

Report

Report to:	Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board
Date of Meeting:	26 June 2017
Report by:	Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

Subject:	Who We Are and What We Do
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ Present to members of the Joint Board for information, a document entitled Who We Are and What We Do, outlining the main undertakings of the Office of the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Board is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the content of the report is noted.

3. Who we are

3.1. The document provides a brief description of the Valuation Joint Board, the members of the Board, the Assessor and the Electoral Registration Officer. These are contained in section 1 of the document.

4. What we do

4.1 Sections 2 through to 5 of the document highlight the main undertakings in relation to the three core statutory duties of the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, namely;

- ◆ The compilation and maintenance of the Valuation Roll for Lanarkshire
- ◆ The compilation and maintenance of the Valuation List for Lanarkshire
- ◆ The compilation and maintenance of the Electoral Registers for Lanarkshire

5. Employee Implications

5.1 None

6. Financial Implications

6.1 None

7. Other Implications

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

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

8.1 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.

8.2 There is no requirement for consultation in respect of this report.

9. Privacy Impact Assessment

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.

**Gary Bennett BSc MSc AEA (Cert-Scotland) MRICS IRRV (Hons)
Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer**

12 June 2017

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like further information, please contact:-

Gary Bennett, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

Phone: 01698 476078

E-mail: assessor@lanarkshire-vjb.gov.uk



Serving North & South Lanarkshire

***The office of the
Assessor
&
Electoral Registration Officer***

Who we are

&

What we do

LANARKSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

MISSION

As an independent Local Government organisation, Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board's mission is to deliver equitable, customer focussed, professional valuation and electoral services to all stakeholders

VISION

Our vision is to deliver quality, efficient services to all service users, ensuring completeness and accuracy in the work which we undertake

In order that we fulfil our Mission and achieve our Vision we will:-

- Ensure that our services are delivered in accordance with all statutory requirements
- Plan service development and delivery in accordance with the principles of efficient government and continuous improvement
- Undertake customer care surveys to assist us in improving our service delivery
- Recognise our employees as both stakeholders and our most important asset
- Take individual and collective responsibility for the services provided by LVJB
- Encourage innovation and recognise achievement within the organisation
- Monitor and report performance levels to stakeholders
- Integrate Equalities issues into all aspects of our service provision
- Build on our achievements to date



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1.0 Who we are

Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board is a statutory public authority which oversees and scrutinises the offices of the Assessor for Lanarkshire and the Electoral Registration Officer for North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire.

1.1 The Valuation Joint Board

Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board was established by the Valuation Joint Boards (Scotland) Order 1995 to allow for the valuation functions of North Lanarkshire Council and South Lanarkshire Council to be discharged jointly following local government reorganisation in 1996.

1.2 Members of the Board

The Order specified that the Lanarkshire VJB should have 16 members; 8 being from North Lanarkshire Council and 8 from South Lanarkshire Council. The Board also acts as a Joint Committee for the purpose of discharging the electoral registration duties of both authorities.

The Board must appoint a convener and depute convener who cannot be from the same authority and must also appoint a clerk and a treasurer. Acting as a valuation authority the Board must also appoint an Assessor and as a joint electoral committee have appointed the Assessor as the Electoral Registration Officer.

1.3 The Assessor

Since the enactment of the Lands Valuation (Scotland) Act 1854, Assessors have been responsible for the valuation of all heritable properties for local taxation purposes within their respective valuation areas. Assessors are statutory independent officials and are currently appointed under section 27 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 for the purposes of the Valuation Acts. In the case of Lanarkshire the Non-Domestic Rating (Valuation of Utilities) (Scotland) Order 2005 designates the Assessor for Lanarkshire VJB to be responsible for the valuation of all electricity generation, transmission and distribution properties throughout Scotland where such properties are in two or more valuation areas. Although independent the actions of the Assessor are subject to scrutiny through the Board. Additionally, there exists an independent appeals process where values for non domestic subjects and council tax bands may be challenged. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman also looks at complaints of most Scottish public bodies, including those for the Joint Board, as the final stage in handling complaints.

1.4 The Electoral Registration Officer

The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) is also a statutory independent official appointed by the local authority to prepare and maintain the Register of Electors. North and South Lanarkshire have appointed the Assessor as ERO for their area. The actions of the ERO are also subject to appeal to the Sheriff Court.

2.0 What we do

The Valuation Joint Board is essentially the vehicle for carrying out the statutory duties of the Assessor under the body of law known as the Lands Valuation Acts and the statutory duties of the Electoral Registration Officer under the Representation of the People Act and associated legislation.

2.1 Duties of the Assessor under the Lands Valuation Acts

It is the duty of the Assessor to make up a Valuation Roll for his/her valuation area in respect of each year of revaluation. As noted above, for the purposes of certain electricity subjects, the Assessor for Lanarkshire's valuation area extends to the whole of Scotland. The Assessor is also required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to compile and maintain a Valuation List for each of his councils. These lists must show each dwelling which is in the council area and the valuation band applicable to it.

2.2 The Scottish Assessors' Association

The Scottish Assessors' Association (SAA) was instituted in 1975 at the time of local government reorganisation and is the successor body to the Association of Lands Valuation Assessors of Scotland (1957) and earlier bodies extending back to The Association of Lands Valuation Assessors (1886). The SAA continued in being after the 1996 reorganisation of Scottish local government and operates in terms of a formal Constitution.

Although a voluntary organisation, all Assessors and their senior staff are members of the Association. One of the principal functions of the Association is to facilitate a consistency of approach in the administration of the valuation, council tax and electoral registration services. The policies and decisions of the Association have a bearing on how individual Assessors carry out their statutory duties, but each Assessor is an independent official.

The Association has an executive committee containing four Assessors (with each executive member generally holding a particular position on the executive for a period of two years before another Assessor is nominated onto the executive) and works through a series of Committees, chaired by an Assessor, and associated Working Parties, which meet in advance of quarterly plenary sessions which are attended by representatives from all Assessors' offices across Scotland. The SAA liaises with the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) in England and Wales, the Northern Ireland Valuation and Lands Agency (NIVLA) and the Republic of Ireland Valuation Office (RIVO) in matters of common interest. Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board is represented on all of these committees and on the *harmonisation* working groups with colleagues in other parts of the U.K. and Ireland.

Further information, including details of interactive services provided by the SAA, can be found on its Portal at www.saa.gov.uk.

3.0 The Valuation Roll

The Valuation Roll is a public document which contains an entry for all non domestic properties in the Assessor's area except those specifically excluded by law. Each entry in the Roll includes the names of the proprietor, tenant and occupier as appropriate, the Net Annual Value which has been set by the Assessor and the Rateable Value. The Rateable Value is derived from the Net Annual value and as legislation currently stands, for the majority of properties, Rateable Value and Net Annual Value are the same. The Valuation Roll for South Lanarkshire also contains entries for the electricity subjects located throughout Scotland where the Assessor for Lanarkshire is responsible for their valuation. The Valuation Roll entry for any property in Scotland can be checked by using the search facility on the SAA's portal website www.saa.gov.uk . Summary valuations are also available on this site for most shops, offices and industrial properties.

Values are established (usually every five years) at a Revaluation which takes place at the same time throughout Scotland, England and Wales. A Revaluation results in the production of a new Valuation Roll which contains revised values for all non domestic properties in the Assessor's area.

New properties are added to the Roll as they become capable of beneficial occupation and entries for demolished buildings are deleted. Typically, LVJB staff would expect to make over 1,000 such changes to the local valuation roll each year, depending on fluctuating activity in the local property market. The Assessor is required to notify relevant proprietors, tenants and occupiers of changes which he/she makes to the Valuation Roll by issuing a Valuation Notice. All of these interested parties have a right to appeal the valuation set by the Assessor to an independent local valuation appeal committee.

3.1 Valuation Appeal Committee

Most appeals are settled between the Assessor and the ratepayer or appointed agent. However, if a settlement cannot be achieved the appeal is heard by an independent Valuation Appeal Committee. Members are drawn from an Appeal Panel appointed by the Sheriff Principal and are independent of the Assessor, local council, or Valuation Joint Board. Committees are assisted by a Secretary, usually a qualified solicitor (also appointed by the Sheriff) who provides advice on the law and procedure, but who takes no part in the decision making process. Members of the Panel are usually unqualified in valuation or legal matters but are appointed because they are local ratepayers or council tax payers. The proceedings are relatively formal, and witnesses can be called and placed on oath by the Committee Chairman. A Committee usually comprises between 3 and 8 members. Sometimes the Assessor will conduct his/her own case or be represented by a member of staff and at other times he/she will be represented by an Advocate or Counsel. Ratepayers (and Council Tax Payers) are entitled to appear in person to present their own case or can be legally represented. A surveyor, family member or friend can also appear on behalf of the appellant.

The Chairman is responsible for the conduct of the hearing and will give advice and guidance as to the procedure to be followed at any time during the hearing.

3.2 Lands Tribunal for Scotland

In general terms, where a valuation appeal is particularly complex or may set a precedent, the Assessor or ratepayer can ask to have the appeal heard by the Lands Tribunal for Scotland. In such cases the Assessor will usually be represented by an Advocate or Counsel. The Lands Tribunal for Scotland is an independent civil court. It has statutory power to deal with various types of dispute involving land or property including matters of dispute in valuations for rating on non-domestic properties. The circumstances and manner in which reference of an appeal against an entry in the valuation roll may be made to the Lands Tribunal is a matter for regulations made by the Secretary of State. An application for referral to the Lands Tribunal must be made to the Valuation Appeal Committee and include representations in relation to the following matters which provide the grounds on which a referral request may be made, namely that:

- (a) The facts of the case are complex or highly technical;
- (b) The evidence to be given by expert opinion is complex or highly technical;
- (c) The law applicable to the case is uncertain or difficult to apply;
- (d) The law applicable to the case raises a fundamental or general issue likely to be used as a precedent in other cases;
- (e) The subjects relate to more than one valuation area and the valuation is appealed in more than one such area.

3.3 Lands Valuation Appeal Court

A decision of the Valuation Appeal Committee or the Lands Tribunal for Scotland can be appealed to the Lands Valuation Appeal Court. Such an appeal takes the form of a stated case. The case is to be stated to the judges of the Lands Valuation Appeal Court, which is a civil court in Scotland composed of 3 Court of Session judges. The procedure involves LVJB staff preparing transcripts, making representations and observations on draft stated cases, and liaising with Counsel on grounds/answers to grounds of appeal in preparation for the case being heard at the Court of Session in Edinburgh.

4.0 Council Tax

The Assessor is responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the Valuation (Council Tax) List, which places each domestic property ("dwelling") in one of eight valuation bands (Bands A – H).

4.1 The Valuation (Council Tax) List

The Valuation (Council Tax) List is a public document and contains the addresses and Council Tax bands of all domestic properties ("dwellings") in the valuation area. It can be inspected at the Joint Board's office in Hamilton. A Valuation (Council Tax) List entry for any domestic property in Scotland can also be checked by using the search facility on the Scottish Assessors' portal website www.saa.gov.uk.

4.2 Dwellings

In general terms any kind of house or flat will count as a dwelling if it used as such, including second homes. Caravans count as dwellings if they are someone's main home. Certain properties in multiple occupation, where facilities are shared, may count as one or more dwellings depending on the detailed occupation arrangements.

The band reflects the Assessor's opinion of the property's open market value as at 1 April 1991, but taking account of its physical state and its locality as at 1 April 1993 (for new dwellings the date of valuation is still 1 April 1991 but taking account of the current physical state and location of the property) and subject to a number of important statutory assumptions. Assessors base their opinion of value on the actual selling prices of similar properties which sold around the valuation date of 1 April 1991.

Prior to the introduction of Council Tax (and before the Community Charge (Poll Tax)) Assessors were responsible for domestic property rating and maintained data bases of information about houses in their areas. This information included details of accommodation, floor areas, outbuildings, improvements etc as well as actual selling prices recorded in the Register of Sasines (Land Register).

The Assessor is not required to place an actual value on each dwelling but has to demonstrate that its likely sale price would have been within the range of values in the relevant band. Due to the range of values in each band, properties which are not identical in terms of accommodation or size can still be in the same band. Therefore a two or three bedroomed flat can easily be in the same Band as a semi-detached or terraced house.

Many houses will also have been extended and/or modernised since 1993 when Council Tax was introduced. These changes will not necessarily be reflected in their current banding since there are restrictions on when a band can be changed. It is possible, therefore, that bands may appear inconsistent with the current physical circumstances of a group of houses in an area. This is because the bands reflect what the houses were worth in the physical state they were in on 1 April 1993, not how they are today.

4.3 Council Tax Valuation Bands

<i>Range of values</i>	<i>Valuation band</i>
Values not exceeding £27,000	A
Values exceeding £27,000 but not exceeding £35,000	B
Values exceeding £35,000 but not exceeding £45,000	C
Values exceeding £45,000 but not exceeding £58,000	D
Values exceeding £58,000 but not exceeding £80,000	E
Values exceeding £80,000 but not exceeding £106,000	F
Values exceeding £106,000 but not exceeding £212,000	G
Values exceeding £212,000	H

4.4 Statutory Assumptions Applied to Banding

The Assessor must make a number of statutory assumptions in determining the Council Tax band. These are:

- the sale was with vacant possession
- the dwelling was in a state of reasonable repair (regardless of its actual condition)
- the size and layout of the dwelling and the physical state of the locality were the same as at the time when the valuation of the dwelling was made
- the dwelling was sold free from any heritable security (i.e. any mortgage is assumed to be paid off)
- common parts were in a state of reasonable repair (regardless of their actual condition) and the purchaser would be liable to contribute towards the cost of keeping them in such as state
- use of the dwelling would be permanently restricted to use as a private dwelling; and
- the dwelling had no development value other than that attributable to "permitted development".

There are also special provisions applicable to the Council Tax banding of properties used in connection with agriculture, crofting or fish farming, and properties adapted for people with physical disabilities.

4.5 New Houses

As part of the maintenance of the Valuation (Council Tax) List the Assessor adds new built houses to the list as soon as possible after they are completed. It is one of the Joint Board's key performance measures to do this as efficiently as possible.

4.6 Council Tax Proposals

If you are the owner of the property or the person liable to pay Council Tax for it, you can lodge an appeal (known as a "proposal") to alter the Council Tax band:

- within six months of becoming the owner or the liable person
- within six months of the Assessor altering the band

- within six months of an appeal decision, which is a relevant decision, in respect of a dwelling comparable to yours which gives you reasonable grounds to contend that the band applicable to your dwelling should be changed
- at any time if there has been a “material reduction” (see below) in the value of the dwelling
- at any time if there has been a “material increase” (see below) in the value of the dwelling and it, or any part of it, has subsequently been sold
- at any time if the balance between domestic and business use changes (for example, in hotels or boarding houses)
- at any time to add from a particular date a dwelling not shown on the list
- at any time to delete from a particular date a dwelling shown on the list.

The Assessors’ portal has been developed to allow Council Tax payers to lodge a proposal on-line www.saa.gov.uk. A member of the Assessor’s staff will discuss the proposal with the tax payer and if it cannot be resolved, it will be referred to the Valuation Appeal Committee as a formal appeal to be heard by the Committee. The Committee will hear the appeal within its normal cycle of hearings and will issue formal notification of the date and time of the hearing and details of the appeal procedure.

4.7 Material Reduction in Value

The band of a house may be reduced if there has been a material reduction in its value. A material reduction in value may result from the demolition of any part of the dwelling, any change in the physical state of its locality or any adaptation of the dwelling to suit a person who is disabled. A reduction in value caused, for example, by a downturn in the housing market, does not count for this purpose.

4.8 Material Increase in Value and Subsequent Sale

The band of a house may be increased if there has been a material increase in its value and it is subsequently sold. A material increase in value may result from, for example, the building of an extension to the property. Any change in the Council Tax band following on from a material increase in value will only take effect from the date the property is sold. This means that although many properties have had material increases in their value since they were originally banded in 1993, these increases will not be reflected in the band if they have not been subsequently sold.

4.9 Correction of Errors

Where the Assessor is satisfied that the band of a house is not the band which should have been set he/she may amend the Valuation (Council Tax) List to correct that error. This can lead to a band being increased or decreased depending on the circumstances. A reduction in band would be corrected effective from 1 April 1993 or from the date the dwelling entered the list, whichever is later. Any increase in banding as a result of the correction of an error can however only be charged by the billing authority from the 1st of the month following the correction.

5.0 The Register of Electors

The Register of Electors contains details of everyone who has registered to vote. It is used to determine who can vote at elections while the Register is in force. A new Register is published at least once a year, no later than 1st December. A revised version may be published at other times if, for example, major changes are made to the Register in the course of the year.

5.1 Register Updates (Rolling Registration)

The current version of the Register comes into force on or before 1st December each year and is updated on a monthly basis between annual canvasses to reflect changes in people's circumstances as they occur. For example, if you move house and notify the Electoral Registration Officer of the change early in March, your name could be added to the Register on 1 April. It is now possible to register on line at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

5.2 Annual Canvass

The Register is updated monthly between January and September to add new electors and to deal with address changes etc. This procedure is suspended thereafter to allow the annual canvass of households to take place and time for preparation of the new Register. Canvass forms are issued to each household around July/August each year, requesting details of eligible residents. The information obtained during the canvass then goes forward to the new Register published on or before 1st December. During the annual canvass, the ERO must take all steps that are necessary to ensure the he/she meets his/her duty to maintain the register in accordance with Section 9A of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended by the Electoral Administration Act 2006).

In practice, at each year's canvass of electors Lanarkshire VJB issues a Household Enquiry Form (HEF) to each household in Lanarkshire, followed by at least one reminder (where no return is received) followed by a visit by a canvasser (again where no return is received). Additionally, datasets such as Housing and Council Tax records are inspected for identification of empty houses and/or new taxpayers' names.

Since the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in Scotland on 19th September 2014, Electoral Registration Officers are also required to issue Invitation to Register forms (ITRs) where he/she believes someone to be resident at an address but is not on the electoral register.

5.3 "Deadwooding"

In terms of Regulation 34 of the Representation of the People (Scotland) Regulations 2001 (as amended), electors in households for which no electoral registration canvass form has been received for two consecutive years must be deleted from the register unless evidence can be found from other sources that they remain resident. In practice Council Tax records are checked for name matches. Where there is a positive match names are retained. Where there is no match names are deleted. This is generally known as "deadwooding".

5.4 The Open Register

Electors can choose to have their names excluded from the version of the Register made available for sale (the "Open Register") whilst remaining on the version used at elections (the "Full Register"). The intention behind this provision is to safeguard the privacy of electors and restrict unwanted "junk mail". In relation to the interests of the democratic process however the Full Register, which is a public document, is available for inspection throughout registration areas at public libraries, some council offices and at the offices of the ERO.

5.5 Qualifying to Vote

To qualify to be registered to vote at UK elections you must be resident or deemed resident in the registration area, a British, other Commonwealth, Irish or European Union citizen aged 18 or over (16 and 17 year-olds can register but cannot vote until they are 18) and not subject to any legal incapacity. Young persons aged 16 and over may vote at Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government elections.

Citizens of the European Union resident in Scotland may only register as local government and Scottish Parliamentary electors in the first instance. If they so wish, they can then register as European Parliamentary electors. European Union Citizens do not have the right to vote at UK Parliamentary elections. It is expected that further guidance will be made available once the UK exits from the European Union.

5.6 European Union Member States (Excluding UK)

Austria	France	Malta ²
Belgium	Germany	The Netherlands
Bulgaria	Greece	Poland
Croatia	Hungary	Portugal
Cyprus ²	Republic of Ireland ²	Romania
Czech Republic	Italy	Slovakia
Denmark	Latvia	Slovenia
Estonia	Lithuania	Spain
Finland	Luxembourg	Sweden

² Citizens of the Republic of Ireland, Cyprus and Malta resident in the UK are eligible to be registered to vote in respect of all elections held in the UK.

Cyprus and Malta are Commonwealth countries, in addition to being EU states. Accession to the EU has no effect on the status of their citizens, who can continue to register to vote in elections for local government, the European Parliament, the Westminster Parliament and the Scottish Parliament, as appropriate, in the way that they have done in the past (the same position applies for Irish Citizens).

For registration purposes, the whole of Cyprus is considered to be a Commonwealth country. Citizens of Cyprus holding a passport from either the Republic of Cyprus or the Republic of Northern Cyprus and residing in the UK are entitled to be included in the register of electors as Commonwealth citizens. However, anyone with a Turkish passport is not entitled to register.

5.7 Commonwealth Countries

Antigua and Barbuda	Jamaica	St Vincent & The Grenadines
Australia	Kenya	Samoa
The Bahamas	Kiribati	Seychelles
Bangladesh	Lesotho	Sierra Leone
Barbados	Malawi	Singapore
Belize	Malaysia	Solomon Islands
Botswana	Malta ²	South Africa
Brunei Darussalam	Mauritius	Sri Lanka
Cameroon	Mozambique	Swaziland
Canada	Namibia	United Republic of Tanzania
Cyprus ²	Nauru	Tonga
Dominica	New Zealand	Trinidad & Tobago
Fiji Islands ¹	Nigeria	Tuvalu
Ghana	Pakistan	Uganda
Grenada	Papua New Guinea	United Kingdom
Guyana	St Kitts & Nevis	Vanuatu
India	St Lucia	Zambia
		Zimbabwe ¹

¹ Citizens of Fiji and Zimbabwe residing in the UK retain their voting rights despite the countries having been suspended from the Commonwealth

5.8 British Overseas Territories

Anguilla	Gibraltar
Bermuda	Montserrat
British Antarctic Territory	Pitcairn Island
British Indian Ocean Territory	St Helena
British Virgin Islands	St Helena dependencies (Ascension Island, Tristan da Cunha)
Cayman Islands	South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands
Falkland Islands	Sovereign base areas on Cyprus
	Turks and Caicos Islands

5.9 British Crown Dependencies

Isle of Man

The Channel Islands (including Jersey, Guernsey, Sark, Alderney, Herm and the other inhabited Channel Islands).

5.10 Overseas Electors

British citizens resident abroad can register to vote by means of an Overseas Elector's Declaration, provided that on the date the Declaration is made:

- they are not subject to any legal incapacity to vote
- they were once registered to vote in the UK and less than 15 years have elapsed since the Register they were on was in force (currently being reviewed) or
- a parent or guardian was so registered, if the applicant was too young to register to vote at the time.

The Declaration lasts for 12 months and then lapses if not renewed by the elector. The ERO is obliged to send a reminder and a new application form to the elector between 9 and 10 months from the date on which the entry on the Register took effect. The most convenient way to vote for an overseas elector is by post or proxy.

