



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Notice of Meeting and Agenda Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 18 November 2016	14:00	The Robertson Centre, 16 Glasgow Road, Paisley, PA1 3QF

KENNETH GRAHAM
Clerk

Membership

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

Convener - Councillor Mullin.

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 www.renfrewshire.cmis.uk.com/renfrewshire/CouncilandBoards.aspx

For further information, please either email democratic-services@renfrewshire.gov.uk or telephone 0141 618 7112.

Members of the Press and Public

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

Items of business

Apologies

Apologies from members.

Declarations of Interest

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

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|----------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Minute | 5 - 10 |
| | Minute of meeting of the Joint Board held on 19 August 2016. | |
| 2 | Revenue Budget Monitoring | 11 - 14 |
| | Report by Treasurer. | |
| 3 | Electoral Registration Update | 15 - 18 |
| | Report by Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer. | |
| 4 | Performance Report | 19 - 22 |
| | Report by Divisional Assessor and Assistant Electoral Registration Officer. | |
| 5 | 2017 Non Domestic Rating Revaluation Progress Report | 23 - 28 |
| | Report by Divisional Assessor and Assistant Electoral Registration Officer. | |
| 6 | Financial Outlook and Savings Proposals | 29 - 34 |
| | Report by Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer. | |
| 7 | Date of Next Meeting | |
| | Note that the next meeting of the Joint Board will be held at 2.00 pm on Friday 20 January 2017 in the Robertson Centre, Glasgow Road, Paisley. | |



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Minute of Meeting Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 19 August 2016	14:00	Inverclyde Council, Municipal Buildings, Clyde Square, GREENOCK, PA15 1LZ

PRESENT

Provost Carmichael (East Renfrewshire Council) and Councillors Brennan, Nelson and Shepherd (all Inverclyde Council); and M Sharkey, Hood, McGee, Bibby, A Doig and Mullin (Renfrewshire Council).

CHAIR

Councillor Mullin, Convener, presided.

APOLOGIES

Councillors O'Kane, Gilbert and Green (East Renfrewshire Council); Loughran (Inverclyde Council) and Williams (Renfrewshire Council).

IN ATTENDANCE

A MacTaggart, Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, K Crawford, Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, L Hendry, Divisional Assessor & Assistant Electoral Registration Officer and S Carlton, Principal Admin Officer (all Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board); and A MacArthur, Head of Finance, M Simpson, Finance Manager (Management Accounting) and E Currie, Senior Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Resources, 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 May 2016.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 **RESPONSE TO MATTERS RAISED REGARDING SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN MAY 2016**

Under reference to item 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Board held on 20 May 2016 there was submitted a report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to events which occurred around the Scottish Parliamentary Election.

The report provided information in relation to the issue of postal votes and the information slips provided to electors at polling stations when they found that their names were not shown on the appropriate Register.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

3 **AUDITED ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2015/16**

Under reference to item 2 of the Minute of the meeting of this Joint Board held on 20 May 2016 there was submitted a report by the Treasurer relative to the annual accounts for the Joint Board for 2015/16. The report intimated that the audit certificate issued by Audit Scotland provided an unqualified opinion that the abstract of accounts presented a true and fair view of the financial position of the Joint Board as at 31 March 2016, in accordance with the accounting policies detailed in the accounts. A report on the 2015/16 audit by Audit Scotland was also attached to the report.

DECIDED: That the audited accounts 2015/16 be approved for signature and the report by Audit Scotland be noted.

4 **BUDGET MONITORING**

There was submitted a report by the Treasurer in respect of the Joint Board for the period 1 April to 22 July 2016.

The report intimated that gross expenditure was £23,000 over budget and income was currently £1,000 over recovered resulting in a net overspend of £22,000.

The projected year-end position was a deficit of £79,000 resulting in a draw of reserves of £188,500 compared to a budgeted draw on reserves of £109,500. This was as a result of low staff turnover, unanticipated costs and an income reduction of £54,720 from the Cabinet Office to fund Individual Electoral Registration (IER). The Joint Board were examining ways to minimise the deficit and planned to approach the Cabinet Office regarding the underfunding.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

5 BUDGETARY RISKS AND FUTURE RESTRUCTURING

There was submitted a report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to the ongoing risks and challenges from April 2017 arising from reductions in financial settlements.

The report intimated that the Joint Board's budget for 2016/17 was £2,213,000, a reduction of approximately 10% from the budget of £2,459,800 in 2010/11. The majority of the Joint Board's budget was made up of salaries and other staff costs and the only effective and practical method of further and significant reductions to the budget would be to reduce staffing levels. There were currently 42 (FTE) staff compared to 55 (FTE) in 2007. To date, the shortfall had been managed by natural wastage, 'stretching' of vacancies and the use of VER/VR. The Joint Board's reserves had been used to offset the effects of the budget reductions and had been substantially reduced by the impact of VER/VR.

The report further intimated that any significant reduction to available budget would put at risk the statutory duties of the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer. The cost associated with Electoral Registration had risen sharply since the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) with the cost of the annual canvass rising from £130,000 to £270,000. Until last year the increase in cost had been offset by funding from the UK Government but the support funding did not meet the actual costs and the Joint Board was in discussion with the UK Government.

The Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer advised that, on behalf of the Joint Board, the Convener and Depute Convener had written to Chris Skidmore MP expressing concern that the Joint Board faced a significant budget overspend due to the significantly reduced funding in support of Individual Electoral Registration in financial year 2016/17 and supporting any bid for additional funding made by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer. The Joint Board would be advised of any reply received.

The report provided information in relation to the work associated with valuation; the Land Reform Bill; Fixed-line Telecoms and proposals to vary the charges associated with Council Tax.

The Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer was working with the Treasurer to establish a sustainable future structure which would balance savings against the ability of the organisation to meet its statutory obligations. A review of the senior management structure would take place in the first half of 2017 and it was anticipated that this would yield savings in terms of staffing costs. Consideration would also be given to whether VER/VR would allow additional savings to be made. A more detailed report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Board to be held on 18 November 2016 covering the senior management restructure and any other proposals in terms of savings; whether further finances would be made available for IER; and providing an indication of the 2017/18 funding position.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

6 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION ANNUAL REPORT 2016

There was submitted a report by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to the Electoral Registration Annual Report 2016, the purpose of which was to consider the levels of electoral registration in the Joint Board area and to identify the methods employed to ensure that the maximum possible number of citizens were registered to vote. The report had changed from that prepared in previous years but where possible similar statistics to those presented in previous years had been included together with additional statistics to highlight the activities involved in Individual Electoral Registration (IER).

An important balance had to be achieved between quantity and quality in compilation of the register and it was as important to make sure that there were no names on the register of people who were not entitled to vote as it was to try to get everyone who was entitled to vote onto the register. The report detailed the process of electoral registration; the measurement of accuracy of the register; continuous improvement to quality and accuracy of the Register; the steps taken to address under registration; additional activities proposed to maximise registration; and other registration activity.

The introduction of IER had and would continue to make significant changes to the process of Registration.

The Joint Board's commitment to accuracy of the Electoral Register and maximisation of registration was noted. The Joint Board would continue to review its current practices and would adapt and develop where appropriate to ensure that the registration process was as accurate and cost-effective as possible.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

7 PERFORMANCE REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Divisional Assessor & Assistant Electoral Registration Officer covering the first six months of the rating year and providing an update on the current performance and workload issues facing the Joint Board.

The report detailed the performance in Council Tax and non-domestic valuation against set targets. In relation to Council Tax valuation, 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 target of 95% within three months but marginally missing the target of 99.5% within six months, with less than 1%. Given staff priority had been engaged with the statutory duty of completing the 2017 Revaluation, coupled with the fact that the actual number of houses added compared with the same time last year had increased by 40%, this minor decrease in performance gave no cause for concern.

The report also detailed the average number of days taken to add a house in each constituent authority area between 1 April and 30 June 2016 and also the number of deletions from the Valuation (Council Tax) List between 1 April and 31 March during 2015 and 2016 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 30 June 2016 by constituent authority area, again ahead of the targets 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. It was noted that there had been a 61% increase in the total number of alterations compared to this time last year.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

SEDERUNT

Councillor A Doig entered the meeting prior to consideration of the following item of business.

8 2017 NON DOMESTIC RATING REVALUATION PROGRESS REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Divisional Assessor & Assistant Electoral Registration Officer relative to the work being undertaken in preparation for the 2017 Non-domestic Rating Revaluation which came into effect on 1 April 2017.

The report intimated that the Lands Valuation (Scotland) Act required that the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer value or revalue all of the lands and heritages in his valuation area. These valuations were to be totally fresh and relate to rental levels prevailing at the statutory 'tone date' of 1 April 2015. As of 2 August 2016, 8449 subjects, 82% of the Joint Board's total valuation roll, had been revalued and the remaining subjects would be revalued by 30 September 2016.

A detailed analysis of all non-domestic subjects within the Joint Board area grouped by statistical categories formed the appendix to the report.

It was noted that the Joint Board's Assessor & 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. 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.

9 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

There was submitted a report by the Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to the Corporate Risk Register for the Joint Board which had been updated to reflect the current challenges and risks facing the Joint Board. A copy of the Corporate Risk Register formed the appendix to the report.

It was noted that references to the IT Disaster Recovery Plan were a 'work in progress' as discussions were currently ongoing with Renfrewshire Council for the Joint Board to be incorporated within the Council's IT Disaster Recovery Procedures. It was anticipated that this work would be finalised by Spring 2017.

DECIDED: That the Corporate Risk Register, which formed the appendix to the report, be approved.

10 BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

There was submitted a report by the Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to the Business Continuity Plan for the Joint Board which had been updated to ensure it reflected the most recent changes in circumstances facing the Joint Board. A copy of the Business Continuity Plan formed the appendix to the report.

DECIDED: That the Business Continuity Plan, which formed the appendix to the report, be approved.

11 RE-USE OF INFORMATION PROCEDURES AND ASSET LIST FOR COUNCILS AND JOINT BOARDS

There was submitted a report by the Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to the Policy on Re-use of Information Procedures and Asset List for Councils and Joint Boards, a copy of which formed the appendix to the report.

The report intimated that the purpose of the policy was to ensure that stakeholders were aware of what information held by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer could be re-used by other stakeholders.

DECIDED: That the Policy on Re-use of Information Procedures and Asset List for Councils and Joint Boards, which formed the appendix to the report, be approved.

12 UPDATE ON TEMPORARY POSTS - PROPERTY ASSISTANTS

There was submitted a report by the Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer relative to the two temporary posts of Property Assistants being made permanent within the staffing structure.

The report intimated that looking ahead to the various challenges facing the Joint Board's technical section in the medium to long term, the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer was seeking to incorporate both temporary posts into the permanent establishment of the staffing structure. In keeping with best practice both posts would be advertised as permanent posts.

DECIDED: That the report be approved.

13 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 18 November 2016 within the Robertson Centre, Glasgow Road, Paisley.

RENFREWSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

To: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

On: 18 November 2016

Report by: The Treasurer

Heading: Revenue Budget Monitoring Report to 14th October 2016

1. Summary

- 1.1 Gross expenditure is £51,000 over budget and income is currently £3,000 over recovered resulting in a net overspend of £48,000. This is summarised in point 4.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members consider the report.

3 Budget Adjustments Since Last Report

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

4 Budget Performance

4.1 Current Position	Net Overspend £48,000
<i>Previously Reported</i>	<i>Net Overspend £22,000</i>

The overspend relates to staffing costs.

The overspend within Employee Costs is due to a low turnover of staff, resulting in turnover targets not being achieved, and also due to higher than anticipated overtime required to address workload pressures associated with the 2017 revaluation exercise.

Projected Year End Position

The projected year end position is a deficit of £85,800, resulting in a draw on reserves of £195,300, compared to a budgeted draw on reserves of £109,500.

This is a result of a low staff turnover, higher than anticipated overtime costs and an income reduction of £54,720 from the Cabinet Office to fund Individual Electoral Registration (IER).

The RVJB are actively examining ways to minimise the deficit and are awaiting a response from the Cabinet Office regarding additional funding.

RENFREWESHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT 2016/17
1st April 2016 To 14th October 2016

JOINT BOARD : RENFREWSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Description (1)	Revised Annual Budget (2)	Revised Period Budget (3)	Actual (4)	Adjustments (5)	Revised Actual (6) = (4 + 5)	Budget Variance		
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	(7)	%
Employee Costs	1,801	813	864	0	864	(51)	-6.3%	overspend
Property Costs	242	135	135	0	135	0	0.0%	breakeven
Supplies & Services	79	65	65	0	65	0	0.0%	breakeven
Contractors and Others	25	5	5	0	5	0	0.0%	breakeven
Transport & Plant Costs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	breakeven
Administration Costs	320	153	153	0	153	0	0.0%	breakeven
Payments to Other Bodies	20	1	1	0	1	0	0.0%	breakeven
GROSS EXPENDITURE	2,487	1,172	1,223	0	1,223	(51)	-4.4%	overspend
Contributions from Local Authorities	(2,213)	(1,291)	(485)	(806)	(1,291)	0	0.0%	breakeven
Other Income	(164)	(81)	(115)	31	(84)	3	3.7%	over-recovery
INCOME	(2,377)	(1,372)	(600)	(775)	(1,375)	3	0.2%	over-recovery
TRANSFER (TO)/FROM RESERVES	110	(200)	623	(775)	(152)	(48)	-24.0%	overspend

Bottom Line Position to 14th October 2016 is an overspend of	£000's	Opening Reserves	£000's
Anticipated Year End Budget Position is an overspend of	(48)	Anticipated Closing Reserves	(467)
	(86)		(271)



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to : Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on : 18th November 2016

Subject : Electoral Registration Update Report

Author : Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

1.0 Introduction

This report is to provide members with an update on the ongoing Electoral Registration Annual Canvass and other electoral issues facing the Board.

2.0 Annual Canvass

Under IER the Canvass has the following stages:

2.1 Issue of Household Enquiry Forms (HEFs):

The first stage of the Canvass was issue of HEFs to all properties in the Joint Board area. These forms invited those at each house to complete and return the form, to respond by telephone, text or internet, or to register online. The number issued was:

Council	Household Enquiry Form
East Renfrewshire	38,352
Inverclyde	38,807
Renfrewshire	84,923
Total	162,082

Any changes notified by post, telephone text or internet resulted in an invitation to register which could be on-line use the Government Registration Portal or by personal application.

2.2 Issue of Reminders:

Where no response had been made to the initial issue of HEFs, reminders were issued on 2 September 2016. The number issued was:

Council	Household Enquiry Form	
	1 st Reminder	2 nd Reminder
East Renfrewshire	16,141	10,774
Inverclyde	18,519	13,668
Renfrewshire	41,216	30,407
Total	75,876	54,949

The issue of Second Reminders was incorporated with the Door-to-Door Canvass.

2.3 Door-to-Door Canvass:

IER mandates that at least one visit will be made to properties with electors who have made no response. This will be carried out as part of the Second Reminder exercise.

For this Canvass, we had to arrange a door-to-door visit for properties where we had no response. Temporary Canvassers have been working round these since 7th October 2016.

This is the information we supplied to the EC when providing our canvass update:

The availability of time, funding and canvassers forced us to look closely at how to deal with the 2nd reminder stage for this year's canvass. We decided to split the 52,267 non returned HEF's into 2 categories:-

Firstly households with recent occupier information (18,490) and

Secondly households where we were less confident with the information held as it was either old or there was no occupier information (33,777).

We then focused on the 33,777 households with no/old information and sent a canvasser to door knock each household. The 18,490 with recent occupier information were treated as lower priority and were posted as we believed that this was a more efficient way of dealing with them. We intend to monitor returns from those posted in the New Year and follow-up if necessary.

2.4 Local Secondary Checks:

Under the legislation in force, local data held by Councils and other bodies including Council Tax Billing records, lists of social tenancies and lists of private tenancies cannot be used for this Canvass. This continues to add to the complexity and cost of the Canvass.

2.5 Publication of Registers:

This takes place on 1st December 2016.

2.6 Boundary Review:

The review of Council Boundaries will come into force in time for the elections on 4th May 2017.

Ideally, the Registers to be published on 1st December 2016 would reflect the changes to Ward Boundaries and Polling Districts. However, I do not intend to publish Registers with revised boundaries on 1st December 2016 unless I am convinced that the data used are as accurate as possible. I also need sufficient time to consider, apply and audit the changes. Registers as published must be as accurate as possible and free from any processing error.

As things stand, delays resulting from challenges to the proposed changes have resulted in a very compressed timescale for implementation of the changes. Monday 21st November is my last date for making changes in order that the Registers can be published on 1st December. The relevant map data and Polling Schemes are not yet finalised and it will not now be possible to reflect all of the changes for 1st December. Instead, the changes will be reflected in a fresh publication of the Registers on 1st February 2017.

2.7 Costs:

This is the second “business as usual” Canvass since the introduction of IER. I have, at earlier meetings of the Board, indicated the financial challenge we face this year as the result of having the same expensive process as in 2015 alongside a reduction in financial support from the UK Government.

There is now a possibility that additional funding may be made available but nothing is confirmed as yet.

3. The Next Year:

3.1 Elections:

There is one scheduled election - the Local Government Elections to be held on 4th May 2017.

Work is already under way in preparation for the Scottish Parliamentary Election and further meetings are being scheduled with the staff representing the three Returning Officers in the Joint Board area.

3.2 Key Dates:

- 17 April 2017 Last Date for Registration (Midnight)
- 18 April 2017 Last Date for New Postal Vote (5pm)
- 18 April 2017 Last Date to change or cancel existing Postal Vote & Proxy Vote (5pm)
- 25 April 2017 Last Date for New Proxy Vote (5pm)
- 4 May 2017 Polling Day
- 4 May 2017 Deadline for Emergency Proxy Vote Applications (5pm)
- 4 May 2017 Last alteration due to Clerical Error (9pm)

General Conclusions

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their continuing hard work and diligence in dealing efficiently with the management of the Annual Canvass.

Recommendations

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

Alasdair MacTaggart

Assessor & ERO

11th November 2016

For further information please contact Alasdair MacTaggart at 0141-618-5900

or via e-mail at alsadair.mactaggart@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to : Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on : 18th November 2016

Subject : Performance Report

Author : Divisional Assessor & Assistant Electoral Registration Officer

1.0 Introduction

This performance report covering the first six months of the rating year provides an update to the ongoing reporting of performance to the members and is intended to keep members informed of current performance and workload issues facing the Board.

2.0 Council Tax

The main work involved in Council Tax at the moment 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 2016 to 30th September 2016

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	422	411	97.39%	6	1.42%	100%	5	1.18%
East Renfrewshire	204	182	89.22%	22	10.78%	100%	0	0%
Inverclyde	52	50	96.15%	2	3.85%	100%	0	0%
RVJB totals	678	643	94.84%	30	4.42%	99.26%	5	0.74%

This performance is marginally below our targets of 95% within three months and 99.5% within 6 months. This minor decrease in performance gives no cause for concern given resources have been heavily employed in completing the 2017 Non Domestic Revaluation.

In the period from 1 April 2015 to 30th September 2015, the average number of days taken to add a house was as follows:

Council Area	No. Added	Average No. of Days
Renfrewshire	422	35.61
East Renfrewshire	204	32.46
Inverclyde	52	26.77
RVJB Totals	678	33.98

This measure exceeds our target of 38 days.

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 and 30th September during 2015 and 2016

Council Area	No. Deleted 2015	No. Deleted 2016
Renfrewshire	25	87
East Renfrewshire	5	3
Inverclyde	12	5
RVJB Total	42	95

3.0 Non-domestic Valuation

One of the main areas of work in non domestic valuation has been revaluing all non domestic subjects for the 2017 Revaluation whilst still maintaining alterations to the 2010 valuation roll. The table below is a summary of the statutory amendments carried out to the current Valuation Roll over the last six months. These are new entries being added to the Roll, entries being deleted or properties that have been altered. Each of these amendments has been made after a member of staff has inspected the premises.

3.1 Time taken to make statutory amendments to the Valuation Roll (excluding appeal settlements and amendments to prescribed entries) Period 1st April 2016 to 30th September 2016

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	294	188	63.95%	103	35.03%	98.98%	3	1.02%
East Renfrewshire	45	42	93.33%	2	4.44%	97.77%	1	1.82%
Inverclyde	44	37	84.09%	5	11.36%	95.45%	2	4.55%
RVJB totals	383	267	69.71%	110	28.72%	98.43%	6	1.57%

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 at this period in the financial year with regard to our internal target of having 80 % of alterations actioned within 3 months has sadly not been met. However performance over the 6 months period has recovered the position and continues to exceed the overall target set of 95% of alterations completed within this time frame.

4.0 General Conclusions,

The completion of the 2017 revaluation by the 30 September this year has put a strain on resources particularly over the last six months. Valuation staff have been stretched in delivering the targets set which in some instances have being marginally missed. It was anticipated that targets may be affected as a result of the time pressures involved over this cycle and the result of which, although disappointing, gives no cause for concern in the long run. The fact that the overall level of performance in all sectors of business has continued at such high levels is a testament to the staffs' commitment over this extremely busy period.

5.0 Recommendations

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

Jacqueline Murgatroyd
Divisional Assessor & Assistant ERO
14 October 2016

For further information please contact Jacqueline Murgatroyd on 0141-618-5951 or via email jacqueline.murgatroyd@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on: 18 November 2016

Subject: 2017 Non Domestic Rating Revaluation Progress Report

Author: Divisional Assessor & Assistant Electoral Registration Officer

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Board on the current work that is being undertaken in preparation of the 2017 Non Domestic Rating Revaluation which comes into effect on the 1st April 2017.

2.0 Background

The Assessor is required by the Lands Valuation (Scotland) Act to value or revalue all of the lands and heritages in his valuation area. These valuations are totally fresh and relate to rental levels prevailing at the statutory “tone date” of the 1st April 2015. This process involves the collection and analysis of rental, building costs and turnover data to establish the new levels of value to be applied to the various types of subject.

3.0 Progress

As stated in previous reports to the Board the 2017 Revaluation, in a draft format, had to be completed by 30th September 2016. I am pleased to report the Revaluation was completed by this date with all staff working hard to deliver the Revaluation on time with robust values.

As can be seen from the table at Appendix 1, the total number of subjects revalued at the present time is 10,406. This number may change between 30th September and the date the Valuation Roll is delivered to the relevant Rating Authorities due to the on-going maintenance of the 2010 Valuation Roll and new subjects entering the Valuation Roll with effect from 1 April 2017.

4.0 Statistical Analysis

The table at Appendix 1, shows a detailed analysis of all non domestic subjects within the Joint Board area grouped by the statistical categories used by the Scottish Executive. These 20 Categories divide subjects into easily identified groupings such as Office, Retail, Industrial, Health, Education and Hotels Etc.

The category entitled “Public Service” includes subjects such as the Airport, Bus Stations, Court Houses, Fire Stations, Military Establishments, Police Stations 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.

As all subjects have been revalued for 2017 the percentage detailed in the % Complete Column is 100%.

5.0 2017 Revaluation Future Workload

Despite the Revaluation being completed, we have undertaken to review certain classes of subjects to ensure accurate valuations where information required to value these properties was not provided. In addition to this workload, all staff will be involved in a review of properties to ensure the entries in the 2017 Revaluation Roll are in line with a 2015 Supreme Court Decision.

In addition, as a result of the land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016, shootings and deer forests are to be entered in the valuation roll with effect from 1 April 2017, and accordingly will be liable for non domestic rates from that date. The Board’s staff are currently tasked with identifying and valuing all “shootings and deer forest” within the Board’s constituent authorities.

6.0 Designation Responsibilities

The Assessor for Renfrewshire is the “Designated Assessor” for fixed line telecommunication subjects within Scotland. As a result of this additional responsibility, the Assessor collaborated at a national level with the Valuation Office Agency for England and Wales and in this partnership, carried out valuations of very large subjects involving substantial and in some cases, complex values. In addition to the maintenance of these types of subjects’ valuations, the negotiations of their appeals will prove challenging for the staff of the Board.

7.0 General Conclusions

Whilst every endeavor was made to meet the current performance levels in relation to running roll and council tax targets, unfortunately these were affected by the pressure to complete the Revaluation within the timescales set by the Scottish Government. The performance levels are not a cause for concern as staff were dealing with the heavy workload associated with a Revaluation. It is also worth noting the 44% increase in the statutory amendments to the 2010 Valuation Roll undertaken by staff during this period.

7.0 Recommendations

The Board notes the contents of this report.

Lindsey Hendry
Divisional Assessor & Assistant ERO
1 November 2016

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APPENDIX 1

East Renfrewshire				
Cat	Description	Number of Subjects to be Revalued	Number of Subjects Revalued	% Complete
1	Retail	563	563	100%
2	Public House	22	22	100%
3	Office incl Banks	335	335	100%
4	Hotel Etc	6	6	100%
5	Industrial subjects including Factories Warehouses Stores and Workshops	327	327	100%
6	Leisure Entertainment Caravans and Holiday Sites	63	63	100%
7	Garages and Petrol Stations	46	46	100%
8	Cultural	18	18	100%
9	Sporting Subjects	8	8	100%
10	Education and Training	33	33	100%
11	Public Service Subjects	67	67	100%
12	Communications (Non Formula)	5	5	100%
13	Quarries Mines etc	3	3	100%
14	Petrochemical	0	0	100%
15	Religious	44	44	100%
16	Health Medical	40	40	100%
17	Other	82	82	100%
18	Care Facilities	22	22	100%
19	Advertising	34	34	100%
20	Undertakings	18	18	100%
	TOTAL	1,736	1,736	100%

Note: Figures are as at 30th September 2016

Inverclyde				
Cat	Description	Number of Subjects to be Revalued	Number of Subjects Revalued	% Complete
1	Retail	769	769	100%
2	Public House	47	47	100%
3	Office incl Banks	353	353	100%
4	Hotel Etc	9	9	100%
5	Industrial subjects including Factories Warehouses Stores and Workshops	517	517	100%
6	Leisure Entertainment Caravans and Holiday Sites	98	98	100%
7	Garages and Petrol Stations	41	41	100%
8	Cultural	27	27	100%
9	Sporting Subjects	3	3	100%
10	Education and Training	39	39	100%
11	Public Service Subjects	87	87	100%
12	Communications (Non Formula)	0	0	100%
13	Quarries Mines etc	0	0	100%
14	Petrochemical	0	0	100%
15	Religious	64	64	100%
16	Health Medical	33	33	100%
17	Other	126	126	100%
18	Care Facilities	52	52	100%
19	Advertising	33	33	100%
20	Undertakings	19	19	100%
	TOTAL	2,317	2,317	100%

Note: Figures are as at 30th September 2016

Renfrewshire				
Cat	Description	Number of Subjects to be Revalued	Number of Subjects Revalued	% Complete
1	Retail	1,737	1,737	100%
2	Public House	121	121	100%
3	Office incl Banks	1,442	1,442	100%
4	Hotel Etc	27	27	100%
5	Industrial subjects including Factories Warehouses Stores and Workshops	1,661	1,661	100%
6	Leisure Entertainment Caravans and Holiday Sites	148	148	100%
7	Garages and Petrol Stations	70	70	100%
8	Cultural	63	63	100%
9	Sporting Subjects	12	12	100%
10	Education and Training	80	80	100%
11	Public Service Subjects	157	157	100%
12	Communications (Non Formula)	14	14	100%
13	Quarries Mines etc	1	1	100%
14	Petrochemical	3	3	100%
15	Religious	99	99	100%
16	Health Medical	77	77	100%
17	Other	430	430	100%
18	Care Facilities	54	54	100%
19	Advertising	124	124	100%
20	Undertakings	33	33	100%
	TOTAL	6,353	6,353	100%

Note: Figures are as at 30th September 2016

Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board				
Cat	Description	Number of Subjects to be Revalued	Number of Subjects Revalued	% Complete
1	Retail	3,069	3,069	100%
2	Public House	190	190	100%
3	Office incl Banks	2,130	2,130	100%
4	Hotel Etc	42	42	100%
5	Industrial subjects including Factories Warehouses Stores and Workshops	2,505	2,505	100%
6	Leisure Entertainment Caravans and Holiday Sites	309	309	100%
7	Garages and Petrol Stations	157	157	100%
8	Cultural	108	108	100%
9	Sporting Subjects	23	23	100%
10	Education and Training	152	152	100%
11	Public Service Subjects	311	311	100%
12	Communications (Non Formula)	19	19	100%
13	Quarries Mines etc	4	4	100%
14	Petrochemical	3	3	100%
15	Religious	207	207	100%
16	Health Medical	150	150	100%
17	Other	638	638	100%
18	Care Facilities	128	128	100%
19	Advertising	191	191	100%
20	Undertakings	70	70	100%
	TOTAL	10,406	10,406	100%

Note: Figures are as at 30th September 2016



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Meeting on: 18th November 2016

Subject: Financial Outlook and Savings proposals

Author: Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Board's financial position and the medium term financial outlook facing the Board; and also to provide further information with regards measures being proposed to ensure the Board remains financially sustainable.

Background

The level of Requisition Funding available to the Board has declined over the past 6 years as follows:

Year	Requisition	Reserves used
2010/11	£2,459,800	£77,400
2011/12	£2,361,400	£47,000
2012/13	£2,321,300	£33,500
2013/14	£2,281,800	£22,800
2014/15	£2,281,800	£0
2015/16	£2,281,800	£41,100
2016/17	£2,213,300	£109,500

This is a reduction, in cash terms, of 10% since 2011 and approximately 16.66% in real terms due to the requirements of meeting increasing costs from a declining budget. The most significant of these inflationary costs has been salary and National Insurance contributions. During this period, the general reserves available to the Board have been maintained at a prudent level (reserves used as outlined above have generally been replaced through good budgetary control); with a draw on reserves being planned for 2016/17 as agreed by the Board in January 2016.

The number of staff employed by the Board has reduced by 17% from 52 in 2011 to 43 at present. This reduction has been reached by non-filling of vacancies and, in the last year, VR/VER.

Current Financial Position

The current financial position is outlined in detail in a separate report on this agenda; however it is projected that in addition to the agreed draw on reserves of £110k, a further overspend of potentially £85k is forecast due to workload pressures associated with the 2017 Non-Domestic Rating Revaluation and reduced Cabinet Office income associated with IER. This would bring the level of general reserves down to circa £270k, or 10% of turnover. Further information on reserves is outlined below.

Financial Outlook

The Board has, as outlined above, made considerable efforts to meet the financial challenges facing both the Board and its requisitioning authorities since the financial crisis of 2008 triggered the ongoing austerity measures put in place by the UK government. The level of requisition has as outlined above either been held in cash terms or reduced in successive years.

During this period the Board has also managed the effects of changes to National Insurance contributions, pay awards and changes in pension contributions; in addition to managing a challenging workload and new obligations in terms of IER.

The outlook in the medium term is characterised by uncertainty. At this point both major areas of risk for the Board – the level of pay award and the level of requisition income (broadly linked to the movement in the level of grant available to local government) – are unknown. The Chancellor has announced an intention to review the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review; while the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Finance & the Constitution has in the recent past limited local government settlement information to single years. This will be the case again for 2017/18; again continuing the uncertain financial environment for the Board.

Further uncertainty for the local government settlement arises from enhanced powers for Scotland under the Scotland Act 2016; and also significantly from the Brexit vote.

However; while the exact impact of these issues for the Board cannot be forecast with certainty; there is a general consensus that prospects for economic growth have deteriorated, placing further ongoing pressure on public spending. Estimates of potential cuts to the 2017/18 local government settlement range across Scotland; however they are broadly in the 3-5% range.

Ability to meet Statutory Obligations

The Assessor and ERO has statutory obligations to maintain the Valuation Rolls, the Council Tax Valuation Lists and the Electoral Registers. These are tasks that are not optional.

The Assessor has responsibility for:

- 10,406 entries in the Valuation Rolls accounting for £338 million in terms of Rateable Value (this will increase significantly on 1st April 2017).

- 171,000 entries in the Council Tax Valuation Lists
- 260,000 electors in the Electoral Rolls

Reduced staffing levels limit resilience in terms of long-term absence and unexpected workloads such as an unexpected influx of appeals or a snap election. The recently completed exercise to compile a draft Revaluation Roll was only achieved through the use of overtime allied to the commitment and dedication of the staff.

The Board also faces additional workload in terms of implementing changes to valuations as the result of a Supreme Court decision. We will also be required to make entries in the Valuation Rolls for "Shootings and Deer Forests" and, while the Joint Board area is not a hotspot for such Sporting Rights, investigatory work will be required for all agricultural holdings in the area.

The financial pressures surrounding Electoral Registration and the Annual Canvass have been debated at earlier meetings of the Board.

Reserves

As outlined above, the Board has agreed to utilise reserves to mitigate reduced income levels and to fund VR/VER.

The level of reserves held by the Board has increased in the past 7 years largely as the result of non-filling of vacancies or, when circumstances permitted, a delay in the filling of vacant posts. Increased efficiencies in non-payroll costs have also contributed to the inflow to Reserves.

It has been highlighted by the Board's Auditors that the level of Reserves, while understandable, is verging upon being too great for the size of the organisation. With this in mind, reserves have been used to fund cost pressures and, in 2015-16, to fund the release of staff through VR/VER as part of the transition towards a sustainable structure.

Depletion of Reserves is acceptable to a point but it must be borne in mind that a safety net needs to remain in place for potentially expensive appeal litigation; and a minimum level of reserves of 5-10% of turnover is recommended.

Levels of Reserves held by the Board

Year	Reserves
2011/12	£357,674
2012/13	£496,334
2013/14	£463,991
2014/15	£591,440
2015/16	£466,704
2016/17*	£271,000

* Estimated closing balance

Potential for Further Savings

The potential to save on expenditure on items other than staff costs is limited, and there remains a risk that further reductions in staff numbers beyond that proposed by this report may have a detrimental impact on one or more statutory obligations.

Scenario Planning

In line with Audit Scotland best practice, 2 possible scenarios which may face the Board over the next financial year are outlined below.

Scenario 1

Best case would be that requisition income from the 3 constituent councils is frozen. However, it is likely that there will be a pay award and for this scenario a 1% pay award has been assumed.

Requisition Income (same as 16/17)	£2,213,300
Pay Award @1%	-£20,000
Actual Budget	£2,199,900
(Net loss of £20,000 from existing budget)	

Scenario 2

Given the challenges facing Scottish Local Authorities assume after the Comprehensive Spending Review requisition income from 3 councils is cut 3.5%, and pay award is still 1%.

Requisition Income (3.5% less than 16/17)	£2,135,800
Pay Award @1%	-£20,000
Actual Budget	£2,115,800
(Net loss of £97,500 from existing budget)	

Given the financial outlook information outlined above, Scenario 2 is considered to be the more likely outcome for 2017/18.

Proposed Savings

Discussion with Renfrewshire Council officers with regards the lease of the Robertson Centre has resulted in a proposal that the current lease be extended from its current expiry date in 2020 for a further 4 years to 2024. This may result in an increased rental cost. However, it is not anticipated that this will result in a significant change to the current rent being charged by Renfrewshire Council. This provides the Board with certainty over the medium term with regards its office accommodation and also allows the costs of refurbishment works undertaken in 2010 to be paid down over a longer period; reducing the cost to the Board by potentially £43k per annum. These discussions are preliminary at this stage however they will be progressed with the Board's permission; with a final recommendation to the Board being considered at the January 2017 meeting. Renfrewshire Council will also require to formally agree to the extension and the Head of Property Services is taking steps to request this authority from the relevant Policy Board.

Further, in order to allow a resilient and sustainable staffing structure to be put in place and, given the possibility of Scenario 2 becoming the reality for the next financial year, it is proposed that the post of Depute Assessor will be deleted. This could generate net savings of £60,000 per annum. However, this saving may be offset in the event supporting posts require to be re-evaluated in consideration of additional responsibilities arising from the deletion of the Depute Assessor Post. This saving may also be offset by one-off exit costs, which would require to be funded through reserves.

However, discussions with HR will need to take place in consideration of the effects on the remaining posts. I would intend to take this forward with HR after the Board has given its approval to the removal of the Depute Assessors post.

The Depute Assessor post would be deleted from 1 April 2017; around the same time as the Assessor intends to retire. The Assessor would require to put in place measures to secure a replacement and handover period prior to his leaving date. The impending vacancy must be advertised and filled after interview of all suitable candidates. The interviews, as the post is a Chief Officer position, must be carried out by a specially convened sub-committee of the Board.

Recommendations

The Board notes the information in the report;

The Board agrees to the Assessor concluding discussions with Renfrewshire Council with regards extending the current lease for Robertson House, with a further report to be presented to the Board in January 2017;

The Board agrees the proposed revised staffing structure as outlined in the report and sets in train the process of establishing an Appointments Sub-Committee.

Alasdair MacTaggart
Assessor & ERO
November 2016

For further information please contact Alasdair MacTaggart on 0141-618-5900 or via email at alasdair.mactaggart@renfrewshire-vjb.gov.uk

