for 2023/24, the management team had reviewed the targets for Council Tax and Non-domestic Valuation in light of the demands placed on staff, core vacancies and resources and the report proposed that (i) the 2023/24 performance target for Council Tax be retained, and (ii) that the 2023/24 performance target for Non-domestic Valuation be increased to 60 % - within zero to three months, 15% - between three and six months, and 25% - more than three months.

The summary of performance returns for 2013/14 to 2022/23 was appended to the report.

On behalf of the Joint Board, the Convener thanked staff for the work undertaken in dealing with statutory amendments to the Valuation List for Council Tax and the Valuation Roll.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) That the performance targets for the financial year 2023/24 be approved; and
- (c) That the publication of the summary report, appended to the report, be approved.

8 Non-domestic Proposals and Appeals

Under reference to item 7 of the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Board held on 24 February 2023, there was submitted a report by the Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer advising on the new proposal and 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. The Non-domestic Rates (Scotland) Act 2020 changed the revaluation cycle from five years to three years with the 2023 Revaluation being the first which would be in force for three years from 1 April 2023.

The report noted that the revaluation brought with it a fresh right to challenge a net annual value and in previous Revaluations these were classed as appeals. The Valuation (Proposals Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2022, The Valuation Timetable (Scotland) Order 2022 and The Valuation Roll and Valuation Notice (Scotland) Order 2022 brought in the new two stage proposal/appeal process which would be effective for the 2023 Revaluation. The right to lodge a proposal against the Revaluation had to be exercised by 31 July in the year of the Revaluation or within four months of the date of issue of the Valuation Notice, whichever was the later.

The report advised that proposals against Net Annual Values issued at the 2023 Revaluation could be lodged from 1 April 2023 to 31 July 2023 and as at 1 May 2023, the Assessor had received 35 revaluation proposals. The report provided detail on the proposal regime and advised that the effect of this change on business practices and service delivery was unknown at this time. The Joint Board would be kept informed of the 2023 proposals and appeals.

In relation to the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service, the report noted that with effect from 1 April 2023, the function of the Valuation Appeals Committees transferred to the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Services new Local Taxation Chamber in the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland. In addition, the relevant functions of the Lands Tribunal for Scotland transferred to the Upper Tribunal for Scotland. The Joint Board would be kept informed when information was received.

The report noted that the total number of Revaluation appeals received for 2017 was 3,832 which related to 3,542 subjects with a cumulative value of £324,294,285 and Appendix 1 to the report detailed the number of Revaluation appeals received, disposed of and outstanding by constituent authority and the Joint Board area as of 31 March 2023.

In relation to Running Roll proposals/appeals, the report advised that following a Revaluation, new values would generally remain unchanged until the next Revaluation unless the property had been altered or other changes had taken place. Running Roll proposals could now be lodged by ratepayers or their agents at least once in any one financial year and required to be disposed of in line with the prescribed statutory

timetable. Any Running Roll proposals lodged after 1 April 2023 required to be dealt with under the new two stage proposal/appeal process and the report advised that as of 1 May 2023, one Running Roll proposal had been lodged against the 2017 entry in the Valuation Roll. Appendix 2 to the report detailed the number of Running Roll appeals received on or after 1 March 2020, outlining those dealt with in each constituent authority and the Joint Board area as of 31 March 2023.

The report advised that the disposal of former appeals and proposals/appeals lodged under the new legislative regime would be a major component of the work undertaken by the Assessor's valuation staff and was work that could be stressful due to the strict legislative timetables and the adversarial nature of the negotiations.

DECIDED: That the contents of the report be noted.

9 **Public Sector Equalities Duty**

There was submitted a report by the Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to the two-yearly progress report on how the organisation was meeting the equality duty, a copy of the Public Sector Equality Duty 2023 was appended to the report.

DECIDED:

(a) That the report be noted; and

(b) That the Equality Outcomes be approved for the next four years with a review of progress being reported to the Joint Board in 2025.

10 **Strategic Service Plan 2021/24 - Annual Update**

There was submitted a report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to the annual update of the three-yearly Strategic Service Plan 2021/24, a copy of which was appended to the report.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

11 **Domestic Abuse Policy**

There was submitted a report by the Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to the adoption of a Domestic Abuse Policy which would support employees experiencing domestic abuse, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The report intimated that domestic abuse had a devastating impact on individuals and their families and that the Joint Board was committed to supporting both employees and service users who were impacted by this. The Domestic Abuse Policy had been adopted by Renfrewshire Council and minor amendments had been made to ensure it was appropriate for the Joint Board.

The report advised that the policy demonstrated the Joint Board's commitment to the health, safety and welfare of employees, creating a workforce culture that was supportive and provided a safe place for employees to disclose their experience of abuse and access appropriate support if they wished, irrespective of gender, gender identity or sexuality.

Appendix 2 to the policy detailed information on domestic abuse support organisations and the Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer advised that details of the outreach services in East Renfrewshire and others identified in both East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Council areas would be added.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Domestic Abuse Policy be approved; and

(b) That details of the outreach services in East Renfrewshire and others identified in both East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Council areas be added to Appendix 2 to the policy.

12 **Supporting Menopause Policy**

There was submitted a report by the Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to the adoption of a Supporting Menopause Policy, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The report intimated that the Joint Board wanted to support colleagues' wellbeing at every stage of life and recognised that many colleagues would be working through the perimenopause and menopause transition and managing symptoms at work. The purpose of the policy was to provide support, raise awareness of what menopause was and help discuss this openly and confidentially should colleagues wish to do so. The Supporting Menopause Policy had been adopted by Renfrewshire Council and minor amendments had been made to ensure it was appropriate for the Joint Board.

The report noted that managers had undertaken online training which included the stages, symptoms and impact of menopause, flexible workplace support available, adjustments and paid menopause related leave.

DECIDED: That the Supporting Menopause Policy, as appended to the report, be approved.

13 **Whistleblowing Policy**

There was submitted a report by the Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to the adoption of a Whistleblowing Policy, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The report intimated that the Joint Board was committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity and expected all employees to maintain high standards in accordance with the Joint Board's Code of Conduct for Employees. The Whistleblowing Policy had been reviewed and adopted by Renfrewshire Council and minor amendments had been made to ensure it was appropriate for the Joint Board. The

report noted that this replaced the Joint Board's Expressing Concerns outwith Line Management Policy.

The report advised that the policy would provide a mechanism for a concern about any wrongdoing or malpractice within the Joint Board to be reported and investigated.

DECIDED: That the Whistleblowing Policy, as appended to the report, be approved.

14 **Arrangements for Future Hybrid Meetings**

Under reference to item 12 of the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Board held on 16 September 2022, there was submitted a report by the Clerk relative to arrangements for future hybrid meetings of the Joint Board.

The report intimated that at the meeting of this Joint Board held on 16 September 2022, the Joint Board decided that hybrid meetings of the Joint Board be held in the offices of (i) East Renfrewshire Council in September of each year, starting from September 2023 and (ii) Inverclyde Council in November of each year, starting November 2023. Further, that the Clerk finalise arrangements and look again at the Joint Board's hybrid meeting protocol to establish if it met the requirements of the Joint Board if meeting in three different venues and report back to a future meeting.

The report advised that all three Council's did not use the same platform for hybrid meetings and had different protocols in place for hybrid meetings of their council boards in their respective Council venues. The Joint Board protocol for hybrid meetings had been reviewed and the amended protocol for future Joint Board meetings was appended to the report and covered arrangements for hybrid meetings in all three Council venues.

On behalf of the Joint Board, the Depute Convener thanked staff for the work undertaken in enabling the Joint Board to meet in the three constituent authority offices.

DECIDED: That the amended protocol for future hybrid meetings of the Joint Board, as appended to the report, be approved.

15 **Robertson Centre Office**

Under reference to item 10 of the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Board held on 24 February 2023, there was submitted a report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to the Joint Board's offices in the Robertson Centre, Glasgow Road, Paisley which are let from Renfrewshire Council.

The report intimated that during 2017/18 the Joint Board decided that staff would only occupy the ground floor of the premises, handing back control of the upper floor of the premises to Renfrewshire Council. At the meeting of the Joint Board held on 17 August 2018, the Joint Board decided that the Assessor be authorised to rescind the existing lease and continue discussions on the terms of a new lease. The broad terms of the new lease were agreed shortly thereafter, however, the finalised offer of lease had now been put forward for signing. The report sought consent for the Assessor to sign this lease which covered the period from October 2018 to March 2024.

The report noted that Renfrewshire Council had advised that it was undertaking a review of its property portfolio with the Robertson Centre forming part of this review. Renfrewshire Council had intimated that due to this they would prefer not to extend the lease beyond its currently agreed period.

The report advised that the management team were continuing to explore options for a future office base for the Joint Board's functions. The report noted that some additional expenditure might fall within the current financial year to facilitate a move and it was intended that where this occurred it would be funded by the use of reserves.

DECIDED: That the Joint Board authorise the Assessor to rescind the existing lease, sign the new lease on terms as detailed in section 2 of the report and continue investigations for alternative accommodation and report to the next meeting or the Joint Board.

16 **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 15 September 2023 and would be a hybrid meeting in the offices of East Renfrewshire Council.

RENFREWSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

To: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

On: 15 September 2023

Report by: The Treasurer

Heading: Revenue Budget Monitoring Report to 18 August 2023

1. Summary

- 1.1 At the end of Period 5, Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board (the Board) had a year-to-date underspend position of £60k. The Board is projected to underspend by £54k against budget by the end of the financial year; detail is provided in Section 4.
-

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board considers the report.
-

3 Budget Adjustments

- 3.1 There have been no budget adjustments since the start of the financial year.
-

4 Budget Performance

4.1 Year-to-date position: Net underspend of £60k

The year-to-date underspend at Period 5 largely relates to unfilled vacancies within employee costs. This is offset by an overspend within Supplies and Services, which can be attributed to timing of spend compared with the phasing of the budget across the year.

4.2 Projected Year-end position: Net underspend of £54k

The budget approved in February 2023 included a planned drawdown from reserves of £89k. Based on current projections, it is anticipated that the Board

will drawdown £35k from reserves this financial year, resulting in a favourable variance of £54k.

Within Employee costs a 6% estimated pay award has been included into the projections, which is offset by current vacancies resulting in a projected underspend.

Within gross income, an over recovery of £20k is mainly due to new burdens funding of £18.6k to be received by the UK Government to help support changes to absent voters and overseas electors, which is in addition to the £9k originally budgeted for the introduction of voter identification.

All projections will be monitored closely through the remainder of the financial year and regular updates provided to the Board.

RENFREWSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD
REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT 2023/24

1 April 2023 to 18 August 2023

Description	Approved Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual to Date	Variance to Date (Adverse) / Favourable	Projected Full Year Actual	Projected Full Year Variance (Adverse) / Favourable
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Employees	2,256	847	756	90	2,225	30
Premises Related	179	44	37	6	179	1
Supplies and Services	379	152	195	(44)	388	(8)
Support Services	105	10	10	0	103	2
Transfer Payments	25	5	3	2	20	5
Transport Related	15	6	2	4	10	5
Gross Expenditure	2,959	1,062	1,003	59	2,925	35
Contributions from Local Authorities Core	(2,342)	0	0	0	(2,342)	0
Contributions from Local Authorities Barclay	(492)	0	0	0	(492)	0
Other Income	(36)	(14)	(16)	1	(56)	20
Gross Income	(2,870)	(14)	(16)	1	(2,890)	20
TRANSFER (TO)/FROM RESERVES	89	1,048	988	60	35	54

	£000
Opening Revenue Reserve at 1 April 2023	(847)
Budgeted drawdown from Reserves	89
Projected year-end variance	(54)
Projected Revenue Reserve at 31 March 2024	(812)



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on: 15th September 2023

Subject: Scheme of Delegation – Amendment

Author: Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

1. Introduction

The Board has delegated a number of powers to the office bearers via a scheme of delegation. This allows for the day to day functions of the Board to be undertaken in an efficient manner while allowing suitable scrutiny of decisions.

2. Update

Members will be aware that much of the work of the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer is supported by the Scottish Assessors Association (SAA). All of the fourteen Assessors in Scotland and senior members of their staff are members of the SAA and the joint working undertaken helps to facilitate a consistency of approach in administering our valuation, council tax and electoral registration services. The most visible aspect of this joint working is the SAA Portal (www.saa.gov.uk) .

The SAA is recognised by both Scottish and UK Governments and is regularly consulted by them on valuation, council tax and electoral registration. The SAA also liaises with the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) in England and Wales, Land and Property Services in Northern Ireland (LPSNI) and Tailte Eireann in the Republic of Ireland in matters of common interest.

I have recently been appointed to the Executive Committee of the SAA, this means that I am required to represent Assessors in a variety of forums including liaising with the bodies in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland mentioned above. Meetings take place approximately twice a year and the location rotates among the four bodies. The next meeting is due to take place in Dublin on 13th and 14th November.

The current scheme of delegation allows the Assessor:

(6) to approve the attendance of officers at conferences or meetings within the United Kingdom where he/she considers it to be in the interests of the Joint Board or is relevant to the statutory functions of the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer provided that the cost does not exceed £2,000 exclusive of subsistence, travelling and other ancillary expenses.”

(9) to authorise officials to travel within and outwith the Joint Board’s area (but within the United Kingdom), to authorise overnight absences in appropriate circumstances and to authorise the payment of monies for travel and subsistence in accordance with the scheme of travel/subsistence allowances accepted or approved by Renfrewshire Council.

I am seeking the addition of ‘and Ireland’ after the reference to the United Kingdom in both the delegations above.

5. Recommendations

The Board approve the addition of 'and Ireland' to delegation numbers 6 and 9 of the powers currently delegated to the Assessor.

Robert Nicol
Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer
6th September 2023

For further information please contact Robert Nicol 07483921232
Or via e-mail at robert.nicol@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on: 15th September 2023

Subject: Electoral Registration Update Report

Author: Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is to inform board members of work undertaken within Electoral Registration, any updates to legislation and report to the Board on any electoral events.

2. Current Position – General

- 2.1 Work continues on processing all registration applications, including postal, proxy and voter authority certificates, whether made on-line or paper format, in line with statutory timetables.
- 2.2 Since publication of the Register on 1st December 2022, monthly updates have been published, resulting in 14,080 additions to and 11,899 deletions from our Registers.

3. 2023 Canvass

- 3.1 The 2023 canvass started on Monday 3rd July 2023, with publication of the new register due to take place by 1st December 2023.
- 3.2 As a precursor to the start of the canvass National Data Matching of the register to the records of DWP took place in early June, with local data matching following. These matching stages helped identify the appropriate form of communication to be issued to each household.
- 3.3 Where an email address is held then the initial contact was by email, and where there was no response then the appropriate letter was issued to the household. In other cases the initial contact was made by letter. Where a response is required then there are a range of options for the elector to utilise including internet, phone and mail.
- 3.4 If an email address wasn't held or there was no response to an email then letters were sent to the property. Where all the electors in a household were data matched then a CCA letter was issued, this letter does not require a response unless the information on it isn't correct. A total of 92,254 CCA letters were issued. In circumstances where not all the electors in a household were data matched then a CCB letter is issued, this letter requires a response to either confirm that the electors shown on it are correct or to inform us of changes. There were 41,099 CCB letters issued.
- 3.5 The final stage of the canvass is a visit to the household for those households where a response was required and none received. This stage will be undertaken throughout the canvass period and will involve visits to approximately 24,000 properties.

- 3.6 In conjunction with many other Scottish EROs and the Electoral Commission, work has been undertaken to produce a leaflet on Voter ID. This is included with our canvass mail communications and our electronic communications include a link to further information on Voter ID.

4. Future Elections

- 4.1 At the time of writing no elections are scheduled, however a UK Parliamentary General Election will take place by early January 2025. Members of the Team will be attending an Electoral Commission & Electoral Management Board of Scotland seminar in early October along with Returning Officers and their teams, the main theme of the seminar is preparedness for the UK Parliamentary General Election. In addition to this there is also regular contact with the Returning Officer's teams.

5. Elections Act 2022

- 5.1 The Elections Act 2022 received Royal Assent on 28th April 2022. The provisions of the Act come into force at various times and elements of it are subject to further Regulations. The main provisions that will impact the Board are the requirement for Voter ID for UK Parliamentary Elections, changes to the Absent Voting application process for the UK Parliamentary Elections and changes to the eligibility to be registered as an Overseas Elector.
- 5.2 The final statutory instruments on Voter Identification were made on 22nd December 2022 and came into force on 16th January 2023. Since that date applications for the Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) have been able to be made online or by a paper application form. A VAC will only be required if an elector wishes to vote in person and does not have another approved form of photo ID. A full list of acceptable types of photo ID was circulated to members in February 2022 or can be found at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id/accepted-forms-photo-id
- 5.3 A new ERO portal for processing these applications has been created by the UK Government and staff have undertaken training in its use.
- 5.4 A funding allocation for implementing Voter Identification has been determined by the UK Government, for 2023/24 a grant of £9,509 has been received.
- 5.5 The Elections Act 2022 also brings in changes to the franchise for overseas electors. It is the first legislative step towards removing the 15-year limit on overseas electors being able to vote in UK Parliamentary elections and allowing British citizens overseas who were previously registered or previously resident in the UK to apply to register to vote. The extended franchise is not yet in operation. Secondary legislation was expected to be laid in the summer however this has been delayed and it is now expected to be laid late 2023/early 2024 with changes taking effect in the early part of 2024.
- 5.6 Another change being introduced by the Elections Act that will have an impact on the Board is the changes to the rules around absent vote applications. It is likely that applications for an absent vote for UK Parliamentary Elections will be able to be made on line as well as by paper and will go through an identity verification process similar to that undertaken for registration and that a fresh application will be required after three years. Secondary legislation is also required for this change and it was expected that these changes would take place during the summer of 2023, however this has also been delayed and the likely implementation date is now October 2023. It should be noted that these changes are only applicable for electors that are applying for an absent vote for a UK Parliamentary election the current arrangements will remain in place for absent vote applications for Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections.

