

LANARKSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Minutes of meeting held in Committee Room 5, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 6 June 2011

Chair:

Councillor Bill Shields

Councillors Present:**North Lanarkshire Council**

Bob Chadha, Kaye Harmon, James McGuigan, Peter Nolan, Gordon Stewart

South Lanarkshire Council

John Cairney (Depute), Hugh Dunsmuir, Bobby Lawson, Lesley McDonald, Alex McInnes, Alice Marie Mitchell, Patrick Ross-Taylor, Jim Wardhaugh

Councillors' Apologies:**North Lanarkshire Council**

Clare Adamson, Robert Burrows, Brian Wallace

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; P MacRae, Administration Officer, South Lanarkshire Council

Treasurer's Office

J Allan, Risk and Audit Manager; 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 7 March 2011 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board - Revenue Budget Monitoring 2010/2011

A report dated 13 May 2011 by the Treasurer was submitted comparing the Board's actual expenditure at 31 March 2011 against budgeted expenditure for 2010/2011.

As at 31 March 2011, the operational variance from the annual budget was an underspend of £0.120 million. The budgeted expenditure for the Board relied on a contribution from reserves of £0.050 million, therefore, the net movement in Reserves would be an increase of £0.070 million.

The 2010/2011 Annual Report and Accounts were currently being prepared and would be submitted for external audit by the statutory deadline of 30 June 2011. It was anticipated that the unaudited Annual Report and Accounts would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board, with the Audit Report being submitted to the meeting in December.

The Board decided:

- (1) that the operational underspend of £0.120 million on the Board's revenue budget, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted and;
- (2) that the net transfer to Reserves of £0.070 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 1 March 2010 (Paragraph 3)]

4 Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board - Internal Audit Annual Report 2010/2011

A report dated 30 April 2011 by the Treasurer was submitted on Internal Audit services delivered to the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board by South Lanarkshire Council for the 2010/2011 financial year.

The Internal Audit Annual Report in relation to the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board covered:-

- ◆ current performance
- ◆ delivery of audit actions
- ◆ audit findings
- ◆ the opinion of Internal Audit on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Board's internal control systems.

The opinion of Internal Audit for the year 2010/2011 was that a good level of assurance could be placed on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Board's internal control systems.

The Board decided:

- (1) that the Internal Audit report for 2010/2011 for the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board be noted; and
- (2) that the opinion of Internal Audit be considered in the preparation of the Statement of Internal Control for the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 June 2010 (Paragraph 5)]

5 Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board 2011 to 2015 Service Plan

A report dated 11 May 2011 by the Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was submitted on the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board Service Plan for the period 2011 to 2015. The Service Plan, which was attached as an appendix to the report, set out:-

- ◆ key business areas identified for the LVJB for the period 2011 to 2015
- ◆ key tasks to ensure the most effective and efficient delivery of services to service users

The Board decided: that the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board Service Plan for the period 2011 to 2015 be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 2 June 2008 (Paragraph 4)]

6 Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board 2008 to 2011 Service Plan - Outcomes

A report dated 11 May 2011 by the Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was submitted on the outcomes linked to the key objectives set out in the Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board Service Plan for the period 2008 to 2011.

The outcomes report, attached as an appendix to the report, provided a brief summary of the outcomes linked to the core objectives contained in the Service Plan for the period 2008 to 2011.

Details were also given on the:-

- ◆ key undertakings related to each objective
- ◆ key achievements in each area of business, namely Electoral Registration, Non-Domestic Valuation and Council Tax.

The Board decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 2 June 2008 (Paragraph 4)]

7 Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board Public Performance Report 2010/2011

A report dated 11 May 2011 by the Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was submitted on the Board's Public Performance Report for the financial year 2010/2011. The Public Performance Report, attached as an appendix to the report, outlined the Board's performance in its core service delivery areas for the period 2010/2011.

The Board decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 June 2010 (Paragraph 8)]

8 Internal Audit Report I214918 - Budget Monitoring and Reporting

A report dated 20 April 2011 by the Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was submitted on South Lanarkshire Council's Internal Audit report on Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board's budget monitoring and reporting procedures.

The aim of the audit had been to ensure that accounting processes and practices within LVJB were robust. The audit examined:-

- ◆ the overall accounting process
- ◆ accounting policies and practices
- ◆ financial information systems
- ◆ budgetary control
- ◆ coding structure
- ◆ security of data

Following the audit, it was confirmed that there was an adequate level of assurance that the accounting processes and practices in operation within LVJB were robust. However, as the current software application employed by LVJB for budget monitoring and reporting was not supported, it was highlighted that an alternative software solution would be required.

The Internal Audit report, including a detailed action plan based on the findings of Internal Audit, was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Board decided: that the report be noted.

9 Monitoring of Complaints - 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011

A report dated 11 May 2011 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was submitted on complaints received by the Joint Board in the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.

A total of 11 complaints had been received in the period 1 April 2010 to March 2011. Of those, 6 related to Council Tax, 3 to electoral registration and 2 to non-domestic rating. 4 of the complaints had been classed as justified and 7 as unjustified. Details were given on the action taken, in each instance, as a result of the justified complaints.

In response to a question about a change in naming procedures affecting the electoral register, the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer advised that the changes had been implemented to comply with data standards recommended by the Ministry of Justice.

The Board decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 June 2010 (Paragraph 10)]

Councillor McInnes left the meeting during consideration of this item of business

10 Electoral Commission Performance Standards for Electoral Registration Officers - Scottish Comparison

A report dated 3 May 2011 by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was submitted on the performance of the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) for Lanarkshire as measured by the Electoral Commission performance standards and by comparison with other Scottish EROs.

Details were given on performance in the following categories:-

- ◆ achievement of performance standards
- ◆ cost per elector of providing electoral registration service
- ◆ registration rate
- ◆ comparison to peer group of areas with largest electorate

The ERO for Lanarkshire had demonstrated a good level of performance across all categories.

The Board decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 7 March 2011 (Paragraph 6)]

11 Progress Report

A report dated 3 May 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 7 March 2011 (Paragraph 4)]

Councillor Mitchell left the meeting during consideration of this item of business

12 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.