

## **DUNBARTONSHIRE AND ARGYLL AND BUTE VALUATION JOINT BOARD**

At a meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board held in Committee Room 2, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Friday 12 December 2003 at 11.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillors Daniel Kelly, Donald MacMillan, Sidney MacDougall and Donald McIntosh, Argyll & Bute Council; Councillors Vaughan Moody and Margaret McNaughton\*, East Dunbartonshire Council; and Councillors Geoff Calvert and Gail Casey, West Dunbartonshire Council.

\*Attended later in the meeting.

**Attending:** Duncan Wilson, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; William Mathieson, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; Brian Byrne, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer; June Nelson, Principal Administrative Officer; Eric Walker, Treasurer; David Connell, Manager of Accounting; Peter Rudzinski, Section Head Support, Information Services; Gerry McInerney, Head of Personnel; and David Rooney, Senior Administrative Officer (for the Clerk to the Board).

**Apologies:** Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Robin Currie, Argyll & Bute Council; Provost Pat Steel and Councillor Anne Jarvis, East Dunbartonshire Council; and Councillors Jackie Maceira and Marie McNair, West Dunbartonshire Council.

**Councillor Donald MacMillan in the Chair**

### **VARIATION TO ORDER OF BUSINESS**

After hearing Councillor Moody, the Board agreed to vary the Order of Business and to take item 12(b) on the agenda, under the heading "Allocation of Funds for the Return of Public Utilities to Conventional Rating", as the last item of business with all officers with the exception of the Head of Personnel and the Senior Administrative Officer being excluded.

### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of Meeting of the Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board held on 27 June 2003 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

## **MEMBERSHIP OF VALUATION JOINT BOARD AND APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO SUB-COMMITTEES**

A report was submitted by the Clerk concerning the membership of the Valuation Joint Board and the appointment of members to Sub-Committees.

It was agreed:

- (1) that the position with respect to the membership of the Valuation Joint Board be noted;
- (2) that Councillor Geoff Calvert (West Dunbartonshire Council) be appointed as a member of the Appeals Sub-Committee;
- (3) that Councillor Gail Casey (West Dunbartonshire Council) be appointed as a member of the Property Sub-Committee; and
- (4) that the Complaints Sub-Committee be re-established and that Councillor Donald McIntosh (Argyll & Bute Council), Councillor Geoff Calvert (West Dunbartonshire Council) and Councillor Vaughan Moody (East Dunbartonshire Council) be appointed as members.

## **REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

### **(a) Standards in Public Life – The Councillors’ Code of Conduct**

A report was submitted by the Clerk providing information for members of the Valuation Joint Board on the need to register certain interests in terms of Section 4 of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct.

The Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to note that members should make contact with the relevant officer of their local authority with a view to ensuring that their registration form is kept up to date; and
- (2) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

### **(b) Register of Members of Staff’s Interests**

A report was submitted by the Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing information for members of the Valuation Joint Board on the steps taken to satisfy the requirements of Audit Scotland in relation to work undertaken by staff of the Joint Board which would involve them in making decisions or taking actions which might relate to friends, relatives, or their properties.

The Joint Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

## **INFORMATION SERVICES**

### **Valuation Joint Board Systems**

A report was submitted by the Head of Information Services, West Dunbartonshire Council providing an update on the computer and other systems currently used by the Valuation Joint Board.

Having heard the Section Head Support, Information Services, the Joint Board agreed to note:-

- (1) that the additional programmer resource post had been filled and that this officer is dedicated and directed by the Assessor's staff;
- (2) that the Assessor's staff are evaluating the use of a Geographical Information System;
- (3) that the Assessor's computer systems will be included in the final phase of West Dunbartonshire Council's Disaster Recovery Solution; and
- (4) that the Assessor should consider all options for replacing Microsoft Exchange version 5.5 as the corporate messaging system, although Microsoft had extended support for this version of Exchange beyond the date of December 2003 referred to in the report.

### **MODERNISING GOVERNMENT FUND (2) – THEME 5 ASSESSORS' PORTAL**

A report was submitted by the Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on the current position on Theme 5 of the Modernising Government Fund (2) – The Assessors' Portal.

Having heard Mr. Byrne, Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, the Joint Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

NOTE: Councillor Margaret McNaughton entered the meeting at this point.

## **FINANCE**

### **(a) Annual Report and Final Accounts for Year Ending 31 March 2003**

A report was submitted by the Treasurer advising of the detailed Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2003 which had now been audited.

Following discussion and having heard the Treasurer and Mr. Mathieson, Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer in answer to Members' questions, it was agreed to approve the Annual Report and Accounts and to note the Auditor's 'Report to Members'.

Councillor Calvert asked if the timetable contained in Audit Scotland's Action Plan would be met, and Mr. Mathieson confirmed that it was his intention to finalise the appropriate items before Christmas, with the co-operation of West Dunbartonshire Council's Manager of Internal Audit.

**(b) Revenue Estimates 2004/05**

A report was submitted by the Treasurer presenting the draft Revenue Estimates for 2004/05.

Having heard the Treasurer in further explanation the Joint Board agreed:

- (1) to approve the draft Revenue Estimates for 2004/2005; and
- (2) that the requisition on the Constituent Councils be based on each Council's relevant Grant Aided Expenditure figures as in previous years and as indicated in Appendix 3 to the report.

