

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



PARTNERSHIP AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

LOTHIAN VALUATION JOINT BOARD

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Partnership and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on the business and activities of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel notes the terms of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2020 and 7 September 2020 of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs Being honest, open and accountable Working in partnership.
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Council requires the activities of certain outside bodies to be reported to elected members on a regular basis, as part of its Code of Corporate Governance.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	National outcome 15: Our Public Services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None
VII	Consideration at PDSP	No prior consideration required.
VIII	Consultations	None required.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

At its meeting of 29 June 2010, the Council Executive decided that the activities of certain outside bodies should be reported within the council to ensure all elected members are aware of the business of those bodies and to help to ensure their activities are more effectively scrutinised.

In accordance with that decision, the business of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board was to be reported to this meeting by the production of its minutes and annual report.

Appendix 1 provides the minutes of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board meeting held on 15 June 2020 and appendix 2 provides the minutes of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board meeting held on 7 September 2020.

E. CONCLUSION

This report ensures that members are kept apprised of the activities of Lothian Valuation Joint Board as part of the council's Code of Corporate Governance.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

West Lothian Council Code of Corporate Governance.

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1 – Minutes of meeting of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board held on 15 June 2020.

Appendix 2 – Minutes of meeting of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board held on 7 September 2020.

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Graham Hope
Chief Executive
5 February 2021

Lothian Valuation Joint Board

15 June 2020

Meeting held virtually by Skype

Present:

City of Edinburgh Council – Councillors Key (Convener), Corbett, Doggart, Doran, Gordon, Gloyer, Henderson, Rust and Work.

East Lothian Council – Councillor Goodfellow.

West Lothian Council – Councillor McGuire.

1 Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board of 3 February 2020 as a correct record.

2 Assessor's Update Report to the Lothian Valuation Joint Board

An update report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was presented to the Board. It provided information on the activities of the organisation during the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent closure of the office premises and staff move to home working.

The update also covered the canvass process for 2020, registration applications, elections, non-domestic rates and council tax.

Decision

To note the report.

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

3 Members Code of Conduct Report

A management action had been identified by the external auditors in their 2018/19 Annual Audit Report which was considered by the Board in September 2019. It was proposed that a code of conduct for Board members and a register of interests should be established to mitigate the identified risk.

Decision

- 1) To approve the draft Members Code of Conduct.

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15 June 2020

- 2) To agree to provide a Register of Interests Declaration Form and once submitted, the information would then be published on the Lothian Valuation Joint Board website.

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

4 Treasury Management Annual Report 2019/20

The Annual Treasury Management report for the financial year 2018/19 was submitted.

Decision

To note the annual report for 2019/20.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted)

5 Unaudited Annual Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2020

The unaudited annual accounts were presented to the Board in accordance with the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, which required that the Annual Accounts for the year 2019/20 be presented to the Board no later than 31 August 2020. The Annual Accounts were required to be presented to external audit by 30 June 2020.

Decision

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To note that the Audited Annual Accounts for 2019/20 would be re-presented to the Board on completion of the external audit.
- 3) To note that a pension adjustment of £0.124m would be made in the Audited Annual Accounts due to a timing issue on receipt of pension information. The pension liability will increase from £6.453m to £6.577m as a result of the return on assets figure being revised from an estimate to an actual. The Board were previously advised of this ongoing annual adjustment between unaudited and audited accounts. This adjustment only affects unusable reserves so will not change the general reserve balance reported in paragraph 2.7 of the report by the Treasurer.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted).

6 Recruitment of a new Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

The current Assessor and ERO had confirmed his intention to retire in June 2020 and recruitment had commenced. The process was suspended in March 2020 due to Covid-19 and the Assessor and ERO agreed to delay his

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retirement until September 2020. It was recommended that one of the Assistant Assessors be appointed on an interim basis with a recommended approach to the permanent position brought back to the Board in June 2020.

Decision

- 1) To note the current Assessor and ERO would retire in September 2020.
- 2) To agree that due to the ongoing uncertainty with COVID-19, to appoint one of the Assistant Assessors on an interim basis, initially for a six-month period.
- 3) To appoint Councillors Goodfellow and McGuire to support the Convener with the interim recruitment process.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted)

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Lothian Valuation Joint Board

7 September 2020

Meeting held virtually by Teams

Present:

City of Edinburgh Council – Councillors Key (Convener), Corbett, Doggart, Doran, Gordon, Gloyer, Rust and Work.

East Lothian Council – Councillor Findlay and Goodfellow.

West Lothian Council – Councillor McGuire and Timson.

1 Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board of 15 June 2020 as a correct record.

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

A progress report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) was presented to the Board. It provided information on the overview of current service delivery, priorities, risks and future direction.

An update was also provided on the activities of the organisation during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Decision

To note the report.

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

3 Interim Appointment of an Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

At its meeting on 15th June 2020 the Lothian Valuation Joint Board (LVJB) agreed that due to the ongoing uncertainty with Covid-19 it would appoint one of the LVJB Assistant Assessors as Interim Assessor and ERO until 31 March 2021.

It was proposed that the full recruitment panel would reconvene in December 2020 to short list and interview candidates for the permanent role of Assessor and ERO.

Decision

- 1) To note the decision to appoint Gary Elliott as Interim Assessor and ERO until 31 March 2021.
- 2) To agree that the recruitment panel would reconvene in December 2020 to shortlist and interview candidates for the permanent appointment of an Assessor and ERO.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted)

4 Period 4 Financial Statement 2020/21

The Period 4 Financial Statement for the financial year 2020/21 was submitted.

The projected revenue budget outturn position was summarised to 31st March 2021, based on the position at 31st July 2020. The forecast was for net expenditure to be in line with the approved revenue budget of the Board.

Decision

- 1) To note the projected outturn position for 2020/21.
- 2) To note that a further 2020/21 budget update would be presented in November 2020.
- 3) To note that the Scottish Government had extended the deadline for presenting the Audited Annual Accounts due to Covid-19 and that they would be presented to the Board in November 2020.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted)