



Grampian Valuation Joint Board

Friday, 21 June 2019

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at a Meeting of the **Grampian Valuation Joint Board** is to be held at **Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX** on **Friday, 21 June 2019 at 10:30**.

BUSINESS

1. **Sederunt**
2. **Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests ***
3. **Minute of the Meeting of 1 February 2019** 5 - 10
4. **Revenue Budget Monitoring 1 April to 31 May 2019** 11 - 16
5. **Unaudited Accounts for 2018-19** 17 - 90
6. **Complaints Report** 91 - 94
7. **Governance Report** 95 -
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8. **Register of Electors Report** 127 -
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9. **Valuation Roll and Council Tax Report** 131 -
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10. **Risk Report** 139 -
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11. **IRRV Conference 2019 Report** 153 -
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12. **Question Time *****

Consider any oral question on matters delegated to the Committee in terms of the Council's Scheme of Administration.

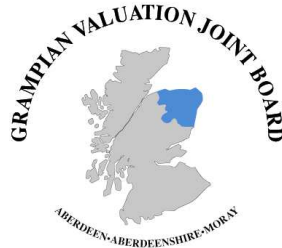
13. **Any Other Competent Business**

GUIDANCE NOTES

- * **Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests** - At the beginning of the meeting, immediately following the Sederunt, the Convener will, in terms of Standing Order 25, seek declarations from individuals on any financial or other interests.

- ** **Written Questions** - Any member can put one question to the Convener about relevant and competent business not already on the Agenda for a meeting of the Board. No member can put more than one question at any meeting. The member must give notice in writing of their question to the Clerk 4 working days prior to the meeting. A copy of any written answer provided by the Convener will be tabled at the start of the relevant meeting. The member who has put the question may, after the answer has been given, ask one supplementary question directly related to the subject matter but no discussion will be allowed.

- *** **Question Time** - At each ordinary meeting of the Board, 10 minutes will be allowed for question time when any member can put one question to the Convener regarding any matter within the remit of the Board. The Member who has put the question may, after the answer has been given, ask one supplementary question directly related to the subject matter, but no discussion will be allowed. In the event of further information/investigation being required in order to answer the question, the Clerk will arrange for a written answer to be provided within 7 working days.



Grampian Valuation Joint Board

SEDERUNT

Councillor Graham Leadbitter (Chair)
Councillor Bill Cormie (Depute Chair)
Councillor Charles Buchan (Member)
Councillor Alan Donnelly (Member)
Councillor Gordon Graham (Member)
Councillor Andy Kille (Member)
Councillor Neil MacGregor (Member)
Councillor Ron McKail (Member)
Councillor John Reynolds (Member)
Councillor Michael Roy (Member)
Councillor Sandy Stuart (Member)
Councillor Brian Topping (Member)
Councillor Judy Whyte (Member)
Councillor Frank Brown (Member)
Councillor Theresa Coull (Member)

Clerk Name: Tracey Sutherland
Clerk Telephone: 01343 563014
Clerk Email: tracey.sutherland@moray.gov.uk



Minute of Meeting of the Grampian Valuation Joint Board

Friday, 01 February 2019

Woodhill House, Aberdeen,

PRESENT

Councillor Frank Brown, Councillor Charles Buchan, Councillor Bill Cormie, Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor Alan Donnelly, Councillor Gordon Graham, Councillor Andy Kille, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Ron McKail, Councillor Sandy Stuart, Councillor Brian Topping, Councillor Judy Whyte, Councillor Neil MacGregor (for Councillor Christian Allard), Councillor Sandra Macdonald (for Councillor John Reynolds)

APOLOGIES

Councillor Christian Allard, Councillor John Reynolds, Councillor Michael Roy

IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance at the above meeting were Councillor Neil McGregor substituting for Councillor Allard, Councillor Sandra MacDonald substituting for Councillor Reynolds, Ian Milton, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, Lorraine Paisey, Treasurer to the Board and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer (Moray Council).

1. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests *

In terms of Standing Order 25 and the Councillor's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations from group leaders or spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions taken on how Members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of Members' interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting on 16 November 2018

The minute of the meeting of the Board dated 16 November 2018 was submitted and approved by the Board.

3. Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement 1 April to 31 Dec 2018

A report by the Treasurer to the Board was submitted to consider the Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement for the period 1 April to 31 December 2018.

The Board noted that an estimated underspend of £144,000 is predicted. Of this, an estimated £62,000 would be transferred to the General Fund, with refunds to the constituent authorities totalling £82,000.

Following a lengthy discussion Councillor Kille proposed and seconded by Councillor Whyte that the entire £144,000 estimated underspend is returned to the constituent authorities.

As an amendment, Councillor Leadbitter, seconded by Councillor Cormie, moved that the estimated underspend be divided as detailed in the report.

On a division there voted:-

For the motion (7)	Councillors A Kille, J Whyte, A Donnelly, G Graham, R McKail, S MacDonald and F Brown
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For the Amendment (7)	Councillors G Leadbitter, B Cormie, N MacGregor, C Buchan, T Coull, S Stuart and B Topping
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Abstentions (0)

There being an equality of votes Councillor Leadbitter with the casting vote, voted for the amendment and the amendment became the finding of the meeting.

Therefore, the Board agreed to note:-

- i) the revenue monitoring statement for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018; and
- ii) the estimated outturn forecast for the financial year 2018/19

4. Revenue Budget 2019-20

A report by the Treasurer to the Board asked the Board to consider and agree the Revenue budget for 2019/20 and the requisitions to the three constituent authorities.

During consideration of the report Councillor McKail requested a report on the options for reducing the office space used by the Assessor and ERO staff by making effective use of technology and current space. In response the Assessor and ERO agreed to carry out an option appraisal and bring a report back to a future meeting of the Board.

Councillor Leadbitter questioned whether there would be any scope for the Assessor and ERO to speak to the constituent Local Authorities regarding the use of pool cars. In response the Assessor and ERO agreed to provide a report to a future meeting of the board on the practicalities of introducing pool cars.

Following further consideration, Councillor McKail proposed a motion, seconded by Councillor Donnelly to approve a budget of £4,292,000 which is in line with the

2018/19 budget. With the savings being achieved from a reduction in staffing but gave no indication of which staff.

In response, Councillor Leadbitter queried that it would be difficult to set a reduced budget without knowing where the £171,000 reduction could be saved. He further added that the motion was not competent as no alternative figures have been produced.

Councillor Kille added that legal advice had been sought from legal advisers in Aberdeenshire Council who had advised that the motion was competent.

Councillor Whyte suggested that there should be a budget setting meeting prior to the meeting where the next year's budget is set. Councillor Kille agreed that the Board should consider an alternative way of setting the budget.

In response the Treasurer confirmed that the lateness of the Scottish Government budget announcement had prevented an earlier report to the Board as she had hoped to provide an interim paper for the October/November meeting. The Treasurer agreed that for future years an interim report would be provided to the board to allow members the opportunity to discuss the proposals. The Treasurer further added that the requisitions for 2019/20 needed to be agreed at this meeting.

Councillor Leadbitter, seconded by Councillor Topping proposed an amendment that the budget be agreed as set out in the recommendations of the report.

On a division there voted:-

For the motion (7)	Councillors A Kille, J Whyte, A Donnelly, G Graham, R McKail, S MacDonald and F Brown
--------------------	---

For the Amendment (7)	Councillors G Leadbitter, B Cormie, N MacGregor, C Buchan, T Coull, S Stuart and B Topping
-----------------------	--

Abstentions (0)

There being an equality of votes Councillor Leadbitter with the casting vote, voted for the amendment and the amendment became the finding of the meeting.

Therefore, the Board agreed to:

- i) note the changing legislation framework within which the Assessor's services work as set out in paragraph 3.2;
- ii) note the level of uncertainty regarding key expenditure assumptions as set out in Section 4 of this report;
- iii) approve the budget for 2019/20 is set at £4,463,000 as detailed in Appendix 1, which includes £99,000 to meet the additional demands of the Non Domestic Rates reform; and
- iv) approve the requisitions to the constituent authorities for 2019/20 are set at £4,463,000 as detailed in the table at paragraph 6.2.

5. Annual Audit Plan 2018-19

A report was submitted by the External Auditor to update the Board on the Audit Plan for 2018/19.

Following consideration the Board noted the update on f the Audit Plan for 2018/19.

6. Internal Audit Plan

A report was submitted by the Treasurer advising the Board of the planned internal audit coverage of the Assessor's Services for the financial year ended 31 March 2019.

Following consideration the Board agreed to note the report.

7. Register of Electors

A report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer updated the Board on the performance details following the publication of the revised registers on 1 December 2018 and update the Board on current developments in electoral registration.

Following consideration the Board noted the content of the report.

8. Valuation Roll and Council Tax

A report was submitted by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer to advise the Board of current activities and performance levels achieved during the period 1 April to 31 September 2018.

Following consideration of the report Members agreed to note the current position.

9. Governance

A report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer asked the Board to consider the updates to the employment policy framework and the requirement to ensure that related party returns and registers of interest are maintained.

Following consideration the Board agreed to:

- i) approve the update on the employment policy framework for 2018 for Health and Work, Recruitment and Selection, Code of Conduct and smoking;
- ii) identify related parties within the annual accounts in relation to members and senior officers; and
- iii) introduce a register of interests returns for senior officers.

10. Question Time ***

Councillor Topping asked whether training could be organised before or after a future meeting on the Board.

In response the Assessor and ERO confirmed that training could take place following the next meeting of the Board on 21 June 2019 covering the work of the Assessor staff and also include governance in terms of the responsibilities between Officers and Board Members.



REPORT TO: GRAMPIAN VALUATION JOINT BOARD ON 21 JUNE 2019

SUBJECT: REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL TO 31 MAY 2019

BY: TREASURER TO THE BOARD

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement for the period 1 April to 31 May 2019.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board considers the Revenue Monitoring Statement to 31 May 2019.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1.1 At its meeting on 1 February 2019, the Board agreed the Revenue Budget for 2019/20 (paragraph 5 of the Minute refers) and approved that the requisitions to constituent authorities should be set at £4,463,000.
- 3.2 The **APPENDIX** shows the monitoring position to 31 May 2019 against the budget agreed in February. It gives details of the 2019/20 Revenue Budget, actual expenditure to date and the variance of expenditure against budget to date.
- 3.3 Total net expenditure at 31 May 2019 is £706,000 which is an underspend against budget to date of £42,000.
- 3.4 There is a £26,000 underspend against budget to date within employee costs. At budget preparation time, the pay award was still being negotiated; budgets included a 3.0% increase in 2019/20 which has since been agreed and implemented. The variance arises from vacant posts in the establishment.
- 3.5 Property Costs budgets were reduced by £1,000 from 2018/19, in repairs and maintenance. There are minor variances against budget to date in these headings.

- 3.6 There is a small variance within Transport Costs to date, which will continue to be monitored.
- 3.7 The total budget for Supplies and Services increased in total in 2019/20 by £16,000 to £683,000, with a reduction in the budget for postage outweighed by an increase in IT maintenance and support. Postage is £37,000 under budget to date and IT maintenance and support is £21,000 over budget to date.
- 3.8 The budget for postage was reduced by £60,000, reflecting the current expenditure and trends in recent years. Expenditure on postage can be vary considerably year on year. The expenditure in 2018/19 of £203,000 reflected a relatively 'normal' year for the service, i.e. with no major election or referendum taking place. With an election and/or referendum, annual postage costs could be as high as £280,000.
- 3.9 IT Maintenance and Support budgets were increased by £72,000; of this £60,000 is for additional IT and portal costs resulting from the Barclay review recommendations to reform the Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) system in Scotland. The NDR reform also incorporated a staff budget of £39,000 to recruit undergraduates on a temporary basis in the summer months with a view to offering them full time employment next year. If successful, this proposal should see the recruitment of suitably qualified personnel.
- 3.10 Support charges are processed at 31 March as part of the year end closedown.
- 3.11 There are no other significant variances to report at this early stage in the year.
- 3.12 Since 2014/15 the Cabinet Office has given the Board £1,107,000 in funding to cover the additional cost that IER has placed on the overall cost of electoral registration. During 2019/20 budget setting, the Board were made aware of the uncertainty regarding the level of central government grant funding for Individual Electoral Registration (IER). The budget was set at £130,000 with the expectation that any initial allocation could be supplemented with an evidence-based case for further funds, through a Justification Led Bid (JLB). The Cabinet Office recently sent a letter to all Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) informing them that they can expect to receive confirmation of IER allocations for 2019/20 in early July 2019.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The total net expenditure as at 31 May 2019 is £706,000 giving an underspend against budget to date of £42,000.
- 4.2 The Assessor and his Senior Management Team closely monitor and control budgets in order to keep within agreed levels and generate savings wherever possible throughout the year.

- 4.3 A detailed estimated outturn statement will be reported at the Board meeting in October 2019.

Author of Report:	Susan Souter, Accountant.
Background papers:	Held within Accountancy Section, Moray Council
Date:	June 2019

**GRAMPIAN VALUATION JOINT BOARD REVENUE MONITORING STATEMENT
FOR PERIOD 1 APRIL TO 31 MAY 2019**

Line No.	2019-20 Total Budget	2019-20 Budget to Date	Actual 31 May 2019	Variance 31 May 2019
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Employee Costs</u>				
1 Salaries	2,645	436	418	18
2 National Insurance	271	45	42	3
3 Superannuation	509	84	79	5
4 Additional Pensions	23	4	4	0
5 Other Employee Costs	3	2	2	0
6 Training	10	4	4	0
Total Employee Costs	3,461	575	549	26
<u>Property Costs</u>				
7 Accommodation Charges	319	82	81	1
8 Repairs and Maintenance	3	1	0	1
9 Energy Costs	8	1	2	(1)
10 Cleaning	4	0	0	0
Total Property Costs	334	84	83	1
<u>Transport Costs</u>				
11 Staff Travel and Subsistence	73	12	14	(2)
Total Transport Costs	73	12	14	(2)
<u>Supplies & Services</u>				
12 Equipment, Furniture & Materials	2	0	0	0
13 Protective Clothing	1	0	0	0
14 Text & Reference Books	10	1	1	0
15 Printing & Stationery	34	2	1	1
16 Postages	220	37	0	37
17 Telephones	7	1	2	(1)
18 Advertising	7	0	0	0
19 IT Maintenance & Support	232	35	56	(21)
20 Canvass Expenses	75	0	0	0
21 Valuation Appeals	56	0	0	0
22 Fees, Charges & Subs	3	0	0	0
23 Specialist Services	35	1	0	1
24 Other Supplies & Services	1	0	0	0
Total Supplies & Services	683	77	60	17
<u>Support Services</u>				
25 Lead Authority Charge	57	0	0	0
Total Support Services	57	0	0	0
Gross Expenditure	4,608	748	706	42
<u>Income</u>				
26 Sales and Other Income	(13)	0	0	0
27 Government Grant and recharges	(130)	0	0	0
28 Interest on Revenue balances	(2)	0	0	0
Total Income	(145)	0	0	0
Net Expenditure	4,463	748	706	42
29 Requisitions	(4,463)	(753)	(753)	0
(Surplus)/Deficit for Year	0	(5)	(47)	42



REPORT TO: GRAMPIAN VALUATION JOINT BOARD ON 21 JUNE 2019

SUBJECT: UNAUDITED ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2018/19

BY: TREASURER TO THE BOARD

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the unaudited Annual Accounts for the Grampian Valuation Joint Board for the year ended 31 March 2019.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board considers the unaudited Annual Accounts of the Grampian Valuation Joint Board for the year ending 31 March 2019.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Joint Boards are required to account for their activities to the communities that they serve and to have the financial effect of those activities audited by External Auditors.
- 3.2 In accordance with the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, it is a statutory requirement that the unaudited Annual Accounts 2018/19 are presented to the Board's appointed Auditor by the 30 June in the next financial year. Although this is the statutory deadline, there is an agreement that Joint Board Accounts will be completed by 31 May and the Annual Accounts were submitted to the External Auditor, Audit Scotland on 29 May 2019.
- 3.3 The unaudited Annual Accounts for 2018/19 have been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards.

4. 2018/19 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

- 4.1 Copies of the unaudited Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019 have been distributed with this report.

- 4.2 The Board approved the 2018/19 budget of £4,292,000 at their meeting on 26 January 2018 (paragraph 5 refers). The net expenditure for the year was £4,088,000, an underspend of £204,000. This is discussed in more detail in paragraphs 4.12 to 4.16 below.
- 4.3 The Board at its meeting on 28 January 2011 (paragraph 4 refers) agreed to create a General Reserve from the surplus generated in that year and that transfers to the General Fund would be restricted to 3% of the total budget in any one year and that the cumulative balance of the fund would not exceed 5% of the total budget. Under the policy the maximum amount that can be transferred to the General Fund in 2018/19 is £62,000, increasing the balance of the fund from £153,000 to £215,000. Transfer of the maximum allowed under the policy was agreed at the meeting of the Board on 1 February 2019 (paragraph 3 of the Minute refers).
- 4.4 Following the transfer to the General Fund of £62,000, an anticipated £135,000 falls due to be returned to the constituent authorities. The confirmed audited amount will be reported at the Board meeting in August 2019 for approval.

2018/19 Proposed Surplus Refund to Authorities		
	%	£
Aberdeen City Council	39.07	53,000
Aberdeenshire Council	44.59	60,000
Moray Council	16.34	22,000
Total	100.00	135,000

- 4.5 A Capital Fund was established in 2002/03 using the Board's share from the sale of Woodhill House. The balance of the fund at 31 March 2018 was £55,000. A new Electoral Management System was purchased and is now operational. This cost £55,000 and so exhausted the Capital Fund. Further capital expenditure of £7,000 was required for a new telephone system in the Banff and Elgin offices to be installed in 2018/19 and this was funded from revenue.
- 4.6 The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account shows a deficit of £332,000 on the provision of services for the year. Adjustments are required to reverse the statutory accounting charges and replace with charges relating to Local Government statutory regulations. These adjustments include the removal of the full charge for pension costs and holiday pay earned in accordance with International Accounting Standard 19 Employee Benefits (IAS19). These are replaced by superannuation contributions payable and an accrual for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year e.g. annual leave entitlement carried forward, resulting in a reduction of £399,000. The depreciation charge of £2,000 is also removed. With the capital fund expended, capital expenditure of £7,000 towards for the telephone system was funded from revenue.
- 4.7 This results in a net transfer to the General Fund of £62,000.

- 4.8 The Movement in Reserves Statement on page 29 of the Annual Accounts shows the movement in the year on the various reserves held by the Board, analysed into Usable Reserves, i.e. those that can be used to fund expenditure, and Unusable Reserves, i.e. those that have been created for specific accounting entries and do not represent distributable funds.
- 4.9 The Usable Reserves show the reserves which members of the Board have control over. These consist of the General Fund balance of £215,000
- 4.10 The Unusable Reserves record accounting entries which the Board is required to disclose and do not represent funds available for use. These include balances for the Revaluation Reserve, Capital Adjustment Account, Pensions Reserve and the Employee Statutory Adjustment Account. More detail on the purpose of these reserves and the movements during the year in them are described in Note 16 to the Accounts.

Significant Variances between Budget and Actual for 2018/19

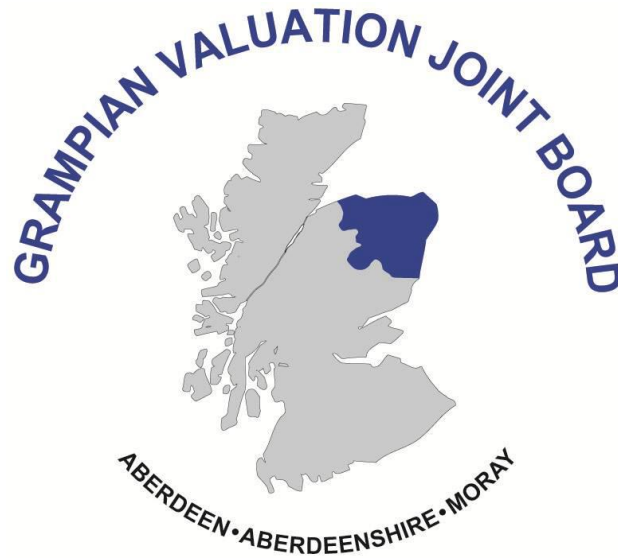
- 4.11 The actual result for the year, set out in the usual budget monitoring format, forms **APPENDIX 1** to this report.
- 4.12 Salary costs were under budget by £144,000, mainly due to vacancies and part vacancies throughout the year. An element of vacancies is to be expected and a vacancy management provision of £52,000 was made in the 2018/19 budget, based on 1.4FTE vacancies. The net effect of actual vacancies in the year is an underspend of £92,000.
- 4.13 Property costs were under budget in total by £14,000. The main variance was a £14,000 reduction in the Woodhill House service charge from Aberdeenshire Council for 2017/18 that was carried forward into 2018/19. Energy costs were over budget by £3,000 due to an increase in the cost of the electricity for the Banff office.
- 4.14 Transport costs were £12,000 over budget, with additional travel incurred to cover a vacancy in the Banff office from Aberdeen.
- 4.15 Supplies and Services is under budget in total by £71,000, predominantly from an underspend on postages. Expenditure on postages varies considerably on a year by year basis. The expenditure this year reflects that no major election or referendum took place. There were other minor variances in supplies and services.
- 4.16 Income received during the year was above budget by £40,000 in total. Income from the sale of electoral registers was higher than expected by £5,000. The government grant for Individual Electoral Registration (IER) was expected to be less than the amount received in 2017/18 and was budgeted for at £125,000. The initial grant received was £103,000. A justification-led bid of £57,000 was submitted to the Cabinet Office and was approved, resulting in an over achievement on budget of £35,000.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Board met the statutory deadline for the submission of the annual accounts to the External Auditor on 29 May 2019.
- 5.2 The Board generated a surplus of £204,000 for the year to 31 March 2019. It is anticipated that a total of £135,000 will be returned to constituent authorities following the annual audit.

Author of Report:	Susan Souter, Accountant
Background papers:	Held within Accountancy Section, Moray Council
Date:	

UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS



GRAMPIAN VALUATION JOINT BOARD

**ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 MARCH 2019**

If you need information from Moray Council in a different language or format, such as Braille, audio tape or large print, please contact:

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Treasurer to the Board, Financial Services, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX



01343 563125



accountancy.support@moray.gov.uk

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MANAGEMENT COMMENTARY

Strategy and objectives

Unlike local authorities that are charged with providing a wide range of services within their local authority area, the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer is charged with the provision of valuation assessment and registration services across Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Moray Council areas.

These strictly defined and regulated services are delivered by the Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer, the responsible independent statutory official, in partnership with the Grampian Valuation Joint Board. The Board is required to appoint and resource the Assessor; the constituent authorities are required to appoint and resource an Electoral Registration Officer (ERO). By agreement, the Board has undertaken this responsibility on behalf of the local authorities.

The priorities for 2018/19 were

- Conduct a full household canvass under the individual electoral registration (IER) regime;
- Publish revised registers by 1 December 2018;
- Replace the electoral registration computer system;
- Maximise valuation roll appeal resolution;
- Maintain a complete and accurate Valuation roll in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975;
- Maintain a complete and accurate valuation list in terms of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Monitoring regimes

The Electoral Commission has a performance monitoring framework in place for EROs across the UK.

The Cabinet Office in its capacity as lead department for the implementation of individual electoral registration across the UK required performance returns from EROs that were shared with the Electoral Commission

Key performance indicators set by the Board and submitted to the Scottish Government monitor the operational performance in terms of the valuation list and valuation roll.

MANAGEMENT COMMENTARY (continued)

Business model

The organisation delivers the outcomes that are required by statute in a dual strand approach with the Board providing resources and oversight and the Assessor and ERO delivering the specialised professional services of valuation assessment and registration from offices in Aberdeen, Banff and Elgin.

The Assessor and ERO works closely with the other Scottish Assessors and EROs via the Scottish Assessors' Association (SAA) to deliver a service across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray council areas that is consistent with that being delivered across all 32 local authority areas in Scotland. The sharing of expertise and representation through the SAA is a unique example of shared services across Scotland that includes a single website and data source for a wide range of stakeholders that includes citizens, business, third sector, public agencies, government and research bodies.

Key performance indicators measure the effectiveness of the organisation's valuation assessment role and the Electoral Commission's performance framework monitors the registration outcomes.

During 2018/19 the organisation met all the demands placed upon it in terms of valuation assessment and registration. Apart from the Cairngorm National Park election on 21 March 2019 and some local community council elections, no other local or national elections were scheduled for the year. This year had therefore been identified as the ideal opportunity to migrate from our in-house electoral registration system to an externally provided system as part of our risk mitigation strategy. This proceeded during the fourth quarter of the year immediately upon conclusion of the annual household canvass in December 2018.

In stark contrast to the registration service, the operational demands on the valuation service were extremely high with intense focus from all stakeholders on the ability of the service to meet the appeal disposal workload set by the local valuation appeal committees.

The principal risks and uncertainties continue to relate to national policy and resourcing. Whilst the organisation has a history of successfully implementing change, particularly in relation to assessment for domestic taxation and electoral registration, uncertainties continued to prevail in 2018/19. During the year significant work has been undertaken to estimate the shape and related requirements, and their costs, for NDR reform. At the same time, the organisation has been in reactive mode in relation to defending assessments against concerted challenge.

A fair review of the business

In terms of our priorities –

Conduct a full household canvass under the individual electoral registration (IER) regime.

The canvass of 278,637 households achieved a return rate of 84% by 1 December 2018. This was an improvement on the corresponding return rate of 79% as at 1 December 2016 and 83% as at 1 December 2017. We have continued to chase up non-returns and by mid-March 2019 the return rate had risen to 85%. We have also managed to increase the proportion of households who respond to the canvass by automated response channels such as online, text or automated telephone options from 79,606 in 2016 to 95,704 in 2017 and 104,965 in 2018. Automated responses are more efficient as they do not require back-office processing.

MANAGEMENT COMMENTARY (continued)

Publish revised registers 1 December 2018;

We completed our door to door canvass of final reminder properties earlier than in previous years and statistical data on our registration activities has been submitted to the Electoral Commission for its report on the December 2018 registers that is due to be published in May 2019. Meantime, there has been no indication from the Commission that we have not met the performance standards.

Maximise valuation roll appeal resolution;

The 2017 revaluation had a significant impact on ratepayers in the North East and the volume of appeals is greater than had been the case in previous revaluation years. The sensitivity of the situation was principally due to the slowdown in the NE property market that became apparent after the valuation date of 1 April 2015 but before the revaluation values came into force on 1 April 2017. Against this backdrop the service was severely challenged by ratepayers who had been encouraged to lodge appeals against their rateable values through campaigns in mainstream and social media along with advice from high profile professionals and politicians. The resultant heightened level of expectation for significant reductions in values through the appeal resolution process service has been proven to be wrong and the resultant appeal resolution process has therefore been particularly demanding in terms of expertise and resources.

A significant decision, published by the Lands Valuation Appeal Court in March 2018¹ supported the stance of the Grampian Assessor, did however add clarity to the law concerning changes in the economy and has assisted the appeal resolution process to a degree. However, the majority of appeals had essentially all been lodged ahead of the decision. In terms of numbers, the valuation service has resolved revaluation appeals against assessments for 3,627 properties and a further 3,361 running roll appeals. This represents the highest volume of appeal resolution ever achieved over 12 months in Grampian. In terms of accuracy, the most recent figures published by the Scottish Government show that the losses in rateable value through resolution of Revaluation appeals in Grampian is the lowest in Scotland at only 2%².

Maintain a complete and accurate Valuation roll in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975

&

Maintain a complete and accurate valuation list in terms of the Local Government Finance Act 1992

The last two priorities make use of quantitative target based performance indicators rather than qualitative measures and as such can at times be misleading. In terms of overall numbers, the number of assessments of domestic and non-domestic properties being made within the 90 day performance timeframe when compared to the previous year has increased by 6% with 4,882 assessments in 2018/19 compared to 4,619 for the previous year. We met our performance target of 94% of new dwellings being banded in the 90 day timeframe but did not manage to make 70% of valuation roll updates within the same 90 day timeframe. The concentration of our resources on our priority of maximising appeal resolution rates did impact on updates to the valuation roll to the extent that 59% of updates were made within the 90 day timeframe.

¹ The Assessor for Grampian v Anderson, Anderson and Brown LLP and others 2018 at <https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/docs/default-source/cos-general-docs/pdf-docs-for-opinions/2018csih15.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

² Non-domestic Rates Revaluation Appeals 2018-19 Q3 <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Local-Government-Finance/NDR-Rates-Relief/Appeals2018-19Q3>

MANAGEMENT COMMENTARY (continued)

In overall terms the organisation met its priorities for 2018/19. It has worked tirelessly to give ratepayers in the Grampian area not only extremely accurate rateable values, but also to maximise appeal resolution to provide the certainty that is so important to property occupiers and taxpayers. Meantime it has rolled out a new IT system for electoral registration and continued to deliver routine business as usual canvass, rolling registration, running roll and council tax update. Once again, the organisation has shown itself to be capable of responding and delivering.

Future developments

The priorities over the next two years relate to all three of our service areas. In relation to the Valuation roll, the completion of the revaluation appeal process and preparations necessary to deliver the next revaluation of non-domestic properties reflecting the reforms currently being implemented by government is absolutely critical. This will involve upgrading our capacity to meet the additional workloads of a three-year revaluation cycle.

We also have the challenge of implementing the electoral canvass reforms that are scheduled to replace the current unsustainable model. There are also the wider electoral reforms currently being considered by the Scottish Government that we will need to prioritise whilst we also work to optimise the recently installed electoral registration system.

Finally from a governance viewpoint we need to continue with our process of updating and modernising our governance arrangements to streamline and improve efficiency across the organisation whilst also seeking to ensure that we maximise our efficiency in terms of costs and service delivery.

These priorities involve many unknowns. Ratepayers' appeals against their assessments are by their very nature driven by the ratepayer rather than the Assessor. Our role is therefore essentially reactive; the NDR reforms are still at an outline stage in the NDR (Scotland) Bill with much of the detail to follow in secondary legislation. Similarly the electoral reforms in terms of canvass and franchise are still at the outline stage and will require a high degree of agility to ensure that implementation of the reforms does not impact on our service delivery. Finally, the question of resources also carries uncertainties and whilst the government has committed to provide additional funding for Assessors by way of the NDR Bill through to 2024/25, this funding will be channelled via the local government settlement and as such the organisation will need to ensure that requisitions are sufficient to continue to meet operational requirements. This must be viewed with the real prospect of top-up funding from the Cabinet Office being withdrawn on the implementation of the proposed canvass reforms.

Key performance indicators (KPI's)

The organisation's code of corporate governance established a KPI reporting and three-year review regime. They seek to quantify the effectiveness of the organisation's activities in relation to the valuation roll of non-domestic property assessments and the valuation list of domestic property council tax band allocations. The Assessor and ERO provides performance reports at every meeting of the Board and an annual public performance report is published online.

The Electoral Commission has reviewed the performance framework for electoral registration officers and for 2018/19 is focussing on qualitative performance monitoring in preference to target-based quantitative indices. This move to qualitative indices reflects concern regarding reliance on quantitative indicators.

MANAGEMENT COMMENTARY (continued)

Financial Performance for 2018/19

The public sector in Scotland continues to face severe financial pressures. In setting the 2018/19 budget the Board was conscious of the need of the constituent authorities to achieve savings. With employee costs representing over 75% of the revenue expenditure budget, there was little scope to make efficiencies without impacting on the level of service. The Board approved the procurement of a new Electoral Management System (EMS) which is designed to meet the demands of individual electoral registration, and a new telephone system in Woodhill House, after the existing landlines were being withdrawn. Some of these costs were met from the Capital Fund, which is now exhausted. The EMS has ongoing licensing costs for the next five years that are included in the revenue budget.

At the meeting of the Board on the 26 January 2018, revenue budgeted net expenditure of £4.292m for 2018/19 was approved (2017/18 £4.039m), a 6.3% increase.

The actual net expenditure was £4.087m (2017/18 £4.095m) resulting in an underspend of £0.204m for the year. Of this total, £0.007m was used to cover Capital funded from Revenue, £0.135m will be returned to the constituent authorities and £0.062m was transferred into the General Fund Reserve.

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement shows a deficit of £0.332m on the provision of services for the year. After allowing for the reversal of statutory charges for International Accounting Standard 19 (IAS19) of £0.392m and depreciation totalling £0.002m, the net transfer to the General Fund is £0.062m, the maximum permitted under the Board's Reserves Policy.

The table below shows a summary of the figures for the main variances between budget and actual for the year to 31 March 2019.

	2018/19 Budget £000	2018/19 Actual £000	2018/19 Variance £000
Employee benefit expenses	3,604	3,512	92
Other service expenses	1,071	998	73
Support service recharges	57	58	(1)
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	2	2	-
Interest payments	93	93	-
Requisitions	(4,157)	(4,157)	-
Government grants and other service income	(131)	(171)	40
Interest and investment income	(3)	(3)	-
Net Under/(over) spend Against Budget	536	332	204

Of the £0.092m underspend in Employee expenses, £0.087m relates to vacant posts and £0.005m of training. Other service expenses were under spent by £0.073m; this includes an underspend of £0.014m for property costs due to a reduction in the Woodhill House service charge for 2017/18 that was carried forward, and overspends for Non Domestic Rates for Woodhill House and unbudgeted Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (LBTT), a tax applied on the lease of Woodhill House; an overspend on Staff Transport costs of £0.012m for canvassers mileage; and an underspend in Supplies and Services of £0.071m, primarily Postage costs.

MANAGEMENT COMMENTARY (continued)

Government grants and other service income exceeded budget by £0.04m; government grant funding received for IER was initially below the budgeted level, however a Justification Led Bid was submitted to the Cabinet Office to recover additional IER-related costs incurred in the year, and was granted in full. Sales of electoral registers were also above budget.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The organisation maintains and reviews an operational and strategic risk register.

The principal risks and uncertainties relate to a fairly dynamic valuation assessment and registration statutory framework. As referred to above, funding responsibilities between central and local government are similarly fluid and the requirement to deliver enhanced services and reduced demands on the public purse present major challenges.

Apart from the normal control measures in terms of financial and operational planning, the Assessor and ERO is seeking to mitigate such risk and uncertainty through partnership working via the SAA and also external agencies. He is President of the Scottish Assessors Association, a member of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland, a member of the RICS rating and local taxation practice group and the Institute of revenues Rating and Valuation. He also works with COSLA, the Scottish Government, UK Government, the Electoral Commission, and chairs the Scottish Ratepayers Forum and Scottish Rating Surveyors Forum – both of these bodies being part of a consultation framework established by the SAA to improve the engagement with all stakeholders in the NDR system. He has provided evidence to the Local Government and Communities Committee in 2017 and 2018 and is scheduled to appear before the committee in 2019. Through these roles the organisation has a unique insight into potential developments in the valuation assessment and registration fields and therefore is able to minimise uncertainty as far as is possible.

Retirement Benefits

Employees are eligible to join the North East Scotland Pension Fund, a Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), administered by Aberdeen City Council. Note 22 to the annual accounts details the income and expenditure charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in respect of the North East Scotland Pension Fund, based upon estimates provided by Mercer, the actuary to the Fund. The liability on the North East Scotland Pension Fund and a pensions reserve are incorporated on the balance sheet. In the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the cost of retirement benefits is recognised in the Net Cost of Services when earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge that is funded by requisitions is based on the contribution payable to the pension scheme in the year, so the cost of retirement benefits is adjusted out in the Movement in Reserves Statement. The Balance Sheet shows that the Board has a net pension liability of £4.476m as at 31 March 2019 (31 March 2018 £3.878m). The main assumption to determine the liabilities is the discount rate which is set by the value of high quality corporate bond yields. A higher discount rate leads to a lower value being placed on scheme liabilities. An increase in yield values has meant that the discount rate at 31 March 2019 was 2.7%, compared to 2.6% at 31 March 2018, resulting in a decrease in the value of pension liabilities.

Going Concern

The accrual of pension liabilities has a significant impact on the Balance Sheet at 31 March 2019 which shows an excess of liabilities over assets of £3.626m (£3.137m at 31 March 2018). The North East Scotland Pension Fund is required to carry out actuarial valuations every three years. Future actuarial valuations of the North East Scotland Pension Fund will

MANAGEMENT COMMENTARY (continued)

consider the appropriate employee/employer's rate to meet the commitments of the Fund and the constituent authorities of the Board are required to fund the liabilities of the Board as they fall due. Accordingly, it has been considered appropriate to adopt a going concern basis for the preparation of these Annual Accounts.

Councillor Graham Leadbitter
Convener

Ian H Milton BSc(Hons) FRICS IRRV AEA(Cert-Scotland)
Assessor and Electoral Registrations Officer

Lorraine Paisey CA
Treasurer

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Board's Responsibilities

The Board is required to: -

- make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that the proper officer of the Board has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs (section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973). In the Valuation Joint Board, that officer is the Treasurer to the Board.
- manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.
- ensure the Annual Accounts are prepared in accordance with legislation (The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014), and so far as is compatible with that legislation, in accordance with proper accounting practices (section 12 of the Local Government Scotland Act 2003).
- approve the Annual Accounts for signature.

The Treasurer's Responsibilities

The Treasurer to the Board is responsible for the preparation of the Board's Annual Accounts in accordance with proper practices as required by legislation and as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 (the Accounting Code).

In preparing these annual accounts, the Treasurer has: -

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- complied with legislation;
- complied with the local authority Accounting Code (in so far as it is compatible with legislation);
- kept adequate accounting records which were up to date;
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

I certify that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Board at the reporting date and the transactions of the Board for the year ended 31 March 2019.

Lorraine Paisey CA
Treasurer

31 May 2019

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of responsibility

The Board was established in terms of The Valuation Joint Boards (Scotland) Order 1995 and is the valuation authority for Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Moray Council. The Board is responsible for the provision of valuation assessment services for local taxation purposes. Through an agreement to share services, the Board also provides electoral registration services for the same three constituent authorities.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. It must ensure that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Board is considered to be a local authority in terms of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 and has a duty to deliver continuous improvement as set out in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Board is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its valuation and registration functions. This includes arrangements for the management of risk.

Responsibility for delivery - members and officers

In terms of the above Order, the Board membership comprises 6 members appointed by Aberdeen City Council, 6 members appointed by Aberdeenshire Council and 3 members appointed by Moray Council.

To fulfil its operational role, the Board is responsible for the appointment of an Assessor, and deposes as appropriate, in terms of section 27 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994. In practice the Assessor and deposes manage the provision of valuation assessment and electoral registration services on a day to day basis, with the Board providing resources, a governance framework and a monitoring regime for financial and operational performance.

The Assessor is also appointed as the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) for the Board's three constituent authorities. This too is a statutory position with the ERO and deposes appointed in terms of section 8 of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

The Board has approved and adopted a local code of corporate governance that is reviewed annually and is available at www.grampian-vjb.gov.uk

The purpose of the governance framework

The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, cultures and values by which the Board is directed and controlled and the activities used to engage with the community. It enables the Board to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective valuation assessment and registration services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to an acceptable level, and provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that the statutory requirements of the Assessor and ERO are met and policies, aims and objectives can be delivered. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Board's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (continued)

The governance framework

The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the Board's governance arrangements are described in terms of the seven principles of good governance defined in the framework and summarised as follows:

Governance Principle 1 - behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.

The Board's updated Code of Conduct provides a clear standard in terms of conduct and behaviour, as does the Board's personnel related policies that deal with mainstreaming equalities into the fabric of the organisation, dignity of the individual, whistleblowing, special leave and personal development. These policies go beyond behavioural matters and reflect the positive approach to workforce development to the extent that career development schemes are in place across all three service strands: non-domestic property valuation assessment, domestic property valuation assessment and electoral registration. As such, career pathways are available to almost all staff.

In order to avoid duplication the Board relies on the registers of interests and gifts maintained by the relevant constituent authorities for elected members. A Register of Gifts is maintained for the organisation's officials and a Register of Interests for Senior Officials is being implemented. The Assessor and ERO and deputies are bound by the policies of the Board and also must adhere to the professional standards regime set by the RICS.

Issues relating to actions taken or not taken by officials can be addressed internally through the Complaints Handling Procedure. This is the third year of operation of the more open and accessible reporting procedure. This procedure has enabled the organisation to improve service delivery by taking account of stakeholder feedback that in previous years had not been effectively captured or recorded.

The organisation maintained its commitment to combating fraud during the year by assisting with the National Fraud Initiative. The Assessor and ERO also works closely with Police Scotland, has participated in their resilience focussed sessions and provides pre-election briefings. If necessary, suspected fraudulent registration or absent vote applications are referred to the Police Scotland single point of contact.

Governance Principle 2 – ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

The Board's decision-making processes are well established with decisions concerning finance, performance and governance being taken by the Board. Standing orders and regulations govern how decisions are made and appropriate legal, financial and other professional advice is considered as part of the decision-making process.

At an operational level, stakeholder involvement falls within the domain of the Assessor and ERO. The engagement work around the roll-out of the 2017 revaluation has continued although as the appeal workload arising from the 2017 Revaluation gets underway, attention has shifted to the opportunities and challenges of the government's NDR reform agenda. The Assessor and ERO's engagement strategy in terms of maintaining a high level of accessibility and visibility in the public domain continued with detailed presentations being given to the professional bodies such as the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation and participation in business community meetings attended by industry and political leaders.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (continued)

On a wider footing, the Assessor and ERO, as President of the Scottish Assessors' Association, has consolidated the new national consultative framework for stakeholders at a national level that comprises bodies such as the Scottish Ratepayers Forum and Scottish Rating Surveyors Forum. Elements of the national framework have been replicated at a local (Grampian) level and have been active in 2018/19.

The Board's performance management framework is reviewed regularly to drive continuous improvement and ensure effective monitoring of progress and outcomes against stated objectives. Reporting arrangements include regular updates to the Board, the Electoral Commission, the Electoral Management Board, the Scottish Government, and online publication of annual performance reports.

Protocols are in place to meet requests made under the Freedom of Information Act and Assessors through the Scottish Assessors' Association have established procedures to improve the response standards where common requests for information are made.

Governance Principle 3 – defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.

