

AYRSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2022 at 10.30 am remotely.

Item 1 - Sederunt

Attended remotely
East Ayrshire:

Councillors: McKay and Todd

Attended remotely
North Ayrshire:

Councillors: Glover, McClung, and Reid

Attended remotely
South Ayrshire:

Councillors: D Campbell (Chair) and W Grant

In Attendance
remotely:

Helen McPhee, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO);
John McConville, Head of Valuation Services and Assistant ERO (ERO);
Harry McCormick, Principal IT and Admin Development Officer (ERO);
Tom Simpson, Service Lead - Corporate Accounting (SAC); Karen
Briggs, Service Lead - Legal and Licensing, Steven Hill, Senior
Accountant, (EAC) Alison Nelson, Co-ordinator, Democratic Support
(SAC).

Apologies:

Councillors: A Campbell, I Campbell, and M Dowey (SAC)
Councillor: J McFadzean (EAC)

Item 1 – Sederunt

As detailed above. In the absence of Councillor McFadzean, the Board agreed that Councillor D Campbell, Vice Chair would Chair the meeting.

The Chair intimated that an additional item would be considered under Item 3 – Minutes of the Special Meeting held on the 12 November 2021.

Item 2- Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Item 3 – Minutes of the Previous Meetings held on 21 September 2021 and 12 November 2021

The Minutes of the meeting of the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board (the Board) held on 21 September 2021 ([circulated](#)) were submitted.

Decided: to approve the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 21 September 2021.
Proposed by Councillor Campbell and Seconded by Councillor Glover.

The Minutes of the special meeting of the Board held on 12 November 2021 ([circulated](#)) were submitted.

Decided: to approve the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 12 November 2021.
Proposed by Councillor Grant and Seconded by Councillor Campbell.

Item 4 – Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2021.

Councillor Reid expressed his disappointment that the draft Minutes of the special meeting held on 12 November 2021 were not included in the initial set of papers and, for transparency purposes, requested that any Minutes of the Recruitment Subgroup be circulated to the Board.

The Service Lead – Legal and Licensing apologised for the delay in circulating the Minutes of the special meeting held on the 12 November 2021 and agreed to speak to the appropriate Council officer regarding the Minutes of the Recruitment Subgroup. She further advised that the post of Assessor and ERO had been re-advertised with a closing date of 30 January 2022.

Item 5 – Revenue Monitoring Report 2021/22 – Position Statement on 30 November 2021

There was submitted a report ([circulated](#)) of 23 December 2021 by the Treasurer to the Board advising Members of the Board of the income and expenditure for the period ended 30 November 2021 (monitoring period 8) as compared with the approved revenue budget.

The Service Lead – Corporate Accounting provided a verbal overview of the report highlighting the main variances from budget as contained in 4.2 of the report.

The Chair noted that there had been an increase in third party payments as outlined in 4.2.4 of the report and enquired if this issue was being considered in preparations for the 2022/23 budget. The Service Lead – Corporate Accounting confirmed that there were sufficient funds in the current budget and that this matter would be discussed in preparing the 2022/23 budget.

After considering the report, the Board

Decided: to approve the content of the report.

Item 6 – Public Performance Report

There was submitted a report ([circulated](#)) of 3 November 2021 by Assessor and ERO informing Members that the last Public Performance Report presented to the Board contained incorrect performance tables.

The Assessor and ERO apologised for the oversight and assured Members that this had been highlighted and that the correct tables had been published. A revised copy of the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board Public Performance Report 2020/21 was detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

After discussion, the Board

Decided: to approve the revised Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board Public Performance Report 2020/21.

Item 7 – Valuation and Performance

There was submitted a report ([circulated](#)) of 21 December 2021 by the Head of Valuation Services and Assistant ERO advising Members on progress achieved in Valuation and Council Tax during the period 1 April 2021 to 30 November 2021.

The Head of Valuation Services and Assistant ERO provided an overview of Appendix 1 of the report which provided the performance detail for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates and a summary of the outstanding Council Tax and Non-Domestic Appeals as of 30 November 2021.

The Head of Valuation Services and Assistant ERO advised that some targets would not be met this year and that this was due to the challenging environment and pressure staff were currently working under.

Councillor Reid asked if the Appeal Committee process was ongoing in the current climate and the Head of Valuation Services and Assistant ERO advised that three had taken place recently. The Hearing held in October dealt with 30 valid Council Tax appeals and 12 invalid Council Tax appeals and the Hearings held in November and December had dealt with non-domestic appeals.

After discussion, the Board

Decided: to note the content of the report.

Item 8 – Covid-19 and Related Matters

There was submitted a report ([circulated](#)) of the 1 December 2021 by the Assessor and ERO providing Members with an update on the implications of the pandemic now and in the future. The report centred on the performance of the organisation, over this year and the following financial year.

The Assessor and ERO highlighted the recruitment issue facing every Assessor in Scotland in relation to the recruitment of Chartered Surveyors. There were several reasons for this, fewer Chartered Surveyors were being produced by universities; private practice surveying firms were also recruiting with better salaries; and all Assessors were recruiting. The Board had however been successful in recruiting trainee valuers to the organisation and attracted staff from a wider geographical area.

Councillor McKay asked what proactive steps were being taken to engage with universities to address this issue. The Assessor and ERO advised that, as Chair of the Scottish Assessor Association Training Group, universities had been approached and Napier and Caledonia Universities were now facilitating courses, several Boards were now feeding into this however it would take time for trainee valuers to qualify. The Assessor and ERO reiterated that remuneration packages required to be comparable, if not better, than the public and if possible private sector to retain Chartered Surveyors once qualified.

Councillor McKay suggested that the Board may wish to grant permission to the Assessor and ERO to liaise with South Ayrshire HR Service with a view to reviewing remuneration packages for Chartered Surveyors in a bid to resolve this staffing issue. The Chair intimated that there would be financial implications regarding any review and that these would require to be

considered during budget preparation and for long-term sustainability. The Chair suggested that the new Assessor and ERO be asked to produce a new Workforce Plan for presentation to the Board in September.

Decided:

- (1) to note the contents of the report.
- (2) to agree that the Assessor and the Management Team review the 2022/23 KPIs to reflect the changes and challenges faced by the Board;
- (3) to agree that the Assessor and ERO should remain flexible with the structure staying within the agreed budget;
- (4) to request that the Assessor and ERO contact South Ayrshire Council's HR to review the remuneration package for Chartered Surveys; and
- (5) to request that the newly appointed Assessor and ERO revise the Workforce Plan for submission to the Board in September.

Item 9 – Strategic Risk Register

There was submitted a report ([circulated](#)) of 1 December 2021 updating the Board on the risks currently faced by the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board.

Following discussion particularly in relation to recruitment, the Board

Decided:

- (1) to note the significant issues that were being felt throughout Scotland regarding the recruitment of Chartered Surveyors.
- (2) to agree the Strategic Risk Register; and
- (3) to note the remainder of the report.

Item 10 – Electoral Registration

There was submitted a report ([circulated](#)) of 20 December 2021 by the Principal Admin. and IT Development Officer updating the Board of the position regarding the Board's functions concerning Electoral Registration.

The Principal Admin. and IT Development Officer provided a verbal overview of the detail contained within Appendix 1 and 2 of the report.

After discussion, the Board

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

Item 11 – Staffing

There was submitted a report ([circulated](#)) of 21 December 2021 by the Head of Valuation Services and Assistant ERO advising Members of current staffing issues.

The Head of Valuation Services and Assistant ERO provided an overview of Appendix 1 of the report relating to absence figures, recruitment, personal development reviews and the wellbeing initiatives being undertaken within the organisation.

The Board:

Decided:

- 1) to note the Assessor and ERO's ongoing action to recruit additional staff; and
- 2) to note the remainder of the report.

Item 12 – Public Holidays 2022

There was submitted a report ([circulated](#)) of 22 December 2021 by the Head of Valuation Services and ERO advising Members of the Board's intentions regarding Public Holidays during 2022.

The Board

Decided:

- (1) to agree the allocation of Public Holidays for 2022 as set out in Section 4.3 of the report; and
- (2) to note the contents of the remainder of the report.

Any Other Competent Business

The Service Lead – Legal and Licensing further advised in relation to the proposed revised timetable for recruitment as detailed below:

Closing date for applications:	30 January 2022
Issue applications to Recruitment Subgroup:	31 January 2022
Shortleet:	3 February 2022
Assessment/Interviews:	11 February 2022

Councillor McKay intimated that it might be useful if Board Members were circulated with a copy of the revised job advert. The Chair requested that the Recruitment Subgroup Minutes, the timetable and the revised job advert be circulated to all Board Members for information.

Item 13 – Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board would take place on 15 March 2022 at 10.30am.