

## Lothian Valuation Joint Board

Edinburgh, 23 April 2019

### Present:

**City of Edinburgh Council** – Councillors Key (Convener), Corbett, Doggart, Doran, Gordon, Henderson, Neil Ross (substituting for Councillor Gloyer) and Work.

**East Lothian Council** – Councillor Goodfellow.

**Midlothian Council** – Councillor Russell.

**West Lothian Council** – Councillor McGuire (Vice-Convener).

### 1. Minute

#### Decision

To approve the minute of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board of 4 February 2019 as a correct record.

### 2. Appointments

Midlothian Council had appointed Councillor Kieran Munro to serve on the Joint Board in place of Councillor Winchester who had resigned.

Councillor Winchester also served on the Joint Board's Appointment Committee and the Board was now requested to appoint a member from Midlothian Council to fill that vacancy.

#### Decision

- 1) To note the appointment of Councillor Munro, Midlothian Council to the Joint Board.
- 2) To appoint Councillor Munro, Midlothian Council to the Joint Board's Appointment Committee.

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

### 3. Medium Term Financial Plan 2019-20 to 2022-23 – Progress Update

An update was provided on development of a medium term financial plan for the Joint Board. The plan had been developed in alignment with the Joint Board's Corporate and Service Plan which set out the priorities and commitments it sought to deliver.

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Projections had been made for the effect of the anticipated pay award and other inflationary assumptions as well as implementation of the recommendations of the Barclay Review and Individual Electoral Registration.

Following recommendations of the Scottish Budget Review Group, the Scottish Government had indicated that it would bring forward a three year funding settlement for local government from 2020/21 onwards. This would give the Joint Board greater clarity to support medium term financial planning.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note progress on the medium terms financial plan and that further updates would be provided to the Board during 2019/20 in advance of approving a budget for 2020/21.
- 2) To note future cost savings achieved would be required to address cost pressures as set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report.
- 3) To note the Assessor and ERO would update the Board during 2019/20 of any changes to Barclay/Individual Electoral Registration with service and financial implications both within the medium term financial plan and the quarterly Board cycle.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted)

## **4. Assessor's Report to the Joint Board**

The Assessor presented an update on the service overview and priorities, current issues and the future direction of the Joint Board.

The 2018 annual canvass had concluded on 1 December 2018 with the publication of the electoral register. A return rate for household enquiry forms of 75% had been recorded which compared favourably with previous years – 2016 70% and 2017 74%.

Service priorities over the next three months included:

- 2018 Absent Vote personal identifier refresh
- Electoral engagement strategy
- Continue with other engagement activities
- 2020 annual household canvass
- Council tax
- 2017 revaluation appeal disposal
- Commercial rental evidence (CRE) form issue

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- Transformation and cultural change programme
- Governance

**Decision**

To note the updates.

**5. Update on Non-Domestic Rates Reform**

Members were provided with an update on progress being made both nationally and locally in respect of Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) Reform following the recommendations arising from the 2017 Barclay Review of Non-Domestic Rating.

Details were also given of projects supporting the implementation of NDR Reform including enhancing ICT systems and process improvement, engagement activities and developing training and performance frameworks.

The current anticipated annual funding levels to support the NDR Reform were as follows – 2019/20 £154,000, 2020/21 £279,000, 2021/22 £350,000, 2022/23 £350,000, 2023/24 £358,000 and 2024/25 £379,000.

Members also considered the latest iteration of the NDR Reform Risk Register which detailed the steps taken to mitigate identified risks and any required further action.

**Decision**

To note the report.

(References – Lothian Valuation Joint Board 4 February 2019 ((item 6); report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, submitted.)

**6. External Audit Plan 2018-19**

The External Audit Plan for 2018-19 was presented. Core elements of the Plan included:

- an audit of the 2018/19 annual accounts
- a review, where applicable, of the Joint Board's arrangements for governance and transparency, financial management, financial sustainability and value for money
- any other work requested by Audit Scotland.

**Decision**

To note the External Audit Plan for 2018/19.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted)