



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Minute of Meeting Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

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

PRESENT

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

CHAIR

Councillor Mullin, Convener, presided.

APOLOGIES

Councillors Green (East Renfrewshire Council); and Hood (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, J Murgatroyd, Divisional Assessor and Assistant Electoral Registration Officer and S Carlton, Principal Admin Officer (all Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board); and M Simpson, Finance Manager (Management Accounting), D Low, Senior Committee Services Officer and M Ball, Accountant (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 19 August 2016.

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 14 October 2016.

The report intimated that gross expenditure was £51,000 over budget and income was currently £3,000 over recovered resulting in a net overspend of £48,000.

The projected year-end position was a deficit of £85,000 resulting in a draw of reserves of £195,300 compared to a budgeted draw on reserves of £109,500. This was as a result of low staff turnover, unanticipated overtime 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.

3 ELECTORAL REGISTRATION UPDATE

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 as part of the Annual Canvass, Householder Enquiry Form (HEF) reminders had been issued on 2 September 2016 to all those households that had failed to respond to the initial HEF. Where no response was received to the reminder door-to-door visits had commenced on 1 October 2016.

The report referred to recent changes to ward boundaries and polling districts as a result of the review of Council boundaries. Taking into account the timescale for the publication of Registers on 1 December 2016 the report indicated that the changes arising from the review would be reflected in a fresh publication of the Registers on 1 February 2017.

The report detailed the key dates for the Local Government Elections to be held on 4 May 2017.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

4 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 marginally below 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 30 September 2016 and also the number of deletions from the Valuation (Council Tax) List between 1 April and 30 September 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 September 2016 by constituent authority area, which fell below the target of 80% to be actioned within three months but exceeded the target of 95% within six months.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

5 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. The report advised that the revaluation had been completed on schedule with a total number of subjects revalued at the present time amounting to 10,406.

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

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

6 FINANCIAL OUTLOOK AND SAVINGS PROPOSALS

There was submitted a report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on the Board's financial position and the medium-term financial outlook facing the Joint Board together with information on the measures being proposed to ensure that the Joint Board remained financially sustainable.

The report indicated that there had been a reduction of funding of 16.66% to the Joint Board in real terms over the past six years; that the number of staff had reduced from 52 in 2011 to 43 at present; that the outlook in the medium-term was characterised by uncertainty, mainly relating to the level of pay awards and the level of requisition; the Joint Board's ability to meet the statutory obligations highlighted in the report; and the depletion of reserves since 2011.

In line with Audit Scotland best practice, the Joint Board had prepared two possible scenarios which could arise for the 2017/18 financial year, both of which set out potential net losses to the existing budget level. To offset this reduction in funding, the report suggested that discussions take place with Renfrewshire Council with a view to extending the lease for the Robertson Centre which would allow the reprofiling of the repayment of the cost of refurbishment works carried out in 2010 and proposed changes to the Joint Board's staffing structure.

The Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer advised the Joint Board of the timescales relating to his retirement in 2017 and requested that the other issues relating to changes to the staff structure be deferred to a future meeting. This was agreed. The Senior Committee Services officer then invited nominations from the membership of the Joint Board for the Appointments Sub-committee which required to be established with delegated powers to interview and appoint the new Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That it be agreed that the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer conclude discussions with Renfrewshire Council with regards to extending the current lease for the Roberston Centre, with a further report to be presented to the Joint Board in January 2017;
- (c) That consideration of the proposed revised staffing structure as outlined in the report be continued to a future meeting of the Joint Board; and
- (d) That it be noted that Councillor O'Kane and Provost Carmichael (East Renfrewshire Council); Councillors Loughran and Shepherd (Inverclyde Council) and Councillors Bibby, Audrey Doig, Mullin and M Sharkey (Renfrewshire Council) had been appointed to the Appointments Sub-committee and that Councillor Mullin had been appointed as the Convener of the Sub-committee.

7 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 January 2017 within the Robertson Centre, Glasgow Road, Paisley.