

Lothian Valuation Joint Board

24 October 2022

Hybrid Meeting held in the Diamond Jubilee Room, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh and Virtually by Teams

Present:

City of Edinburgh Council – Councillors Beal (Vice-Convenor), Caldwell, Dalgleish, Dixon, Glasgow, Finlay McFarlane, Mitchell and Staniforth.

East Lothian Council – Councillors Carol McFarlane and McMillan.

Midlothian Council – Councillors Bowen and Russell.

West Lothian Council – Councillors Adamson, Conn (Convenor) and McGuire.

1 Appointment of Interim Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

The Convenor advised the members that the Recruitment Committee, on 10 October 2022, had appointed Michael Wilkie as Interim Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer and welcomed him to the meeting.

2 Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board of 5 September 2022 as a correct record.

3 Assessor's Progress Report to the Lothian Valuation Joint Board

A progress update by the Interim Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was presented to the Board. The report provided an overview of current service delivery, priorities, risks and future direction.

Staff continued to work on a hybrid basis, part home based, part office based. The Board had agreed its Hybrid Working Policy and this would be implemented over the coming months.

The Board had around 17,000 outstanding appeals which had been lodged on the basis of Covid-19. The disposal date for these appeals was 31 December 2023.

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Key service priorities over the forthcoming year included:

- Continuing electoral registration maintenance
- Household canvass 2022
- Maintenance of the Valuation Roll
- Valuation Roll appeals

Decision

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To note that the Assessor intended to arrange a meeting of the Governance Strategy Group in the near future.

(References – Lothian Valuation Joint Board 5 September 2022 (item 2); report by the Interim Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, submitted)

4 Appointment of Acting Up Assistant Assessor

Approval was sought to fill the vacant Assistant Assessor post on an “acting up” basis for the period 1 November 2022 to 16 July 2023. The post was currently within the staffing structure and was included in the current budget.

Decision

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To approve the appointment of an Acting Up Assistant Assessor for the period 1 November 2022 to 16 July 2023.

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

5 Audited Annual Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

The Board had considered the unaudited annual accounts at its meeting on 13 June 2022. The audited Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 were presented to the Board for consideration.

Decision

- 1) To note the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022.
- 2) To authorise the annual accounts 2021/22 for signature.

(References – Lothian Valuation Joint Board 13 June 2022 (item 5); report by the Treasurer, submitted)

6 Revenue Budget 2022-2027

An update on the financial position of the Board was provided summarising the projected outturn at 31 March 2023, based on the position at 31 August 2022.

The forecast was for net expenditure to be £212,000 greater than the 2022/23 budget. Following completion of the external audit of the annual accounts for 2021/22, indicative financial plans had also been updated for the period 2023 to 2027.

Decision

- 1) To note the projected outturn position of a budget pressure of £0.12m for 2022/23.
- 2) To note that a further update on the 2022/23 budget would be presented to the Board on 30 January 2023.
- 3) To note the updated indicative medium-term financial planning estimates for the period 2023/24 to 2026/27 set out in appendix 2 of the report.
- 4) To note the indicative financial planning estimates for 2023/24 to 2026/27 would be the subject of further update to the Board meeting on 30 January 2023.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted)

7 2021/22 Annual Audit Report to Members of Lothian Valuation Joint Board and the Controller of Audit

The external auditor summarised the findings arising from the 2021/22 external audit as presented to members in the Annual Audit Report. The report also included an update on progress of the recommendations from the previous year's audit.

The external auditor advised members that this was Azets' final year as auditor and thanked the Board and the City of Edinburgh Council finance team for their commitment in ensuring that this and previous audits had been carried out smoothly and efficiently.

Decision

To note the Annual Audit Report to members of Lothian Valuation Joint Board and the Controller of Audit, including the Action Plan and management responses.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted)