

Report

Report to: Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board

Date of Meeting: 1 June 2020

Report by: Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

Subject: Progress Update

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- Provide an overview of the service to members
- Outline current issues and service priorities
- ♦ Provide an update on performance
- Highlight issues affecting the future direction of the Joint Board

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1. The Board is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-
 - (1) that the content of the report be noted.

3. Service Overview and Priorities

3.1. Electoral Registration

3.1.1 Annual Canvass Reform

Preparations for the annual canvass reform continue, with testing having been conducted successfully of the data matching element of canvass reform, using both national testing data and local data. Software developments are currently being undertaken by Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board's (LVJB) electoral registration software supplier to facilitate the changes.

3.1.2 Individual Electoral Registration (IER)

The bid for additional funding made to the Cabinet Office in relation to the work undertaken in connection with IER during 2019 was accepted and arrangements made for the monies to be transferred to LVJB.

3.1.3 Extension to Electoral Registration Franchise

The extension of the electoral franchise to foreign nationals and certain prisoners, the latter extension to the electoral franchise coming into force on 1 April 2020, continue to be discussed by Scottish Assessors' Association representatives and the Scottish Government in respect of developing processes which best assist with managing these specific changes to electoral registration.

3.1.4 Elections Held Since Last Board Meeting

Since the last meeting of the Board, a Local Government by-election was called for Ward 14 Thorniewood, North Lanarkshire on 7 May 2020. Due to the coronavirus pandemic the by-election was postponed until 19 November 2020.

3.2. Non-Domestic Valuation

A summary of information in this area can be found in Appendices 1.1 to 1.5.

3.2.1 Changes to the 2017 Valuation Roll (Running Roll)

These are highlighted in Appendices 1.1 and 1.2 for the period 1 April 2020 to 1 May 2020.

3.2.2 2005 Valuation Roll Appeals (Revaluation and Running Roll)

A summary of the position with 2005 Revaluation and Running Roll appeals is contained in Appendix 1.3.

3.2.3 2010 Valuation Roll Appeals (Revaluation and Running Roll)

A summary of the position with 2010 Revaluation and Running Roll appeals is contained in Appendix 1.4.

3.2.4 2017 Valuation Roll Appeals (Revaluation and Running Roll)

A summary of the position with regards to 2017 Revaluation and Running Roll appeals is contained in Appendix 1.5. Table 2 excludes the voluminous levels of appeals recently received in connection with the coronavirus pandemic.

3.3. Council Tax

A summary of information in this area can be found in Appendices 2.1 to 2.4.

3.3.1 **New Houses**

A summary of the position for the period 1 April 2020 to 1 May 2020 is contained at Appendix 2.2.

3.3.2 **Proposals and Appeals**

Appendices 2.3 and 2.4 contain information on Council Tax proposals and appeals. In the absence of valuation appeal committee hearings (please refer section 5.4), the number of proposals and appeals outstanding is now increasing.

4. Staffing

4.1. Since the last Board meeting, following a successful recruitment and selection process, two additional Divisional Valuers have now been recruited. This recruitment exercise is in preparation for the anticipated increase in workload as a result of the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Act 2020, and formed part of the funding bid to the Scotlish Government in relation to that workload.

One of the two successful applicants was employed as a Valuer within the organisation, whilst the other is an external candidate from another Assessor's office.

4.2. Staff absence levels for the last year are summarised in Appendix 3.0.

5. Other Matters

5.1. Complaints Received and Dealt with Since Last Progress Update Report

There have been no complaints received since the last meeting of the Board.

5.2. Complaints to the Ombudsman

One complaint proceeded to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) during the year 2019/2020 which related to a Council Tax issue. Following a review of the complaint, the SPSO decided, as the Assessor's response was considered reasonable, not to take the complaint forward.

5.3. Barclay Review Implementation

The Non-Domestic Rates Reform Bill received Royal Assent on 11 March and became the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Act 2020. The Act can be found at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2020/4/enacted.