- 5.7 The divergence of the rules around absent voting for reserved and devolved elections will result in significant IT changes, training requirements for our staff and new forms are being created by the Electoral Commission, it is probable that separate applications will need to be made by electors that wish a postal vote for both reserved and devolved elections.
- 5.7 A funding allocation for 2023/24 for this second Tranche of changes of £18,638 has been provided by the UK Government for these new burdens.

6. Scottish Government Consultation on Electoral Reform

- 6.1 The Scottish Government consultation on Electoral Reform closed on 15th March 2023, several hundred responses were received including one from the Scottish Assessors Association on behalf of all the Scottish EROs. An analysis report of the consultation responses was published by the Scottish Government on 31st July 2023 with an Electoral Reform Bill forming part of the recently announce programme for government.

7. Boundary Commission for Scotland – Review of UK Parliament Constituencies

- 7.1 The Boundary Commission for Scotland began its 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies in Scotland in January 2021. After going through the required consultation processes it laid its final recommendations before Parliament on 28th June 2023. It is expected that the final stage of the approval process will be in October 2023 and the new boundaries will take effect from the next General Election called after they have been approved.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The Board notes the contents of this report

Robert Nicol
Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer
6th September 2023

For further information please contact Robert Nicol 07483921232
Or via e-mail at robert.nicol@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on: 15th September 2023

Subject: Performance Report

Author: Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

1. Introduction

This quarter's performance report provides an update to the reporting of performance for the first three months of the rating year and is intended to keep members informed of current performance and workload issues facing the Board.

2. Council Tax

The main work involved in Council Tax remains the addition of new houses to the Valuation List and the deletion of demolished houses. I include a summary of new additions to the Council Tax List for information.

2.1 Time taken to enter new houses into the Valuation (Council Tax) List

Period 1st April 2023 to 30th June 2023

Council Area	No. Added	Within 3 months	%age of total added	Between 3 and 6 months	%age of total added	Added within 6 months	More than 6 months	%age of total added
Renfrewshire	270	256	94.81%	9	3.34%	98.15%	5	1.85%
East Renfrewshire	121	120	99.17%	1	0.83%	100%	0	0.00%
Inverclyde	46	45	97.83%	1	2.17%	100%	0	0.00%
RVJB totals	437	421	96.34%	11	2.52%	98.86%	5	1.14%

This performance has exceeded our current target of 95% within three months and also our six-monthly target of 97% within 6 months with our key performance indicators showing 96.34% and 98.86% respectfully.

In the period from 1st April 2023 to 30th June 2023, the average number of days taken to add a house was as follows:

Council Area	No. Added April to June 2023	Average No. of Days 2023
Renfrewshire	270	44.43
East Renfrewshire	121	21.76
Inverclyde	46	19.56
RVJB Totals	437	35.54

This measure is below our target of 38 days although, as can be seen, Renfrewshire is above our target. This is due to resources being diverted during 22/23 to discharge the statutory duty of completing the 2023 Draft Revaluation Roll by the 30th November and the final Revaluation Roll by the 15th March 2023. In addition, the information flow from a specific housing developer has been an issue and steps are being taken to rectify it.

2.2 Information on Deletions from the Council Tax List

The main reasons for deleting a property from the valuation list would be where the property is demolished, where a house is now being used for non-domestic purposes or where two or more houses are combined to form one house.

2.2.1 Number of Deletions from the Valuation (Council Tax) List between 1st April 2023 and 30th June 2023

Council Area	No. Deleted 2022/23	No. Deleted 2023/24
Renfrewshire	7	59
East Renfrewshire	4	6
Inverclyde	13	78
RVJB Total	24	143

The main reasons for deleting a property from the valuation list would be where the property is demolished, where a house is now being used for non-domestic purposes or where two or more houses are combined to form one house.

3. Non-domestic Valuation

One of the main areas of work in non-domestic valuation is the maintenance of the Valuation Roll. The table below is a summary of the statutory amendments to the Valuation Roll. These are new entries being added to the Roll, entries being deleted or properties that have been altered.

3.1 Time taken to make statutory amendments to the Valuation Roll (excluding appeal settlements and amendments to prescribed entries)

Period 1st April 2023 to 30th June 2023

Council Area	No. of Alt'ns	Within 3 months	%age of total added	Between 3 and 6 months	%age of total added	Added within 6 months	More than 6 months	%age of total added
Renfrewshire	39	39	100%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%
East Renfrewshire	28	28	100%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%
Inverclyde	59	59	100%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%
RVJB totals	126	126	84.21%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%

The above alterations to the Valuation Roll are value changes only and do not reflect alterations where overall value is unchanged, changes to occupancy details or other administrative changes.

The performance target of 60% to be actioned within 3 months and 75% within 6 months has been exceeded with our key performance indicators showing 100% for both.

The performance levels detailed above are in line with our expectations at this time in the rating year although please note, the number of alterations carried out to the roll are still lower compared with this period in 2019, the last year not affected by Covid - the total number of alterations carried out within the Joint Board area during the first three months of the roll for 2019/20 was 205 compared to 126 for 2023/2024.

4. General Conclusions

Current performance is above the targets set for this year however, this may diminish due to demands placed on the organisation with the changes to how we dispose of council tax proposals/appeals and a new two stage non-domestic rating appeal system as with effect from 1st April 2023, the functions of the Valuation Appeals Committees transferred to the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Services new Local Taxation Chamber in the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland.

The effects of the change on our business practices and service delivery are still relatively unknown in terms of non-domestic rating proposals/appeals. In relation to council tax proposals/appeals, we are beginning to experience the change to our business practices and resources have had to be diverted to ensure we meet the demand from the First-tier Tribunal in the correct statutory timeframe.

Staff also have to carry out business as usual duties in terms of maintenance of the Valuation Roll and Valuation Lists in line with our key performance indicators and start preparation for the 2026 Revaluation.

5. Recommendations

- i. The Board note the contents of this report.

Lindsey Hendry
Assistant Assessor & ERO
25th July 2023

For further information please contact Lindsey Hendry at 0141-487-0635 or via email at lindsey.hendry@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on: 15th September 2023

Subject: Progress Update Review Report – Records Management Plan

Author: Assistant Assessor/Public Records Scotland Act Assessment Team

1. Introduction

In January 2023, the Public Records Scotland Act Assessment Team invited Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board to complete their annual Progress Update Review (PUR). The completion of the PUR enables authorities to be credited for the progress in any future developments identified in the Records Management Plan (RMP) and also ensures the RMP is kept under review in line with section 5(1)(a) of The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011.

The Progress Update Review Report sets out the findings of the Assessment Team and has been published on RVJB's website.

2. Recommendations

- i. The Board notes the report.

Lindsey Hendry
Assistant Assessor & ERO
6th September 2023

For further information please contact Lindsey Hendry at 0141 487 0635 or via email at lindsey.hendry@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk.

Robert Nicol
Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer
Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board
The Robertson Centre
16 Glasgow Road
Paisley PA1 3QF

1st August 2023

Dear Mr Nicol,

Progress Update Review (PUR) Final Report: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Thank you for your authority's submission of a Progress Update Review (PUR) for assessment and comment by the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 Assessment Team. We commend participation by authorities in undertaking, and reporting on, regular self-assessments and reviews of their records management arrangements. We anticipate that through uptake of the PUR tool, a stronger sense of collaboration and mutual support will be achieved between authorities and the Assessment Team. This will continue to enhance the culture of records management across Scotland's public authorities.

The Assessment Team has now evaluated the submission and consider that Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board continues to take their statutory obligations seriously and are working to bring all the elements of their records management arrangements into full compliance with the Act and fulfil the Keeper's expectations.

I enclose the Assessment Team's findings in the accompanying Report. We would welcome you publishing this Report as an indication of the good work and progress your authority is making in its record management arrangements and to aid colleagues by sharing good practice with other authorities. The National Records of Scotland will publish the Report on its website in due course.

The PUR process is offered to all public authorities each year on the anniversary of the agreement of their Records Management Plan. Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board can therefore expect to receive its next PUR invitation in January 2024.

Yours sincerely,

Iida Saarinen
Public Records Officer
Direct Email: iida.saarinen@nrscotland.gov.uk

The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Progress Update Review (PUR) Report by the PRSA Assessment Team

1st August 2023

Contents

1. The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011..... 3

2. Progress Update Review (PUR) Mechanism..... 3

3. Executive Summary..... 3

4. Authority Background..... 4

5. Assessment Process..... 4

6. Records Management Plan Elements Checklist and PUR Assessment..... 5-13

7. The Public Records (Scotland) Act Assessment Team’s Summary..... 14

8. The Public Records (Scotland) Act Assessment Team’s Evaluation.....14

1. Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011

The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 (the Act) received Royal Assent on 20 April 2011. It is the first new public records legislation in Scotland since 1937 and came into force on 1 January 2013. Its primary aim is to promote efficient and accountable record keeping by named Scottish public authorities.

The Act has its origins in *The Historical Abuse Systemic Review: Residential Schools and Children's Homes in Scotland 1950-1995* (The Shaw Report) published in 2007. The Shaw Report recorded how its investigations were hampered by poor recordkeeping and found that thousands of records had been created, but were then lost due to an inadequate legislative framework and poor records management. Crucially, it demonstrated how former residents of children's homes were denied access to information about their formative years. The Shaw Report demonstrated that management of records in all formats (paper and electronic) is not just a bureaucratic process, but central to good governance and should not be ignored. A follow-up review of public records legislation by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland (the Keeper) found further evidence of poor records management across the public sector. This resulted in the passage of the Act by the Scottish Parliament in March 2011.

The Act requires a named authority to prepare and implement a records management plan (RMP) which must set out proper arrangements for the management of its records. A plan must clearly describe the way the authority cares for the records that it creates, in any format, whilst carrying out its business activities. The RMP must be agreed with the Keeper and regularly reviewed.

2. Progress Update Review (PUR) Mechanism

Under section 5(1) & (2) of the Act the Keeper may only require a review of an authority's agreed RMP to be undertaken not earlier than five years after the date on which the authority's RMP was last agreed. Regardless of whether an authority has successfully achieved its goals identified in its RMP or continues to work towards them, the minimum period of five years before the Keeper can require a review of a RMP does not allow for continuous progress to be captured and recognised.

The success of the Act to date is attributable to a large degree to meaningful communication between the Keeper, the Assessment Team, and named public authorities. Consultation with Key Contacts has highlighted the desirability of a mechanism to facilitate regular, constructive dialogue between stakeholders and the Assessment Team. Many authorities have themselves recognised that such regular communication is necessary to keep their agreed plans up to date following inevitable organisational change. Following meetings between authorities and the Assessment Team, a reporting mechanism through which progress and local initiatives can be acknowledged and reviewed by the Assessment Team was proposed. Key Contacts have expressed the hope that through submission of regular updates, the momentum generated by the Act can continue to be sustained at all levels within authorities.

The PUR self-assessment review mechanism was developed in collaboration with stakeholders and was formally announced in the Keeper's Annual Report published on 12 August 2016. The completion of the PUR process enables authorities to be credited for the progress they are effecting and to receive constructive advice concerning on-going developments. Engaging with this mechanism will not only maintain the spirit of the Act by encouraging senior management to recognise the need for good records management practices, but will also help authorities comply with their statutory obligation under section 5(1)(a) of the Act to keep their RMP under review.

3. Executive Summary

This Report sets out the findings of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 (the Act) Assessment Team's consideration of the Progress Update template submitted for Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board. The outcome of the assessment and relevant feedback can be found under sections 6 – 8.

4. Authority Background

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board was established by the Valuation Joint Boards (Scotland) Order 1995 to carry out the valuation functions of Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils.

It came into existence on 1 April 1996 and was also given the responsibility of carrying out Electoral Registration on behalf of the three constituent authorities.

The composition of the membership of the Board is determined by the above Order and consists of 8 Councillors representing Renfrewshire Council and 4 each representing East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils.

<http://www.renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk/>

5. Assessment Process

A PUR submission is evaluated by the Act's Assessment Team. The self-assessment process invites authorities to complete a template and send it to the Assessment Team one year after the date of agreement of its RMP and every year thereafter. The self-assessment template highlights where an authority's plan achieved agreement on an improvement basis and invites updates under those 'Amber' elements. However, it also provides an opportunity for authorities not simply to report on progress against improvements, but to comment on any new initiatives, highlight innovations, or record changes to existing arrangements under those elements that had attracted an initial 'Green' score in their original RMP submission.

The assessment report considers statements made by an authority under the elements of its agreed Plan that included improvement models. It reflects any changes and/or progress made towards achieving full compliance in those areas where agreement under improvement was made in the Keeper's Assessment Report of their RMP. The PUR assessment report also considers statements of further progress made in elements already compliant under the Act.

Engagement with the PUR mechanism for assessment cannot alter the Keeper's Assessment Report of an authority's agreed RMP or any RAG assessment within it. Instead the PUR Final Report records the Assessment Team's evaluation of the submission and its opinion on the progress being made by the authority since agreeing its RMP. The team's assessment provides an informal indication of what marking an authority could expect should it submit a revised RMP to the Keeper under the Act, although such assessment is made without prejudice to the Keeper's right to adopt a different marking at that stage.

Key:

G	The Assessment Team agrees this element of an authority's plan.	A	The Assessment Team agrees this element of an authority's progress update submission as an 'improvement model'. This means that they are convinced of the authority's commitment to closing a gap in provision. They will request that they are updated as work on this element progresses.	R	There is a serious gap in provision for this element with no clear explanation of how this will be addressed. The Assessment Team may choose to notify the Keeper on this basis.
----------	---	----------	---	----------	--

6. Progress Update Review (PUR) Template: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Element	Status under agreed Plan 18JAN16	Progress review status 28JUL22	Progress review status 01AUG23	Keeper's Report Comments on Authority's Plan 18JAN16	Self-assessment Update 13APR22	Progress Review Comment 28JUL22	Self-assessment Update as submitted by the Authority since 28JUL22	Progress Review Comment 01AUG23
1. Senior Officer	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	As notified to Pete Wadley and Hugh Hagan by email from Lindsey Hendry on 19 October 2021, the Assessor for Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board, Kate Crawford, retired on 17th October 2021. Robert Nicol is the new Assessor and is now the Senior Officer who has corporate responsibility for our records management.	The Assessment Team is grateful for this update which has been noted.	No change.	Update required on any change.
2. Records Manager	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	Update required on any change.	No change.	Update required on any change.
3. Policy	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	<p>The Records Management Policy was fully reviewed and approved by the Governance Working Group on 27 April 2021.</p> <p>The updated Policy sets out Employee responsibilities in more detail, including that key knowledge and skills required by staff with operational responsibility for records management will be clearly defined and explained to staff to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities. The updated Policy also reinforces that the Data Protection Officer is responsible for delivering staff training on Records Management.</p> <p>This was circulated to all staff on 27.4.21</p> <p>The Housekeeping Manual for the Electoral Management System (EMS) was agreed by the Governance Working Group to be kept as a separate document as not all RVJB staff have access to the EMS. This is in line with Data Protection Principles, as only staff who have a business need to obtain access are provided with the appropriate authentication. The manual was circulated to staff for information purposes.</p>	<p>The Assessment Team thanks you for this update on Records Management Policy review, and the associated changes in RVJB approach to operational records management and the required knowledge and skills. The Team have no concerns about this Element, but require an update on any change.</p>	<p>The Records Management Policy was reviewed and revised by our Information Governance Solicitor/ DPO in January 2023. The Governance Working Group and Management Team reviewed the updates and approved in February 2023.</p> <p>The main updates are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of the principles of good records management as set out by the National Records of Scotland. The separation of 'Purpose' and 'Scope' in order to elaborate on both, particularly adding more detail on the responsibilities on all staff. <p>Update on the cross-references to other Policies to ensure accuracy and up-to-date.</p>	<p>The Assessment Team thanks you for this update on recent Records Management Policy revision. It is apparent from this update that RVJB continues to keep their RM Policy up to date and therefore fit for purpose.</p> <p>Update required on any change.</p>
4. Business Classification	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	<p>The Business Classification Scheme is in the process of being reviewed, with the Records Manager currently incorporating into the Board's Retention Schedule for ease of reference.</p> <p>Significant work has been done in relation to hard-copy scanning. All Council Tax paper files have now been fully scanned and paper files securely destroyed. Valuation records are now fully electronic. We are a substantial way through the scanning of Non-Domestic paper files and work will continue on this throughout the coming months.</p>	Thank you for updating the Assessment Team on this Element. We note that Valuation records are now fully electronic, and that scanning of other records continues. It is perfectly reasonable to maintain paper format records as indicated.	A full review of the Business Classification Scheme was undertaken, incorporating into the Board's Retention Schedule to provide a consistent resource for staff in one place. It also contains an introduction and users' guide for staff. The integrated Business Classification Scheme and Records Retention Schedule is maintained by	Thank you for this very positive update on full review of the Business Classification Scheme, including the incorporation of the Board's Retention Schedule. This will help the organised migration

