

AYRSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2021 at 10.30 am remotely.

Item 1 - Sederunt

Attended

East Ayrshire: Councillors: McFadzean (Chair), McKay and McMahon.

Attended

North Ayrshire: Councillors: Easdale, Glover and McClung.

Attended

South Ayrshire: Councillors: D. Campbell and Grant.

In Attendance:

Helen McPhee, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO); Harry McCormick, Principal IT and Admin Development Officer (ERO); Tom Simpson, Service Lead - Corporate Accounting (SAC); Tim Baulk, Head of Finance and IT (SAC); Wynne Carlaw, Service Lead – Democratic Governance (SAC) (Clerk); Laura Miller, Chief Internal Auditor, (SAC); Steven Hill, Senior Accountant, (EAC); Andrew Gibson, Committee Services Officer (SAC); and C. McCallum, Clerical Assistant, (SAC).

Apologies:

Councillors: A. Campbell, I Campbell and Dowey, South Ayrshire Council.
Councillors: George and Reid, North Ayrshire Council.
Councillors: Jenkins and Todd, East Ayrshire Council.

Item 1 – Sederunt

As detailed above.

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 Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board (the Board) held on 2 March 2021 were submitted.

Decided:

to approve the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 2 March 2021. Proposed by Councillor Grant and seconded by Councillor McMahon.

Item 4 – Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2021.

Item 5 – Appointment of Vice-Chair

Decided:

The Clerk, having advised that Councillor Cullen, South Ayrshire Council was no longer a member of the Joint Board, requested a nomination for the position of Vice-Chair, which he had previously held. The Board agreed that Councillor D. Campbell, South Ayrshire Council, who had taken the place of Councillor Cullen on the Joint Board, be appointed that position.

Item 6 – Internal Audit Annual Report 2020/21 and Proposed Internal Audit Plan 2021/22 – 2023/24

There was submitted a report (circulated) of 13 May 2021 by the Chief Internal Auditor (SAC) who presented the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board (AVJB) annual report on the internal audit activity during 2020/21 (including an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and internal control systems for the year ended 31 March 2021) and presented the Internal Audit Plans for 2021/22 – 2023/24.

The Chief Internal Auditor provided the Members with an overview of the Internal Audit Annual Report 2020/21 and the Internal Audit Plan 2021/22 – 2023/24 and highlighted the main areas. The Board

Decided:

- (1) to note the annual report and statement on internal controls for 2020/21, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (2) to approve the proposed changes to the strategic internal audit plan for 2021/22 – 2023/24.

Item 7 – 2020/21 Annual Accounts (Unaudited)

There was submitted a report (circulated) dated 28 May 2021 by the Treasurer to the Board presenting to the Board the unaudited Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 ('the unaudited Accounts').

Tom Simpson, Service Lead – Corporate Accounting advised that it was a statutory requirement that the Board consider the unaudited accounts before the end of August each year and provided a verbal overview.

Having considered the unaudited Annual Accounts, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report (as submitted to the Board's external auditors), noting that all figures remained subject to audit, the Board

Decided: to request that the Treasurer report back to the Board following completion of the audit.

Item 8 – Delivering Good Governance – 2020/21 Assessment

There was submitted a report (circulated) dated 1 May 2021 by the Assessor and ERO reporting on the completion of the Board's Annual Local Code of Delivering Good Governance for 2020/21 and inviting Members of the Board to review the 2020/21 year end assessment against the Board's Governance and Performance Framework and its Corporate Plan.

The Board

Decided: to agree the 2020/21 report.

Item 9 – Strategic Risk Register

There was submitted a report (circulated) dated 1 May 2021 by the Assessor and ERO updating the Board on the risks currently being faced by Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board and the strategic risks Covid-19 had brought. There were a number of operational risks assessments related to Covid-19 which had been completed and did not form part of the Strategic Risk Register.

The Board

Decided: to note the contents of the report and agree the Strategic Risk Register.

Item 10 – Annual Report 2020-2021

There was submitted a report (circulated) dated 1 May 2021 by the Assessor and ERO highlighting the challenges affecting the future direction of the Board.

Following a question from a Member of the Board as to the reason why the number of electors coming off the Open Register was increasing, it was noted that there was now greater knowledge about the Open Register and the fact that more people had access to it. It was also explained that young electors aged 14 to 16 years were automatically opted out of the Open Register and would remain so unless they decided to opt in.

The Board

Decided:

- (1) to note the contents of the report;
- (2) to note the impact that Covid-19 has had on service delivery; and
- (3) to agree the suggested targets for 2021/22.

Item 11 – Workforce Plan 2021-2024

There was submitted a report (circulated) dated 1 May 2021 by the Assessor and ERO providing the Board with an update on the progress that the Assessor and ERO had made on the development of a revised Workforce Plan.

Having considered section 15.0 Service Improvements in the Workforce Plan and section 14.0 Assessor and ERO in the Workforce Action Plan, the Board

Decided: to approve

- (1) the Reporting Template, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report; and
- (2) the remainder of the Workforce Plan, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

Item 12 – Corporate Plan 2021-2024

There was submitted a report (circulated) dated 2 April 2021 by the Assessor and ERO outlining the priorities of Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board in the years 2021 to 2024 which detailed the key areas that would be targeted and work that would be undertaken to deliver the Service Plan (Corporate Plan - Appendix 2 of the report).

The Board

Decided: to approve the Corporate Plan 2021-24 and note the contents of the report.

Item 13 – Complaints Handling Report – 1 September 2019 – 31 March 21

There was submitted a report (circulated) dated 21 May 2021 by the Head of Valuation Services and Assistant ERO advising Members on the outcome of the Board's complaints handling activities during the period 1 September 2019 to 31 March 2021. During the period of the report the Board had continued to operate the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) original Model Complaints Handling Procedure. However, at the Board's meeting held on 2 March 2021, the Board agreed to adopt the SPSO's new revised Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) with effect from 1 April 2021.

The new MCHP had a different reporting procedure and it was therefore agreed that a report would be presented to the Board that would close off the old MCHP resulting in a report that covered the period 1 September 2019 (the anniversary of introducing the MCHP) and 31 March 2021 (the end of the old MCHP).

The Board

Decided:

- (1) to approve the performance indicators, as shown in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (2) to agree that the performance indicators be published on the Board's website; and
- (3) to otherwise note the contents of the report.

Item 14 – Public Sector Equality Duty 2021-25

There was submitted a report (circulated) dated 21 May 2021 by the Head of Valuation Services and Assistant ERO seeking approval of the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board's Public Sector Equality Duty 2021-25.

The Board

Decided:

- (1) to approve the contents of the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board's Public Sector Equality Duty 2021-25;
- (2) to agree that the final report be published on the Board's website; and
- (3) to otherwise note the contents of the report.

Item 15 – Electoral Registration

There was submitted a report (circulated) dated 13 May 2021 by the Principal Admin. and IT Development Officer updating Members on the position with regard to the Board's function relating to Electoral Registration.

The Board

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

Item 16 – Assessor and ERO's Appraisal

The Clerk advised that the Board had previously agreed at its meeting in March 2020, to arrange the EROs Appraisal, however it had been postponed as a result of lockdown. It was now proposed that the Appraisal would take place following this year's summer recess and be reported to the Board's September meeting. It was noted that the Appraisal Panel comprised six councillors, two from each authority, and that one of the Panel members had been Councillor Siobhian Brown, and that as she was no longer a Member of the Board, a replacement was sought.

Decided: to agree that Councillor D. Campbell, South Ayrshire Council be appointed to the Appraisal Panel.

Item 17 - Any Other Items of Business

No further business was raised.

Item 18 – Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board would take place on the 21st September 2021 at 10.30am.

The meeting ended at 11.10 a.m.