**(c) Capital Estimates 2004/05**

A report was submitted by the Treasurer presenting the draft Capital Estimates for 2004/05.

Following discussion and having heard the Treasurer and Mr. Mathieson, Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed:-

- (1) to approve the 2004/05 Capital Plan of £11,100; and
- (2) that the requisition on the constituent Councils be based on each Council's relevant Grant Aided Expenditure figures as in previous years and as indicated in Appendix 1 to the report.

## **ELECTORAL REGISTRATION**

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on the current position on Electoral Registration.

Having heard Mr Wilson, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer in answer to Members' questions, the Joint Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

## **REVALUATION 2000 & 2005 – PROGRESS**

A report was submitted by the Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on the final stages of disposal of appeals arising from the non-domestic Revaluation 2000 and with preparations for the next Revaluation in 2005.

Having heard Mr. Mathieson and Mr. Wilson in further explanation, and the Convener, who commended the officers and their staff with respect to the work undertaken to reduce the level of outstanding appeals, the Joint Board agreed to note the progress being made in relation to both Revaluations.

## **BEST VALUE & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING – GENERAL PROGRESS**

A report was submitted by the Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer providing an update on progress with Best Value, as delegated to the Assessor and staff, and also confirming the current position with Performance Management Planning (P.M.P), which is a Best Value related process.

Having heard Mr. Mathieson, Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer in elaboration of the report it was agreed:

- (1) to note that the report on Disaster Planning referred to in paragraph 3.1.1 of the report was at a preliminary stage, but would be completed in the very near future; and
- (2) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

## **SCOTTISH WATER**

A report was submitted by the Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer advising the Joint Board of the information now available to Scottish Water.

Having heard Mr. Byrne, Depute Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer and Councillor Calvert, the Joint Board agreed to note the contents of the report.

## **CAR ALLOWANCES**

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel asking the Joint Board to agree to the retention of the former NJC Scheme of Car Allowances for Joint Board Staff.

Having heard the Head of Personnel in elaboration the Joint Board agreed to retain the existing former NJC Scheme of Car Allowances.

## **EXCLUSION OF OFFICERS**

At this point in the meeting the Joint Board agreed that all officers with the exception of the Head of Personnel and the Senior Administrative Officer be excluded for the following two items of business.

### **POST OF ASSESSOR & ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER – ADVERTISING AND RECRUITMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel, West Dunbartonshire Council asking the Board to approve advertising and recruitment arrangements for the post of Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer.

Having heard the Head of Personnel it was agreed:

- (1) that a Recruitment Panel be established to determine a shortlisting and interview timetable which could be conveyed to potential candidates;
- (2) that the Recruitment Panel would consist of 5 members of the Valuation Joint Board, including the Convener and Depute Convener and one other member from each of the constituent Councils, with 3 members being required for a quorum;
- (3) that the post of Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer be advertised in the Herald and Scotsman on 9 January 2004;
- (4) that the proposed advert text, job profile and person specification detailed in the appendices to the report be approved; and
- (5) that the existing Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer participate in the recruitment process as an adviser to the Recruitment Panel.

### **ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FOR THE RETURN OF PUBLIC UTILITIES TO CONVENTIONAL RATING**

A report was submitted by the Head of Personnel, West Dunbartonshire Council asking the Board to agree to expenditure from the sum of £50,000 received from the Scottish Executive in recognition of the new burden of additional duties and responsibilities connected with Public Utilities.

Having heard the Head of Personnel and after discussion it was agreed:

- (1) that recommendation 5.1.4 of the report be approved and that the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer be authorised to establish an additional Valuer post graded GS1 – PO5 for a twelve month period, to be extended for a further period depending on future funding; and

- (2) that consideration of recommendations 5.1.1, 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 of the report be continued to a special meeting of the Valuation Joint Board to allow additional information to be provided.

Note: The various officers who had been excluded from the meeting during consideration of the foregoing two items were readmitted at this point and advised of the decisions of the Board by the Convener.

### **DATE OF SPECIAL MEETING AND NEXT ORDINARY MEETING**

It was agreed that the special meeting referred to in the preceding item would be held on Friday, 23 January 2004 at 11.00 a.m. within Committee Room 2, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, subject to accommodation being available.

It was also agreed that the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer be permitted to have an input with respect to the presentation of the additional information requested by the Board in relation to the matter concerned and that he be allowed to attend the special meeting.

Having heard the Convener, it was agreed that the next ordinary meeting of the Valuation Joint Board would be held on Friday, 25 June 2004 in Lochgilphead.

### **CONVENER'S REMARKS**

Before closing the meeting, the Convener, Councillor MacMillan, referred to the forthcoming retirement of Mr. Duncan Wilson, Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, in March 2004.

Councillor MacMillan paid tribute to the service given by Mr. Wilson and commented on the professional manner in which he carried out the duties of his post. On behalf of the members of the Joint Board, Councillor MacMillan wished Mr. Wilson a long and happy retirement. Mr. Wilson responded appropriately.

Councillor MacMillan concluded by wishing the members of the Board and officers a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year.

The meeting closed at 12.15 p.m.