A summary of the principal sections of the Act which affect matters relating to the Valuation Roll are:-

- Section 2 Amends the definition of "year of revaluation" such that, after 2022, revaluations will be carried out every three years, rather than every five years.
- Section 3 Inserts a new section into the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975.
 The section requires an Assessor to include a mark in appropriate entries in the
 Valuation Roll to show that it relates to newly built lands and heritages, or to
 improved lands and heritages. The local authority will be able to use this mark to
 identify properties which may be eligible for business growth accelerator relief.
- Section 5 Amends Section 19 of the Local Government (Financial Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1963 to require that certain subjects contained within parks should be entered in the Valuation Roll. The subjects to be entered are those which are occupied by a person or body other than a local authority or the Crown, or where persons may be required to pay for access to facilities or for goods or services.
- Section 6 Makes provision for Ministers to make regulations which will give a local authority power to determine, in particular circumstances, whether subjects fall to be considered as domestic subjects. It is anticipated that this power will enable local authorities to exercise some discretion to take into account particular adverse circumstances (e.g. cancellation of a ferry service or a blockage of a major arterial route) once the Barclay recommendation that self-catering units should only be entered in the Valuation Roll if they have achieve actual lettings of 70 days is implemented.
- Section 7 Directs Assessors to enter any (pre-) agreed value into the Valuation Roll.
- Section 8 Requires that Assessors make up a draft Valuation Roll and send a draft Valuation Notice to interested parties prior to making up a Revaluation.
- Section 9 Amends section 3 of the 1975 Act to allow Ministers to prescribe that Assessors must give ratepayers additional information at Revaluation.
- Section 10 Makes significant changes to the appeal arrangements enabling a
 "proposal" to be made to the Assessor in the first instance. Where no agreement is
 reached as to what should be done about a proposal, an appeal may be submitted to
 the Valuation Appeal Committee. Whilst this section sets out the basic framework,
 much of the detail of the procedure (including whether any fee may be charged for
 making a proposal or an appeal) will be contained within secondary legislation. It is

anticipated that the Scottish Government will undertake a consultation exercise on the format of those Regulations.

- Section 13 Amends the definition of Material Change of Circumstances to exclude a change in the rent of the lands and heritages or any change in the levels of valuations or values generally.
- Section 16 Empowers Minsters to provide for rating relief to be granted to certain Specialist Music Schools. Ministers may also provide that parts of schools used as a Specialist Music School are to be separately entered in the Valuation Roll.
- Section 22 Allows for Ministers to regulate for allowing or requiring notices to be made by electronic means.
- Section 26 Gives powers for Assessors to issue "Assessors' Information Notices" requiring the return of information which the Assessor may reasonably require for the purposes of exercising his/her functions in relation to non-domestic rates in respect of the lands and heritages set out in the notice. Information may be requested from the Proprietor, Tenant or Occupier or any person who the Assessor thinks has the information.
- Section 30 provides for civil penalties to be issued for failure to return requested information within certain time periods.

It should be noted that, of the above, only the sections 26 and 30 relating to Assessors' information gathering powers came into force on the day after the Bill received Royal Assent. Section 13 was brought into force with effect from 2 April 2020. The other sections of the Act will be brought into force at a future date.

5.4. Coronavirus Pandemic

LVJB's Business Continuity/Emergency Planning (BC/EP) team met daily in the run up to the eventual UK and Scottish Government's announcement on a country wide lockdown. The BC/EP meetings focused on, amongst other things, the welfare of staff (there have been no reported cases of Covid-19 with any staff to date) and enabling homeworking in order that statutory undertakings could continue to be carried out. Arrangements are in place to deal with all correspondence, both electronic and by post, and the majority of staff have full access to IT systems. The following is a summary of our organisation's progress in respect of key business undertakings:

- The electoral registers continue to be maintained and monthly updates are produced as normal. Invitation to Register forms continue to be issued, as appropriate, although there is a current halt on any follow-up door to door visits. Preparations continue in respect of planning for the reformed annual canvass of electors, which is due to commence 1 August 2020.
- The Valuation List for Council Tax continues to be maintained, including any band increases as a result of dwellings being materially altered and then subsequently sold. The activity in this area will reduce once the sales data from Registers of Scotland run down given the current pause in activity in housebuilding. Proposals and appeals to alter the Valuation List continue to be dealt with, where possible, however there are no scheduled valuation appeal hearings which will take place up until at least the end of June, following the Lanarkshire Valuation Appeal Panel, understandably, cancelling non-domestic hearings which had already been cited for the months of April, May and June.

• The Valuation Roll for non-domestic rating continues to be maintained, however, activity in this area is minimal. Appeals continue to be dealt with, where possible. Staff are dealing with an upsurge in correspondence in relation to Valuation Roll entries, in particular in respect of the new grant legislation put in place by government. Over 3,000 appeals have been received against valuation roll entries as a result of the coronavirus pandemic which are still to be logged within LVJB's systems. This spike in appeals is likely to put a significant strain on resources and dialogue is underway with the Scottish Assessors' Association, the Scottish Government, rating agents and representatives of the Valuation Appeal Panels to consider how best this is managed going forward.

A risk assessment is currently being undertaken in respect of a return to the workplace for staff when circumstances permit. The assessment will include for a rotation system of staff to homework to ensure compliance with social distancing measures, which are likely to continue for some time.

6. Employee Implications

6.1. See 4 above.

7. Financial Implications

7.1. None.

8. Other Implications

8.1. There are no implications for risk or sustainability in terms of the information contained in this report.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.
- 9.2 There is no requirement for consultation in respect of this report.

10. Privacy Impact Assessment

10.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

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14 May 2020

Previous References

Progress Update Report for Board meeting of 2 March 2020.

List of Background Papers

None.

Contact for Further Information

If you require further information, please contact:-Gary Bennett, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

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Alterations made to the Valuation Roll (including appeal adjustments) between 01/04/2020 and 01/05/2020

	AS AT 01/04/20		ADDED		DELETED		ALTERED		AS AT 01/05/2020	
Area	SUBJECTS	RV	SUBJECTS	RV	SUBJECTS	RV	SUBJECTS	RV	SUBJECTS	RV
North Lanarkshire	10,338	294,259,225	0	0	1	1,600	6	-105,800	10,337	294,151,825
South Lanarkshire	10,670	751,970,325	0	0	0	0	1	-385,000	10,670	751,585,325
LVJB total	21,008	£1,046,229,550	0	£0	1	£1,600	7	-£490,800	21,007	£1,045,737,150



Summary of time taken to make alterations (excluding appeal adjustments) to the Valuation Roll

Period: 1 April 2020 to 1 May 2020

Area					altered 3 to 6		
	Total altered	altered <	altered < 3 months		onths	altered > 6 months	
	No.	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
North Lanarkshire	1	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
South Lanarkshire	2	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%
LVJB totals	3	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%



Valuation Roll Appeals: Revaluation and Running Roll 2005

1. Revaluation Appeals

Area	Appeals received since 2005 Valuation Roll	Appeals resolved as at 1 May 2020	Appeals heard but awaiting stated case for appeal to Lands Valuation Appeal Court	Rateable Value of Appeals in process of appeal to LVAC	Appeals outstanding awaiting determination of Lands Tribunal for Scotland	Rateable Value of Outstanding Appeals awaiting determination of LT	Appeals Outstanding as at 1 May 2020
North Lanarkshire	3,921	3,917	0	£0	4	£85,250	4
South Lanarkshire	3,148	3,146	0	£0	2	£82,400	2
LVJB total	7,069	7,063	0	£0	6	£167,650	6

2. Running Roll Appeals

Area	Appeals received since 2005 Valuation Roll	Appeals resolved as at 1 May 2020	Appeals heard but awaiting stated case for appeal to Lands Valuation Appeal Court	Rateable Value of Appeals in process of appeal to LVAC	Appeals outstanding awaiting determination of Lands Tribunal for Scotland	Rateable Value of Outstanding Appeals awaiting determination of LT	Appeals Outstanding as at 1 May 2020
North Lanarkshire	2,023	2,022	0	£0	1	£36,500	1
South Lanarkshire	1,695	1,693	0	£0	2	£90,050	2
LVJB total	3,718	3,715	0	£0	3	£126,550	3



Valuation Roll Appeals: Revaluation and Running Roll 2010

1. Revaluation Appeals

Area	Appeals received since 2010 Valuation Roll	Appeals resolved as at 1 May 2020	Appeals heard but awaiting stated case for appeal to Lands Valuation Appeal Court	Rateable Value of Appeals in process of appeal to LVAC	Appeals outstanding awaiting determination of Lands Tribunal for Scotland	Rateable Value of Outstanding Appeals awaiting determination of LT	Appeals Outstanding as at 1 May 2020
North Lanarkshire	4,460	4,458	0	£0	2	£18,600	2
South Lanarkshire	3,103	3,100	0	£0	3	£100,300	3
LVJB total	7,563	7,558	0	£0	5	£118,900	5

2. Running Roll Appeals

Area	Appeals	Appeals	Appeals heard but	Rateable Value	Appeals outstanding	Rateable Value of	Appeals
Alea	received since 2010 Valuation Roll	resolved as at 1 May 2020	awaiting stated case for appeal to Lands Valuation Appeal Court	of Appeals in process of appeal to LVAC	awaiting determination of Lands Tribunal for Scotland	Outstanding Appeals awaiting determination of LT	Outstanding as at 1 May 2020
North Lanarkshire	5,480	5,478	0	£0	2	£28,900	2
South Lanarkshire	6,727	6,724	0	£0	3	£100,000	3
LVJB total	12,207	12,202	0	£0	5	£128,900	5



Valuation Roll Appeals: Revaluation and Running Roll 2017

1. Revaluation Appeals

LVJB total	9,281	8,242	0	£0	0	£0	1,039
South Lanarkshire	4,553	3,921	0	£0	0	£0	632
North Lanarkshire	4,728	4,321	0	£0	0	£0	407
Area	Appeals received since 2017 Valuation Roll	Appeals resolved as at 1 May 2020	Appeals heard but awaiting stated case for appeal to Lands Valuation Appeal Court	Rateable Value of Appeals in process of appeal to LVAC	Appeals outstanding awaiting determination of Lands Tribunal for Scotland	Rateable Value of Outstanding Appeals awaiting determination of LT	Appeals Outstanding as at 1 May 2020

2. Running Roll Appeals

Area	Appeals received since 2017 Valuation Roll	Appeals resolved as at 1 May 2020	Appeals heard but awaiting stated case for appeal to Lands Valuation Appeal Court	Rateable Value of Appeals in process of appeal to LVAC	Appeals outstanding awaiting determination of Lands Tribunal for Scotland	Rateable Value of Outstanding Appeals awaiting determination of LT	Appeals Outstanding as at 1 May 2020
North Lanarkshire	487	311	0	£0	0	£0	176
South Lanarkshire	500	217	0	£0	0	£0	283
LVJB total	987	528	0	£0	0	£0	459



Council Tax Subjects as at 01/05/2020

	ENTRI	ES AS AT	01/04/20		ADDITION	S	DE	LETION	S	CURR	ENT EN	TRIES	BAND	'D' EQUIV	ALENT
BAND	NORTH	SOUTH	TOTAL	NORTH	SOUTH	TOTAL	NORTH	SOUTH	TOTAL	NORTH	SOUTH	TOTAL	NORTH	SOUTH	TOTAL
Α	53191	36128	89319	2	0	2	3	2	5	53190	36126	89316	35462	24085	59547
В	37641	30533	68174	2	0	2	0	0	0	37643	30533	68176	29279	23749	53028
С	19686	26214	45900	15	0	15	0	0	0	19701	26214	45915	17512	23302	40814
D	17233	21140	38373	23	4	27	0	0	0	17256	21144	38400	17256	21144	38400
E	16808	19823	36631	21	10	31	1	0	1	16828	19833	36661	22110	26059	48169
F	9612	12623	22235	32	13	45	1	0	1	9643	12636	22279	15670	20534	36204
G	3051	6539	9590	3	1	4	1	0	1	3053	6540	9593	5979	12807	18786
Н	163	566	729	0	1	1	0	0	0	163	567	730	399	1389	1788
TOTAL	157385	153566	310951	98	29	127	6	2	8	157477	153593	311070	143667	153069	296736
'D' EQIV.	143550	153027	296577	125	43	167	7	1	8	143668	153068	296736			

JOINT BOARD TOTALS

		01/04/2020	01/05/2020	Increase
TOTAL CHARGEABLE ENTRIES	North	157385	157477	92
	South	153566	153593	27
	Total	310951	311070	119
BAND 'D' EQUIVALENT	North	143550	143667	117
	South	153027	153069	42
	Total	296577	296736	159



Summary of time taken to enter new houses in Valuation (Council Tax) List

Period : 1 April 2020 to 1 May 2020

Area	Total added	added < 3	months	added 3 to 6	added 3 to 6 months		months
North Lanarkshire	98	95	96.94%	3	3.06%	0	0%
South Lanarkshire	29	29	100%	0	0%	0	0%
LVJB totals	127	124	97.64%	3	2.36%	0	0%



Summary of Council Tax Proposals/Appeals received and dealt with as at 1 May 2020

Valid	Proposals/Appeals outstanding @ 1 April 2020	Proposals/Appeals received since 1 April 2020	Proposals/Appeals completely resolved 01/04/2020 to 01/05/2020	Outstanding balance
North Lanarkshire	14	1	0	15
South Lanarkshire	22	0	1	21
LVJB total	36	1	1	36

Invalid	Proposals/Appeals outstanding @ 1 April 2020	Proposals/Appeals received since 1 April 2020	Proposals/Appeals completely resolved 01/04/2020 to 01/05/2020	Outstanding balance
North Lanarkshire	49	0	0	49
South Lanarkshire	40	4	0	44
LVJB total	89	4	0	93

Combined	Proposals/Appeals outstanding @ 1 April 2020	Proposals/Appeals received since 1 April 2020	Proposals/Appeals completely resolved 01/04/2020 to 01/05/2020	Outstanding balance
North Lanarkshire	63	1	0	64
South Lanarkshire	62	4	1	65
LVJB total	125	5	1	129



Summary of resolution of Council Tax Proposals/Appeals Between 1 April 2020 and 1 May 2020

Valid	Proposals/Appeals completely resolved 01/04/2020 to 01/05/2020	Number withdrawn	Number abandoned	Number adjusted	Number dismissed by VAC	Number adjusted by VAC
North Lanarkshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Lanarkshire	1	1	0	0	0	0
LVJB total	1	1	0	0	0	0

Invalid	Proposals/Appeals completely resolved 01/04/2020 to 01/05/2020	Number withdrawn	Number abandoned	Number adjusted	Number dismissed by VAC	Number adjusted by VAC
North Lanarkshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Lanarkshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
LVJB total	0	0	0	0	0	0

Combined	Proposals/Appeals completely resolved 01/04/2020 to 01/05/2020	Number withdrawn	Number abandoned	Number adjusted	Number dismissed by VAC	Number adjusted by VAC
North Lanarkshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Lanarkshire	1	1	0	0	0	0
LVJB total	1	1	0	0	0	0



ABSENCE MANAGEMENT STATISTICS

Month	Self C	ertified	Medically	Certified	Unautho Abser		Total		Total				
	No of Days	%	No of Days	%	No of Days	%	No of Days	Work Days Avail	%	Month	No of Days	Work days available	%
May 2019	15	1.2%	46	3.7%	Nil	0.0%	61	1259	4.8%	May 2018	42	1364	4.8%
June 2019	13	1.2%	24	2.2%	Nil	0.0%	37	1071	3.5%	June 2018	15	1230	1.2%
July 2019	27	2.3%	37	3.1%	Nil	0.0%	64	1186	5.4%	July 2018	10	1277	0.8%
August 2019	5	0.4%	30	2.5%	Nil	0.0%	35	1181	3.0%	August 2018	27	1323	2.0%
September 2019	5	0.4%	21	1.7%	Nil	0.0%	26	1207	2.2%	September 2018	44	1163	3.8%
October 2019	20	1.5%	59	4.4%	Nil	0.0%	79	1329	5.9%	October 2018	28	1337	2.1%
November 2019	21	1.7%	68	5.5%	Nil	0.0%	89	1228	7.2%	November 2018	59	1257	4.7%
December 2019	23	1.8%	55	4.3%	Nil	0.0%	78	1290	6.0%	December 2018	40	1261	3.2%
January 2020	11	0.8%	46	3.4%	Nil	0.0%	57	1347	4.2%	January 2019	41	1392	2.9%
February 2020	3	0.2%	40	3.3%	Nil	0.0%	43	1213	3.5%	February 2019	24	1200	2.0%
March 2020	37	2.7%	71	5,2%	Nil	0.0%	108	1367	7.9%	March 2019	73	1248	5.8%
April 2020	0	0.0%	66	4.9%	Nil	0.0%	66	1355	4.9%	April 2019	48	1277	3.8%
Averages for 12 months	15	1.2%	47	3.7%	Nil	0.0%	62	1253	4.9%		38	1277	2.9%