The Board, being focussed around delivery of specialised valuation and registration services, has a limited role to play in the wider community planning aspects anticipated by the governance framework set out by CIPFA/SOLACE. The Board is therefore conscious of the need to ensure that its mode of operation and the delivery of the valuation and registration services reflect the responsibilities towards the communities in Grampian in terms of devolved service delivery models that support the sustainability of communities across the whole region and minimise natural resource demands. In terms of the two specialised services the Board delivers, they are foundation stones to local government and democracy at local, national and international levels, as they provide the means to raise local taxation and to conduct elections/referendums.

Operational outcomes for these services are essentially driven by statute and it is pertinent to this governance principle that moves are underway to improve the sustainability and economic and social benefits through reform to local taxation and electoral registration.

Local taxation has continued to be the subject of intense scrutiny during the last year and the Assessor and ERO, as a member of the government's Barclay Implementation Advisory Group, has continued to work with other stakeholders to ensure that Scotland has a more sustainable and effective system for NDR. The Group reported in March 2019³ but work in relation to the NDR (Scotland) Bill and the future shape of the appeal process continues into 2019/20.

The electoral registration regime has undergone a period of intense change following the introduction of individual electoral registration in 2014 and enfranchisement of 16 and 17 year olds in 2016. The Scottish and UK governments are both seeking to introduce common canvass reforms that will seek to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the annual canvass. The Scottish Government is also carrying out a broader reform of electoral matters that includes a potentially wider franchise. The Assessor and ERO is actively engaged in both reform processes as a member of the Electoral Management Board for Scotland.

³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/barclay-implementation-advisory-group-final-report/pages/2/>

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (continued)

The Assessor and ERO is President of the Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) and through this non-statutory voluntary association, the 14 Assessors and 2 independent EROs⁴ that provide valuation assessment and registration services across the 32 local authority areas in Scotland share expertise and resources through this association to deliver unified and modern assessment and registration services.

Governance Principle 4 – determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of intended outcomes.

As a specialised outcome-orientated organisation, our activities of producing, maintaining and defending valuation rolls, lists and electoral registers essentially drive the organisation's agenda. The Board and the Assessor and ERO recognise the financial challenges they face and through established reporting arrangements ensure that Board members have full detail of resource inputs and performance outputs. Regular and detailed financial reports are made to the Board and the outcomes for the organisation that are essentially driven by statute, are monitored in terms of performance.

The Management Team focus on these outcomes and work closely to innovate and optimise them.

Governance Principle 5 - developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.

Roles of elected members and officers are clearly defined and constructive working relationships are achieved to ensure clear relationships between the Board, the Assessor and ERO, corporate stakeholders and the public. The Board adopted a scheme of delegation last year and the Assessor and ERO has an ongoing commitment of engagement with board members to ensure that both the Board and the Assessor have not only a knowledge of the respective positions but also an understanding and appreciation of what lies behind the outcomes that the organisation delivers.

Standing orders regulate the form and content of board meetings and the Board's financial regulations provide a framework for financial decisions. Performance reports are made at each board meeting and the Board's key performance indicators are subject to regular periodic review.

As part of its commitment to lifelong learning, the Board uses the IRRV Scottish conference as a cost-effective source of professional training for both members and officials. To foster a personal development culture and seek to retain personnel the organisation operates an internal recruitment procedure that encourages personal development and ultimately improves leadership capacity.

New employees receive induction training on arrival and in the vast majority of cases are able to participate in a career grade development scheme that seeks to promote personal and professional development. Surveyors, who are members of the RICS, are subject to additional compulsory continuing professional development training that is monitored by the RICS.

⁴ Dundee and Fife opted to provide registration services independently and contribute to the SAA Electoral Registration Committee.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (continued)

The organisation's training officer is responsible for monitoring training provision and recording progress. The training officer is also responsible for identifying appropriate training opportunities and the distribution of training opportunities is reported in public performance reports / equalities mainstreaming reports.

Functions and roles of statutory posts including the Clerk, Treasurer, Monitoring Officer and Assessor and ERO are clearly defined and the postholders work closely together to achieve the objectives of the organisation.

Governance Principle 6 – managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

The Board's decision-making process is well established with governance, finance and performance issues being reported at board meetings that take place in public (unless exempt under statutory provision) and the board reports are published online and made available to the media. Rules and procedures govern how decisions are made and appropriate legal, financial and other professional advice is considered as part of the decision-making process. Scrutiny is secured through internal and external audit.

Decisions of the Assessor and ERO are subject to public scrutiny, scrutiny via an appeal and complaint process to the respective judicial bodies and external stakeholders that monitor performance such as the Electoral Commission and the Electoral Management Board for Scotland. In addition the SAA website provides practice notes that provide details on how rateable values are determined and allows individual taxpayers to look up the assessment of every non-domestic and domestic property in Scotland.

The compliance and monitoring regimes for public bodies in particular has increased in complexity during the last year and the Board & Assessor and ERO has updated its model publication scheme, reported on records management procedures to the Keeper of Records and continues to make quarterly returns to the Information Commissioner.

Risk management is a fundamental part of the organisation's decision making process and as such is a standing item on the Assessor and ERO's management team quarterly agenda, with the Board reviewing the risk register on an annual basis.

To mitigate against and control risk, the Board's system of internal control is based on a framework of financial regulations that were revised and updated periodically and supplemented by regular management information, administrative procedures, management supervision and a code of corporate governance. Establishing and maintaining an effective system of internal control is a management function. The Board, through its consideration of reports by internal and external auditors, monitors the effectiveness of internal control procedures.

Policies to combat fraud, theft, bribery and corruption are in place, not only in order to protect public finance, but also to ensure the veracity of the statutory rolls, lists and registers that the Assessor and ERO is required to provide. The Assessor and ERO works closely with Police Scotland at a local and national level and through the requirement to work with the Government Digital Service our IT facilities must meet and maintain Public Service Network accreditation. During the last year we have also secured the UK Government's Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation.⁵

⁵ <https://www.cyberessentials.ncsc.gov.uk/>

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (continued)

A performance management system is in place which calls for reporting of established performance measures to the Board at quarterly intervals throughout the year. An annual Public Performance Report is also published

Strong financial management procedures are secured through the work of the Treasurer appointed in terms of s.95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. This officer provides advice to the Board and Assessor and ERO on all financial matters and ensures the timely production and reporting of budget estimates, budget monitoring reports and annual accounts.

Governance Principle 7 – implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Board business is conducted through an established cycle of quarterly meetings held in public (unless exempt under statutory provision) in both Aberdeen and Elgin. Meeting dates are published in advance. Reports follow a corporate style and include: the purpose of the report, information relevant to the matter under consideration, a conclusion and recommendations. Minutes of meetings are prepared and are published on the Board's website.

Information is disseminated in many forms targeted at different audiences for different purposes ranging from statutory returns that follow prescribed layouts, through to media releases and presentations which may be focussed on specific groups of service users. The organisation's website is frequently updated with news items to ensure that the Grampian community is kept up to date.

Assurance and accountability oversight is a key role for the Board which comprises members of a variety of political backgrounds. The Board receives reports on the work of the internal auditor and the external auditor placing particular focus on recommendations arising from audit work and on the corrective actions proposed by the officials of the Board.

Review of effectiveness of governance arrangements

The review of effectiveness of the governance framework including the system of internal control is pursued throughout the year by various means involving:

- **The Board**

In practice, governance arrangements are monitored over the year with board meetings taking place four times during each year. Every time the Board meets, it considers reports on financial and operational performance. It also considers annual public performance and audit reports along with reports on governance.

- **The Management Team**

The management team which has overall responsibility for good governance arrangements, comprises the Assessor and ERO, two deputies, four assistant assessors and the principal admin officer. The management team is scheduled to meet on a quarterly basis and considers corporate issues such as finance, personnel, performance and risk management along with an overview of service related issues that are handled by two service orientated groups – the technical and administration groups.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (continued)

- **The Technical and Administration groups**

These two groups also normally meet quarterly and focus on specialised service related planning and delivery. These groups foster co-operative working across the Aberdeen, Banff and Elgin offices of the organisation and also benefit from input from the Scottish Assessors Association representatives. They provide technical solutions to valuation assessment and electoral registration issues. Membership includes the management team and team leaders, with input from other members of staff too, that seeks to capture the widest range of expertise and experience and also provide an inclusive insight into the decision making process to all members of the organisation.

- **The Assessor and ERO**

The Assessor and ERO has the statutory responsibility for the valuation rolls, valuation lists and electoral registers. The Assessor is essentially the chief executive for the organisation and has a wide range of financial, personnel, governance and reporting responsibilities.

- **The Treasurer**

The Treasurer has statutory responsibility for the Board's financial affairs in terms of Section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. This officer provides relevant financial advice and support to the Assessor and ERO and elected members at meetings of the board and otherwise as required. The Board's financial management arrangements generally conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA statement on the role of the chief financial officer, and whilst the Treasurer is not a member of the management team, she is actively involved in, and is able to influence, decision-making processes.

The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained. The system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, that transactions are authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or detected within a timely period.

The system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information, financial regulations, administrative procedures (including segregation of duties), management supervision and a system of delegation and accountability. The system includes comprehensive budget setting and monitoring arrangements and the preparation of regular financial reports indicating actual expenditure against forecasts that are reported at each board meeting.

- **Monitoring Officer**

The Monitoring Officer is appointed in terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, which covers the duty to ensure that no enactments, rules of law, or codes of practice are breached, and that the organisation is not involved in maladministration or injustice as defined in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (continued)

- **Internal Audit**

Internal Audit is an assurance function that primarily provides an independent and objective opinion to the Board on the control environment comprising risk management, internal control, and governance by evaluating its effectiveness in achieving the organisation's objectives. It objectively examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of the control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources.

The Internal Audit Manager is accountable on a day-to-day basis to the Treasurer and to the Board. Internal Audit operates in accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and in line with the requirements of the Standards was subject to external inspection during the year. The results of the inspection are provided within the internal audit annual report. A number of areas of good practice were identified and the review concluded that the service generally conforms to the PSIAS. The review identified a number of areas for improvement and an action plan has been developed to be taken forward for implementation during 2019/20.

Internal audit and the subsequent report by the external auditors in their annual audit letter and in other reports, informs the effectiveness of the financial control environment as an element of the Board's governance arrangements. No fundamental control weaknesses were reported during the period covered by this statement. It is the opinion of the Internal Audit Manager that reasonable assurance can be placed on the Board's internal financial control systems in place for the year ended 31 March 2019.

- **External Agencies**

In addition to the various internal review processes and the financial audit referred to above, there are a number of bodies that the organisation is required to report to/submit governance arrangement for approval. The Information Commissioner collects data on responses to requests for information and will intervene where it considers enforcement action is required. The Keeper of Records reviews and approves records management arrangements.

The way the organisation delivers its valuation and registration services is also subject to scrutiny by external agencies, with the valuation assessment aspect reported to the Scottish Government and subject to a case by case scrutiny on appeal; and the Electoral Commission and Electoral Management Board reviewing and reporting on the performance of the ERO.

Ultimately this organisation has possibly one of the largest service communities in the Grampian area providing registration services to 440,000 citizens, and property valuation assessments for 313,000 properties. Such a wide and comprehensive reach throughout the Grampian region also provides a barometer for the success or otherwise of the organisation's service delivery.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (continued)

Significant governance issues

Securing good governance has been and remains of prime importance to elected members and senior officials of the board; a considerable task at a time when budgets are under pressure, and major changes such as NDR reform are being contemplated.

In the governance statement for 2018/19, key challenges identified by the service related to

- Responding to the government's NDR reform plans that include a 3 year revaluation cycle from 2022.
- Implementing the General Data Protection Regulation requirements.
- Continuing to work towards an efficient system of individual electoral registration.
- Managing the resourcing required to defend challenges to the revaluation roll that came into force from 1 April 2017.
- Implementing effective customer consultation arrangements.

Significant progress was made in addressing these challenges over the last 12 months. As a member of the Barclay Implementation Advisory Group, the Assessor and ERO has been closely involved in detailed consideration of the implications and challenges of the NDR reforms. In his capacity of President of the SAA, he has led discussions with COSLA and the Scottish Government to secure additional funding for implementation of NDR reforms both locally and nationally. Work has also been initiated locally in terms of workforce planning for the additional workload of delivering revaluations on a three-year cycle. This includes the necessity to increase the organisation's pool of rating valuation expertise and moves to free-up existing resources in terms of the roll-out of alternative and more efficient data capture measures whilst seeking to maintain high standards of assessment accuracy.

The appointment of a Data Protection Officer and roll-out of the related data protection policy, privacy notices and training mean that the organisation is meeting its data protection responsibilities.

Both NDR and ER reform now have a higher profile and impetus than that of 12 months. Electoral registration is subject to major changes in the form of canvass reform and as part of the preparation for roll-out of these changes the organisation has replaced its own electoral registration IT system during the last year.

The unique circumstances of the North East economy have given rise to an above average volume of appeals and resourcing the appeal resolution process in terms of funding and expertise is absolutely critical to ensure that all appeals are resolved by the local valuation appeal committees by the statutory deadline of 31 December 2020. The organisation's management and highly skilled valuers and negotiators have worked tirelessly to facilitate the local committees to achieve this outcome and all parties are extremely conscious of the desire of stakeholders in terms of ratepayers and indeed the government as the ultimate holder of the public purse to ensure that appeals are resolved as quickly as possible.

The devotion of resources to operational service delivery during a period of extremely intense demand has led to progress on widening our existing customer consultation framework being slower than originally planned.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (continued)

The key challenges for 2019/20 are

- Upgrade our operational capacity in terms of workforce, processes and IT systems to meet the challenges of moving to a 3 year revaluation cycle for Revaluation 2022.
- Maintain the drive to improve and streamline our governance arrangements progress equalities mainstreaming and performance monitoring and widen our existing customer consultation framework.
- Optimise the new electoral registration system to capitalise upon information sources.
- Continue to manage the resourcing required to ensure that this organisation presents no barriers to Revaluation 2017 appeal resolution.
- Manage the organisation's resources to ensure that all existing business as usual statutory commitments are met.

Concluding Remarks

In our respective roles as Convener of the Board and Assessor and ERO, we are committed to good governance and recognise the contribution it makes to securing delivery of service outcomes in an effective and efficient manner. This annual governance statement summarises current governance arrangements, provides evidence of progress and affirms our commitment to ensuring that the Board's governance framework is responsive to the dynamic and challenging environment in which we serve.

