



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Minute of Meeting Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 15 January 2016	14:00	The Robertson Centre, 16 Glasgow Road, Paisley, PA1 3QF

PRESENT

Provost Carmichael and Councillors O'Kane, Gilbert and Green (East Renfrewshire Council); Brennan, Nelson and Shepherd (Inverclyde Council); and Lawson, M Sharkey, Hood, Bibby, A Doig and Mullin (Renfrewshire Council).

CHAIR

Councillor Mullin, Convener, presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

A MacTaggart, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, K Crawford, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, L Hendry, Divisional Assessor and Assistant Electoral Registration Officer, J Murgatroyd, Divisional Assessor and Assistant Electoral Registration Officer, S Carlton, Principal Admin Officer, J Gallacher, Senior Admin Officer, Y Gray, Property Assistant and J Fraser, Property Assistant (all Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board); and D Forbes, Finance Manager and E Currie, Senior Committee Services Officer (both Finance & Resources, Renfrewshire Council).

APOLOGIES

Councillors Loughran (Inverclyde Council) and Williams (Renfrewshire Council).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

1 **MINUTE**

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Joint Board held on 20 November 2015.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 **REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING**

There was submitted a report by the Treasurer in respect of the Joint Board for the period 1 April to 11 December 2015.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

3 **REVENUE ESTIMATES 2016/17**

There was submitted a report by the Treasurer relative to the revenue estimates for the Joint Board for the financial year 2016/17 and the establishment of the 2016/17 requisition.

The report intimated that local government was, once again, facing a significant contraction in the levels of available resources relating predominantly to the provision of revenue grant from the Scottish Government. In this context it was recognised that this was likely to have a consequential impact on the level of requisition funding available to the Joint Board over the medium term. The Scottish Government had announced the funding settlement for 2016/17 only and as such no indicative budget figures have been provided for 2017/18.

At the meeting of the Joint Board held on 16 January 2015 it had been decided that up to £0.200m of reserves be utilised to meet the costs associated with voluntary redundancy/voluntary early retirement arising from a review of staffing levels. It had been agreed that two members of staff would leave under the voluntary redundancy/voluntary early retirement scheme on 31 March 2016 and the costs to be met from reserves had been calculated at £0.114m with net annual savings of £0.067m from 2016/17.

The report proposed that the overall requisition levels be £2,213,300 which was a 3% reduction against 2015/16 requisition levels. The budget had been constructed on the basis of assumptions detailed in the report at paragraph 4.1. The allocation of the requisition amongst the constituent authorities would be based on the percentage proportions of the Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) as detailed in the report.

Appendix 1 to the report detailed the revenue estimates 2016/17 to 2017/18 for the Joint Board and the requisitions for constituent authorities. Appendix 2 to the report detailed the individual constituent authority requisition levels.

The Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer advised that the Joint Board's budget had declined from £2,459,800 in 2010/2011 to £2,213,300, an overall reduction of 10% and indicated the pressures facing electoral registration and valuation matters arising from the reduced funding, advanced timetables and new burdens. He further intimated that the budget for 2016/17 was manageable although any additional costs for canvass or other unforeseen expenditure would cause considerable difficulty or would deplete the reserves to a dangerously low level leaving little for unexpected costs such as complex litigation. He added that further depletion of funding or staff resources would provide considerable risk to his ability to satisfactorily undertake statutory functions.

Moving forward into 2017/18 it had been identified that planned retirement and a modest restructuring would deliver additional savings but any reductions beyond that would provide considerable risk to the ability to satisfactorily undertake statutory functions.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the 2016/17 revenue estimates, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, and the requisitions for constituent authorities, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved;
- (b) That the utilisation of balances during 2016/17, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (c) That it be noted that the 2017/18 revenue budget and associated requisition levels would be developed in future years once constituent council grant levels had been confirmed;
- (d) That the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer carry out a further service review in order to develop a sustainable and affordable staffing structure and identify further savings options to be reported to a future meeting of the Joint Board; and
- (e) That the constituent authorities be notified of the requisitions required for 2016/17.

4 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

There was submitted a report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on electoral registration matters and advising of current activities and issues facing the Joint Board.

The report intimated that the Annual Canvass concluded in November 2015 with the Registers being published on 1 December 2015. The tables attached to the report detailed the total electorate by Council ward and Scottish Parliamentary Constituency.

The report provided information on the refresh of absent voter identifiers; canvassing, absent voters; and the Scottish Parliamentary Election to be held on 5 May 2016.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

5 PERFORMANCE REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Divisional Assessor and Assistant Electoral Registration Officer relative to the various key measures introduced to monitor and manage the performance of the Joint Board's services.

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 again exceeding the targets of 95% within three months and 99.5% within six months. The report also detailed the average number of days taken to add a house in each constituent authority area between 1 April and 31 December 2015 and also the number of deletions from the Valuation (Council Tax) List between 1 April and 31 December during 2014 and 2015 by constituent authority area.

The report detailed the number of statutory amendments to the Valuation Roll, excluding appeal settlements and amendments to the prescribed entries, between 1 April and 31 December 2015 by constituent authority area, again ahead of the target of 80% to be actioned within three months and 95% within six months. These amendments were value changes only and did not reflect alterations where overall value was unchanged, changes to occupancy details or other administrative changes.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

6 2017 NON-DOMESTIC RATING REVALUATION

There was submitted a report by the Divisional Assessor and Assistant Electoral Registration Officer relative to the 2017 Non-Domestic Rating Revaluation.

The report intimated that the main focus in January would be the analysis and valuation of the Joint Board's commercial and industrial subjects. As at 31 December 2015 there were 10,300 subjects in the Joint Board area of which 7,500 had to be valued by the end of January 2016.

After January the objective would be to complete the 2017 Revaluation by dealing with those categories of subject within the Joint Board area such as Glasgow Airport, fire stations, police stations, waste water treatment works and education and training subjects.

It was noted that the Joint Board's Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was the designated Assessor for fixed line telecommunications subjects which had resulted in a substantial increase in the workload of Joint Board staff in preparation for the 2017 Revaluation. The proposed completion date for the 2017 Revaluation was August 2016. Whilst every endeavour would be made to meet the current performance levels in relation to running roll and council tax targets, these may be affected as a result of the time pressures to complete the 2017 Revaluation within the timescale set by the Scottish Government.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

7 UPDATE ON TEMPORARY POSTS - PROPERTY ASSISTANTS

There was submitted a report by the Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer relative to the appointment of two members of staff to the temporary posts of Property Assistants.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

8 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 Friday, 20 May 2016 within the offices of East Renfrewshire Council, Eastwood Park, Rouken Glen Road, Giffnock.

9 VALEDICTORY

The Convener referred to Joe Gallacher's imminent retirement and paid tribute to his service to the Joint Board. On behalf of the Joint Board he thanked Joe for his contribution to the development of Joint Board services in Renfrewshire and wished him a long and happy retirement.