



*Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute
Valuation Joint Board*

LOCAL CODE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board is fully committed to the principles of sound governance and good management.

The Assessor's office functions under the terms of the Lands Valuation Acts which is a body of legislation that can be traced back to the Lands Valuation (Scotland) Act of 1854 and includes the Valuation and Rating (Scotland) Act of 1956 and the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1975. These Acts concern the rating valuation of non-domestic property. In relation to Council Tax valuation the principal Act is the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The functions of the Electoral Registration Officer are carried out in terms of The Representation of the People Acts and Regulations.

Arising from the above functions, the Joint Board's stated Business Mission is 'To professionally compile and maintain the Valuation Rolls, Council Tax Valuation Lists and Registers of Electors for the Argyll & Bute, East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire Council areas'.

By building on our established professionalism, we aim to provide high quality, effective and responsive services to all of our stakeholders.

To fulfil our Mission and achieve our Aims we are committed to:-

- Consulting our stakeholders, and listening and responding to their views
- Valuing staff and providing them with opportunities to develop and contribute
- Reacting innovatively to change
- Encouraging innovation and recognising achievement within the organisation
- Treating all stakeholders, including staff, in a fair, consistent manner and in accordance with equal opportunities requirements
- Striving for continuous improvement in all aspects of service delivery
- Ensuring that we are accessible and accountable to stakeholders
- Pro-actively planning workloads and deploying resources efficiently
- Using language which is easy to understand
- Working with our partners in the Scottish Assessors' Association to ensure Scotland wide consistency of approach to service delivery

The Joint Board's approach to Governance is underpinned by the above Mission, Vision and Commitment statements along with the following 'Core' elements:-

- **Code of Corporate Governance**
- **Standing Orders**
- **Financial Regulations**
- **Scheme of Delegation**
- **Service Plans**

The complete Governance framework, however, includes the elements contained in the tables below which are collated together under the Principles of Good Governance contained in the 2016 CIPFA publication "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government" and its accompanying Framework.

To ensure that the Board's Governance systems and structures and are appropriate, informed and measured in a proportionate manner, a self-assessment against the CIPFA Framework will be completed on an annual basis with any gaps being identified for improvement action. Action Plans will identify the person responsible for delivery of the improvement and the expected timescale for implementation. It will be regularly reviewed by the Assessor & ERO's Management Team.

The completion of the self-assessment will also inform and support the Annual Governance Statement which is submitted with the Annual Report.

It should be noted that DABVJB is a small organisation in the context of most local government bodies and its Governance arrangements are proportionate to its size and complexity.

The following does include some duplication as the elements listed provide compliance with more than one of the Principles.

1. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
--

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Code of Corporate Governance• Code of Conduct for Employees• Registers of, and Guidance on, Hospitality, Gifts and Conflicts of Interest• RICS Professional Ethics |
|---|

- Constituent Councils' Codes of Conduct for Members
- Strategy for the Prevention and Detection of Fraud & Corruption
- Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy
- Business Irregularities Procedure
- National Fraud Initiative

2. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

- Annual Report
- Publication Scheme and Guide to Information
- DABVJB and SAA websites
- Public Performance Reports including KPI targets and performance
- Published Board Minutes
- Customer and Staff Satisfaction Surveys
- Comments and Complaints Procedure
- Participation Strategy
- Service Level Agreement
- Scottish Assessors Association Constitution

3. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

- Statutory Functions
- Vision, Mission and Commitments
- Service Plan
- Reporting Framework
- Risk Management Policy and Risk Registers
- Equality Policy

4. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

- Member/Chief Officer engagement
- Detailed Budget Planning based on operational requirements
- Budgetary Control Process with established criteria for intervention
- Prudential Reserve Policy
- Risk Registers with mitigations and planned actions
- Staffing Reviews
- Service Plans

- Detailed operational timetables
- Project timelines, Task Register and Helpdesk
- Electoral Commission Performance Standards, Guidance and Bulletins
- Modernising Electoral Registration Programme Guidance and advice
- SAA and RICS Practice Notes

5. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

- Annual review of staffing included in Service Plan
- Chief Officer Performance and Development Policy
- Staff Personal Development Plans
- Continuing Professional Development requirements for surveying staff.
- Benchmarking and comparisons with other Assessors/EROs
- Service Level Agreement with West Dunbartonshire Council for Support Services
- Membership of, and participation in, Scottish Assessors Association
- Staff Complement Model
- Clear roles for officers through Job Descriptions
- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Scheme of Delegation
- Training and presentations to Members
- Staff Induction Procedures
- AEA qualifications
- Staff Core Training requirements/Training Log
- Health & Safety Policy including Risk Assessments
- Several Health & Wellbeing/Support Services and Policies in place.

6. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

- Risk Management Strategy/Procedures/Risk Registers/Action Plans
- Business Continuity Plan
- Service Plans
- KPI Targets and Performance Reports
- External and Internal Performance Reports
- Reporting Framework
- Public Notice of Board Meetings and Publication of Minutes
- Internal and External Audit arrangements

- Collated Audit Action Plan
- Annual Governance Statement
- Public Scrutiny of Valuation Roll, Council Tax Lists and Electoral Register
- Appeals Processes to various judicial and quasi-judicial bodies.
- Prevention of Fraud & Defalcation Procedures
- ICT Strategy including Physical and other Security measures
- Data Protection Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy, Model Publication Scheme and Guide to Information
- Data Sharing Arrangement
- Financial Regulations, Annual Budgeting and Budget Monitoring
- Ordering and Invoicing Procedures
- Procurement Policy and procedures

7. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

- DABVJB and SAA web sites
- Annual Report/Management Commentary and Board Minutes Published
- Public Performance Report and KPIs
- Annual Self-Assessment of Governance CIPFA Good Governance Framework
- Annual Statement of Assurance
- Audit Action Plans approved by Board and contained in Collated Audit Action Plan
- Electoral Commission Performance Standards and Reporting Requirements
- Barclay Review Action List
- Scottish Assessors' Association Constitution
- Electoral Management Board Directions and Advice