					<p>It is notable that some files are not capable of being held electronically, for example large architect's plans and these will be kept in paper format which are tracked via the paper record filing system.</p> <p>Work on the shared drive for valuation data was stopped as there is a planned move of our core Valuation system to a new valuation system and files will be migrated to this system. The system will significantly contribute to good records management as it is, designed with electronic retention periods. It is currently expected the migration to the system will be the latter half of this year.</p> <p>The Records Manager, DPO, Senior IT Manager and Service Co-Ordinator have held monthly meetings to discuss, review and manage Electronic Records Management. As a result of these regular meetings there has been significant development to the migration of personnel, governance, and corporate electronic files over to the EDMS. The software allows retention timescales to be added when a document is added to ensure efficient records management.</p> <p>The Records Manager and DPO have also been having regular meetings with an IT Manager and Senior Clerical Manager with responsibility for the electronic system Elector8 to ensure it is being used to its full capacity for good electronic management of records.</p>	<p>We note the upcoming move to a new line-of-business system with thanks.</p> <p>Thank you also for letting us know about the regular electronic records management meetings. Keeping records management on the agenda is a good way to ensure that it continues to be considered alongside any changes in the operations of the organisation, and it sounds like RVJB keeps RM matters appropriately high-profile.</p>	<p>the Records Manager with support from the DPO.</p> <p>The Records Manager, DPO, Senior IT Manager and Service Co-Ordinator continue to hold monthly meetings to discuss, review and manage Electronic Records Management. There continues to be significant development to the migration of personnel, governance, and corporate electronic files over to the EDMS.</p> <p>The Records Manager and DPO continue to have regular meetings with an IT Manager and Senior Clerical Manager with responsibility for the electronic system Elector8 to ensure it is being used to its full capacity for good electronic management of records. More recently, the Records Manager has encouraged the IT Manager and Senior Clerical Manager to be more proactive in discussing records management with their peer working group to gather different ideas and advice for this particular software.</p>	<p>of necessary content onto the EDMS.</p> <p>It is also very good to hear that DPO and the Records Manager continue to work collaboratively on RVJB's line-of-business system Elector8, and to engage colleagues in other relevant areas in conversations on records management.</p> <p>Update required on any future change.</p>
5. Retention Schedule	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	<p>The Retention Schedule was reviewed and significantly revised in April 2021. This is held on our EDMS to ensure staff are aware of the appropriate retention periods when dealing with documents. It is also held on RVJB's website.</p> <p>As referenced in Element 4, the Business Classification Scheme is in the process of being reviewed, and will be incorporated into the Board's Retention Schedule for ease of reference.</p> <p>The Governance items were expanded on to more fully reflect the records handled by the organisation, as well as a new HR sheet created to set out in more detail the extent of the HR records held. The more detailed itemisation should ensure that the retention and disposal arrangements are more accurately followed.</p>	<p>The Assessment Team is grateful for this update on the revision of RVJB's Retention Schedule. The current project of reviewing the Business Classification Scheme is a good opportunity to review both.</p> <p>The more detailed itemisation within the Schedule is also noted with thanks.</p>	<p>The Retention Schedule underwent a further review as part of the integration process with the Business Classification Scheme. During this process there was ongoing reassessment of the appropriate retention periods.</p> <p>The Records Manager and DPO worked closely with the Senior Clerical Manager and have completely reviewed and updated all retention periods for Electoral records.</p>	<p>Thank you for this update. The Retention Schedule review, alongside the BCS review, is a very positive step, especially taking the EDMS implementation into account.</p> <p>Thank you also for confirming that all Electoral Records retention periods have recently been reviewed.</p> <p>Update required on any future change.</p>
6. Destruction Arrangements	A	A	A	The Board recognises the importance of the secure and irretrievable destruction of records and has supplied their <i>Protective Marking Handling Disposal Policy & Procedures</i> document as evidence.	The EDMS workflow runs at the end of each month to identify the documents that meet the retention criteria as per RVJB's retention schedule. A link to the folder where the documents, which have met their expiry date, are reviewed by appropriate personnel and documents are either deleted using the metadata fields in the document	Thank you for this explanation of EDMS workflow with regard to regular, practical records destruction. Thank you also for clarifying how this	The Service Co-Ordinator has continued to work consistently on the migration of all our data stored on the management network shares to the EDMS and has made significant progress, with only minimal working	This is a very helpful update, detailing ongoing work on records migration from network drives onto the EDMS, as detailed

				<p>However, the processes by which electronic records will be destroyed will form part of another policy which has not yet been rolled-out. The Keeper requests that this policy is forwarded to him as soon as it becomes available in order that he may keep the Board's submission up-to-date.</p> <p>The Board is also considering incorporating the automated disposal of electronic records within their IT system. Whilst this must remain a business decision for the Board, the Keeper commends this initiative and asks that he be kept informed and supplied with details should a decision be taken.</p> <p>The Keeper agrees that Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board has procedures in place to suitable destroy paper records, hardware and back-ups when appropriate, as required by the Act. He agrees this element of the Plan on 'improvement model' terms on the condition that the Board pursues the creation of a policy detailing the management (including deletion) of electronic records as committed to on page 12 of the Plan.</p>	<p>template or retained. The workflow runs every month and is cleansed appropriately immediately.</p> <p>There has been significant development in the second stage of the installation - the migration of all our data stored on network shares to the EDMS with an emphasis on the migration of personnel, governance, and corporate electronic files over to the EDMS as these documents contain personal data which are deleted when no longer required as retention timescales are added to each document from the date the document was created, not when saved on to the EDMS.</p> <p>Work on the shared drive for valuation data was stopped as there is a planned move of our core valuation system to a new valuation system and files will be migrated to this system. The system will significantly contribute to good records management as it is, designed with electronic retention periods. It is currently expected the migration to the system will be the latter half of this year.</p> <p>As referenced in Element 3, the Housekeeping Manual for the Electoral Management System (EMS) was agreed by the Governance Working Group to be kept as a separate document as not all RVJB staff have access to the EMS. The manual was circulated to the relevant staff for information purposes and appropriate training given.</p>	<p>works when it comes to the gradual migration of all data stored on network shared drives.</p>	<p>documents remaining on network drives. This ensures that retention timescales are managed electronically by the system, as previously outlined.</p> <p>The Service Co-Ordinator also continues to prioritise destruction of physical records in line with the retention timescales. The Service Co-Ordinator recently was allocated a new assistant post who is ably assisting in managing destruction of physical and electronic records.</p>	<p>under Element 4 as well. This puts RVJB in a good position with regard to automated retention and destruction management.</p> <p>Thank you also for providing an update regarding physical (paper) records, as well as the additional resource provided for this area in the form of an Assistant post. This is very positive.</p> <p>It is clear that RVJB continues to invest in the improvement of its electronic records management operations (including both EDMS and a line-of-business system for valuation data), but that the full roll-out of these systems is still an ongoing endeavour.</p> <p>This element will remain at Amber until the electronic records destruction systems have been fully implemented and are operational.</p>
7. Archiving and Transfer	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	No change.	Update required on any change.	No update.	Update required on any change.
8. Information Security	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	<p>The Information Security Policy has been reviewed and updated, most recently in August 2021.</p> <p>In November 2021, the organisation implemented software called Safe Send for All Staff. This software is designed to prevent misaddressed emails being sent or the wrong attachments issued. The software requires users to confirm external recipients and attachments after initially selecting 'send' in Outlook. The software has also been configured to pick up certain words such as 'confidential', 'internal', 'restricted' etc as well as NINO's and credit card numbers to alert staff and ask them to think twice about who and what information they are</p>	<p>Thank you for letting the Assessment Team know that the Information Security Policy update took place in August 2021.</p> <p>It is also interesting to hear about the Safe Send software implementation and the Cyber Security awareness campaign.</p>	<p>No notifiable changes to arrangements, cyber security training/software still utilised, training sessions and bulletins continue to be regularly implemented as per previous submission.</p> <p>The Senior Officer, Records Manager, DPO and Senior IT Manager recently attended a Ransomware training course delivered by Cyber-Scotland which</p>	<p>Thank you very much for confirming that no major updates have been made to policies or practices under this element.</p> <p>It is good to hear of the recent ransomware training, attended by individuals in key</p>

					<p>sending. SafeSend can also help to prevent spear phishing attacks by highlighting external email addresses, even ones that look like they came from within your organisation.</p> <p>The Board's DPO carried out Information Governance training to All Staff in June and July 2021, tailored to the three functions of the Board i.e., domestic/ non-domestic valuation and electoral registration, which included training specifically on Information Security matters.</p> <p>The Board's DPO introduced a monthly Think Twice bulletin in January 2021 which is issued to All Staff. This monthly bulletin ensures that key information security messages are disseminated to all staff on a regular basis.</p> <p>The Board's DPO also ensures that the Information Security Reporting Procedures are circulated to all staff every 3-months, most recently in February 2022.</p> <p>It remains mandatory for all staff to complete an online training course each year on Information Security.</p> <p>In addition to this, in April 2021 our IT section ran an awareness campaign on Cyber Security for all staff. This included issuing several mock phishing emails to all staff and additional training for those staff who failed to identify it was a suspicious email. At this time, all staff were required to complete VIPRE training courses on (i) Defending Against Phishers and (ii) Ransomware, how to defend yourself. This is an annual awareness campaign which will be replicated this year for all staff.</p> <p>Cyber Security Courses are also mandatory for all staff and are delivered via online training courses.</p>	<p>Staff training updates are explored under Element 12.</p> <p>It is evident from this update that RVJB continues to recognise the importance of robust information security arrangements.</p>	<p>simulated a Phishing Attack scenario to work through with Ethical Hackers. The Senior IT Manager continues to implement technical and organisational measures to manage Information Security.</p> <p>It has not been previously noted that the DPO maintains an Information Security Log which records all Information Security incidents. This reinforces to staff the importance of reporting, even if the incident is a 'near-miss'. The reporting procedures work well. None have been identified as reportable to the Information Commissioners' Office but have been recorded for lessons learned and to identify any areas which may require further staff training.</p>	<p>records management roles.</p> <p>The described Information Security Log, maintained by the Data Protection Officer, is a helpful way to keep track if IS incidents and, as RVJB recognises, can result in better information security through near-miss reporting. It is clear from this update that Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board continues to maintain robust information security arrangements.</p> <p>Update required on any future change.</p>
9. Data Protection	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	<p>Data protection remains a standing item on the agenda of the Governance Working Group which is chaired by the Records Manager. The Board's DPO is now a member of the Governance Working Group and provides updates and advice to the Governance Working Group monthly.</p> <p>The Data Protection Policy was reviewed and updated in January 2021.</p> <p>The Public Privacy Notice was last updated on 12 April 2022 and the up-to-date version uploaded onto our website on that date. The Privacy Notice for Employees was updated on 11 January 2021 and circulated to all staff on that date. This Privacy Notice is also circulated annually to ensure all staff have an understanding of how RVJB uses their personal information, as well as their rights over their information.</p> <p>The Board's DPO carried out Information Governance training to All Staff in 2021, tailored to the three functions of the Board i.e., domestic/ non-domestic valuation and electoral registration, which included training specifically on Data Protection matters.</p>	<p>Thank you for this update on Data Protection. It is good to hear it remains a standing item of the Governance Working Group, and that the SAA Governance committee regularly discusses matters relevant to data protection.</p> <p>The review and update of RVJB's Data Protection Policy in January 2021, as well as the update of the privacy notices, is noted with thanks.</p> <p>For comments on the training updates, see Element 12.</p>	<p>The Data Protection Policy was reviewed and revised by our Information Governance Solicitor/ DPO in January 2023. The Governance Working Group and Management Team reviewed the updates and approved in February 2023.</p> <p>The main revisals are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-reference to other related, key policies and procedures • Reference to the work of the Governance Working Group • Reference to Privacy Notices for staff and public 	<p>Thank you for updating us on RVJB's Data Protection Policy revision and update. It is especially good to hear that this has now been further linked to other key policies and procedures.</p> <p>Update required on any change.</p>

					<p>Bespoke training will be carried out in this year by the DPO, similar to the training carried out in 2021.</p> <p>The Senior Manager and Records Manager are members of the SAA Governance Committee who meet regularly to discuss and information share on data protection and other items relating to governance.</p>			
10. Business Continuity and Vital Records	A	G	G	<p>The Board has not yet adopted the formal <i>Business Continuity Plan</i> which at the time of the assessment is described as ‘currently being finalised by the Internal Governance Working Group’. A separate <i>IT Disaster Recovery Plan</i> has also been created and awaits final sign-off. The Keeper welcomes creation of these policies and asks that he has sight of them once approved and operational.</p> <p>The Keeper agrees this element of the Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board’s records management plan under ‘improvement model’ terms. This means that he recognises that an authority has acknowledged a gap in provision (two vital business continuity policies have not yet been approved) but have put processes in place to close that gap. The Keeper’s agreement is conditional of him being provided with fully authorised policy documents as soon as they are available.</p>	<p>RVJB’s Virtual infrastructure is backed up by a Disaster Recovery supplier including replication of its critical servers to an offsite location via a dedicated fibre link. This will protect RVJB’s data in the event of an IT disaster and or malicious attack.</p> <p>RVJB also continue to conduct an annual Disaster Recovery test which is invoked by RVJB’s IT department in order to test recovery times and the overall IT DR plan.</p> <p>The DR Plan, approved by the Management Team in December 2020, is continuously reviewed to ensure the most up to date information/ contact details for relevant personnel are held and to ensure any changes to DR is referenced accordingly. This has been rolled out to appropriate staff members. The DR plan is held on a SharePoint site on the cloud which ensures accessibility and can be distributed easily to all staff if required.</p> <p>RVJB are still in the process of moving away from the Core Valuation System hosted by Renfrewshire Council as the ND/CT arm has not migrated yet but is planned for the latter half of this year and is referenced in Element 4.</p>	<p>The Keeper’s Model Plan states that an authority’s business continuity arrangements should include the recovery of records made temporarily unavailable due to an unexpected event. The update given by RVJB indicates that a Disaster Recovery Plan is now in place and regularly tested. Although RVJB are still moving away from the Core Valuation System, significant improvements in this area have been made.</p> <p>As indicated in the previous PUR, this Element can now be turned from Amber to Green. If this was a formal resubmission, it is likely that RVJB would also be able to obtain a Green RMP status for this Element.</p>	<p>Disaster Recovery Test was carried out in February 2023. The Senior IT Manager concluded it was a positive test. A member of staff was involved and during the test she was able to connect successfully and access a number of resources. During the test, there was successful connection to all file shares and mapped drives.</p> <p>Minor issues identified during the test are being resolved and will be retested.</p>	<p>The Assessment Team thanks you for this update. Periodical testing is a good way to measure aspects of an organisation’s preparedness in the face of an unexpected events. It is positive to hear that this test had a positive outcome, and that minor issues identified are being resolved and retested.</p> <p>Update required on any future change.</p>
11. Audit Trail	A	G	G	<p>The Board recognise that whilst audit trail functionality is available for electronic records, procedures regarding paper records need to be developed and a logging out sheet will need to be created. These action points will be added to the Internal Governance Working Group’s remit. The Keeper is pleased to see the Board’s commitment to close the gap in provision under this element and asks for updates as work in this area progresses.</p> <p>The Keeper agrees this element of Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board’s records management plan under ‘improvement model’ terms. This means that the authority has acknowledged a gap in provision (movement of paper records is</p>	<p>There are no notifiable changes to Arrangements.</p>	<p>Update required on any change.</p>	<p>No update.</p>	<p>Update required on any change.</p>

				inadequately tracked) and has made a commitment to implement a process that will close that gap. The Keeper's agreement is conditional on him being updated as this project progresses.				
12. Competency Framework	G	G	G	<p>The Board recognise that staff require further training on the operation of the retention schedule. There is a commitment to providing staff with a 'clear set of rules'. The Keeper commends this commitment and requests a copy of these rules when they become available.</p>	<p>The Board's DPO carried out Information Governance training to All Staff in June and July 2021, which included training specifically on Records Management issues.</p> <p>Training on all aspects of Information Governance (Data Protection, Records Management, Information Security and Freedom of Information) is delivered by the Board's DPO to all New Starts as a matter of standard practice.</p> <p>The Board's DPO carried out a training session specifically for Managers which covered Records Management matters in detail.</p> <p>The DPO is conscious that the updated Records Management Policy now refers specifically to the DPO's responsibility for training staff on Records Management. The DPO is committed to delivering regular training sessions and bulletins for staff to maintain a good level of awareness of Records Management issues amongst staff at all levels.</p> <p>As highlighted previously, the DPO introduced a monthly Think Twice bulletin in January 2021 which is issued to All Staff. This monthly bulletin ensures that key information governance messages are disseminated to all staff on a regular basis, including Records Management issues specifically. Examples of Think Twice bulletins are "The Principles of Good Records Management" and "Retention and Disposal". The DPO has prepared further Records Management guidance for staff which will be circulated over the next few months.</p> <p>The DPO, alongside the Records Manager, is supported by Senior Management to attend courses which will build confidence in dealing with Records Management matters. The DPO attended the National Records of Scotland PRSA Surgery in April 2021 as well as the PRSA Newcomers Surgery in July 2021.</p> <p>The DPO also liaises with the Records Manager for Renfrewshire Council and has asked to be included in any training courses delivered by Renfrewshire Council's Records Manager.</p>	<p>This is a positive update, and shows that RVJB continues to ensure that staff continue to be trained and supported when dealing with specific or general records management-related practice.</p> <p>It is particularly apparent that the Data Protection Officer has been active in carrying out training to all levels of staff and is taking their responsibilities under the RMP seriously in this regard. It is also good to hear that both the DPO and Records Manager are supported to attend training courses in records management.</p> <p>The staff bulletin also seems like a good method to regularly raise the profile of important records management issues.</p>	No notifiable changes to arrangements, training sessions and bulletins continue to be regularly implemented as per previous submission.	Thank you for letting the Assessment Team know that Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board continues to implement robust staff training and support. Update required on any future change.
13. Assessment and Review	G	G	G	<p>The Board is committed to regular reviews of its Plan and have set a provisional date for undertaking the first such self-assessment by October 2016. There are similar plans to review key policies and there will be a constant review of the Business Classification Scheme and Retention Schedule during</p>	<p>The Records Management Plan was most recently reviewed and updated in October 2021.</p> <p>The Records Manager has also been working with the Internal Auditors of Renfrewshire Council on the 2021/22 audit of our Records Management arrangements. The finalised report was issued in April 2022 and identified that satisfactory arrangements are in place which ensure adequate progress of the Records Management Plan with</p>	<p>Thank you for letting us know that the RMP was reviewed and updated in October 2021.</p> <p>The recent audit of records management arrangements with minimal improvement</p>	Renfrewshire Council conducted an Internal Audit during 2021/2022. The findings were not complete at the date of the last PUR. The Internal Audit Report was concluded April 2022 and reported to Board on 10 June 2022, as follows.	The Assessment Team is grateful to hear of the results of the Internal Audit 2021/2022. This is a great way to assess the practices and practical processes in place, and to ensure

				their implementation. The Keeper applauds these commitments and asks that he is kept informed of these self-assessments, particularly if they result in new policy documents or procedures being introduced.	only a service improvement recommendation relating to the Plan published on our website.	recommendations is also very positive news, and noted with thanks. In addition to this, the regular participation of RVJB in the PUR process is also commendable.	<p>Audit Scope:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviewed the relevant officers to ascertain the arrangements in place for records management and obtained a copy of the record management plan. 2. Prepared and undertook a series of tests to ascertain the progress in completing the actions contained within the record management plan. <p>Key Audit Assurance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is adequate management/board oversight and progress against the records management plan is reviewed regularly. 2. Timeous progression of actions and developments is monitored through regular progress reviews which are adequately evidenced and reported on. 3. Although there have been no deviations from the plan to date, any variations could be easily identified through the progress reviews and confirmation was obtained that any remedial action required would be agreed at an appropriate level in the organisation. <p>There were no key risks identified during the audit.</p> <p>The audit identified that satisfactory arrangements are in place which ensure adequate progress of the Records Management Plan.</p>	<p>these match the policies and plans.</p> <p>The Team agrees that 'satisfactory arrangements are in place which ensure adequate progress of the Records Management Plan'.</p> <p>Update required on any future change.</p>
14. Shared Information	G	G	G	Update required on any change.	Information Sharing arrangements are reviewed on a regular basis by our DPO. The template Information Sharing Protocol was reviewed and updated by our DPO (Information Governance Solicitor) and is now used as a default in any information sharing arrangement.	Thank you for keeping the Assessment Team updated on RVJB's Information Sharing arrangements, and the DPO work that has gone into reviewing and updating the template Protocol. It is very good to hear that that continuous review of arrangements, identified as best practice, continues to take place.	No update.	Update required on any change.

7. The Public Records (Scotland) Act Assessment Team's Summary

Version

The progress update submission which has been assessed is the one received by the Assessment Team on 15th March 2023. The progress update was submitted by Lindsey Hendry, Assistant Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.

The progress update submission makes it clear that it is a submission for **Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board**.

PRSA Assessment Team's Summary

The Assessment Team has reviewed Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board's Progress Update submission and agrees that the proper record management arrangements outlined by the fourteen elements in the authority's plan continue to be properly considered. The Assessment Team commends this authority's efforts to keep its Records Management Plan under review.

General Comments

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board continues to take its records management obligations seriously and is working to bring all elements into full compliance.

Section 5(2) of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 provides the Keeper of the Records of Scotland (the Keeper) with authority to revisit an agreed plan only after five years has elapsed since the date of agreement. Section 5(6) allows authorities to revise their agreed plan at any time and resubmit this for the Keeper's agreement. The Act does not require authorities to provide regular updates against progress. The Keeper, however, encourages such updates.

The Keeper cannot change the status of elements formally agreed under a voluntary submission, but he can use such submissions to indicate how he might now regard this status should the authority choose to resubmit its plan under section (5)(6) of the Act.

8. The Public Records (Scotland) Act Assessment Team's Evaluation

Based on the progress update assessment the Assessment Team considers that Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board continue to take their statutory obligations seriously and are working hard to bring all the elements of their records management arrangements into full compliance with the Act and fulfil the Keeper's expectations.

- The Assessment Team recommends authorities consider publishing PUR assessment reports on their websites as an example of continued good practice both within individual authorities and across the sector.

This report follows the Public Records (Scotland) Act Assessment Team's review carried out by

Iida Saarinen
Public Records Officer



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on: 15th September 2023

Subject: Non-Domestic Proposals and Appeals

Author: Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to report progress on the disposal of the 2017 Revaluation appeals and the disposal of 2017 Revaluation Running Roll appeals. It also gives a brief insight into the two-stage proposal and appeal process which came into force on the 1st April 2023.

1. 2023 Revaluation Proposals

Following the publication of the 2023 Revaluation Roll, Proprietors, Tenant and Occupiers of subjects in the Valuation Roll originally had until 31 July 2023 to submit a Proposal if they were unhappy with the Revaluation. This deadline was subsequently extended to 31st August, and we have received just under 1000 Proposals, these are currently going through the verification phase and further detail on these will be given in future reports to the Board.

2. 2017 Revaluation Appeals

The total number of Revaluation Appeals received for 2017 was 3,832, which related to 3,542 subjects with a cumulative value of £324,294,785.

A number of statistical extracts have been compiled to show the Revaluation Appeals received in 2017 and the subsequent 2017 running roll appeals. These have been shown by category type and map the categories used by the Scottish Executive; see Appendix 1. The 20 categories divide subjects into easily understood groupings such as Retail, Offices, Industrials, Health, Education and Hotels.

Category 11, titled "Public Service" includes subjects such as the Airport, Bus Station, Court House, Fire Station, Military Establishment, Police Station and Waste Water Treatment Works.

Category 17, titled "Others" includes subjects such as Car Parks, Car Spaces, Ground, Kennels, Livestock Auction Marts, Premises Under Reconstruction, Stables, Water Rights and Weighbridges.

3. The disposal of 2017 Revaluation Appeals

A number of statistical extracts have been compiled to show the disposal of the 2017 Revaluation Appeals. These have been shown by the same category type as stated above, see Appendix 1.

As the Board is aware, the Assessor for Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board is the "Designated Assessor" for fixed line Telecommunications subjects which are included at line 20 in the tables.

The Assessor discharged his statutory duty with only a small number of outstanding 2017 Revaluation appeals referred to the Lands Tribunal.

The statistics provided within this report continue to be based on the quarterly progress made and relate to all revaluation appeals referred to the Lands Tribunal and processed over the last quarter up to the 30th June 2023. As at 30th June 2023, the numbers of appeals disposed of is 3,519 which equates to 99.35% of the number of subjects under appeal. There are therefore only 23 subjects within the Joint Board area that have 2017 Revaluation appeals outstanding.

The appeals that remain outstanding relate primarily to Automated Teller Machines which account for 17 of the 23. Staff are actively engaging with the relevant parties to progress these appeals.

The disposal of the additional category of subjects that remain outstanding relate to subjects for which negotiations are being led by the relevant Practice Note authors within the SAA and comprise mainly of public undertakings. Therefore, any future progress in resolving these appeals will, in the main, be dependent upon negotiations being carried out at a national level before progress can be made locally.

Appendix 1 outlines where the remaining appeals lie for each of the three unitary authorities together with a total for the Joint Board area.

4. Running Roll Proposals/Appeals

Following a Revaluation, new values will generally remain unchanged until the next Revaluation; unless the property is altered, or other changes take place. New properties will be added to the Roll as they become capable of occupation and entries for demolished buildings will be deleted.

A Running Roll proposal can be lodged by a ratepayer or their agent on the grounds that there has been a Material Change of Circumstances (MCC) which has affected the value of the property or on the basis of an error in the valuation at any time.

Running roll proposals can be lodged by ratepayers or their agents at least once in any one financial year and require to be disposed of in line with the prescribed statutory timetable. If the proposer remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their proposal, they can appeal to the First Tier Tribunal and in some circumstances the Upper Tribunal and this two-stage appeal process was effective from the 1st April 2023.

The Board will be kept informed of the 2023 running roll proposals and appeals progress as well as the disposal of the 2023 Revaluation proposals and appeals.

5. The disposal of 2017 Revaluation Running Roll Appeals

As previously reported to the Board, the number of running roll appeals received since March 2020 was greater than the norm due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the situation facing many businesses. The position as of 30th June 2023 is that 2017 Revaluation MCC appeals received since March 2020 total 6,249, the bulk of which, some 5585 relate to the Pandemic. We currently have a total of 2,712 outstanding, and we expect the number of appeals outstanding to continue to reduce as the appeals are withdrawn however there is no guarantee that the remaining outstanding appeals will not result in hearings before the Tribunal. The disposal progress of these appeals will be monitored and reported to the Board.

Most of the Non-Domestic appeals outstanding had a disposal deadline of 31st December 2023, however the Valuation Timetable (Scotland) Amendment (No.2) Order 2023 came into force on 15th June and has amended the last date for disposal by the First-tier Tribunal to 31st December 2024.

I have provided additional tables similar to the Revaluation statistics in order to give the Board an indication as to the type of subjects for which appeals have been lodged and the numbers associated with each category.

Appendix 2 outlines the number of outstanding 2017 running roll appeals within RVJB and each of the individual Council areas.

6. Disposal of Other Outstanding Appeals

For the 2017 Revaluation if a case was considered highly complex, it could be referred to the Lands Tribunal for Scotland. With effect from the 1st April 2023, the functions of the Lands Tribunal for Scotland have been transferred to the Upper Tribunal for Scotland. Any outstanding Lands Tribunal appeals will now be dealt with by the Upper Tribunal for Scotland.

At present there are a number of subjects that have cases from both the 2005 and 2010 Revaluations which will now be dealt with by the Upper Tribunal, these relate to either mobile or complex fixed line telecommunication subjects. There are also a number of referrals that have been made with regard to the 2017 Revaluation and again they will be dealt with by the Upper Tribunal. Details of the numbers involved are outlined below. Negotiations continue with the relevant agents where possible and it is hoped that agreements will be reached without the need for any cases proceeding to formal hearings.

The number of appeals referred to the Lands Tribunal currently outstanding are as follows:

2 appeals remain outstanding from 2005 Revaluation in relation to 2 subjects.

7 appeals remain outstanding from 2010 Revaluation in relation to 2 subjects.

32 appeals remain outstanding from the 2017 Revaluation in relation to 25 subjects.
Please note the 32 includes both revaluation and running roll appeals.

7. Conclusion:

The disposal of revaluation and running roll appeals is work that can be stressful due to the strict legislative timetables and the adversarial nature of the negotiations. The effects of the new two-stage proposal/appeal process in relation to non-domestic properties on our business practices and service delivery are unknown at the present time and the Board will be kept informed.

Recommendations

- i. The Board notes the contents of this report.

Lindsey Hendry
Assistant Assessor and ERO
3rd September 2023

For further information please contact Lindsey Hendry at 0141 487 0635 or via email at lindsey.hendry@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

RVJB Revaluation 2017 – Appeals (By number of subjects under appeal as at 30/06/2023 – **RENFREWSHIRE**)

Category	Number Received	RV under Appeal	Disposed	Original RV	Adjusted RV	Number O/S	Appeal RV O/S	% O/S
1 Retail	528	£ 63,147,350	528	£ 63,147,350	£ 58,499,250	0	£ -	0.00%
2 Public House	67	£ 2,482,000	67	£ 2,482,000	£ 2,198,900	0	£ -	0.00%
3 Office including Banks	526	£ 13,448,400	515	£ 13,353,050	£ 12,160,725	11	£ 95,350	2.09%
4 Hotel Etc	18	£ 6,229,500	18	£ 6,229,500	£ 5,212,500	0	£ -	0.00%
5 Industrial	443	£ 30,604,205	443	£ 30,604,205	£ 29,231,155	0	£ -	0.00%
6 Leisure	46	£ 5,977,950	46	£ 5,977,950	£ 5,489,450	0	£ -	0.00%
7 Garages and Petrol Stations	19	£ 1,003,500	19	£ 1,003,500	£ 912,000	0	£ -	0.00%
8 Cultural	3	£ 136,200	3	£ 136,200	£ 136,200	0	£ -	0.00%
9 Sporting Subjects	3	£ 136,000	2	£ 74,000	£ 66,500	1	£ 62,000	33.33%
10 Education and Training	76	£ 13,701,350	76	£ 13,701,350	£ 12,691,000	0	£ -	0.00%
11 Public Service Subjects	89	£ 5,590,000	89	£ 5,590,000	£ 5,170,400	0	£ -	0.00%
12 Communications (Non Formula)	13	£ 1,965,000	13	£ 1,965,000	£ 1,486,629	0	£ -	0.00%
13 Quarries Mines etc	1	£ 21,500	1	£ 21,500	£ 21,500	0	£ -	0.00%
14 Petrochemical	2	£ 239,000	2	£ 239,000	£ 229,000	0	£ -	0.00%
15 Religious	11	£ 127,600	11	£ 127,600	£ 124,400	0	£ -	0.00%
16 Health Medical	22	£ 4,890,200	22	£ 4,890,200	£ 4,447,350	0	£ -	0.00%
17 Other	185	£ 3,020,970	185	£ 3,020,970	£ 1,551,930	0	£ -	0.00%
18 Care Facilities	52	£ 2,498,800	52	£ 2,498,800	£ 2,304,200	0	£ -	0.00%
19 Advertising	38	£ 121,140	38	£ 121,140	£ 102,340	0	£ -	0.00%
20 Undertakings / Fixed Line	8	£ 98,306,000	4	£ 91,888,000	£ 67,483,000	4	£ 6,418,000	50.00%
	2,150	£ 253,646,665	2,134	£ 247,071,315	£ 209,518,429	16	£ 6,575,350	0.74%

RVJB Revaluation 2017 – Appeals (By number of subjects under appeal as at 30/06/2023 – **EAST RENFREWSHIRE**

Category	Number Received	RV under Appeal	Disposed	Original RV	Adjusted RV	Number O/S	Appeal RV O/S	% O/S
1 Retail	180	£ 11,304,000	180	£ 11,304,000	£ 10,256,550	0	£ -	0.00%
2 Public House	12	£ 963,750	12	£ 963,750	£ 844,650	0	£ -	0.00%
3 Office including Banks	118	£ 2,330,950	115	£ 2,311,900	£ 1,905,450	3	£ 19,050	2.54%
4 Hotel Etc	5	£ 635,000	5	£ 635,000	£ 554,000	0	£ -	0.00%
5 Industrial	85	£ 1,175,105	85	£ 1,175,105	£ 1,154,855	0	£ -	0.00%
6 Leisure	13	£ 2,248,000	13	£ 2,248,000	£ 2,196,000	0	£ -	0.00%
7 Garages and Petrol Stations	8	£ 205,850	8	£ 205,850	£ 190,400	0	£ -	0.00%
8 Cultural	0	£ -	0	£ -	£ -	0	£ -	0.00%
9 Sporting Subjects	0	£ -	0	£ -	£ -	0	£ -	0.00%
10 Education and Training	31	£ 6,885,000	31	£ 6,885,000	£ 6,553,500	0	£ -	0.00%
11 Public Service Subjects	36	£ 1,319,940	36	£ 1,319,940	£ 1,225,440	0	£ -	0.00%
12 Communications (Non Formula)	7	£ 861,500	7	£ 861,500	£ 563,278	0	£ -	0.00%
13 Quarries Mines etc	1	£ 60,000	1	£ 60,000	£ 60,000	0	£ -	0.00%
14 Petrochemical	0	£ -	0	£ -	£ -	0	£ -	0.00%
15 Religious	4	£ 11,700	4	£ 11,700	£ 11,700	0	£ -	0.00%
16 Health Medical	7	£ 919,900	7	£ 919,900	£ 872,000	0	£ -	0.00%
17 Other	22	£ 108,950	22	£ 108,950	£ 101,850	0	£ -	0.00%
18 Care Facilities	19	£ 918,200	19	£ 918,200	£ 805,550	0	£ -	0.00%
19 Advertising	13	£ 55,100	13	£ 55,100	£ 43,850	0	£ -	0.00%
20 Undertakings / Fixed Line	2	£ 305,800	2	£ 305,800	£ 279,800	0	£ -	0.00%
	563	£ 30,308,745	560	£ 30,289,695	£ 27,618,873	3	£ 19,050	0.53%

RVJB Revaluation 2017 – Appeals (By number of subjects under appeal as at 30/06/2023 – **INVERCLYDE**

