

Lothian Valuation Joint Board

Edinburgh, 8 February 2016

Present:

City of Edinburgh Council – Councillors Work (Convener), Bagshaw, Ricky Henderson and McVey.

East Lothian Council – Councillors Gillies and McNeil.

Midlothian Council – Councillors Bryant and Russell.

West Lothian Council – Councillors King and McCarra.

1 Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board of 16 November 2015 as a correct record.

2 Solicitor to the Joint Board

Members were advised that the current Solicitor to the Board, Carol Campbell, had intimated her resignation from the City of Edinburgh Council to take up an appointment within another organisation.

It was proposed that the Council's Interim Head of Legal and Risk, Nick Smith, should also assume the duties of Solicitor to the Board.

Decision

To appoint Nick Smith, Interim Head of Legal and Risk, City of Edinburgh Council as Solicitor to the Joint Board with immediate effect.

(Reference – report by the Chief Executive and Clerk, submitted)

3 Revenue Budget 2016/17

The Board's revenue budget for 2016/17 was presented. The budget would be funded through a flat-cash requisition of £6.118m and a maximum drawdown from the general reserve of £0.364m. The level of drawdown may reduce subject to confirmation of Individual Electoral Registration grant funding for 2016/17 from the Cabinet Office.

The requisition for the past four years had been held at £6.118m. The budget had increased from that approved for 2015/16 (£6.118m) due to increased expenditure arising from Individual Electoral Registration (IER).

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The ongoing financial pressure arising from IER had also been subject to numerous reports to the Board throughout the year.

The Assessor and ERO and the Treasurer recognised the need to move towards a sustainable budget position for 2017/18 and a managed position for 2016/17. Further work required to be undertaken by the Assessor and ERO to identify options to move to a sustainable budget for 2017/18.

Although the Cabinet Office had intimated to the Assessor and ERO that IER funding was likely to be provided for 2016/17 there had been no official confirmation at this stage. Therefore no IER grant had been built in to the 2016/17 budget. Any additional grant subsequently received after the Board had considered the 2016/17 budget could negate the need or reduce the level of drawdown from the general reserve.

Decision

- 1) To approve the budget for 2016/17 and authorise the Treasurer to requisition the individual constituent Councils for amounts as follows:

Constituent Council	Requisition 2016/17
Edinburgh	£3,743,604
Midlothian	£560,409
East Lothian	£669,309
West Lothian	£1,144,678
Total	£6,118,000

- 2) To approve a reserve drawdown of up to £0.364m to support the 2016/17 budget.
- 3) To note that the Assessor and ERO would report to the Board on options to balance the 2017/18 budget in autumn 2016.
- 4) To note that any additional IER grant received for 2016/17 would be reported at the earliest Board meeting after formal notification was received from the Cabinet Office.
- 5) To note that the Assessor and ERO would update the Board in due course of any changes to IER with service/financial implications.
- 6) To note the risks identified in section 5 of the report by the Treasurer.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted)

4 Budget Report 2016/17

The Assessor and ERO provided an overview of the expected costs, income and risk to the Board within the budget provision for the financial year 2016/17.

The Board's Corporate Plan and Service Plan for 2016-2017 were also submitted.

Decision

To note the report.

(Reference – report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, submitted)

5 Annual Audit Plan

The external auditor's annual Audit Plan for the Board for 2015-16 was presented. Joan Dalglish, Audit Scotland presented an overview of the Audit Plan and highlighted key audit issues and risks.

Decision

To note the key audit risks and the related assurances received to address these risks and the proposed audit work to be carried out.

(Reference – report by Audit Scotland, submitted)

6 Annual Investment Strategy

Decision

To approve the annual investment strategy set out in appendix 1 of the report by the Treasurer.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted)

7 Operational Governance Framework Review 2016

A review had been carried out of the following key documents supporting the internal controls, accountability and transparent operation of the Joint Board:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Scheme of Delegation to Officers
- Contract Standing Orders

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Decision

- 1) To repeal the existing Lothian Valuation Joint Board's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Contract Standing Orders and approve in their place the documents set out in appendices 1 to 4 of the report by the Chief Executive and Clerk, such repeal and approval to take effect from 9 February 2016.
- 2) To delegate authority to the Chief Executive and Clerk to take such actions and make such minor adjustments to the documents as may be necessary to allow the above decision to be implemented.
- 3) To note that the Operational Governance Framework documents would be submitted for review at a minimum every five years.
- 4) To note that the Contract Standing Orders may require to be reviewed within 12 months to take account of changes in the EU procurement regime and further legislative changes in Scotland.

8 Managing Retirement Policy

A proposed policy for managing retirement of Board staff was presented. The policy aimed to set out options for retirement available to staff and a procedure for staff to follow when they wanted to retire.

Decision

To approve the Managing Retirement Policy.

(Reference – report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, submitted)

9 Death Benefit Scheme

Approval was sought for a death benefit scheme for Board staff. The Scheme would provide a grant to be paid to the dependents of staff who died in service to help cover the costs associated with a bereavement.

Decision

To approve the Death Benefit Scheme.

(Reference – report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, submitted)

10 Special Leave Policy

The revised Special Leave Policy replaced the Board's Family Care Policy and ensured the Board complied with its statutory duties and that its employees could benefit from modern and flexible working practices which underpin diversity and equality of opportunity.

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Decision

To repeal the existing family care policy and approve in its place the Special Leave Policy.

(Reference – report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, submitted)

11 Parental Leave Policy

A new statutory right to Shared Parental Leave (SPL) which came into effect from 5 April 2015 allowed the mothers of children born, and the main adopters of children placed for adoption, on or after 5 April 2015 to end their maternity or adoption leave early and share the remainder of their maternity or adoption leave entitlement with their partners.

The Board's provisions for leave relating to Maternity and Adoption had been reviewed and updated to include this new right. The Policy now set out how the Board would manage Shared Paternity Leave.

Decision

To repeal the existing maternity and adoption leave policy and approve in its place the Parental Leave Policy.

(Reference – report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, submitted)

12 Future Meeting Arrangements

Decision

- 1) To approve the schedule of meetings for the period to June 2017 as follows:

Monday 20 June 2016 (Unaudited Accounts)	10:00am	Edinburgh
Monday 5 September 2016	10:00am	Edinburgh
Monday 14 November 2016	10:00am	Edinburgh
Monday 6 February 2017 (Revenue Budget)	10:00am	Edinburgh
Monday 10 April 2017	10:00am	Edinburgh
Monday 26 June 2017 (Unaudited Accounts)	10:00am	Edinburgh

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- 2) To agree that the meeting dates be notified to Chief Executives of all constituent authorities represented on the Board.

(Reference – report by the Chief Executive and Clerk, submitted)