

LANARKSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 5, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 5 December 2011

Convener:

Councillor Bill Shields, North Lanarkshire Council

Councillors Present:**North Lanarkshire Council**

Kaye Harmon, John Taggart, Brian Wallace

South Lanarkshire Council

John Cairney (Depute), Hugh Dunsmuir, Lesley McDonald, Jim McGuigan, Patrick Ross-Taylor, George Sutherland

Councillors' Apologies:**North Lanarkshire Council**

Bob Chadha, James McGuigan, Peter Nolan, Gordon Stewart

South Lanarkshire Council

Alex McInnes, Alice Marie Mitchell, Jim Wardhaugh

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; K McVeigh, Head of Personnel Services, South Lanarkshire Council

Treasurer's Office

P Manning, Treasurer

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 5 September 2011 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 9 November 2011 by the Treasurer was submitted on the certified annual accounts for the Board for 2010/2011. 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:

- (1) that the clear audit certificate awarded by the External Auditor be noted; and
- (2) that that the final accounts for the Board for 2010/2011 be adopted

[Reference: Minutes of 29 November 2010 (Paragraph 3)]

4 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2011/2012 - Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board

A report dated 9 November 2011 by the Treasurer was submitted comparing the Board's actual expenditure at 28 October 2011 against the budgeted expenditure for 2011/2012 and providing a forecast for the year to 31 March 2012.

The Board decided: that the underspend on the Board's revenue budget of £0.001 million at 28 October 2011, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, and the forecast to 31 March 2012 of an underspend of £0.029 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 5 September 2011 (Paragraph 4)]

5 Revenue Budget 2012/2013 - Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board

A report dated 9 November 2011 by the Treasurer was submitted on the draft revenue budget for Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board for 2012/2013. The total proposed budget amounted to £3.778 million. This resulted in a funding shortfall of £0.153 million.

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

- ◆ reduction in employee costs £0.051 million
- ◆ reduction in transport costs £0.010 million

The remaining shortfall of £0.092 million would be met from reserves. If implemented, those savings would enable presentation of a balanced budget for 2012/2013. The overall budget would be apportioned to both North and South Lanarkshire Councils at 50% each.

The Board decided: that the budget strategy resulting in the sum of £3.778 million for 2012/2013 for the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 29 November 2010 (Paragraph 5)]

6 Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board - 2011 to 2015 Service Plan Update

A report dated 17 November 2011 by the Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was submitted on progress made, at December 2011, on the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board Service Plan for the period 2011 to 2015.

Details were given on progress in:-

- ◆ key tasks undertaken by the Service
- ◆ specific areas of the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer's duties

The Board decided: that the progress on the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board Service Plan 2011 to 2015 be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 6 June 2011 (Paragraph 5)]

7 Progress Report

A report dated 16 November 2011 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 5 September 2011 (Paragraph 7)]

8 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

Convener's Remarks

The Convener, on behalf of the members of the Board, thanked Archibald Strang, Clerk, for the contribution which he had made to the work of the Joint Board and wished him a long and happy retirement. Mr Strang acknowledged the dedication of the officers involved in the work of the Joint Board and extended thanks and best wishes for the future to the members of the Board.

The Convener also extended the compliments of the season to all present.

9 Exclusion of Press and Public

The Board decided: that, in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it was likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information in terms of Paragraph(s) 1 and 6 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act.

10 Senior Management Arrangements

A report dated 10 November 2011 by the Clerk was submitted on options available to the Board in relation to the Service's senior management arrangements.

The Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer's current contract was due to expire on 31 March 2012, when he would take early retirement on the grounds of efficiency. As a result, the Board had an opportunity to consider future management arrangements which would best suit the organisation and the current circumstances.

Details were given on the issues, benefits, costs and risks associated with the following 3 options:-

- ◆ the appointment of a new Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer on a fixed term contract
- ◆ restructure and merging of the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer and Depute posts and matching the current Depute to the new merged post on a fixed term contract
- ◆ the appointment of an Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer on a permanent basis

It was considered that the second option represented best value for the organisation as it would result in an ongoing annual saving of £110,000 and allow the Board to retain the flexibility offered by a fixed term contract in the current economic climate.

If accepted, the second option would result in the deletion of the post of Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer. The responsibilities of that post could be delegated, as appropriate, to other officers.

The Board decided:

- (1) that the posts of Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer and Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer be combined, with the current Depute being matched to the merged post;
- (2) that suitable arrangements be put in place to provide the required Depute function for both roles; and
- (3) that the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer appointment remain on a 5 year fixed term basis.