Category	Number Received	RV under Appeal	Disposed	Original RV	Adjusted RV	Number O/S	Appeal RV O/S	% O/S
1 Retail	245	£ 12,093,100	245	£ 12,093,100	£ 11,131,250	0	£ -	0.00%
2 Public House	28	£ 1,147,500	28	£ 1,147,500	£ 1,014,900	0	£ -	0.00%
3 Office including Banks	171	£ 5,767,375	168	£ 5,742,325	£ 5,373,750	3	£ 25,050	1.75%
4 Hotel Etc	2	£ 171,500	2	£ 171,500	£ 170,000	0	£ -	0.00%
5 Industrial	153	£ 3,917,550	153	£ 3,917,550	£ 3,801,150	0	£ -	0.00%
6 Leisure	25	£ 1,812,500	25	£ 1,812,500	£ 1,613,000	0	£ -	0.00%
7 Garages and Petrol Stations	15	£ 451,300	15	£ 451,300	£ 445,300	0	£ -	0.00%
8 Cultural	1	£ 80,000	1	£ 80,000	£ 80,000	0	£ -	0.00%
9 Sporting Subjects	0	£ -	0	£ -	£ -	0	£ -	0.00%
10 Education and Training	34	£ 7,564,550	34	£ 7,564,550	£ 7,221,050	0	£ -	0.00%
11 Public Service Subjects	61	£ 2,763,800	60	£ 1,998,800	£ 1,853,300	1	£ 765,000	1.64%
12 Communications (Non Formula)	9	£ 637,200	9	£ 637,200	£ 536,682	0	£ -	0.00%
13 Quarries Mines etc	0	£ -	0	£ -	£ -	0	£ -	0.00%
14 Petrochemical	0	£ -	0	£ -	£ -	0	£ -	0.00%
15 Religious	2	£ 57,400	2	£ 57,400	£ 57,400	0	£ -	0.00%
16 Health Medical	11	£ 2,886,550	11	£ 2,886,550	£ 2,668,050	0	£ -	0.00%
17 Other	41	£ 261,000	41	£ 261,000	£ 222,250	0	£ -	0.00%
18 Care Facilities	24	£ 704,300	24	£ 704,300	£ 644,200	0	£ -	0.00%
19 Advertising	7	£ 23,750	7	£ 23,750	£ 17,950	0	£ -	0.00%
20 Undertakings / Fixed Line	0	£ -	0	£ -	£ -	0	£ -	0.00%
	829	£ 40,339,375	825	£ 39,549,325	£ 36,850,232	4	£ 790,050	0.48%

RVJB Revaluation 2017 – Appeals (By number of subjects under appeal as at 30/06/2023 – **TOTALS IN JOINT BOARD AREA**)

Category	Number Received	RV under Appeal	Disposed	Original RV	Adjusted RV	Number O/S	Appeal RV O/S	% O/S
1 Retail	953	£ 86,544,450	953	£ 86,544,450	£ 79,887,050	0	£ -	0.00%
2 Public House	107	£ 4,593,250	107	£ 4,593,250	£ 4,058,450	0	£ -	0.00%
3 Office including Banks	815	£ 21,546,725	798	£ 21,407,275	£ 19,439,925	17	£ 139,450	2.09%
4 Hotel Etc	25	£ 7,036,000	25	£ 7,036,000	£ 5,936,500	0	£ -	0.00%
5 Industrial	681	£ 35,696,860	681	£ 35,696,860	£ 34,187,160	0	£ -	0.00%
6 Leisure	84	£ 10,038,450	84	£ 10,038,450	£ 9,298,450	0	£ -	0.00%
7 Garages and Petrol Stations	42	£ 1,660,650	42	£ 1,660,650	£ 1,547,700	0	£ -	0.00%
8 Cultural	4	£ 216,200	4	£ 216,200	£ 216,200	0	£ -	0.00%
9 Sporting Subjects	3	£ 136,000	2	£ 74,000	£ 66,500	1	£ 62,000	33.33%
10 Education and Training	141	£ 28,150,900	141	£ 28,150,900	£ 26,465,550	0	£ -	0.00%
11 Public Service Subjects	186	£ 9,673,740	185	£ 8,908,740	£ 8,249,140	1	£ 765,000	0.54%
12 Communications (Non Formula)	29	£ 3,463,700	29	£ 3,463,700	£ 2,586,589	0	£ -	0.00%
13 Quarries Mines etc	2	£ 81,500	2	£ 81,500	£ 81,500	0	£ -	0.00%
14 Petrochemical	2	£ 239,000	2	£ 239,000	£ 229,000	0	£ -	0.00%
15 Religious	17	£ 196,700	17	£ 196,700	£ 193,500	0	£ -	0.00%
16 Health Medical	40	£ 8,696,650	40	£ 8,696,650	£ 7,987,400	0	£ -	0.00%
17 Other	248	£ 3,390,920	248	£ 3,390,920	£ 1,876,030	0	£ -	0.00%
18 Care Facilities	95	£ 4,121,300	95	£ 4,121,300	£ 3,753,950	0	£ -	0.00%
19 Advertising	58	£ 199,990	58	£ 199,990	£ 164,140	0	£ -	0.00%
20 Undertakings / Fixed Line	10	£ 98,611,800	6	£ 92,193,800	£ 67,762,800	4	£ 6,418,000	40.00%
	3,542	£ 324,294,785	3,519	£ 316,910,335	£ 273,987,534	23	£ 7,384,450	0.65%

APPENDIX 2

RENFREWSHIRE - Running Roll Appeals (All) Received on/or after 01/03/20

As at 30th June 2023

Category	Number Received		Disposed		Number O/S	% O/S
1 Retail	1,104		705		399	36.14%
2 Public House	104		36		68	65.38%
3 Office including Banks	1,167		681		486	41.65%
4 Hotel Etc	29		14		15	51.72%
5 Industrial	1,074		777		297	27.65%
6 Leisure	78		33		45	57.69%
7 Garages and Petrol Stations	31		19		12	38.71%
8 Cultural	4		1		3	75.00%
9 Sporting Subjects	13		8		5	38.46%
10 Education and Training	81		12		69	85.19%
11 Public Service Subjects	94		21		73	77.66%
12 Communications (Non Formula)	27		13		14	51.85%
13 Quarries Mines etc	0		0		0	0.00%
14 Petrochemical	3		2		1	33.33%
15 Religious	0		0		0	0.00%
16 Health Medical	9		5		4	44.44%
17 Other	93		43		50	53.76%
18 Care Facilities	41		7		34	82.93%
19 Advertising	95		86		9	9.47%
20 Undertakings	12		5		7	58.33%
	4,059		2,468		1,591	39.20%

EAST RENFREWSHIRE - Running Roll Appeals (All) Received
on/or after 01/03/20

As at 30th June 2023

Category	Number Received		Disposed		Number O/S	% O/S
1 Retail	219		129		90	41.10%
2 Public House	17		7		10	58.82%
3 Office including Banks	150		103		47	31.33%
4 Hotel Etc	7		3		4	57.14%
5 Industrial	37		18		19	51.35%
6 Leisure	20		10		10	50.00%
7 Garages and Petrol Stations	10		2		8	80.00%
8 Cultural	0		0		0	0.00%
9 Sporting Subjects	6		5		1	16.67%
10 Education and Training	37		5		32	86.49%
11 Public Service Subjects	26		3		23	88.46%
12 Communications (Non Formula)	20		12		8	40.00%
13 Quarries Mines etc	2		1		1	50.00%
14 Petrochemical	0		0		0	0.00%
15 Religious	1		1		0	0.00%
16 Health Medical	1		1		0	0.00%
17 Other	6		3		3	50.00%
18 Care Facilities	16		3		13	81.25%
19 Advertising	29		22		7	24.14%
20 Undertakings	0		0		0	0.00%
	604		328		276	45.70%

INVERCLYDE - Running Roll Appeals (All) Received on/or
after 01/03/20

As at 30th June 2023

Category	Number Received	Disposed	Number O/S	% O/S
1 Retail	610	245	365	59.84%
2 Public House	39	10	29	74.36%
3 Office including Banks	396	271	125	31.57%
4 Hotel Etc	2	1	1	50.00%
5 Industrial	228	158	70	30.70%
6 Leisure	26	2	24	92.31%
7 Garages and Petrol Stations	13	4	9	69.23%
8 Cultural	1	1	0	0.00%
9 Sporting Subjects	1	0	1	100.00%
10 Education and Training	60	2	58	96.67%
11 Public Service Subjects	62	7	55	88.71%
12 Communications (Non Formula)	23	11	12	0.00%
13 Quarries Mines etc	0	0	0	0.00%
14 Petrochemical	0	0	0	0.00%
15 Religious	2	0	2	100.00%
16 Health Medical	14	7	7	50.00%
17 Other	58	11	47	81.03%
18 Care Facilities	36	3	33	91.67%
19 Advertising	13	7	6	46.15%
20 Undertakings	2	1	1	0.00%
	1,586	741	845	53.28%

RVJB Running Roll Appeals (All) Received on/or after
01/03/20

As at 31st March 2023

Category	Number Received	Disposed	Number O/S	% O/S
1 Retail	1,933	1,079	854	44.18%
2 Public House	160	53	107	66.88%
3 Office including Banks	1,713	1,055	658	38.41%
4 Hotel Etc	38	18	20	52.63%
5 Industrial	1,339	953	386	28.83%
6 Leisure	124	45	79	63.71%
7 Garages and Petrol Stations	54	25	29	53.70%
8 Cultural	5	2	3	60.00%
9 Sporting Subjects	20	13	7	35.00%
10 Education and Training	178	19	159	89.33%
11 Public Service Subjects	182	31	151	82.97%
12 Communications (Non Formula)	70	36	34	48.57%
13 Quarries Mines etc	2	1	1	50.00%
14 Petrochemical	3	2	1	33.33%
15 Religious	3	1	2	66.67%
16 Health Medical	24	13	11	45.83%
17 Other	157	57	100	63.69%
18 Care Facilities	93	13	80	86.02%
19 Advertising	137	115	22	16.06%
20 Undertakings	14	6	8	57.14%
	6,249	3,537	2,712	43.40%



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on: 15th September 2023

Subject: Non-Domestic Rates Reform Update

Author: Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

1. Background

It was agreed that the Board should be updated at each meeting on developments and expenditure arising from the Barclay Review.

The Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Act 2020 and associated Regulations are the main legislative means for introducing the Non-Domestic Rates reforms recommended by the Barclay Review

There are six main Barclay recommendations which are reflected in the Act, these are listed below:-

- i. The change of the revaluation cycle from 5 yearly to 3 yearly (starting 2023)
- ii. New property markers to be shown against properties in the Valuation Roll (April 2021)
- iii. Changes to valuation of properties within a Park (April 2023)
- iv. From the 2023 Revaluation going forward access will be given to a list of comparative subjects used to value a particular entry in the Valuation Roll
- v. The existing Appeals system to be changed to a two-stage appeal system (April 2023)
- vi. Information Gathering powers to be strengthened with Assessors issuing Civil Penalties to those who do not respond (April 2021)

The Scottish Assessor's Association (SAA) has had regular contact with the Scottish Government and has replied to consultations and appeared at committees as appropriate to ensure a consistent approach. Assessors will continue working jointly to ensure delivery of all these new duties and will also support ongoing development of the SAA Portal which provides information to ratepayers and their agents.

Assessors were asked to submit plans showing what actions and preparations Assessors were planning to carry out to ensure all the Barclay recommendations were fully implemented and delivered within the legislative timelines. These plans have been submitted and approved by the Scottish Government and they cover the period up to 2025 by which time all the recommendations of the Barclay review will be in place.

2. Staffing

As previously reported, recruitment of qualified valuation staff has been difficult in recent times and several recent rounds of advertising have not proven successful. At this moment in time we currently have vacancies for a Property Assistant and a Valuer / Senior Valuer being advertised and we will shortly be advertising for a trainee Valuer.

3. 2023 Non-Domestic Revaluation

The Non-Domestic Revaluation came into force on 1st April 2023, with a Tone Date of 1st April 2022. The Tone date is the date to which all valuations are tied, to ensure all non-domestic properties are valued at the same point in time. In line with the statutory requirements the 2023 Revaluation Roll was delivered to the Local Authorities on 15th March 2023 and Revaluation Notices were issued to all Proprietor, Tenants and Occupiers on the 29th March.

On the 1st of April there was a substantial update to the Assessors portal (www.saa.gov.uk) to publish the Revaluation Roll. Across East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire just under 90% of the published values have a valuation showing the make up of the value available to view on line and many properties also have a rented property list showing rental comparisons that have been used to arrive at the valuation. The Assessors portal also published over 100 Practice Notes. Each Practice Note details how a property type should be valued and covers properties as diverse as Shops, Prisons, Bingo Halls and Golf Courses. Members of our team authored a number of these Practice Notes and contributed to many others.

The Assessors portal was also upgraded to allow aggrieved Proprietor, Tenants or occupiers to submit a proposal against the new Revaluation entry. The original deadline for submitting a proposal was 31st July 2023 and on the 20th July, the Scottish Government enacted the Valuation (Proposals Procedure) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2023 which amended the deadline for Revaluation proposals to 31st August 2023. As at 5th September just under 1,000 proposals had been received although these are still going through the verification process and final number of Revaluation proposals will be reported at the next Board meeting.

4. Changes to the Appeals System

The transfer of the Local Appeal Committees into the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) took place on 1st April 2023.

The Valuation (Proposals Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2022, Valuation Timetable (Scotland) Order 2022, Valuation Roll and Valuation Notice (Scotland) Order 2022, The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland Local Taxation Chamber (Rules of Procedure) Regulations 2022 and The Upper Tribunal for Scotland (Local Taxation Rules of Procedure) Regulations 2022 were laid in the Scottish Parliament in mid-December 2022. Further, The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Transfer of Functions of Valuation Appeals Committees) Regulations 2023 were made on 21st February 2023. These Orders and Regulations provide detail on the new two stage proposal / appeal process that came into force on 1st April 2023.

Upgrades to the SAA portal to allow submission of proposals online were put in place and we have been engaging with the SCTS to ensure the smooth transfer over of existing appeals that became their responsibility from April 2023.

Most of the Non-Domestic appeals transferred to the SCTS had a disposal deadline of 31st December 2023, however the Valuation Timetable (Scotland) Amendment (No.2) Order 2023 came into force on 15th June and has amended the last date for disposal by the First Tier Tribunal to 31st December 2024.

5. Self-Catering Properties

The legislation relating to self-catering properties changed with effect from 1st April 2022. To be classed as a non-domestic property the owner of a self-catering property will now be required to provide evidence of 70 days actual letting as well as 140 days intention to let. The letting must be on a commercial basis with a view to making a profit. I wrote to the owners of all self-catering properties within the RVJB area last year to inform them of the change. I have requested the required evidence from each operator and this is being reviewed. Any operators that fail to respond or don't fulfill the new criteria will have the entry in the Valuation Roll deleted and an entry made within the Council Tax list.

6. Information Gathering powers

The new powers allow the Assessor to issue Assessor Information Notices (AINs), which if not responded to can lead to the Assessor issuing a Civil Penalty on the non- responder(s).

With assistance from Renfrewshire Council's Sundry Debt Team, processes are now agreed to assist in the collection of any Civil Penalties raised through these powers for all three of the Board's councils.

When civil penalties are issued the revenue raised is due to be paid into the Scottish Governments Consolidated Fund (net of any costs). These processes will be kept under review and Scottish Government will be updated regularly on any monies raised which are due to them via the Consolidated Fund.

7. IT Valuation System

Development of this system continues with the aim of going live at a suitable time for service delivery.

8. Recommendations

- i. The Board notes this report.

Robert Nicol
Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer
6th September 2023

For further information please contact Robert Nicol at 07483921232
or via e-mail at robert.nicol@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on: 15th September 2023

Subject: Property Report

Author: Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

1. Introduction

The Board functions are delivered from its offices at the Robertson Centre, Glasgow Road, Paisley. The offices are let from Renfrewshire Council and they have deemed the building surplus to requirements and intimated that they would not renew the Board's lease beyond March 2024, therefore the Board has to look for alternative premises.

2. Update

At the last meeting the Board authorised the Assessor to rescind the then existing lease and sign a new lease covering the period October 2018 to March 2024 and to continue investigations for alternative accommodation effective from March 2024.

Investigations have continued into viable options for accommodating RVJB in the long term. Space planning consultants have been engaged and have looked at our current processes and business model to give recommendations on the size requirement.

In recent days Renfrewshire Council have intimated that they would be willing to extend our current lease on similar terms for a further year until March 2025 albeit this offer is subject to approval of the appropriate Board within Renfrewshire Council.

In consultation with the Clerk, we have agreed that this is the best option for the Board and service delivery in the short term. An extension of a year would ensure continuity for the Board beyond the period where a UK General Election could be called and remove a significant area of risk from our ability to deliver our Electoral Registration function during this key period.

3. Next Steps

I will continue to engage with Renfrewshire Council over the proposed lease extension with a view to having this finalised as soon as possible. Work will continue to investigate options for the long term accommodation for the Board.

The Board will be kept updated on progress via reports to future meetings.

5. Recommendations

The Board notes:

- 1. The offer to extend the current lease for a year and that the Assessor will work with Renfrewshire Council to finalise the lease extension.**
- 2. The Assessor will continue to investigate options for the long term accommodation of the Board.**

Robert Nicol
Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer
6th September 2023

For further information please contact Robert Nicol 07483921232
Or via e-mail at robert.nicol@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board
Meeting on: 15th September 2023
Subject: Corporate Risk Register
Author: Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

1. Introduction

The Corporate Risk Register has been reviewed in line with our agreed review cycle and as reported previously, the risks have been evaluated in line with our amended Risk Management Strategy.

Therefore, the evaluation of each risk shown on the Corporate Risk Register reflects the significance of each risk's impact and the likelihood of occurrence combined with the mitigations and controls identified by the Management Team.

2. Recommendations

- i. The Board note the contents of the report.

Lindsey Hendry
Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer
6th September 2023

For further information please contact Lindsey Hendry at 0141 487 0635 or via email at lindsey.hendry@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk

RENFREWSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD



CORPORATE RISK REGISTER IG7

Title	Corporate Risk Register
Author	Depute Assessor & ERO
Approved By	Senior Management Team
Date of Approval	August 2013
Reviewer	Assistant Assessor & ERO - Governance
Review Date	Biannual

Review History

Review No.	Details	Release Date
1	First full review	1 st February 2014
2	Second full review	1 st February 2015
3	Third full review: Name changed to Risk Register	1 st August 2016
4	Fourth full review – Name changed to Corporate Risk Register	1 st August 2018
5	Six monthly review	1 st February 2019
6	Six monthly review	1 st August 2019
7	Six monthly review	11 th February 2020
8	Six monthly review	1 st September 2020
9	Six monthly review	1 st February 2021
10	Six monthly review	1 st August 2021
11	Six monthly review	1 st February 2022
12	Six monthly review	1 st August 2022
13	Six monthly review	1 st February 2023
14	Six monthly review	6 th September 2023

CONTENTS:

	PAGE
Preamble	3
1.0 Background	4
2.0 Corporate Risk Management – Identification of arrangements within RVJB including Roles and Responsibilities	4
3.0 Corporate Risk Management Objectives	5
4.0 Corporate Risks	6
APPENDIX 1	
Risk Matrix	8
APPENDIX 2	
Risk Areas in Order of Significance	9
RVJB Corporate Risk Register	10

Preamble

The business and social environment that the Board operates and provides services within continues to be a challenging and changing environment. Change is ever present, and we need to evolve in order to keep pace with our financial challenges, our key priorities and effective service delivery.

Effective Risk management is the process of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences and determining the most effective methods of controlling them. The purpose is to reduce the frequency of risk events occurring where possible and minimising their effect if they do occur. In effect it's about ensuring the right things happen and that, 'risk-aware' not 'risk-averse' decisions are taken in all areas of service delivery.

Risk management offers a number of benefits; it is not simply about health and safety risks; its purpose is to bring sharp focus on the significant risks facing the Board and identifying risk has the equal and opposite benefit of improved service delivery. For example, making major changes in Information Technology can enable an improved experience for service users, although there may be financial implications to reach the required goal.

Risk management is an integral part of policy planning and operational management. Identifying, analysing, controlling and monitoring risk will aid elected members and senior managers make informed decisions about the appropriateness of adopting policy or service delivery options.

In addition Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board is committed to a culture where employees are encouraged to develop new initiatives, improve performance and achieve their goals, safely, effectively and efficiently by appropriate application of good risk management practice.

1.0 Background

1.1 Working in partnership with Renfrewshire Council, the Board's risks have been analysed and evaluated using the same risk matrix as adopted by the Council (Appendix 1) and involves multiplying the likelihood of occurrence of a risk by its potential impact. This produces an evaluation of risk as either 'low', 'moderate', 'high' or 'very high'. High/very high risks are viewed as significant and will therefore be subject to closer scrutiny by the Management Team.

1.2 The profile of corporate risk going forward is shown in the table below:

Evaluation	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Total
No. of Risks:	0	1	5	1	7

1.3 In scoping the proposed corporate risk register, the management team have identified the main corporate risks to the Board. They have then taken steps to manage the risks within their control in order to safeguard their employees, service users and assets. This will in turn preserve and enhance service delivery and maintain effective stewardship of the Boards funds.

1.4 The corporate risk register will align with Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board's Service Plan, Business Continuity Plan and relevant operational risk registers. Reference should also be made to the Board's Risk Management Strategy.

1.5 It should be noted that the cost of controlling the corporate risks and undertaking further action is at present being met within the Board's current budget.

2.0 Risk Management - Identification of arrangements within RVJB including Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 RVJB have implemented a range of standard procedures in keeping with the organisation's risk management strategy. This included adoption of the risk management process and as mentioned above, the adoption of a standardised risk matrix for analysis and evaluation of risk.

2.2 Within RVJB the Management Team (MT), is responsible for identifying risks and maintaining the Corporate Risk Register. To ensure the risks are identified a number of methods have been employed and information gathered from various sources. These are outlined below: -

Consultation	1. The MT have met to discuss generic themes which impact on the 3 core functions of the Board, to identify service priorities and identify key challenges that may impact on service delivery, financial and other resources.
Benchmarking	2. Discussion has taken place with the Scottish Assessors Association on the risks Assessors and ERO's face throughout Scotland.
Review of key reports specific to Joint Boards	3. Service Plan 4. Business Continuity Plan 5. Electoral Commission – Performance Standards 6. Relevant Operational Risk Registers
Review of new/emerging legislation – working in partnership	6. Review of new/emerging legislation which has or will impact on the statutory 3 core functions. 7. Other examples include the Equalities Act, Data Protection legislation etc

- 2.3 The Assessor or Assistant Assessor, will co-ordinate the RVJB's response to any risk event. They will ensure activation of the Management Team along with appropriate additional specialised staff, if specific expertise is required.

The MT will act in accordance with the Corporate Risk Register and the Business Continuity Plan ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of those affected.

The MT shall ensure effective communication between all relevant internal and external persons and agencies, keep accurate records of all decisions or actions taken and, if the Emergency Services are present, act on the advice of the senior, or Incident Officer.

Due to the relatively small and compact operation carried out by the Valuation Joint Board, the required structure can be compressed, with the same group fulfilling various roles. The expected base of operations will be The Robertson Centre or a Renfrewshire Council Property.

3.0 Corporate Risk Management Objectives

The organisation's corporate risk management objectives will be met by ensuring: -

1. Leadership and management: Ensuring the Assessor, Management Team and Line Managers fully support and promote risk management.
2. Policy and strategy: Ensuring that the risk management policy and strategy remains fit for purpose, providing a consistent approach to risk management and increasing its effectiveness.
3. People: Ensuring that the organisation's people are equipped and supported to manage risk well.
4. Partnerships and resources: Ensuring that the organisation has effective arrangements in place for managing risks in partnerships.
5. Processes: Ensuring that the risk management processes are effective in supporting the business activities of the Board.
6. Risk handling and assurance: Ensuring that risks are handled well and that the organisation has assurance that risk management is delivering successful outcomes and supporting innovation.
7. Outcomes and delivery: Ensuring that risk management does contribute to achieving positive outcomes for the organisation.

4.0 Corporate Risks

Seven corporate risks have been identified and a proforma completed for each risk, with the level of risk identified, see **Appendix 2**.

The majority of the corporate risks are inter-related and, in some instances, inter-dependent. Given this inter-dependence the MT will have an over-view and monitor any changes/developments which may impact on the Board's current risks.

1. Economic Sustainability / Financial Pressures	Those affecting the ability of the Board to meet its financial commitments, due to budgetary pressures as a result of increased financial strain on the Board from their Unitary Authorities and Scottish Government.
2. Legislative Changes	Risks associated with current or potential changes in law. This will, potentially, create unexpected budgetary pressures.
3. Electoral Registration	Preparation for any election called out with the normal electoral timetable, ability to deliver the election in a shortened time frame. Preparation for the Canvass and Absent Vote Divergence.
4. Professional Services	Ability to deliver the statutory functions of the Joint Board e.g. 3 yearly non-domestic revaluations and disposing the corresponding proposals and appeals with the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service as opposed to the Local Valuation Appeal Committees. Responsibility for Utilities valuations – Designated Assessor for Fixed Line Telecommunications.
5. Technological Changes/Pressures/Failure of Information Communication Technology (ICT)	Capacity to deal with the changes/development in IT, including the Board's ability to deal with changing demands as a result of IT development or lack of, which will impact on service delivery. The risk of loss of data sets e.g. through a cyber-attack.
6. Recruitment/Retention of Professional Staff	The inability to recruit and retain professional staff, combined with the demographics of existing personnel would severely affect the ability to deliver the statutory functions of the Board .
7. Relocation of RVJB Offices	RVJB have to vacate the Robertson Centre by 31 st March 2024. The move to alternative premises will bring risk of disruption to the delivery of the 3 statutory functions and the ability to deliver a snap electoral event.

RISK MATRIX FOR ADVERSE IMPACT

Risk should be analysed consistently across the Board in terms of significance of its impact and the likelihood of occurrence. The Risk Matrix is therefore the tool that is to be used for this purpose. The impact element of the same matrix may be used for the grading of adverse events, complaints or claims.

Likelihood

When considering the likelihood of occurrence of a potential risk, the risk assessor's judgement must be based on the prevalence of the event/circumstance and outcome, backed up by experience and data such as relevant incidents/events, complaints and/or claims.

Impact

When considering the consequences of a potential risk, all scenarios must be considered. It may even be appropriate to consider the worst case scenario, however those undertaking the risk analysis must be able to provide a robust rationale and have evidence to support their selection.

Evaluation

As shown in the matrix below, Impact x Likelihood procedures an evaluation of the significance of risk, described as 'Low', 'Moderate', 'High' or 'Very High'.

How a risk is evaluated will determine how the risk is then treated.

Likelihood	Consequent Impact				
	1 Insignificant	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Extreme
5 Almost Certain	5	10	15	20	25
4 Likely	4	8	12	16	20
3 Possible	3	6	9	12	15
2 Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
1 Remote	1	2	3	4	5

Low (1-3), Moderate (4-9), High (10-16), or Very High (17-25)

Risk Areas in Order of Significance

Risk areas	Likelihood	Impact	Score	Evaluation
REF.03 Electoral Registration	05	04	20	Very High
REF.06 Recruitment/Retention of Professional Staff	04	04	16	High
REF. 07 Relocation of RVJB Offices	05	03	15	High
REF.01 Economic stability/Financial Pressures	03	04	12	High
REF.02 Legislative changes	03	04	12	High
REF.04 Professional Services	03	04	12	High
REF.05 Technological Changes / Pressures/Failure of ICT	02	04	8	Moderate

RVJB Corporate Risk Register

Report Type: Risk Report

Report Author: Lindsey Hendry

Generated on: 1st August 2023

Objective:						
Context	Risk Statement	Owned by	Current Risk Control Measures	Likelihood	Impact	Residual Risk
<p>REF.01 Economic Stability / Financial Pressures</p> <p><u>Context:</u></p> <p>(1) The Joint Board is operating in an environment of reduced resources, increased workloads and ever greater demands placed on the service.</p> <p>(2) Funding from Scottish Government to prepare for the changes arising from the non-domestic reform legislation, e.g., 3 yearly Revaluations, is estimated to be provided up to 1st April 2025, but this funding will end with effect on that date. Requisitions will need to increase to fund future years as, if gap not funded, this may lead to staffing cuts and statutory duties in a 3 yearly valuation/appeal cycle not being discharged.</p> <p>(3) Further changes to Electoral Registration Law e.g. UK Elections Act with the full impact on service delivery of the changes not known at present.</p> <p>(4) After a lengthy period of wage and cost stability, inflationary pressures are being experienced across many budget lines</p>	<p>Due to a number of significant financial pressures associated with the service delivery for all 3 functions of the Board, could result in budget/ staffing set to a level too low to allow an adequate service to be provided and ultimately the inability to discharge statutory duties.</p>	<p>Assessor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium Term financial strategy is well developed/continually updated and adapted to quickly changing circumstances. Well-developed budget planning, budget setting and budget monitoring arrangements at both officer and member level; clear decision-making processes in place with regards budget management; financial position reported to the Board by the Treasurer. Board reporting has made clear the challenges we face in the short to medium term. Maintenance of adequate reserves to meet known and unknown peaks in workloads or expensive appeal litigation. Support of the Board would be sought to release budgetary tension by requesting more requisitions. As part of the medium-term financial planning there is continuous development of saving workstreams to ensure the maintenance of adequate reserves. Systems in place to monitor and review financial resources – Budget monitoring undertaken monthly with reports provided to the management team. This assists with budget projections when combined with future service requirements. The staff structure is continuously evaluated to ensure a streamlined, sustainable workforce. Changes to the structure did have a positive short-term impact but a number of qualified staff left in 2022. Re-evaluation of certain posts within the structure took place in February 2023. Organisational specific risk registers in place to deal with risks to each function. Canvass costs have been reduced due to canvass reform and utilising IT to streamline the canvass process. Tablets procured in 2021 from our existing Electoral Management System Supplier have allowed the Board's existing electoral staff to deliver the annual canvass for the last two years and will be used for 2023. As the Board is not required to employ external canvassers, this has produced cost savings. New Print and Mail contract awarded in April 2023 will help mitigate against price increases and allow flexibility in working. Knowledge sharing through Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) which allows the discussion of best practice with limited use of resources. Knowledge sharing through membership of the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) which again allows the sharing of best practice with limited use of resources. Investigate, where possible, shared services with our constituent councils. Potential move from the Robertson Centre may bring cost savings – options are being considered by the Management Team. 	<p>03</p>	<p>04</p>	<p>12 Moderate</p>

Action Codes	Linked Actions	Assigned To	Due Date	Status
	<p>Future Controls - Procurement of the new core valuation system in partnership with 3 Assessors will mitigate the risk of delivering the changes to non-domestic rates and streamline our processes for Council Tax which will future proof the Board in the event of a Council Tax revaluation. Information sharing by the 4 Assessors in the collaborative core valuation system project has allowed the sharing of best practice and knowledge to ensure the new system is tailored to meet the challenges facing Assessors.</p> <p>Office relocation being investigated with several possible options</p>	<p>Budget Team, Management Team</p> <p>Management Team</p>	<p>December 2023</p> <p>September 2023</p>	

Context	Risk Statement	Owned by	Current Risk Control Measures	Likelihood	Impact	Residual Risk
<p>REF.02 Legislative Changes</p> <p>Context:</p> <p>(1) Legislative changes affecting the discharge of statutory duties.</p> <p>(2) The Scottish Government has introduced legislation to deliver a number of recommendations of the Barclay Review of Non-Domestic Rates e.g., 3 yearly rating Revaluations from 1st April 2023.</p> <p>(3) There have been changes to the Valuation Appeal Committees and Tribunal Service with effect from the 1st April 2023 and the effects on our service are currently being felt for council tax proposals and appeals with the effect on workload in relation to non-domestic proposals/appeals currently unknown at the present time.</p> <p>(4) Further changes to Electoral Registration Law including the implementation of the provisions of the UK Elections Act which introduced Voter ID on the 16th January 2023 and will significantly change the legislation around Absent Votes and Oversea elector eligibility. Secondary legislation is expected to be laid in October/November 2023 which will provide the necessary detail on the changes.</p> <p>(5) The Scottish Government's consultation on changes to Electoral Registration that are within its powers ended on the 15th March 2023 and the Scottish Government's response to the consultation is awaited.</p> <p>(6) Prospect of a Council Tax Revaluation and the corresponding changes to the legislation.</p>	<p>Legislative changes will lead to increased budgetary pressures which will limit the opportunity to meet unexpected financial challenges.</p>	Assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SAA Executive has formal, regular meetings with the Scottish Government and through this body we will be empowered to contribute to the decision-making process. In addition the Assessor and ERO for the Board is a member of the SAA Executive. Key partnership arrangements with the Scottish Government, Electoral Commission, AEA, SAA and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This allows participation in the consultation process. 3-year budget setting process is robust to ensure all possible financial risks through changes to legislation are highlighted. Any unexpected overspends would be highlighted to the Board's financial advisers. The Board has access to reserves for unexpected events. Seek funding from other bodies where possible – including Scottish Government, UK Government etc. DLUHC has provided funding to Electoral Registration Officers to deliver Voter ID for elections in 22/23 and 23/24 a JLB process is also available for some defined costs. Funding for other additional burdens arising from the Elections Act has been received. DLUHC has established a communications framework for disseminating information to ERO staff. AEA web page established for supply of information and sharing of good practice relating to the changes to Electoral Registration law. The Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) will ensure Board members are advised of all possible outcomes affecting the organisation and service delivery arising from any statutory changes. Methodologies and processes are continually evaluated, developed, and adopted on an ongoing basis to manage any change. Performance standards in place and regularly monitored. Further investment in forward thinking IT is essential to meet and support challenges the organisation will face in the future and IT solutions are continuously being evaluated. Renfrewshire Council, the Board's lead council have undertaken to engage in shared services for certain elements of our workstreams in relation to non-domestic rates and the non-return of information sought by the Assessor from stakeholders. All information sharing avenues will be explored to ensure all relevant information is up to date, in particular proprietor, tenant and occupier details which is imperative for maintaining an accurate Valuation Roll. The staff structure is continuously evaluated to ensure a streamlined, sustainable workforce. Changes to the structure did have a positive short-term impact but a number of qualified staff left in 2022. Re-evaluation of certain posts took place in February 2023. The Scottish Government's consultation on Electoral Reform ended on the 15th March 2023 and the SAA submitted a response to the Scottish Government on matters relevant to the ERO's duties. The results from the Scottish Government's consultation on electoral reform have been analysed and a report published on the 1st August 2023. The Scottish 	3	4	12 High

			<p>Government will issue a response to the consultation in the coming months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Board's ERO has been appointed the ERO Change Agent for Scotland for implementation of the Election Act ▪ The SAA will continue to monitor the situation regarding Council Tax and provide advice and guidance to government as and when required and contribute to Consultations. 			
Action Codes	Linked Actions			Assigned To	Due Date	Status
	<p>Future Controls – Senior Management Team procured an alternative core valuation system and developing user acceptance testing and migration programme. Procurement of the new core valuation system with the 3 Assessors will mitigate the risk of delivering the changes to non-domestic rates and streamline our processes for Council Tax which will future proof the Board in the event of a Council Tax revaluation. Information sharing by the 4 Assessors in the collaborative core valuation system project has allowed the sharing of best practice and knowledge to ensure the new system is tailored to meet the challenges facing Assessors.</p>			Management Team	December 2023	

Context	Risk Statement	Owned by	Current Risk Control Measures	Likelihood	Impact	Residual Risk
REF.03 Electoral Registration	Due to a number of significant pressures associated with Electoral Registration, there is a real risk that we struggle to deliver on our statutory processes.	Assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board is fully aware of the continuing challenges affecting electoral services through regular updates at Board meetings. Our continued membership of the SAA and active participation on the Electoral Registration Committee which includes representative of key stakeholders such as the Electoral Commission, Scottish and UK Governments and Boundaries Scotland ensure a good communication framework for cascading information. The Board's ERO has been appointed the ERO Change Agent for Scotland in relation Elections Act implementation. . Our continued membership of the AEA allows the sharing of best practice with limited use of resources. The EMS has mitigated the risks of resourcing and delivering unplanned elections and has streamlined and future proofed our electoral processes. Commercial requirement of the Board's EMS supplier to ensure their system is compliant with changes to legislation. The DLUHC is liaising with EMS suppliers to ensure systems are amended in line with the emerging legislation. DLUHC is also funding these changes to the supplier's software. Beta testing is currently taking place with a Scottish ERO customer of the Board's EMS supplier on the absent vote divergence changes. The results of the testing will be communicated to all the Scottish customers and will inform the amendments to our EMS. DLUHC has established a communications framework for disseminating information to ERO staff. AEA web page established for supply of information and sharing of good practice relating to the changes to Electoral Registration. DLUHC has provided funding to Electoral Registration Officers to deliver Voter ID for elections in 22/23 and 23/24 a JLB process is also available for some defined costs. . Funding for other additional burdens arising from the Elections Act has been received. Governance meetings held regularly with EMS supplier with the changes arising from the UK Elections Bill being a standing item on the agenda. Changes to the EMS system due to canvass reform and extension to the franchise in Scotland was delivered effectively and efficiently by our EMS supplier which has ensured the Board has delivered the electoral changes. EMS supplier continuously seeking ways to streamline the canvass process. The EMS has delivered several elections since 2019 for the Board with less experienced staff than previous elections. The SMT and the Senior Clerical Manager (SCM) ensure the evaluation of previous electoral events are incorporated into the electoral planning process. 	5	4	20 Very High
<p><u>Context:</u></p> <p>(1) The UK Elections Act and its secondary legislation has introduced the responsibility of the ERO to accept applications for and issue Voter Authority Certificates as required and will alter the length of time that an overseas voter is eligible to register.</p> <p>(2) The biggest risk to the Board arising from the Elections Act is the divergence of the absent vote process as there will be a new requirement for electors to reapply every three years if they wish to continue to vote by post in UK Parliamentary elections with the personal identifiers refresh process for postal votes at devolved polls remaining at a 5 year refresh cycle. This will add risk to the process of having differing timescales for renewal of post vote identifiers for different elections and voter confusion.</p> <p>(3) The provisions of The Elections Act come into force at various times but much of it relies on secondary legislation. The final statutory instruments on Voter Identification were made in December 2022 and further secondary legislation is expected to be laid in October/November 2023 which will provide the necessary detail on e.g., overseas electors and absent votes.</p> <p>(4) Delays in the secondary legislation has meant that meaningful planning has been difficult and the readiness of the Board's ERO and staff have been compromised by the lack of clarity.</p> <p>(5) Unplanned electoral events are now an ever-increasing possibility and can put a significant strain of the Board's budget.</p>						

Action Codes	Linked Actions		Assigned To		Due Date	Status
Context	Risk Statement	Owned by	Current Risk Control Measures	Likelihood	Impact	Residual Risk
REF.04 Professional Services	Due to a number of significant pressures associated with the Board's Professional Services, there is a real risk that the Board's statutory functions will not be delivered.	Assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and retention of qualified valuers has been difficult in recent years. The staff structure is continuously evaluated to ensure a streamlined, sustainable workforce. Changes to the structure did have a positive short-term impact but a number of qualified staff left in 2022. Re-evaluation of certain posts to ensure a streamlined, sustainable workforce within the structure took place in February 2023. Recruitment drives for valuers/senior valuers in 2023 were unsuccessful which mirrored the recruitment drive in November 2022. As a result of this, the Management Team made the decision to recruit trainee valuers which was successful although is resource intensive for existing qualified staff in terms of on the job training. Despite the lack of success in recruiting qualified staff in the first half of 2023, the Management Team will continue to advertise for a valuer or senior valuer. Monthly budget meetings with the Board's accountants and future funding issues raised as early as possible. Seek effective three-year budgetary cycle to ensure financial resources are in place and known. Strategy in place to tackle priorities, strict timetabling, and staff working efficiently and effectively as a team. Monitoring of progress and collaborate working with SAA colleagues to share best practice on dealing with any challenges. The Scottish Parliament enacted the Non-Domestic Rates (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Act 2022 aimed at minimising the impact of coronavirus with the Act's principal rule being, when calculating the net annual value or rateable value of any lands and heritages for the purposes of any entry in the valuation roll, no account is to be taken of any matter occurring on or after 2nd April 2020 whether directly or indirectly attributable to coronavirus. Approximately 2,600 appeals remain outstanding as at 30th June 2023 and progress will be monitored. Systems in place to monitor and review incoming proposals/appeals and outstanding appeals. Reporting of the disposal programme is reported monthly to the Senior Management Team and quarterly to Scottish Government. As at the 30th June 2023, staff had disposed of 99.35% of the 2017 Revaluation Appeals. The small no. of outstanding 2017 Revaluation appeals have been referred to the Lands Tribunal of Scotland which were transferred to the Upper Tribunal with effect from the 1st April 2023. System in place to analyse results of First-tier Tribunal hearings to ensure lessons learned inform other appeals. Monitoring of staff's workload to minimise stress. Regular signposting to relevant resources to help staff to deal with stress. Seek methods that will allow appeals to be dealt with in a cost-effective manner. Telecoms valuation and appeal work requires careful monitoring and request for resources to deal with this workload if the resultant valuation and appeal disposal cannot be continued to be resourced from existing budget. 	3	4	12 High
<p><u>Context:</u></p> <p>(1) Funding from Scottish Government to prepare for the changes arising from the non-domestic reform legislation e.g., 3 yearly Revaluations is estimated to be provided up to 1st April 2025, but this funding will end with effect on that date. Requisitions will need to increase to fund future years as if gap not funded, may lead to staffing cuts and statutory duties in a 3 yearly valuation/appeal cycle not being discharged.</p> <p>(2) There have been changes to the Valuation Appeal Committees and Tribunal Service with effect from the 1st April 2023 and the effects on our service are currently being felt for council tax proposals and appeals with the effect on workload in relation to non-domestic proposals/appeals currently unknown at the present time.</p> <p>(3) Approx. 6,000 material change of circumstance (MCC) appeals had been lodged as a result of the global pandemic and these appeals need to be disposed of by 31st December 2023. A number of the appeals are being withdrawn but workload for the remaining appeals is unknown at the present time especially if an appellant wished to appear at a formal hearing. but</p> <p>(4) Costs associated with defence of values at formal appeal hearings.</p> <p>(5) Impact on revenue collection for our 3 Unitary Authorities due to loss of value on appeal</p> <p>(6) Impact on Rateable Values resulting in financial uncertainty.</p> <p>(7) The risks involved with the implementation of 3 yearly Revaluation cycles with a one-year</p>						

tone date for the 2023 and the disposal of the resultant appeals in a shorter time frame.			<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ongoing discussions with the VOA in England to enable the Scottish Telecoms valuations to be produced. Costs incurred for the 2023 Revaluation will inform budget planning for the 2026 Revaluation.▪ Joint Working with SAA and VOA			
(8) Funding for RVJB from Scottish Government to enable the Renfrewshire Assessor as the designated Assessor for Fixed Line Telecommunications to carry out their statutory duties. Very high values generated, and subsequent appeals could necessitate legal costs to defend, as required. The cost of time and the resources involved in producing and defending these values for the whole of Scotland has to be funded from existing budget. This is further complicated by the differing revaluation timetables going forward between England & Scotland. Previously the Assessor could work alongside the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) in England in preparing valuations for telecoms and this is no longer the position. This has had an effect on the costs of the valuation of telecom subjects in Scotland.						
Action Codes	Linked Actions		Assigned To	Due Date	Status	
	Future Controls - Senior Management Team procured an alternative core valuation system and developing user acceptance testing and migration programme. Procurement of the new core valuation system with the 3 Assessors will mitigate the risk of delivering the changes to non-domestic rates and streamline our processes for Council Tax which will future proof the Board in the event of a Council Tax revaluation. Information sharing by the 4 Assessors in the collaborative core valuation system project has allowed the sharing of best practice and knowledge to ensure the new system is tailored to meet the challenges facing Assessors.		Management Team	December 2023		

Context	Risk Statement	Owned by	Current Risk Control Measures	Likelihood	Impact	Residual Risk
<p>REF.05 Technological Changes / Pressures/Failure of ICT</p> <p><u>Context:</u></p> <p>(1) The Progress operating system, which facilitates the Valuation functions of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates, is being phased out by Renfrewshire Council and a suitable replacement has been found to enable the Assessor to perform their statutory duties.</p> <p>(2) With the move to 3 yearly revaluations, the IT systems have to be able to minimise the demands placed on the valuation team and be at the forefront of the challenges brought about by the reform of non-domestic rates.</p> <p>(3) Single point of dependency/failure on/of programming capability or IT knowledge.</p> <p>(4) Non availability of systems either through system/telephony/power supply or cyber-attack.</p> <p>(5) Potential loss of key business or financial data.</p> <p>(6) Inability to work remotely.</p>	<p>Risk to the capacity to deal with the changes/development in IT, including the Board's ability to deal with changing demands as a result of IT development will impact on service delivery. It will also affect the ability to perform the statutory duties of the three core functions to the required deadlines.</p> <p>There are many events which may cause ICT failure. e.g. internal/external malicious damage, and a combination of one or more of the events happening would result in a major impact in service delivery to all stakeholders.</p>	Assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy in place to establish priorities, timetable, and to maintain momentum in reaching the requirements for fast efficient service delivery – achieved through the IT Strategic and operational Working Groups Working with partners in Renfrewshire Council IT detailing our requirements over the mid to longer term. The Board adheres to IT security best practice outlined by the National Cyber Security Centre and Industry Standards. The Board's network security configurations are penetration tested each year in the form of an IT Health Check carried out by CREST and CHECK approved providers. Nightly backups are run automatically which transfer data to our offsite backup cloud provider. As a result, there is a restore point for file changes going back to the previous night and data loss would therefore be limited to the previous nights' back up. Contractual arrangements in place for maintenance and upgrading with external contractors. Virus, anti-spam software continually updated and threats monitored. Mandatory online cyber security courses are completed by staff on a regular basis. Firewall, network application controls and audit procedures all in place and continuously updated/reviewed. Server operating system configuration reviewed/renewed on a regular basis to provide maximum data protection. Syslog server configured to house all network device logs logging network traffic and access attempts. Rigorous patch management procedure in place to ensure software is up to date and patched accordingly. Device control software in place to prevent unauthorised devices being attached to the network and data theft. Investment in remote working has been undertaken and is continuously being evaluated to ensure the Board is flexible and can react quickly to changes in working practices. A Disaster Recovery Solution is in place and a full DR test is carried out every year. For all the Board's servers on the RVJB network the recovery time is 10 minutes e.g. loss would only be 10 minutes in the event of server failure. Cyber Incident Response Plan and Playbooks are in place. The Board is named as a cluster organisation on Renfrewshire Council's telephony contract which has produced cost savings as well as ensuring, should our network be compromised, the Board would still have full telephony access through the 'cloud'. 	2	4	8 Moderate
Action Codes	Linked Actions		Assigned To		Due Date	Status
	<p>Future Controls - Senior Management Team procured an alternative core valuation system and will develop user acceptance testing and migration programme. This will protect against single point of dependency/failure of IT programming and knowledge.</p>		Management Team		December 2023	

Context	Risk Statement	Owned by	Current Risk Control Measures	Likelihood	Impact	Residual Risk
<p>REF.06 Recruitment/Retention of Professional Staff</p> <p><u>Context:</u></p> <p>(1) The inability to recruit and retain qualified staff will severely impact the Board's ability to discharge its statutory functions.</p> <p>(2) The Board needs to have the relevant knowledge base to ensure the non-domestic reform legislated for can be delivered.</p> <p>(3) Main resource issue for 3 yearly revaluations is staffing. Qualified valuers are required to cope with Revaluations occurring every 3 years, deal with the resultant proposals and appeals in a shortened time frame as well as carry out their normal daily duties. In addition the 2023 Revaluation had a one year valuation date of 1st April 2022, which shortens the timescale for Assessors to carry out their statutory duties and reinforces the need for qualified valuers who can produce net annual values effectively and efficiently. The one year valuation date will also be present in future revaluations.</p> <p>(4) Unsuccessful recruitment drives and resignations increases pressure on existing staff which may lead to increased levels of stress and could lead to long term absences.</p> <p>(5) The Management Team and associated staff are continually involved with recruitment which diverts time and resources away from normal service delivery.</p> <p>(6) The age profile of the qualified staff within RVJB is skewed to over 50. This presents a risk if these staff members retire in the near future with the loss of their experience and knowledge.</p>	<p>The Board may fail to meet its duties or to maintain service levels if unable to recruit and retain qualified staff.</p>	<p>Assessor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The staff structure is continuously evaluated and changes to the structure did have a positive short-term impact but a number of qualified staff left in 2022. Re-evaluation of relevant posts to ensure a streamlined, sustainable workforce took place in February 2023. ▪ Recruitment drives for valuers/senior valuers in 2023 were unsuccessful which mirrored the recruitment drive in November 2022. As a result of this, the Management Team made the decision to recruit trainee valuers which was successful although is resource intensive for existing qualified staff in terms of on the job training. ▪ Robust training structure for trainees in place. ▪ Despite the lack of success in recruiting qualified staff in the first half of 2023, the Management Team will continue to advertise for a valuer or senior valuer. ▪ Attractive terms and conditions have been adopted and reviewed regularly to ensure RVJB is attractive to applicants and competitive with other Assessors. ▪ Offer to existing personnel of further training where appropriate to empower staff. ▪ Further investment in forward thinking IT is essential to meet and support challenges the organisation will face in the future and IT solutions are continuously being evaluated. ▪ Information sharing through ongoing SAA discussion which allows the sharing of best practice with limited use of resources. ▪ Board reporting has made clear the challenges we face in the short to medium term. 	<p>04</p>	<p>04</p>	<p>16 High</p>

Action Codes	Linked Actions	Assigned To	Due Date	Status
	Future Controls - Procurement of the new core valuation system in partnership with 3 Assessors will mitigate the risk of delivering the changes to non-domestic rates and streamline our processes for Council Tax which will future proof the Board in the event of a Council Tax revaluation. Information sharing by the 4 Assessors in the collaborative core valuation system project has allowed the sharing of best practice and knowledge to ensure the new system is tailored to meet the challenges facing Assessors.	Budget Team, Management Team	December 2023	

Context	Risk Statement	Owned by	Current Risk Control Measures	Likelihood	Impact	Residual Risk
<p>REF.07 Relocation of RVJB</p> <p>(1) The Landlord of the Robertson Centre has deemed the building surplus to requirements and will not renew the Board's lease beyond March 2024, therefore the Board has to look for alternative premises.</p> <p>(2) Any move of premises will bring risk to the continuation of our statutory functions e.g. the ability to deal with a snap General Election.</p> <p>(3) Lack of information and/or clarity from external parties could lead to the office move taking longer than it should and cost more to the service in terms of downtime of IT systems/staff and fundamental changes to our internal processes.</p> <p>(4) A move of premises and/or location may precipitate staff leaving the service.</p> <p>(5) The Board has legacy on-premise IT and if not managed correctly could lead to downtime with a direct impact on business productivity.</p> <p>(6) Threats, loss and/or compromise to data and physical equipment as during a move, there is the potential for processes not to be followed and short cuts to be taken.</p>	<p>The Board may fail to meet its duties or to maintain service levels during the move to alternative premises, especially if a snap electoral event is called.</p>	<p>Assessor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication within the Board is key to a successful office move and a Liaison Group was formed with representatives from all teams to ensure staff can feed into the decision making process and be kept informed of the situation. Good communication is imperative with new landlord as internal processes may need to change with the office move. Maintenance of service provision especially in the case of a snap General Election is vital and proper planning will mitigate the impact of the office move on service delivery. Change for staff should be kept to a minimum to mitigate staff leaving due to an office move. Attractive terms and conditions have been adopted and reviewed regularly to ensure RVJB is attractive to existing staff, applicants and competitive with other Assessors. On-premise IT has been reduced over the last few years and this will continue in 2023. All Council Tax files and valuations of all non-domestic properties are held electronically, less reliant on paper records. Staff personnel files will not be held in paper format by March 2024 but held electronically with automatic retention periods built into the system. IT heavily involved with data security in relation to the office move as security needs to be implemented, managed, and monitored at this time. Manage stress associated with the move in terms of low productivity and morale if IT systems etc do not work by IT being key in the planning of the move. Professional removal company to be utilised to minimise loss, damage or destruction of equipment, especially key items and to allow staff to work on maintaining service provision. Space planning consultants engaged and have looked at our current processes and business model to give recommendations on the size requirement and new ways of working. At the beginning of September, the landlord of the Robertson Centre, Renfrewshire Council have intimated they would be willing to extend our current lease on similar terms for a further year until March 2025. The offer of the extension is subject to approval by the appropriate Board within Renfrewshire Council. 	<p>05</p>	<p>03</p>	<p>15 High</p>



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board
Meeting on: 15th September 2023
Subject: Communications Strategy
Author: Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

1. Introduction

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board's vision states that "we aim to provide high quality, transparent, effective and responsive services to all of our stakeholders." To ensure we meet our vision, good communication is pivotal. This document outlines our strategy for good communications with staff, stakeholders and external organisations etc.

The strategy has been approved by our Management Team and is being presented to the Board for approval.

2. Recommendations

- i. The Board approves the policy.