Councillor Graham Leadbitter
Convener

Ian H Milton BSc(Hons) FRICS IRRV AEA(Cert-Scotland)
Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

31 May 2019

REMUNERATION REPORT

This report has been written to provide details of the Grampian Valuation Joint Board's remuneration arrangements for its senior councillors and senior employees. This is required under the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2014.

All information disclosed in the tables 1 to 6 in this Remuneration Report is audited by the external auditors Audit Scotland. The other sections of the Remuneration Report are reviewed by Audit Scotland to ensure that they are consistent with the financial statements.

Remuneration of Councillors, Senior Councillors, Convener and Vice-Convener

The remuneration of councillors is regulated by The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration and Severance Payments) Amendment Regulations 2018. These regulations set out the amounts a councillor may be paid for being a Convener or Vice-Convener of a Joint Board. This is inclusive of any amounts payable to them as either a councillor or senior councillor of their own Local Authority.

The Board consists of 15 members comprising 6 from Aberdeen City Council, 6 from Aberdeenshire Council and 3 from Moray Council. The local authority of which the Convener or Vice Convener is a member pays the remuneration appropriate to the member's work with the Joint Board. Conveners receive a remuneration which when added to their existing remuneration as a Councillor/Senior Councillor equals 75 percent of the Leader of a "Band A" council, i.e. £21,245 per annum. The Vice Convener's remuneration is calculated on the basis of the basic salary plus 75 percent of the difference between the basic salary and the Convener's salary, i.e. £20,183 per annum. These rates are effective for the year ending 31 March 2019.

The Board has an arrangement with each Council which remunerates the Convener and Vice-Convener/s to reimburse the Council for the additional costs of that councillor arising from them being a Convener or Vice-Convener of the Board.

Councillor Leadbitter was Convener of the Grampian Valuation Joint Board from 30 June 2017 to 12 June 2018. Councillor Leadbitter received an allowance as Joint Leader of his party and the Board paid a Special Responsibility Allowance to him as the Convener of the Board up to 12 June 2018. On becoming Leader of Moray Council on 13 June 2018, he received a Special Responsibility Allowance from Moray Council. This allowance is paid for in full by Moray Council and will be included in their remuneration report. Consequently no additional award is due for undertaking duties for the Valuation Board.

Councillor Cormie has been Deputy Convener of the Board from 30 June 2017. The Board pays a Special Responsibility Allowance to the Deputy Convener of the Board. Details of his salary are included in the remuneration report for Aberdeen City Council.

All other Councillors' expenses are paid directly by the authority that they serve and will also be included in the individual authority's remuneration report.

Remuneration of Senior Councillors, Convener and Vice-Convener (Table 1)

Councillor Name and Responsibility	Salary, fees and allowances	Total Remuneration 2018/19	Total Remuneration 2017/18
	£	£	£
Councillor Shepherd Convener to 4/5/17	-	-	398
Councillor Leadbitter Convener	425	425 (Full year equivalent £2,125)	1,593
Councillor Cormie Depute Convener	3,109	3,109	2,392
Total	3,534	3,534	4,383

No taxable expenses were paid in 2018/19.

Remuneration of Councillors (Table 2)

Grampian Valuation Joint Board paid the following salaries, allowances and expenses for all councillors (including senior councillors) during the year. It includes expenses met directly by the Board and expenses reimbursed to Councillors.

Type of Remuneration	2018/19	2017/18
	£	£
Salaries	3,534	4,383
Expenses	557	1,064
TOTAL	4,091	5,447

Remuneration of Senior Employees

The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2014 require remuneration information to be disclosed for senior employees as defined below:

- i. A person who has responsibility for the management of a local authority to the extent that the person has power to direct or control the major activities of the authority whether solely or collectively with other persons.
- ii. A person who holds a post that is politically restricted by reason of section 2(1) (a), (b) or (c) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- iii. A person whose annual remuneration, including any annual remuneration from a local authority subsidiary body is £150,000 or more.

These regulations apply equally to Joint Boards and remuneration disclosure is therefore required for the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) and two Depute Assessor and Depute Electoral Registration Officers who are deemed to be senior employees for the Grampian Valuation Joint Board. Details are shown on Table 3 below.

The salary of senior employees is set by reference to national arrangements. The Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee (SJNC) sets the terms and conditions and pay bandings for senior employees but remuneration levels and payscales are set locally and were last agreed by the Board on 23 January 2004.

Remuneration of Senior Employees of the Board (Table 3)

Name and Post Title	Salary, fees and allowances	Taxable Expenses	Total Remuneration 2018/19	Total Remuneration 2017/18
	£	£	£	£
Ian Milton Assessor & ERO	109,453	694	110,147	107,503
Gavin Oag Depute Assessor & ERO	85,078	639	85,717	84,152
Mark Adam Depute Assessor & ERO	77,001	593	77,594	75,206
TOTAL	271,532	1,926	273,458	266,861

The Treasurer and the Clerk to the Board do not receive remuneration from the Valuation Joint Board. The duties of the posts are covered by the post holders' substantive posts in Moray Council. Details of their salaries are included in the remuneration report for Moray Council.

Pension Benefits

Pension benefits for Councillors and Local Government employees are provided through the North East Scotland Pension Fund, a Local Government Pension Scheme.

Councillors' pension benefits are based on career average pay. For benefits earned up to 31 March 2019, the councillor's pay for each year or part year ending 31 March (other than the pay in the final year commencing 1 April) is increased by the increase in the cost of living, as measured by the appropriate index (or indices) between the end of that year and the last day in the month in which their membership of the scheme ends. The total of the revalued pay is then divided by the year of membership to calculate the career average pay. This is the value used to calculate the pension benefits.

The Board pay a contribution to the Pension Fund for the Convener and Depute Convener's pensions if they are members of the scheme and this is based on a percentage of the cost of the Special Responsibility Allowance. Details are shown on Table 4 below.

For local government employees, up until 31 March 2015 pension benefits accrued are based on final salary. This means that pension benefits are based on the final year's pay and the number of years that person has been a member of the scheme. Benefits earned from 1 April 2015 are based on 'career average'. The scheme's normal retirement age for both councillors and employees is 65 for benefits up to 31 March 2015 and the State Pension Age for benefits built up after 1 April 2015.

From 1 April 2009 a five tier contribution system was introduced with contributions from scheme members being based on how much pay falls into each tier. This is designed to give more equality between the cost and benefits of scheme membership. Prior to 2009 contributions rates were set at 6% for all non-manual employees.

The member contribution rates for 2018/19 are the same as for 2017/18; however the earning bands have changed as shown in the table below.

Whole time earnings (2017/18 in brackets)	Contribution rate 2018/19	Contribution rate 2017/18
On earnings up to and including £21,300 (£20,700)	5.50%	5.50%
On earnings above £21,300 and up to £26,100 (£20,700 and up to £25,300)	7.25%	7.25%
On earnings above £26,100 and up to £35,700 (£25,300 and up to £34,700)	8.50%	8.50%
On earnings above £35,700 and up to £47,600 (£34,700 and up to £46,300)	9.50%	9.50%
On earnings above £47,600 (£46,300)	12.00%	12.00%

If a person works part-time, their contribution rate is worked out on the whole-time pay rate for the job, with actual contributions paid on actual pay earned.

Pension Benefits (continued)

There is no automatic entitlement to a lump sum. Members may opt to give up (commute) some pension for a lump sum up to the limit set by the Finance Act 2004. Up until 31 March 2015, the accrual rate guarantees a pension based on 1/60th of the final pensionable salary and years of pensionable service. (Prior to 2009 the accrual rate guaranteed a pension based on 1/80th and a lump sum based on 3/80th of the final pensionable salary and years of pensionable service). From 1 April 2015, the accrual rate guarantees a pension of 1/49th of pensionable pay for each year. At the end of each year the benefits are revalued and increased by inflation.

The value of the accrued benefits has been calculated on the basis of the age at which the person will first become entitled to receive a full pension on retirement without reduction on account of its payment at that age; without exercising any option to commute pension entitlement into a lump sum; and without any adjustment for the effects of future inflation. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the person has accrued as a consequence of their local government service, and not just their current appointment.

Senior Councillors (Table 4)

	For the year to 31 March 2019	For the year to 31 March 2018
	£	£
Cllr Leadbitter	82 (Full year equivalent £410)	308 (Full year equivalent £408)
Cllr Cormie	600	462 (Full year equivalent £613)
Total	682 (Full year equivalent £1,010)	770 (Full year equivalent £1,021)

The above amounts show the in-year contributions relating to the Special Responsibility Allowance shown in Table 1. The total pension benefits relating to Councillor Leadbitter are detailed in the remuneration report of Moray Council and those relating to Councillor Cormie are detailed in the remuneration report of Aberdeen City Council.

Senior Employees (Table 5)

The pension entitlements of Senior Employees for the year to 31 March are shown in the table below, together with the contribution made by the Board to each Senior Employees' pension during the year.

	In-year pension contributions			Accrued pension benefits	
	For the year to 31 March 2019	For the year to 31 March 2018		As at 31 March 2019	Difference from March 2018
	£	£		£	£
Ian Milton Assessor and ERO	20,942	20,633	Pension	53,511	3,083
			Lump Sum	100,543	1,483
Gavin Oag Depute Assessor & ERO	16,393	16,084	Pension	36,094	2,446
			Lump Sum	61,390	1,157
Mark Adam Depute Assessor & ERO	14,834	14,332	Pension	36,551	2,738
			Lump Sum	67,444	2,281
Total	52,168	51,049		355,533	13,188

All senior employees shown in the tables above are members of the North East Scotland Pension Fund. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the person has accrued as a consequence of their total local government service and not just their current appointment.

General Disclosure by Pay Band

The Regulations require information to be provided for the number of persons whose remuneration is £50,000 or more. This information is disclosed in bands of £5,000 and is shown overleaf.

General Disclosure by Pay Band (Table 6)

The Table includes the remuneration of the senior employees detailed in Table 3.

Remuneration Band	Number of Employees	
	2018-19	2017-18
£50,000 - £54,999	6	2
£55,000 - £59,999	3	2
£75,000 - £79,999	1	1
£80,000 - £84,999	-	1
£85,000 - £89,999	1	-
£105,000 - £109,999	1	1
	12	7

Councillor Graham Leadbitter
Convener

Ian H Milton BSc(Hons) FRICS IRRV AEA(Cert-Scotland)
Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

This Statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. This differs from the expenditure to be funded from the requisitions raised by the Board from the three constituent Local Authorities in accordance with statute. The effect on the General Fund is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement and Note 7 Expenditure and Funding Analysis and Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations.

31-Mar-18			31-Mar-19		
£000	£000	£000		£000	£000
Expenditure	Income	Net	Note	Expenditure	Income
4,645	(190)	4,455	Rating and Council Tax Valuation and Electoral Registration	4,570	(171)
4,645	(190)	4,455	Cost Of Services	4,570	(171)
161	(2)	159	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	93	(3)
		(4,039)	Requisitions and Non-Specific Grant Income		
		575	Deficit on Provision of Services		
			Surplus on revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment		
			Remeasurement of the Net Defined Benefit Liability		
		(3,237)			
		(3,237)	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		
			Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		
		(2,662)			

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

This Statement shows the movement in the year on the difference reserves held by the Board, analysed into usable reserves (those that can be applied to fund expenditure) and unusable reserves. The Statement shows how the movements in the year are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustments required to return to the amounts chargeable against requisitions for the year. The Increase or Decrease line shows the statutory General Fund movements in the year.

	General Fund £000	Capital Fund £000	Total Usable Reserves £000	Unusable Reserves (Note 17) £000	Total Board Reserves £000
Balance at 31 March 2017	209	73	282	(6,081)	(5,799)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(575)	-	(575)	3,237	2,662
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (Note 7)	519	(18)	501	(501)	-
Increase / (Decrease) in Year	(56)	(18)	(74)	2,736	2,662
Balance at 31 March 2018	153	55	208	(3,345)	(3,137)
Balance at 31 March 2018	153	55	208	(3,345)	(3,137)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(332)	-	(332)	(157)	(489)
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (Note 7)	394	(55)	339	(339)	-
Increase / (Decrease) in Year	62	(55)	7	(496)	(489)
Balance at 31 March 2019	215	-	215	(3,841)	(3,626)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2019

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of assets and liabilities recognised by the Board. The net assets of the Board (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Board.

31 March 2018 £000		Note	31 March 2019 £000
643	Property, Plant & Equipment	10	753
643	Long Term Assets		753
66	Short Term Debtors	11	42
448	Cash and Cash Equivalents	12	613
514	Current Assets		655
(416)	Short Term Creditors	13	(558)
(416)	Current Liabilities		(558)
(3,878)	Other Long Term Liabilities	22	(4,476)
(3,878)	Long Term Liabilities		(4,476)
(3,137)	Net Liabilities		(3,626)
	Usable reserves	15	
153	General Fund		215
55	Capital Fund		-
208	Total		215
	Unusable Reserves	16	
218	Revaluation Reserve		262
425	Capital Adjustment Account		490
(3,878)	Pensions Reserve		(4,476)
(110)	Employee Statutory Adjustment Account		(117)
(3,345)	Total		(3,841)
(3,137)	Total Reserves		(3,626)

The notes on Pages 35 to 62 form part of the Financial Statements.

Lorraine Paisey CA
Treasurer
31 May 2019

CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

The Cash Flow statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Board during the financial year. The statement shows how the Board generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Board are funded by way of requisition and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Board. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Board's future service delivery, i.e. assets.

31 March 2018		31 March 2019
£000		£000
575	Net deficit on the provision of services	332
(269)	Adjust net deficit on the provision of services for non cash movements (Note 18)	(560)
<u>306</u>	Net cash flows from Operating Activities	<u>(228)</u>
-	Net Cash flows from Investing Activities	63
<u>306</u>	Net (increase)/decrease in cash and cash equivalents	<u>(165)</u>
754	Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	448
<u>448</u>	Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	<u>613</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

Note 1 Accounting Policies

1 General Principles

The Annual Accounts summarise the Board's transactions for the 2018/19 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2019. The Board is required to prepare Annual Accounts by the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, which section 12 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 requires to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 and the Service Reporting Code of Practice 2018/19, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and statutory guidance issued under section 12 of the 2003 Act. The principal accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year. The accounting convention adopted in the Annual Accounts is principally historical cost, modified by the revaluation of property, plant and equipment.

2 Accruals of Income and Expenditure

Income and expenditure are accounted for in the year in which they take place, not simply when cash payments are made or received. Where income and expenditure has been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the balance sheet. Where the debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

3 Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets

The service is charged with the following amounts to record the cost of holding non-current assets during the year:

- Depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service
- Revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be written off.

4 Requisitions and Contributions

Requisitions and contributions relating to capital and revenue expenditure are accounted for on an accruals basis and recognised immediately in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as income, except to the extent that the grant or contribution has a condition(s) (as opposed to restrictions) that the Board has not satisfied.

5 Cash and Cash Equivalents

The Board uses Moray Council's bank account for financial transactions and the balance is invested in the Council's Loans Fund. This balance is repayable on demand and therefore treated as a cash equivalent and is included in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost, which equates to the actual cash value at 31 March 2019.

Note 1 (continued)

6 Benefits Payable During Employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave for current employees and are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Board. An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements earned by employees but not taken before the year-end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year.

7 Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Board to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits and are charged on an accruals basis to the relevant service line (or discontinued operations) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement at the earlier of when the Board can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Board recognises costs for a restructuring.

8 Going Concern

The Pension Fund overall liability demonstrates the Board's commitment to pay retirement benefits in the long term. As a consequence there is a significant impact on the net worth of the Board as recorded on the Balance Sheet, which shows a net liability. Statutory arrangements for the funding of the deficit mean that the financial position of the Board remains assured. On the basis of this funding arrangement, the Board considers it appropriate that the Annual Accounts should follow the going concern basis of accounting.

9 Overheads and Support Services

The costs of overheads and support services are charged to those that benefit from the supply or service in accordance with the costing principles of the CIPFA Service Reporting Code of Practice (SeRCOP). The total absorption costing principle is used – the full cost of overheads and support services are shared between users in proportion to the benefits received.

10 Value Added Tax

VAT is included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement only to the extent that it is irrecoverable. The net amount due to or from HM Revenue and Customs in respect of VAT is included as part of debtors or creditors.

11 Reserves

The Board sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes. Reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year to score against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then appropriated back into the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against requisitions for the expenditure. Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, retirement and employee benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Board.

Note 2 Accounting Standards That Have Been Issued But Have Not Yet Been Adopted

The Code requires the Board to identify any accounting standards that have been issued but have yet to be adopted and could have a material impact on the accounts.

New or amended standards within the 2019/20 Code relate to:

- Amendments to IAS40 Investment Property: Transfers of Investment Property
- Annual Improvements to IFRS Standards 2014-2016 Cycle. The amendments that may apply to local authorities include:
 - IFRS 12 Disclosure of Interests in Other Entities: Clarification of the Scope of the Standard
 - IAS28 Investments in Associates and Joint Ventures: Measuring an Associate of Joint Venture at Fair Value
- IFRIC 22 Foreign Currency Transactions and Advance Consideration
- IFRIC 23 Uncertainty over Income Tax Treatments
- Amendments to IFRS9 Financial Instruments: Prepayment features with Negative Compensation

The Code requires implementation from 1 April 2019 and there is, therefore, no impact on the 2018/19 Financial Statements.

Note 3 Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note 1, the Treasurer has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events.

The critical judgements made in the Annual Accounts are:

- There is a high degree of uncertainty about future levels of funding for local government and hence to funding for the Board. However, the Board has determined that this uncertainty is not yet sufficient to provide an indication that the assets of the Board might be impaired as a result of a need to close facilities and reduce levels of service provision.

Note 4 Assumptions Made About the Future and Other Major Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The Annual Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Board about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The items in the Board's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2019 for which there is significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Note 4 (continued)

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ From Assumptions
Pension Liability	Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets.	The effects on the net pensions liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured. For instance, a 0.1% increase in the discount rate assumption would result in a decrease in the pension liability of £0.626m.

Note 5 Material Items of Income and Expenditure

Where material items of income and expenditure are not disclosed on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Code requires that the nature and amount of these items are disclosed in a note to the accounts. During 2018/19 the following items are regarded as material:

Nature	£000
Grant income from the UK Government for Individual Electoral Registration (IER)	160

The grant received for Individual Electoral Registration (IER) is intended to fund the additional costs incurred by the Board.

Note 6 Events After The Reporting Period

The unaudited Annual Accounts were issued on 31 May 2019 by Lorraine Paisey, Treasurer. Any events that would affect the Balance Sheet at 31 March 2019 have been considered up to this date.

Note 7 Expenditure and Funding Analysis and Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (requisitions and government grants) by the Board in comparison with those resources consumed by the Board in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making.

Income and Expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

31 March 2018			31 March 2019		
Net Expenditure chargeable to General Fund £000	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis £000	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £000	Net Expenditure chargeable to General Fund £000	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis £000	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £000
4,097	358	4,455	4,098	301	4,399
4,097	358	4,455	4,098	301	4,399
(4,041)	161	(3,880)	(4,160)	93	(4,067)
56	519	575	(62)	394	332
(209)			(153)		
56			(62)		
(153)		Closing Balance	(215)		

Note 7 (continued)

Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis

	2017/18			
	Adjustment for Capital Purposes £000	Net Change for Pensions Adjustments £000	Other Differences £000	Total Adjustments £000
Rating and CT valuation & Electoral Registration	24	329	5	358
Net Cost of Services	24	329	5	358
Other Income and Expenditure	-	161	-	161
Difference between the General Fund Deficit and the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (Surplus) or Deficit	24	490	5	519

	2018/19			
	Adjustment for Capital Purposes £000	Net Change for Pensions Adjustments £000	Other Differences £000	Total Adjustments £000
Rating and CT valuation & Electoral Registration	(5)	299	7	301
Net Cost of Services	(5)	299	7	301
Other Income and Expenditure	-	93	-	93
Difference between the General Fund Deficit and the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (Surplus) or Deficit	(5)	392	7	394

Note 7 (continued)

a) Adjustments for Capital Purposes

This column adds in depreciation and impairment and revaluation gains and losses in the services line.

b) Net Change for the Pensions Adjustments

This column reflects the removal of pension contributions and the addition of IAS 19 Employee Benefits pension related income and expenditure.

For the service this reflects the removal of the employer pension contributions made by the Board as allowed by statute and the replacement with current service costs and past service costs.

c) Other Differences

This column adjusts for differences between the amounts debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and amounts payable/receivable recognised under statute.

For the service this reconciles the impact of accruals for accumulating compensated absences e.g. holiday pay as required by IAS19 Employee Benefits, to the salaries actually payable in the financial year in accordance with statute.

Note 8 Expenditure and Income Analysed by Nature

The Board's expenditure and income is analysed as follows:

Expenditure and Income

	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
	Rating, Council Tax Valuation and Electoral Registration	Rating, Council Tax Valuation and Electoral Registration
Employee benefit expenses	3,521	3,512
Other service expenses	1,044	998
Support service recharges	56	58
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	24	2
Interest payments	161	93
Total Expenditure	4,806	4,663
Requisitions	(4,039)	(4,157)
Government grants and other service income	(190)	(171)
Interest and investment income	(2)	(3)
Total Income	(4,231)	(4,331)
(Surplus) or deficit on the provision of services	575	332

Note 9 Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
Pensions interest cost and expected return on pensions assets	161	93
Interest receivable and similar income	(2)	(3)
	159	90

Note 10 Property, Plant and Equipment

Recognition

All expenditure on the acquisition, creation, enhancement or replacement of an asset or part of an asset is capitalised, providing the asset yields benefit for more than one year to the Board and the services it provides and the cost can be reliably measured.

Where a component is replaced or restored, the carrying amount of the old component is derecognised and the new component reflected in the carrying amount.

Measurement

New assets are measured at cost. Cost includes the original purchase of the asset and the costs attributable to bringing the assets to its working condition for its intended use.

Assets are measured at current value which is Existing Use Value for Land and Buildings and Depreciated Historic Cost for Equipment and Furniture which is used as a proxy for current value.

Derecognition

The carrying amount of an item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised when an asset is disposed of or when no future economic benefits or service potential are expected from its use. The value of the asset in the Balance Sheet and any receipt is written to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal.

The gain or loss on disposal is not a charge against Requisitions, as the cost of non current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for Capital Financing. The carrying amount of the non current asset disposal is transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account and the disposal proceeds transferred to the Capital Fund and reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all items of property, plant and equipment with a finite useful life by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amount over their useful lives. An exception is made for land where it can be demonstrated that it has an unlimited useful life. Each part of an item of property, plant and equipment with a cost that is significant in relation to the total cost of the item is depreciated separately. Depreciation is calculated using the straight-line method. In the year of acquisition, a full year's depreciation is provided for on all assets. In the year of disposal, no depreciation is charged.

The following useful lives and depreciation rates have been used in the calculation of depreciation:-

Other Land & Buildings - 35-60 years, land is not depreciated

Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment - 10 years

Impairment

Assets are assessed at each year end as to whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where indications exist and any possible differences are estimated to be material, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated and, where this is less than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognised.

Where an impairment loss is reversed subsequently, the reversal is credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, up to the amount of the original loss, adjusted for depreciation that would have been charged if the loss had not been recognised.

Note 10 (continued)

Revaluations

The Board carries out a rolling programme that ensures that all Property, Plant and Equipment required to be measured at current value is revalued at least every five years. The last revaluation of Land and Buildings was done with effect from on 1 April 2018 and the next revaluation is scheduled during 2023/24. All valuations were carried out by Moray Council's Head of Estates in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Valuations of vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment are based on depreciated historic cost as a proxy for current values.

Note 10 (continued)

	Other Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Total Property, Plant and Equipment
	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2017	696	210	906
Additions	0	18	18
At 31 March 2018	696	228	924
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment			
At 1 April 2017	55	202	257
Depreciation charge	14	10	24
At 31 March 2018	69	212	281
Net Book Value			
At 1 April 2017	641	8	649
At 31 March 2018	627	16	643
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2018	696	228	924
Additions	-	62	62
Revaluation increases recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	-	-	-
Revaluation increases recognised in the Provision of Services	-	-	-
At 31 March 2019	696	290	986
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment			
At 1 April 2018	69	212	281
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	(49)	-	(49)
Depreciation written out to the Provision of Services	(20)	-	(20)
Depreciation charge	14	7	21
At 31 March 2019	14	219	233
Net Book Value			
at 31 March 2018	627	16	643
at 31 March 2019	682	71	753

Note 11 Short Term Debtors

	Restated 2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
Trade Receivables	1	-
Prepayments	33	31
Other Receivables	32	11
	66	42

Note 12 Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
Temporary Investment in the Moray Council Loans Fund	448	613

Note 13 Short Term Creditors

	Restated 2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
Trade Payables	301	59
Other Payables	115	499
	416	558

Note 14 Financial Instruments

Classifications

A financial instrument is a contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another. Non-exchange transactions, such as those relating to taxes and government grants, do not give rise to financial instruments.

Financial Liabilities

A financial liability is an obligation to transfer economic benefits controlled by the Board and can be represented by a contractual obligation to deliver cash or financial assets or an obligation to exchange financial assets and liabilities with another entity that is potentially unfavourable to the Board.

The majority of the Board's financial liabilities held during the year are measured at amortised cost and comprised:

- Creditors for requisitions due to be returned to constituent authorities
- Trade payables for goods and services received

Financial Assets

A financial asset is a right to future economic benefits controlled by the Board that is represented by cash, equity instruments or a contractual right to receive cash or other financial assets or a right to exchange financial assets and liabilities with another entity that is potentially favourable to the Board. The financial assets held by the Board during the year are accounted for under the following classification:

- Amortised cost (where cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest and the Council's business model is to collect those cash flows) comprising:
 - temporary investment in the Moray Council Loans Fund
 - trade receivables for goods and services provided

Financial assets held at amortised cost are shown net of a loss allowance reflecting the statistical likelihood that the borrower or debtor will be unable to meet their contractual commitments to the Board.

Financial Instruments – Balances

The financial liabilities disclosed in the Balance Sheet are analysed across the following categories:

	Short Term Creditors	
	2017/18	2018/19
	£000	£000
Amortised Cost	416	558

The financial assets disclosed in the Balance Sheet are analysed across the following categories:

	Short Term Debtors	
	2017/18	2018/19
	£000	£000
Amortised Cost	66	42

Note 15 Usable Reserves

General Fund

The creation of a General Fund was agreed by the Board at its meeting on 28 January 2011. This was introduced to provide the Assessor with some flexibility to investigate any spend-to-save projects which would require one-off expenditure in order to deliver future budget savings. The reserve also acts as a contingency for any unexpected costs in future years. Transfers are restricted to 3% of revenue budget in any one year subject to the reserve having a cumulative balance not exceeding 5% of revenue budget.

Capital Fund

Under the terms of Schedule 3 to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975, the Board has established a Capital Fund and has paid into that fund the receipt in respect of the Board's share from the sale of Woodhill House. Interest earned on the Capital Fund balance is added to the accumulated balance each year.

	2017/18	2018/19
Usable Reserves	£000	£000
General Fund	153	215
Capital Fund	55	-
	208	215

Note 16 Unusable Reserves

	2017/18	2018/19
	£000	£000
Revaluation Reserve	218	262
Employee Statutory Adjustment Account	(110)	(117)
Capital Adjustment Account	425	490
Pension Reserve	(3,878)	(4,476)
	(3,345)	(3,841)

Note 16 (continued)

Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains gains made by the Board arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment.

The reserve contains only revaluation gains accumulated since 1 April 2007, the date that the Reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance on the Capital Adjustment Account.

	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
Balance at 1 April	223	218
Revaluations		
Upward revaluation of assets not posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	49
Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation written off to the Capital Adjustment Account	(5)	(5)
Balance at 31 March	218	262

Employee Statutory Adjustment Account

The Employee Statutory Adjustment Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund Balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year, e.g. annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31 March. Statutory arrangements require that the impact on the General Fund Balance is neutralised by transfers to or from the Account.

	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
Balance at 1 April	(105)	(110)
Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year	105	110
Amounts accrued at the end of the current year	(110)	(117)
Balance at 31 March	(110)	(117)

Note 16 (continued)

Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions.

The Account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1 April 2007, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains.