5.11 Homeless People

A person who has no fixed address can register to vote by means of a Declaration of Local Connection. The Declaration lasts for 12 months and then lapses if not renewed by the elector. The ERO is obliged to send a reminder and a new application form to the elector between 9 and 10 months from the date on which the entry on the Register took effect. This form of registration is also available to prisoners on remand awaiting trial but not yet convicted.

5.12 Service Electors

The following people are entitled to register to vote as service electors:

- a. serving members of the armed forces and their spouses or civil partners (for whom the entitlement exists as an alternative to registering as civilian electors if resident in the UK).
- b. British Council staff and Crown Servants in posts abroad and their spouses or civil partners by completing and submitting the appropriate Service Declaration form, which includes the facility to apply to vote by post or proxy.

The Declaration, in relation to electors in paragraph a. above, lasts for 5 years and then lapses if not renewed by the elector. The ERO is obliged to send a reminder and a new application form to the elector between 57 and 58 months from the date on which the entry on the Register took effect. For electors in paragraph b. above the declaration lasts for 12 months and then lapses if not renewed. The ERO however is obliged to send a reminder and new application form between 9 and 10 months from the effective date.

5.13 The Absent Voters' List (Postal Voters' List)

The Electoral Registration Officer also maintains a list of people who are entitled to vote by post or by proxy. This is known as the Absent Voters' List.

Postal voting is available to anyone, whatever their circumstances.

Long-term proxy voting is available to people who cannot reasonably be expected to attend their polling station at elections because:

- they suffer from a physical incapacity, or
- their employment duties take them away from home, or
- their attendance on a course of study takes them away from home.

Temporary proxy voting is available to people who cannot reasonably be expected to attend their polling station at elections because they will be away from home temporarily (e.g. on holiday) on the date of the election.

5.14 Further Information

More information on electoral registration can be found on the Electoral Commission's website www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

6.0 Summary

The work of Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board is extensive and varied. It impacts on every household in the Lanarkshire area through Council Tax and Electoral Registration and on every business, public body and voluntary organisation through non-domestic rating. Our primary aim is to provide excellence in the delivery of our services to the citizens and businesses of Lanarkshire. The Joint Board provides a good working example of joint service delivery in practice both in how North and South Lanarkshire Councils have combined to provide valuation and electoral registration services and in how the Assessor and his staff work with other councils and Joint Boards to develop consistency and good practice in the delivery of services.

Web Site

The Board's web site (www.lanarkshire-vjb.gov.uk) includes a host of useful information. There is the facility to download application forms relating to Electoral Registration. Additionally, the site contains useful information on the Assessor's functions and the processes involved in making appeals against entries in the Valuation Roll and Council Tax List. The web site is compatible with mobile devices.

The web site has useful links to North and South Lanarkshire Councils' web sites, and to the Scottish Assessors' Association Portal (www.saa.gov.uk), which provides a single point access to Non-Domestic Rating, Council Tax and Electoral Registration information on a Scotland-wide basis.

Equal Opportunities

Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board is committed to achieving equal opportunities in all aspects of our business and in relationships with our service users and other stakeholders. This means ensuring that services, facilities, and employment opportunities are accessible and receptive to the values and the diversity needs within the community. In meeting this commitment, we shall aim to prevent – as well as eliminate – any form of discrimination that occurs in the workplace or in service delivery. We also aim to provide good quality services which users can access freely without prejudice, discrimination and/or harassment. Details of our Equal Opportunities policy and our Mainstreaming Equalities report can be viewed on our website, together with our annual employee information report.

7.0 Contact Information

Address: Lanarkshire Valuation Joint Board
North Stand
Cadzow Avenue
HAMILTON
ML3 0LU
Telephone: 01698 476000 Fax: 01698 476010
E-mail: assessor@lanarkshire-vjb.gov.uk
ero@lanarkshire-vjb.gov.uk
Web site: www.lanarkshire-vjb.gov.uk