



# Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

**Report to:** Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

**Meeting on:** 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**Subject:** Barclay Update / Service Review

**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. Furthermore, at the February Board meeting permission was sought from the Board for a Service review to be undertaken to address issues such as non-filling of vacancies and the new legislative changes coming into effect beginning in April of this year.

The Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill is now law and has been partially implemented in April 2020, with full implementation to follow thereafter.

There are six main Barclay recommendations which are reflected in this bill, these are listed below;

- i. The change of the revaluation cycle from 5 yearly to 3 yearly
- ii. New property markers to be shown against properties in the Valuation Roll
- iii. Changes to valuation of properties within a Park
- iv. From the 2022 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
- vi. Information Gathering powers to be strengthened with Assessors issuing Civil Penalties to those who do not respond.

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.

## 2. Recruitment/Restructure

As previously reported one of the major impacts of this Bill will be the necessity to recruit staff in order for the new powers and legislative changes to be implemented timeously.

I asked for the Board's permission to review the current structure and report back to this Board meeting with my recommendations.

As I had stated in my February report and highlighted as a real risk within the Corporate Risk Register, the recruitment and retention of staff has now become a serious issue. In addition, our Principal Administrative Officer (PAO) has retired at the end of March and despite advertising and interviewing, a suitable replacement has not been found. This has also necessarily influenced the review of the organisation to include the electoral and administrative sections.

Given the recent lack of success in recruitment I am seeking the Board's approval to allow me to use my delegated powers, quoted below, to restructure as I see necessary, taking account of the fact of the difficulties in recruitment and retention of staff. I will do this in consultation with both the Clerk and the Treasurer to the Board ensuring I work within budget, within the Job Evaluation Scheme and with Union approval as appropriate.

### **POWERS/FUNCTIONS DELEGATED OR RECOGNISED**

*The delegations to the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer shall also be delegations to the Assistant Assessors and Electoral Registration Officers but only in those circumstances where the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer is not available to exercise any of these delegations.*

*The **Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer** is empowered or is recognised by the Joint Board as enjoying the authority:-*

- (1) to deploy resources as he/she thinks fit for the best execution of functions under his/her management subject to the Joint Board's Financial Regulations and subject to there being appropriate provision in the Joint Board's budget.*

This course of action allows me the flexibility to address the vacancies and required re modelling of the existing structure in a fluid manner which results in an organisation that can deliver the new statutory requirements.

### **3. IT Valuation System**

As previously discussed a new IT valuation system is in the process of being procured. The procurement exercise has been affected by the Covid-19 lockdown, however, work is now resumed on this and procurement is still on track to be finalised by late summer.

### **4. Internal Barclay Project Group**

Given the changes to current working practices which will be required to deliver these recommendations an internal working group has been established. This group will now meet on a regular basis.

Training and a plan for delivery of this new legislation will be a top priority over the coming months.

### **5. Recommendations**

- i. The Board approves this report and allows the Assessor to reorganise the structure, as already delegated, ensuring financial implications are within both the core budget and Barclay funding.

Kate Crawford  
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18<sup>th</sup> May 2020

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