Lindsey Hendry
Assistant Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer
21st August 2023

For further information please contact Lindsey Hendry at 0141 487 0635 or via email at lindsey.hendry@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk

RENFREWSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD



COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2023-2026

Title	Communications Strategy
Author	Assistant Assessor
Approved By	Management Team
Date of Approval	July 2023
Reviewer	Assistant Assessor
Review Date	As required

Review History

Review No.	Details	Release Date

CONTENTS

PAGE

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	The Strategy	3
3.0	General Approach	3 - 4
4.0	Objectives	4
5.0	Partnership	4 – 5
6.0	External Communications	5 – 6
7.0	Internal Communications	6 - 7
8.0	Review of Strategy	7
Appendix 1	Non-Domestic Rating – Communications Plan	8 – 9
Appendix 2	Council Tax Communications Plan	10
Appendix 3	Electoral Registration Communications Plan	11 – 12
Appendix 4	Corporate Communications Plan	13
Appendix 5	Staff Communications Plan	14

1.0 Introduction

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board's (the "Board") vision states that "we aim to provide high quality, transparent, effective and responsive services to all of our stakeholders". Our Commitment Statement includes the following, all of which directly relate to, or are dependent upon, good communications.

- Consulting our stakeholders and listening and responding to their views
- Valuing staff and providing them with opportunities to develop and contribute
- Encouraging innovation and recognising achievement within the organisation
- Treating all stakeholders, including staff, in a fair, consistent manner in accordance with our Equalities Requirements.
- Ensuring we are accessible and accountable to stakeholders
- Using language which is easy to understand
- Working with our partners in the Scottish Assessors' Association (SAA) to ensure transparency and Scotland-wide consistency of approach to service delivery

It is only through good communications that we will meet our commitments and achieve our aims.

2.0 The Strategy

This strategy aims to illustrate that the Board will:-

- Ensure our communication methods are effective
- Collect and evaluate the views and experiences of citizens
- Engage with external organisations and institutions
- Develop formal and informal partnerships to use resources efficiently and drive improvement
- Use feedback obtained through the various communication channels to plan and deliver better services.
- Work with partners to ensure communications are efficient and effective

For the purposes of this Strategy, the term "Communications" will be considered in the wider sense of all forms of 'giving and receiving information'. Such a document cannot detail every form of communication that occurs in a multi-functional organisation such as the Board, but it will identify the main methods by which the Board will deliver its objectives. These will include direct mail, email, the Board website, SAA website and advertising. The Board has social media accounts which are used where appropriate.

3.0 General Approach

The majority of the Board's communications are directly related to the three statutory functions of the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer (ERO). These are production and maintenance of the:-

- Valuation Roll, for Non-domestic Rating purposes (NDR).
- Council Tax List (CT)
- Electoral Register

The format, content and frequency of these communications are, in many instances prescribed by law and may not be entirely under the control of the Board. We will make our communications with the public as clear and easy to use as possible.

We will also provide information and assistance about our services to citizens using language which is easy to understand and by the most appropriate method. We also subscribe to an interpreter service to ensure language is not a barrier to access our services. Digital communications are increasingly important to the Board.

Internal communications will ensure a well-informed workforce which is equipped to deliver services and empowered to make improvements. We will ensure that our employees have an understanding of change affecting the organisation now and in the future.

Information gathered for statutory purposes, and through the Assessor and ERO's statutory powers, will be treated at all times with appropriate confidentiality and in accordance with the data protection legislation.

4.0 Objectives

The objectives of our communications are shown in the table below.

Externally	Internally
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver statutory functions in accordance with the law • To improve service delivery in line with stakeholder requirements • To inform the public of our functions • To provide openness and transparency in all operations of the Assessor, the ERO and the Board • To work with partners to ensure consistency of service across Scotland • To give stakeholders the opportunity to contribute to decisions and actions of the Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To communicate news and information to employees • To improve service delivery • To provide an understanding of change • Improve employee morale • To ensure member scrutiny of officers' actions and decisions. • To give employees the opportunity to contribute to decisions and actions of the Joint Board
Underpinning all of the above is our commitment to eliminate discrimination, promote equalities and good relations.	

5.0 Partnerships

To ensure efficient use of public money and ensure nationwide consistency of message, the Board will deliver many of its communications through, or in partnership with, the following:-

Partner	Partnership areas
Scottish Assessors Association	Design of forms, consultation responses, web portal (see below), stakeholder meetings, press enquiries and national advertising campaigns
Assessors web portal	<p>Public: Council Tax List and Valuation Roll search facilities, public provision of Practice Notes and valuations, provision of general information and news, NDR and CT proposal submission facilities, various stakeholder form return facilities and consultation releases.</p> <p>Institutions: Government statistical extraction, data to local councils, access to data for government agencies, including Scottish Water, emergency services and government projects.</p>

	Between Assessors: Shared information repositories and internal guidance
Electoral Commission	Design of forms, guidance manuals, consultations/reports, media resources, events and national advertising campaigns.
Association of Electoral Administrators	Design of forms, guidance and advice, consultations/reports, national lobbying.
Renfrewshire Council (RC) Communications Department	On request, RC will aid RVJB with press releases and press enquiries

Of those listed, the following two areas are of particular importance:

5.1 Assessors Web Site (www.saa.gov.uk)

This web facility provides a single point of access to the Valuation Roll, Council Tax List and Electoral Registration information across Scotland. It is an exemplar of joint working which is the chosen way to provide consistent data to a range of stakeholders in an efficient manner. Assessors & EROs are committed to using the portal as a primary way of delivering modern services and it is seen as one of the main tools in delivering 3-yearly revaluations and Non-Domestic Rates Reform.

The Board commits staff to the Management Committee and Project Team and provides a share of its funding.

5.2 The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission (EC) provides guidance to EROs on the performance of their duties and issues a comprehensive set of on-line guidance notes. The Commission also sets ERO performance standards and monitors compliance with these.

The EC provides a regularly updated suite of media tools including leaflets and posters, national television and social media adverts and campaigns, role play tools and email banners which are developed through market research and targeted at particular populations of electors and potential electors. The joint aim is to maximise the use of these materials to increase the number of people who are registered for electoral purposes. This in turn will help to improve the completeness and accuracy of registers.

6.0 External Communications

The Board's regular communications primarily relate to the three statutory functions. Summaries of these communications are provided at Appendices 1-3.

6.1 Non-Domestic Rating and Council Tax Valuation (See Appendices 1-2)

Most active communications with stakeholders take the form of statutory notices or requests made under statutory powers. These were previously issued by post but, increasingly, the Board is looking to provide these by email or other electronic means. Various items of outgoing mail, including email, invite feedback through our Customer Satisfaction process.

The Assessors portal (see above) provides the public with an invaluable source of the general information on the assessors' services and has an excellent search facility for service users wishing to find information on the Valuation Roll and/or Council Tax Valuation List. Proposals can be submitted on-line.

Communications with government and a number of ratepayer representative bodies, including the Scottish Ratepayers Forum, and the Scottish Rating Surveyors Forum, are maintained through the Scottish Assessors Association.

On a day-to day basis, valuation staff members communicate with ratepayers, council tax payers, their agents and the importance of these communications in customer satisfaction and influencing public perception of the service should not be underestimated.

6.2 Electoral Registration (See Appendix 3)

As with the Assessor's valuation functions, many of the ERO's public communications also take the form of statutory notices or requests made under statutory powers. Where legal provision has been made, an increasing number of these are issued and/or received by electronic means (web submission, email etc). The Board also invites feedback by including a link to our Customer Satisfaction Survey on all our emails. The survey is also available to stakeholders via our website.

Electoral Registration is the main area of proactive promotion with a campaign every year to promote the annual electoral canvass. The aims of the campaign are to increase public awareness of the annual canvass process, maximise the number of people who respond to the annual canvass where required and improve the completeness and accuracy of registers.

There are a number of initiatives and these are contained in the annual "Electoral Engagement Strategy". Specific efforts are made, and will continue to be made, to target population groups which, from research, are known to be underrepresented in the Electoral Register.

In many instances it is impossible to tie the outcomes with our engagement activities. It is therefore very difficult to evaluate the success of these campaigns with any accuracy. Where outcomes can be monitored these will be measured and assessed as detailed in the Participation Strategy.

6.3 Corporate Communications (See Appendix 4)

To enhance openness and ensure transparency in all that we do, the Board makes a full suite of reports available to the public and other stakeholders through the publication of Board Reports on RC's website and Public Performance Reports on our website.

The Board's Complaints Handling Procedure is aligned with the Ombudsman's Model complaints procedure and provides a structured process for the Board to learn from public feedback. Complainants are advised of the outcomes of their complaints including any corporate learning which has been highlighted during the process. We also publish annual and quarterly complaints reports.

Recent users of Board services are invited via email to provide feedback using our Customer Satisfaction Survey. The results of these surveys are reported to the Management Team to improve and refine services.

7.0 Internal Communications (See Appendix 5)

Internal communications are directed towards supporting the Board's aims, objectives and statutory functions and improving the services we deliver. We also communicate with employees to promote engagement, encourage development and provide an understanding of change (further details below). Staff are also continually encouraged to contribute to service design and improvement.

The Board's shared network drives and electronic document management system are the main platform for policies, procedures, guidance and advice. New or revised versions of policies are issued by email or at team briefings and through specific training/roll-out events.









Management Team meetings are followed by Team Briefings to deliver news, decisions and actions to employees. These briefings are supported by way of meeting 'Bullet Notes' which help ensure consistency of message.



The employees' Trades Union is consulted on all relevant draft policies and policy changes and is given the opportunity to present to the Board where appropriate.

8.0 Review of Strategy









This Strategy will be reviewed at 3-yearly intervals or earlier where appropriate.

Non-Domestic Rating – Communications Plan











CITIZEN		Description	Purpose	Channel
		Valuation Notices	Statutory requirement	Paper/mail, but information also available at SAA web portal. Electronic provision may well be enabled moving forward.
		Valuation roll searches. Submission of proposals and various particulars. Provision of general information.	As per description	Scottish Assessors web portal
		Rental and other Assessors Information Notices	To gather information to assist with making up and maintaining Valuation Roll	Issued:- Paper/mail Responses: SAA web site interactive forms are default position with paper/mail provided on request, RVJB web site forms. On-line submissions will continue to be expanded.
		Property visits	To gather details of the property as well ownership/occupancy details	Physical site visits
		Ratepayer Representative Bodies (including SRF and SRSF)	To support statutory functions To inform procedure To disseminate news To consult To inform service planning and improvement	Multiple communication channels including messaging, telephony, at meetings, consultations, remote conferencing etc.
INSTITUTIONS		Description	Purpose	Channel
		Council Billing Departments	Statutory Requirement	Secure weekly Data Exchange Regular reconciliations by paper/report
		Scottish Assessors Association (and colleague Assessors)	To support statutory functions To ensure Scotland-wide consistency. To design and inform procedure To disseminate news Consult with governments and others Exchange of best practice	Multiple communication channels including messaging, telephony, meetings, consultations, remote conferencing etc. Assessors' portal – secure dtf, shared secure web site space plus the above.
		Other Valuation Authorities including Valuation Office Agency,	To support statutory functions To design and inform procedure To disseminate news	Multiple communication channels including messaging, telephony, meetings, consultations, remote conferencing etc.




		Land & Property Services NI	Consult with governments and others Exchange of best practice	
		Liaison with Government(s), departments and their agencies, including Harmonisation Group and Scottish Water	Service planning Service improvement Provision of news /change information Service/Performance Monitoring Legislative Consultations Exchange of best practice	Multiple communication channels including messaging, telephony, meetings, consultations etc both directly and through SAA and IRRV.
		Registers of Scotland	Provision of Sales Information	Secure File Transfer

Council Tax Valuation List – Communications Plan








CITIZEN		Description	Purpose	Channel
		Banding Notices	Statutory requirement	Paper/mail, but information also available at SAA web portal.
		Council Tax List searches Submission of proposals. Provision of general information	As per description	Scottish Assessors' web portal
		Property visits	To gather physical attribute and occupation data	Physical site visits
INSTITUTIONS		Description	Purpose	Channel
		Council Billing Departments	Statutory Requirement	Secure weekly Data Exchange Quarterly reconciliations by paper/report
		Scottish Assessors Association (and colleague Assessors)	To support statutory functions To ensure Scotland-wide consistency. To design and inform procedure To disseminate news Consult with governments and others Exchange of best practice	Multiple communication channels including messaging, telephone, meetings, consultations, remote conferencing etc. Assessors' portal – secure dtf, shared secure web site space plus the above.
		Liaison with Government(s), departments and their agencies	Service planning Service improvement Provision of news /change information Service/Performance Monitoring Legislative Consultations Exchange of best practice	Multiple communication channels including messaging, telephone, meetings, consultations etc both directly and through SAA and IRRV.
		Electoral Registration Officer	Maintenance of Council Tax Lists Maintenance of Electoral Register	Multiple communication channels including messaging, telephone, meetings, remote conferencing etc.
		Registers of Scotland	Provision of Sales Information	Secure File Transfer

Electoral Registration Function – Communications Plan








CITIZEN		Description	Purpose	Channel
		Annual Canvass forms (3 different forms)	Statutory requirement	Issued: Annually by paper/email Returns: Paper/mail, Internet, telephone, Household visit
		Invitation to Register	Statutory requirement	Issued: Paper/email/download from internet Returns: Paper/mail, Internet (GDS). Household visit
		Household canvass/ visits	Statutory requirement	Issued: Paper - household visit/mail Return: Paper – household visit/mail or encourage electronic return
		On-line application	Application to be registered Voter Authority Certificate applications	Government Digital Service (GDS)
		Various (absent voter and special category) application forms	Statutory requirement	Issued: Paper/email/download from internet Returns: Paper/mail/email. AV applications will be provided by GDS in future for UK Parliamentary Electors
		Canvass Advertising	To improve canvass return rates. Improve the accuracy of the Electoral Register See separate Participation Strategy	Various Local Public Notices Notification to the Board's Constituent Councils to advertise on their websites etc. Web site Notice Social Media Campaigns to be reviewed annually
		Notices of Addition, Deletion & related	Statutory requirement General Enquiry	Issued: Paper/mail, email
INSTITUTIONS		Description	Purpose	Channel
		Provision of Registers to Returning Officers	Statutory requirement	Secure electronic exchange Managed and planned through liaison meetings
		Provision of Registers to Political Parties, Elected Members etc	Statutory requirement	Various channels (paper and secure exchange) as requested by recipient
		News, information etc from Electoral Commission	Service improvement Provision of news/change information	Email – EC Bulletins, EC Alerts, EC Roll Call Meetings and Seminars

		Provision of information to Electoral Commission	Service/Performance Monitoring Compliance with Standards	Email with attachments Cloud reporting, Web submission Ad hoc face –to –face meetings
		News, information etc from AEA	Service improvement Provision of news/change information	Email – Weekly Notifications Arena Magazine Branch meetings, Conferences, Training events
		Liaison with Government(s), departments and their agencies, including Electoral Management Board	Service planning Service improvement Provision of news/change information Service/Performance Monitoring Legislative Consultations	Multiple communication channels including messaging, telephone, at meetings, consultations etc both directly and through SAA, AEA, EC.

RVJB CORPORATE EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

		Description	Purpose	Channel
CITIZEN		Public Performance, Annual and Board Reports	Openness and transparency Public scrutiny Performance reporting Accountability	RVJB Web site for Public Performance Reports and Renfrewshire Council for Board Reports
		Customer Complaints Procedures	Learning from stakeholders Process improvements Accountability	Available on Web site or a paper copy on request Submissions made by email, web submission, paper/mail Responses as per submission type
		Customer Satisfaction process	Learning from stakeholders Process improvements Accountability	Invitation via email Submissions by web form. Response as appropriate
		General Service Provision	To ensure the public has access to our services	Face-to-face, wheelchair access, language translation service
INSTITUTIONS		Scottish Assessors Association	To support statutory functions To ensure Scotland-wide consistency. To design and inform procedure To disseminate news Consult with governments and others Exchange of best practice	See Electoral Registration, Non-Domestic Rating and Council Tax Assessors' portal
		Renfrewshire Council	Provision of Support Services	Service Level Agreement Multiple communication channels including messaging, telephone, meetings and remote conference facilities – both formal and informal
		Constituent Councils' Planning and Building Control	Identification of changes affecting Valuation Roll, Council Tax List and Electoral Register	Website download/access File transfer Paper transfer where required

RVJB CORPORATE STAFF COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

RVJB MANAGEMENT		Description	Purpose	Channel
		Policies and Procedures (inc HR, Health & Safety)	Procedural uniformity/operational consistency Compliance with statute and best practice	Intranet/Shared network drive, website, paper, team briefings, email circulation, presentations, training events, online meetings etc as appropriate. Note that although this is presented as a one directional flow, staff are involved in policy etc formulation
		Operational Guidance, Instruction and Assistance	Clarity of roles and responsibilities Procedural uniformity/operational consistency	Intranet/Shared network drive, website, paper, team briefings, email circulation, presentations, training events, remote conferencing etc as appropriate. Note that although this is presented as a one directional flow, staff are involved in formulation of process and procedure
		Grievance, and Suggestions Box	Opportunity for staff to raise issues or suggestions with the Management Team	Document management system, email, paper.
		Trades Unions	Representation of staff to Management Team	Formally and informally through meetings, exchanges of draft policies, proposed changes etc.
		Staff Equalities Survey	Quantification of representation of protected characteristics within workforce. Monitoring of equality of application of internal policies and procedures. Informing external/statutory reports.	Issued by email Responses by email and paper
		General Management Information	Procedural uniformity/operational consistency Provide information on change. Seek staff feedback on proposals	Team Briefings, Minutes, email, intranet, face-to-face, online meetings. Team briefings after each management team meeting provide staff with opportunity to feedback on decisions and proposals.
		Internal Working Groups	Innovation and suggestions Opportunity for staff input into process and procedural design	Face-to-face meetings, minutes, email, online meetings, etc