

## **LANARKSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD**

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 5, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 29 November 2010

**Convener:**

Councillor Bill Shields, North Lanarkshire Council

**Councillors Present:**

**South Lanarkshire Council**

John Cairney (Depute), Hugh Dunsmuir, Beith Forrest, Jim McGuigan, Alex McInnes, Jim Wardhaugh

**Councillors' Apologies:**

**North Lanarkshire Council**

Robert Burrows, Bob Chadha, Kaye Harmon, James McGuigan, Gordon Stewart, Brian Wallace

**South Lanarkshire Council**

Lesley McDonald, Alice Marie Mitchell, Patrick Ross-Taylor

**Attending:**

**Assessor and Electoral Registration Service**

E Duffy, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; G Bennett, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

**Clerk's Office**

A Strang, Clerk; J Burke, Administration Assistant; P MacRae, Administration Officer, South Lanarkshire Council

**Treasurer's Office**

P Manning, Head of Finance, South Lanarkshire Council

### **1 Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

### **2 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 30 August 2010 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

**The Board decided:** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

### **3 Certified Annual Accounts 2010/2011 and External Auditor's Report to the Board**

A report dated 16 November 2010 by the Treasurer was submitted on the certified Annual Accounts for the Board for 2009/2010. The accounts had been audited by the external auditor, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and had received a clear audit certificate.

A copy of the external auditor's Annual Report to Members and the Controller of Audit was attached as an appendix to the Treasurer's Report.

The accounts would be available for inspection in:-

- ◆ Finance Services' offices in Almada Street, Hamilton
- ◆ the offices of the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, North Stand, Cadzow Avenue, Hamilton
- ◆ public libraries
- ◆ Q and A offices

**The Board decided:** that the clear audit certificate awarded by external audit be noted and the final accounts for the Board for 2009/2010 be adopted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 7 December 2009 (Paragraph 3)]*

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#### **4 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2010/2011 - Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board**

A report dated 16 November 2010 by the Treasurer was submitted comparing the Board's actual expenditure at 29 October 2010 against the budgeted expenditure for 2010/2011 and providing a forecast for the year to 31 March 2011.

**The Board decided:** that the underspend on the Board's revenue budget of £0.073 million at 29 October, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, and the forecast to 31 March 2011 of an underspend of £0.081 million be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 30 August 2010 (Paragraph 4)]*

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#### **5 Revenue Budget 2011/2012 - Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board**

A report dated 5 November 2010 by the Treasurer was submitted on the draft revenue budget for Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board for 2011/2012. The total proposed budget amounted to £3.735 million. This resulted in a funding shortfall of £0.112 million which included a contribution from reserves of £0.050 million.

The following savings were proposed to meet the funding shortfall:-

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| ◆ non-filling of existing vacancies and turnover savings | £0.073 million |
| ◆ reduction in property costs                            | £0.021 million |
| ◆ reduction in other costs                               | £0.018 million |

If implemented, those savings would allow the Board to manage the reduction in requisition payments of £0.112 million and enable presentation of a balanced budget for 2011/2012. The overall budget would be apportioned to both North and South Lanarkshire Councils at 50% each.

Prior to the Board's consideration of the budget proposals, the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer:-

- ◆ requested and received clarification on the position of the Head of Finance as it related to the post of Treasurer to the Board
- ◆ made a statement to the Board:-
  - ◆ indicating that he had provided the information required by the Financial Regulations to allow the Treasurer to prepare the report

- ◆ expressing concern that a report which he had prepared on the risks associated with the budget strategy had not been included in the agenda and papers for this meeting
- ◆ advising of the opinion that he had received from Counsel on this matter
- ◆ detailing further measures which he intended to take regarding the matter

The Treasurer's report included a paragraph on the risks associated with the budget strategy.

The Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer then advised the Board of his views on the risks associated with the budget strategy in relation to the following 3 areas of work:-

- ◆ electoral registration
- ◆ non-domestic rating
- ◆ council tax

He advised that the risk register for the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board would be updated and submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

Following discussion, Councillor Shields, seconded by Councillor Cairney, moved that the budget strategy resulting in the sum of £3.735 million for 2011/2012 be approved. Councillor Wardhaugh, seconded by Councillor McGuigan, moved as an amendment that consideration of the budget strategy be continued to the next meeting of the Board.

On a vote being taken by a show of hands, 2 members voted for the amendment and 5 for the motion which was declared carried.

**The Board decided:**

- (1) that the risks associated with the budget strategy be noted; and
- (2) that the budget strategy resulting in the sum of £3.735 million for 2011/2012 for the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board be approved.

## **6 Data Protection Policy**

A report dated 11 November 2010 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was submitted on a Data Protection Policy for the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board and the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.

At its meeting on 1 June 2009, the Board had considered a report on its information management arrangements. One of the actions identified within the report was the preparation of a Data Protection Policy document in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The policy document was attached as an appendix to the report.

**The Board decided:** that the Data Protection Policy for the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board and the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer be approved.

*[Reference: Minutes of 1 June 2009 (Paragraph 8)]*

## **7 Revaluation 2010 - Appeals**

A report dated 11 November 2010 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was submitted on appeals received as a result of the 2010 revaluation of non-domestic subjects throughout Lanarkshire.

The 2010 revaluation had involved revaluating over 18,000 non-domestic subjects. Following this exercise, a total of 7,346 appeals had been received.

Details were given on the number and categories of subjects appealed in connection with the 2010 revaluation across all wards in Lanarkshire. Further, detailed information on subject types appealed in the Scottish Government categories on a ward by ward basis was provided in the appendix to the report.

The revaluation of large electricity subjects had contributed significantly to the increase in value of the appeals.

**The Board decided:** that the report be noted.

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## **8 Progress Report**

A report dated 9 November 2010 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was submitted on:-

- ◆ an overview of the Service
- ◆ current issues and Service priorities
- ◆ an update on performance
- ◆ issues affecting the future direction of the Joint Board

**The Board decided:** that the report be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 30 August 2010 (Paragraph 7)]*

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## **9 Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.