	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
Balance at 1 April	426	425
Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		
Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	(24)	(2)
Adjusting amounts written out of the Revaluation Reserve	5	5
Net written out amount of the cost of non-current assets consumed in the year	(19)	3
Capital financing in the year:		
Use of Capital Fund to finance new capital expenditure	18	55
Capital Expenditure charged against the General fund	-	7
Balance 31 March	425	490

Note 16 (continued)

Pensions Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Board accounts for post employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Board makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Board has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

	2017/18	2018/19
	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	(6,625)	(3,878)
Remeasurements of the net defined benefit liability/asset	3,237	(206)
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(956)	(876)
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	466	484
Balance at 31 March	(3,878)	(4,476)

Note 17 External Audit Costs

The Board has incurred the following costs in relation to the audit of the Annual Accounts.

	2017/18	2018/19
	£000	£000
Fees payable in respect of external audit services carried out by the appointed Auditor for the year	7	7

Note 18 Cashflow – Analysis of Net Deficit on the provision of services for non cash movements

	2017/18	2018/19
	£000	£000
Depreciation/Impairment charges	(24)	(2)
Pension Liability	(490)	(392)
Increase/(Decrease) in Debtors	40	(24)
Decrease/(Increase) in Creditors	205	(142)
	(269)	(560)

Note 19 Requisition and Grant Income

The Board credited the following requisitions to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The requisitions are based on population.

	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
Credited to Requisitions and Non Specific Grant Income:		
Requisition from Aberdeen City Council	1,583	1,677
Requisition from Aberdeenshire Council	1,800	1,914
Requisition from Moray Council	656	701
	4,039	4,292
Returned to constituent authorities:		
Aberdeen City Council	-	53
Aberdeenshire Council	-	60
Moray Council	-	22
	-	135

Note 20 Leases

Operating Leases – Board as Lessee

Operating lease payments are reflected in the Cost of Services heading in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, as the rentals become payable. The Board does not have any finance leases.

The Board pays Aberdeenshire Council for the rental of their offices within Woodhill House under the terms of an operating lease. The amount paid under these terms in 2018/19 was £0.125m (£0.125m in 2017/18). The lease agreement, although having been negotiated, has still to be signed.

The future minimum lease payments due under non-cancellable leases in future years are:

	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
Not later than one year	125	125
Later than one year and not later than five years	375	250
	500	375

Note 21 Related Parties

The Board is required to disclose material transactions with related parties - bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Board or to be controlled or influenced by the Board. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the Board might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Board.

Constituent Authorities

The constituent authorities have the potential to control or influence the Board as they provide the majority of the Board's funding. Details are shown in Note 19. The Board also made payments to the constituent authorities in the normal course of business. The amounts are detailed below:

	2017/18	2018/19
	£000	£000
Aberdeen City Council	68	76
Aberdeenshire Council	298	199
Moray Council	84	73

The amounts owed to the constituent authorities for requisitions and normal business activities at 31 March were:

Aberdeen City Council	4	57
Aberdeenshire Council	17	72
Moray Council	-	92

Members

Members of the Board have direct control over the Board's financial and operating policies. The total of members' allowances paid is shown in the Remuneration Report.

Note 22 Defined Benefit Pension Scheme

Participation in Pension Scheme

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers, the Board makes contributions towards the cost of post-employment benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until the employees retire, the Board has a commitment to make the payments for those benefits and must disclose them at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

The Board participates in the North East Scotland Pension Fund, a Local Government Pension Scheme, which is administered by Aberdeen City Council. Up until 31 March 2015 pension benefits accrued are based on final salary. This means that pension benefits are based on the final year's pay and the number of years that person has been a member of the scheme. Benefits earned from 1 April 2015 are based on career average salary. The Scheme is a funded defined benefit scheme, meaning that the Board and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension liabilities with investment assets over a period of time.

There are also arrangements in place for the award of discretionary post retirement benefits upon early retirement. This is an unfunded defined benefit arrangement under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. However, there are no investment assets built up to meet these pensions liabilities and cash has to be generated to meet actual pension payments as they eventually fall due.

The North East Scotland Pension Fund is operated under the regulatory framework for the Local Government Pension Scheme and the governance of the scheme is the responsibility of the Pensions Committee. The Committee is comprised of nine elected members of Aberdeen City Council. Policy is determined in accordance with the Pensions Fund Regulations. Following the introduction of The Local Government Pension Scheme (Governance) (Scotland) Regulations 2015, the Pension Fund took the opportunity to review its governance arrangements. To comply with these regulations, the Pension Fund implemented a Pension Board with representation from Unions and Employers from the 1 April 2015. With the introduction of the Pension Board, the Joint Investment Advisory Committee was disbanded.

The principal risks to the scheme are the longevity assumptions, statutory changes to the scheme, changes to inflation, bond yields and the performance of the investments held by the scheme. These are mitigated to a certain extent by the statutory requirements to charge the General Fund the amounts required by statute as described in the accounting policy note.

Transactions relating to Post-employment Benefits

In relation to the North East Scotland Pension Fund, the Board recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the reported cost of services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge required to be made against requisitions is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post employment/retirement benefits is reversed out in the Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and Movement in Reserves Statement during the year:

Note 22 (continued)

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT	2017/18	2018/19
	£000	£000
Cost of Services:		
Current Service Cost and administration expenses	795	783
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure:		
Net Interest Expense	161	93
Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	956	876
Other Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.		
Remeasurement of the Net Defined Benefit Liability comprising:		
Expected return on pension fund assets	(769)	(1,615)
Actuarial (gain)/loss on financial assumptions	(2,468)	1,821
Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.	(3,237)	206
MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT		
Reversal of net charges made to the Surplus or Deficit for the Provision of Services for post employment benefits in accordance with the Code	956	876
Actual amount charged against requisitions for pensions in the year	466	484

Note 22 (continued)

Pensions Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

The change in the net pensions liability is analysed into the following components:

Current Service Cost: The increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year.

Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability: The change during the year in the net defined benefit liability that arises from the passage of time – charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. It is the difference between the interest (increase) in the value of the liabilities as the benefits are one year closer to being paid and the interest on pension assets based on assets held at the start of the year. The calculation is based on the discount rate in force at the beginning of the year.

Remeasurements: This comprises the Return on Plan Assets (excluding amounts included in the Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability) and Actuarial Gains and Losses which are changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

Contributions Paid to the Pension Fund: Cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

The amount included in the Balance Sheet arising from the Board's obligation in respect of its defined benefit plan is as follows:

	31 March 2018	31 March 2019
	£000	£000
Present value of the defined benefit obligation	(35,079)	(37,671)
Fair value of plan assets	31,201	33,195
Net liability arising from defined benefit obligation	(3,878)	(4,476)

Note 22 (continued)

The reconciliation of the Board's share of the present value of the North East Scotland Pension Fund's defined benefit liability is as follows:

	2018	2019
	£000	£000
1 April	(36,477)	(35,079)
Current Service Cost	(786)	(773)
Interest on pension liabilities	(905)	(899)
Remeasurements:		
Experience gain/(loss)	229	-
Gain/(Loss) on financial assumptions	2,452	(1,821)
Gain/(Loss) on demographic assumptions	(213)	-
Contributions by scheme participants	(159)	(228)
Benefits Paid	780	1,129
31 March	(35,079)	(37,671)

The reconciliation of the movements in the Board's share of the fair value of the North East Pension Fund's assets is as follows:

	2018	2019
	£000	£000
1 April	29,852	31,201
Interest on plan assets	744	806
Remeasurements (assets)	769	1,615
Administration expenses	(9)	(10)
Employer Contributions	466	484
Contributions by scheme participants	159	228
Benefits Paid	(780)	(1,129)
31 March	31,201	33,195

Note 22 (continued)

The Board's share of the Pension Fund's assets is:

	31 March 2018		
	Quoted Prices in	Prices not Quoted in	Totals
	Active Markets	Active Markets	
	£000	£000	£000
U.K. Equities	10,463		10,463
Overseas Equities	10,047		10,047
U.K Government Bonds	1,903		1,903
Other Government Bonds	437		437
Other U.K. Bonds	21		21
Other non U.K. Bonds	374		374
Property		2,277	2,277
Private Equity		1,217	1,217
Global Infrastructure		437	437
Cash Instruments		499	499
Infrastructure Pooled fund		468	468
Multi Asset Credit		749	749
Diversified Growth Funds		2,309	2,309
Total Assets	23,245	7,956	31,201

	31 March 2019		
	Quoted Prices in	Prices not Quoted in	Totals
	Active Markets	Active Markets	
	£000	£000	£000
U.K. Equities	9,979	-	9,979
Overseas Equities	10,805	-	10,805
U.K Government Bonds	1,534	-	1,534
Other Government Bonds	471	-	471
Other U.K. Bonds	23	-	23
Other non U.K. Bonds	388	-	388
Property	-	2,437	2,437
Private Equity	-	1,524	1,524
Private Debt	-	146	146
Private Equity Infrastructure	-	252	252
Infrastructure Pooled fund	793	-	793
Private Equity Real Estate	-	405	405
Multi Asset Credit	-	767	767
Diversified Growth Funds	-	2,327	2,327
Cash Instruments	-	1,344	1,344
Total Assets	23,993	9,202	33,195

Note 22 (continued)

Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

The most recent valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2017 and has been updated by Mercer Limited, independent actuaries to the North East Scotland Pension Fund, in order to assess the liabilities of the Fund as at 31 March 2019. Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels etc.

The principal assumptions used by the actuary have been:

	31 March 2018	31 March 2019
Financial assumptions:		
Discount rate	2.60%	2.40%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.60%	3.70%
Rate of increase in pensions	2.20%	2.30%
Rate of CPI inflation	2.10%	2.20%
Mortality assumptions:		
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners:		
Men	22.7	22.9
Women	24.9	25.0
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners:		
Men	25.6	25.8
Women	27.9	28.1

Sensitivity Analysis

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analyses below have been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period, and assume for each change that the assumption analysed changes while all the other assumptions remain constant. The assumption in longevity, for example, assumes that life expectancy increases or decreases for men and women. In practice, this is unlikely to occur, and changes of the assumptions may be interrelated. The estimations in the sensitivity analysis have followed the accounting policies for the scheme, i.e. on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method. The methods and types of assumptions used in preparing the sensitivity analysis below did not change from those used in the previous period.

The effects of a 0.1% increase/decrease in the rate for discounting scheme liabilities, the rate of inflation, and the rate of increase in salaries and a 1 year increase/decrease in life expectancy are shown in the table below:

Note 22 (continued)

Sensitivity Analysis as at 31 March 2019

	Central position	+ 0.1% p.a. discount rate	+ 0.1% p.a. inflation	+ 0.1% p.a. pay growth	+1 year increase in life expectancy
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Liabilities	37,671	37,045	38,308	37,809	38,399
Assets	(33,195)	(33,195)	(33,195)	(33,195)	(33,195)
Fund Deficit	4,476	3,850	5,113	4,614	5,204
	Central position	- 0.1% p.a. discount rate	- 0.1% p.a. inflation	- 0.1% p.a. pay growth	-1 year increase in life expectancy
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Liabilities	37,671	38,297	37,034	37,533	36,943
Assets	(33,195)	(33,195)	(33,195)	(33,195)	(33,195)
Fund Deficit	4,476	5,102	3,839	4,338	3,748

Note 22 (continued)

Funding Strategy Statement (FSS)

The FSS sets out how the administering authority balances the potentially conflicting aims of affordability of contributions, transparency of process, stability of employers' contributions, and prudence in the funding basis.

The Pension Committee's long-term funding objective is to achieve and maintain assets equal to 100% of projected accrued liabilities, assessed on an ongoing basis. The current actuarial valuation of the Fund is effective as at 31 March 2017 and the results indicate that overall the assets represented 107% of projected accrued liabilities at the valuation date. Investments that would most closely match the pension liabilities would be gilts, predominantly index-linked, reflecting the nature of the Fund's liabilities. However, the Fund invests in other assets, in the expectation that these will provide higher returns albeit without any guarantee that higher returns will be achieved over any particular year. The benefit of higher investment return is that, over the long term, a higher level of funding should achieve lower employer contribution rates. However the additional investment returns from growth assets come with a price: greater volatility relative to the liabilities thus introducing risk. There is a trade-off between the benefits of additional investment return from greater exposure to growth assets and the greater predictability from having greater exposure to liability matching assets.

The asset proportions of the Fund at 31 March 2019, with March 2018 in brackets were: equities, including alternatives 81.3% (82.3%), bonds 7.3% (8.8%), property 7.4% (7.3%) and cash 4.0% (1.6%). This is based on the Board's proportion of assets held as supplied by the actuary, rather than the proportions held by the fund as a whole.

Impact on the Board's Cash Flows

While the Funds main objective is to ensure solvency of the NESPF they also aim to keep employers' contributions at as constant a rate as possible. Following the 2017 valuation the Pensions Committee has agreed a strategy with the scheme's actuary to achieve a funding level of 100% over an average surplus spread period of 24 years and have maintained an employer contribution rate requirement of 19.3% for local authorities across the scheme. During the valuation process employer rates are set for a period of three years with the next triennial valuation due as at 31 March 2020 to determine a funding level and set the rates for 2021/22 onwards.

The projected employer contributions expected to be made to the Local Government Pension Scheme in the year to 31 March 2019 is £0.484m.

The weighted average duration of the liabilities for scheme members at the 31 March 2017 valuation is 17 years.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

EXPENDITURE

Employee Benefit Expenses

Includes direct and indirect employee expenses.

Direct expenses include salaries and overtime, employer's national insurance and superannuation contributions.

Indirect employee expenses include relocation cost, interview expenses, training and staff advertising.

Other Service Expenses

Includes

- rent, rates, repairs and maintenance and premises-related expenditure at the area offices in Banff, Elgin and Woodhill House headquarters.
- all costs associated with the hire or use of transport, including staff travel allowances and public transport and
- the cost of purchasing equipment, furniture and materials used in the operation or administration of the service, including printing and stationery, canvass expenses and valuation appeal panel costs.

Support Services

This is a charge from Moray Council for services that support the Board in its provision of services to the public. These include Legal Services, Financial Services, Internal Audit and Human Resources.

Depreciation

Depreciation is a charge to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, reflecting the decline in value of assets as a result of their usage or ageing.

Impairment

Impairment is a charge to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, reflecting that the recoverable amount of an asset is less than its carrying amount.

INCOME

Requisitions

Funding received from the constituent authorities for which the Board provides a service.

OTHER TERMS

CIPFA

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

LASAAC

Local Authority (Scotland) Accounts Advisory Committee

IFRS

International Financial Reporting Standard

The Code

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom

SeRCOP

Service Reporting Code of Practice

Fair Value

IFRS 13 defines fair value as the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date (i.e. an exit price). When measuring fair value, an entity uses the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability under current market conditions, including assumptions about risk.

Current Value

For operational land and buildings, current value is the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use.

Economic Cost

The total cost of performing an activity or following a decision or course of action.



REPORT TO: Grampian Valuation Joint Board on 21 June 2019

SUBJECT: Complaints handling performance

BY: The Assessor & ERO

1. Reason for Report

1.1 To report on complaints handling performance.

2. Recommendation

2.1 **The Board consider the complaints handling performance.**

3. Background

3.1 Complaints are valuable. When handled well, they can provide a low cost and important source of feedback and learning for the organisation to drive improvement and restore a positive relationship with service users who feel let down by poor service.

3.2 2018/19 is the third year of operation of the revised Complaints Handling Procedure. The procedure follows the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) model complaints handling procedure and comprises three stages

- Stage 1 frontline resolution;
- Stage 2 investigation where stage 1 is not capable of resolving the issue;
- Stage 3 referral to the SPSO where service failure or maladministration has not been identified at Stage 2 and the issue remains unresolved.

3.3 Local authorities are required to assess complaints handling performance to provide assurance in relation to their performance, to facilitate continuous improvement and to assist in benchmarking between local authorities.

4. Current position

4.1 The SPSO's Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) developed a series of performance indicators. The 2018/19 performance of the organisation is provided in the table at 4.2, along with that for the previous two years for comparative purposes.

4.2 Complaints performance 2016/17 – 2018/19

Indicator	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Total number of complaints		6		7		10
Total number of complaints/1000 population	-	0.01	-	0.01		0.02
Complaints closed at Stage 1	100%	6	43%	3	80%	8
Complaints closed at Stage 2		0	57%	4	20%	2
Resolution outcome						
Complaints upheld at Stage 1	17%	1	29%	2	20%	2
Complaints partially upheld at Stage 1	50%	3	14%	1	30%	3
Complaints not upheld at Stage 1	33%	2	-	0	30%	3
Complaints upheld at Stage 2		0	14%	1	20%	2
Complaints partially upheld at Stage 2		0	29%	2		0
Complaints not upheld at Stage 2		0	14%	1		0
Resolution time						
Average time for a full response at Stage 1	3 days		2 days		3 days	
Complaints resolved at Stage 1 against SPSO target 5 days	83%	5	100%	3	88%	7
Complaints extended at Stage 1 beyond SPSO target 5 days	17%	1	-	-	12%	1
Average time for a full response at Stage 2	-		11 days		22 days	
Complaints resolved at Stage 2 against SPSO target 20 days	-	-	75%	3	50%	1
Complaints extended at Stage 2 beyond SPSO target 20 days	-	-	25%	1	50%	1

- 4.3 The organisation has a high level of contact with stakeholders in the Grampian area and beyond with a canvass to over 276,000 dwellings for over 400,000 electors, over 3,000 new dwellings being added to the valuation list and more than 2,500 updates to the valuation rolls made relative to non-domestic properties. Despite such a widespread reach of the organisation's service provision across the Grampian area, the volume of complaints remains extremely low.
- 4.4 An analysis of the 10 complaints recorded for 2018/19 show that they are evenly divided between valuation and electoral registration aspects of the organisation and have not identified any major concentration around one aspect of service delivery or failure in process, but have identified areas where the Management Team can bring about improvement in terms of training and contact management.
- 4.5 It is difficult to determine any emerging trend over the three year period that the new complaints handling procedure has been in operation due to the relatively low volume of complaints. Whilst the overall number of complaints has increased from 6 in 2016/17 to 10 in 2018/19, the low volume prevents statistically significant analysis.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The third year of operation of the updated complaints handling procedure has proved effective, with ready access for stakeholders and frontline personnel seeking to resolve issues within extremely short timeframes.
- 5.2 The quantitative and qualitative output from this procedure provide the Management Team with reliable and effective information that in turn supports the constant drive to improve service delivery across all three areas of activity.

Author of Report: Ian H Milton



REPORT TO: Grampian Valuation Joint Board on 21 June 2019

SUBJECT: Governance

BY: The Assessor & ERO

1. Reason for Report

- 1.1 To advise the Board of equalities mainstreaming activities.
- 1.2 To update the Board on the introduction of a register of interests for officers

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **The Board note the content of this report**

3. Equalities mainstreaming

- 3.1 The General Equality Duty that is set out in the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those that do not.
- 3.2 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 required public authorities such as the Board to publish mainstreaming reports and set equality outcomes that would be reviewed every second year with refreshed outcomes identified every fourth year, commencing in 2013.
- 3.3 Previous Equalities Mainstreaming reports identified 5 equalities outcomes for the organisation –
 - 1. to maximise young citizen engagement with the voting process;
 - 2. to maximise registration amongst high mobility citizens;
 - 3. to maximise opportunities for young people to enter the workforce.
 - 4. Our services meet the needs of all service users in our community;
 - 5. The Board is seen as an equal opportunities employer where diversity is welcomed and respected

Appendix 1 to this report (The Equalities Mainstreaming and Outcomes report 2019 – 2021) sets out the progress that has been made towards achieving these equality outcomes and provides an assessment of the gender pay gap, an equal pay statement and a procurement statement.

4. Register of Interests

- 4.1 Audit Scotland recommended that a review of procedures for identifying related parties within the annual accounts should be carried out to include both members and senior officers. Further consideration by the Assessor, Treasurer and Internal Audit established that a register of interests for all employees should be established. Appendix 2 provides the proposed template declaration form and guidance.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The organisation is continuing to integrate equalities as part of its business as usual operations. Whilst progress has been made towards securing the specific outcomes identified, operational constraints and demands have impacted on the rate of progress. The report in Appendix 1 identifies the priorities for the Management Team and their success in meeting these priorities will continue to be monitored. The reduction in the Gender Pay Gap is welcome and the Equal Pay Statement provides useful context information.
- 5.2 Implementation of a formal register of interests is a welcome development towards evidencing the professional standards that employees are currently working to.

Author of Report: Ian H Milton

Grampian Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer



Equalities Mainstreaming and Outcomes 2019 Report

On behalf of the Grampian Valuation Joint Board

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1. Introduction

The Grampian Valuation Joint Board (the Board) and the Assessor for the Grampian Valuation Joint Board (the Assessor) are fully committed to embracing and implementing the principle and ethos of the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

By fully adopting the principles and ethos of the Equality Act 2010, the Board will provide to all electors, rate payers, council tax payers and to its own staff a service provision, culture and working environment which is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and where all members of our community have equal opportunities and treat each other with dignity and respect.

2. Grampian Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

The Grampian Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) is an independent statutory official appointed and funded by the Grampian Valuation Joint Board to value non-domestic properties for rating purposes, allocate dwellings to council tax valuation bands and provide an electoral registration service for the Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray council areas. These councils lie in the North East of Scotland and their collective area is known as Grampian. The local councils collect non-domestic rates and council tax and their Returning Officers are usually responsible for conducting any elections. The Assessor & ERO has a workforce of approximately 80 staff distributed between offices in Aberdeen, Banff & Elgin.

3. The Grampian Valuation Joint Board

The Grampian Valuation Joint Board is the statutory valuation authority established by the Valuation Joint Boards (Scotland) Order 1995. The Board comprises 15 members; Aberdeen City Council appoints six Members, Aberdeenshire Council appoints six Members and The Moray Council appoints three Members. The three councils fund the Board on a pro-rata basis.

The role of the valuation authority is to appoint the Assessor and deposes as necessary for the purposes of the Valuation Acts. The Assessor and any deposes must be chartered surveyors and the Valuation Acts place the duty to assess properties on the Assessor rather than the Board thus ensuring that the assessments are arrived at in an independent manner. Through local arrangements, the Board appointed the Assessor as Electoral Registration Officer to the three councils.

Given the respective roles of the Board and the Assessor & ERO, the Assessor & ERO reports on behalf of the Board.

4. The Legal Context

The Equality Act 2010 and the General Equality Duty

The General Equality Duty replaces the previous race, disability and gender equality duties, which aimed to mainstream equality into public sector culture. These principles continue to apply to the public sector under the Equality Act 2010. This Act increased the number of equality groups from three to eight. These groups are called protected characteristics in the Equality Act:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation

The General Equality Duty also covers Marriage and Civil Partnerships, with regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination in employment.

The General Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The Act makes clear that having due regard to advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;

- taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- encouraging persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The Specific Equality Duties

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 place particular legal requirements on specified public authorities to assist them meet the requirements of the General Equality Duty. Valuation Joint Boards are specified in the regulations. The legal duties for the Grampian Valuation Joint Board are to:

- Report on mainstreaming equality
- Publish equality outcomes and report on progress
- Assess and review policies and practices
- Gather and use employee information
- Publish gender pay gap information
- Publish statements on equal pay, including occupational segregation information
- Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement
- Publish in a manner that is accessible to the public

The Specific Duties required public authorities in Scotland to publish a Mainstreaming Report and a set of Equality Outcomes by 30 April 2013. There is an ongoing duty to provide two yearly update reports and to refresh equality outcomes every four years. Accordingly, having

published its first mainstreaming report in 2013 and two yearly update reports in 2015 and 2017, this is the Board's fourth report since the 2012 Regulations came into force.

A number of listed public authorities are required to publish the gender composition of their board members and to report on current and planned work towards board diversity. The Grampian Valuation Joint Board is not a listed authority under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2016.

5. The operational context

Neither the Board nor the Assessor & ERO operate in a vacuum albeit that the remit has a very narrow and statutory foundation. It is important to recognise that the functions are restricted but also that the impact of the functions is fundamental – providing access to the democratic process and an independent assessment service for local taxation.

Partnership working is however a key aspect of the service, with partnerships between the Scottish Assessors Association (SAA) and the 13 other individual and independent lands valuation assessors, the SAA Electoral Registration Committee and the 14 other electoral registration officers in Scotland, the Electoral Commission, the Electoral Management Board for Scotland, the Association of Electoral Administrators, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation. Through these partnerships, the service is able to benefit from the synergies of joint working. The benefits of sharing resources, research and expertise enables the Assessor & ERO to deliver cost effective but specialist and comprehensive outcomes to the local area.

Operational partnerships with the three local councils responsible for the levy and collection of non-domestic rates and council tax, along with their electoral services offices that support the returning officers appointed for particular elections also prevail. Joint working at this local level ensures that the equalities themes flow across services and measures to advance the interests of those with protected characteristics are implemented in a coordinated manner.

Through their local and national joint working arrangements it is considered that Assessors & EROs provide one of the best examples of joint working within the Scottish public sector, where the focus is on service delivery without disproportionate overheads of a structural or organisational nature.

Local and national partners also have an important role in providing feedback as to performance.

The service's strategic position is as follows:

- Electoral Registration has been subject to a fundamental shift from household registration to individual registration brought about by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. The regime has been subject to a series of initiatives that have made a substantial impact on the service and citizens. There are some 440,000 electors currently registered to vote in Grampian, which amounts to approximately 10% of the Scottish electorate and 1% of the UK electorate. As a result of its importance in the oil and gas sector, Grampian has experienced high levels of employment and migration from other parts of the UK and overseas. Since 2002 there has been a large increase in national insurance registrations to non-UK nationals. Since the Scottish

Independence Referendum there has been a requirement to register 14 and 15 year olds. The area has a significant student population. In view of all of the above and as a result of the necessity to make contact with every elector, electoral registration is a priority area for equalities.

- Rating – the rating revaluation of non-domestic properties that was due to be held in 2015 came into effect from 1 April 2017. The Assessor is responsible for assessing the values of some 29,700 non-domestic properties across Grampian that currently have a total rateable value of £1,020M. The service is currently dealing with large volumes of appeals arising from both the Revaluation and challenging local economic conditions. A timetable for disposal of all Revaluation appeals by 31 December 2020 has been agreed with the independent Valuation Appeal Committee and resolution is on target with approximately 50% resolved to date. The organisation is now preparing for the challenge of the move from 5 yearly to 3 yearly revaluations brought about by the Scottish Government's response to the Barclay Review of Non-Domestic Rates.
- The Council Tax regime is currently a stable function, with a valuation list of some 283,000 dwellings allocated to council tax bands and around 3,000 new dwellings being added each year. The Scottish Government chose to retain Council Tax with minimal disturbance following the 2016 election. However, the prospect of a revaluation or a replacement system is increasing in view of the problems associated with the continued existence of a system based on values that are now out of date by over 28 years.

Appendix 1 to this report provides the characteristics of the employees as at 31 March 2019. The Assessor & ERO service establishment comprises 75 full time posts. There are currently 76 full and part-time employees that represent 70 full time equivalents. Staff turnover has decreased over the last two years and 7 out of the 11 leavers during the period did so as a result of reaching their chosen retirement age. Whilst the nature of the vacated posts has not provided the best opportunities to address one of our published outcomes, i.e. to maximise the recruitment of young people, there will be a clear opportunity to do so going forward in view of the additional requirement, arising from the implications of the Barclay Review mentioned above, to take on and train a number of graduate trainee valuers.

6. Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming simply means integrating equality into the day-to-day operations of the service – considering equality in everything that is done as an employer and when planning and providing services. Senior managers must provide clear and consistent messages with the equality duties embedded within all strategy. Co-workers should be able to recognise the relevance of the equality duties to their own role and should consider it in carrying out their work. Equality therefore becomes fully integrated within structures, behaviours and culture rather than an adjunct to these aspects of the service.

Evidence is an important aspect of mainstreaming and includes monitoring service users and service activity as regards all of the protected characteristics and then analysing outcomes. Monitoring and annual reporting on workforce composition, recruitment, development

and retention of its employees with respect to protected characteristics also assists the mainstreaming process. See appendices 1 & 2.

6.1 Progress in mainstreaming in the workplace

Workforce monitoring demonstrates that there have been some changes in the overall balance of the workforce since 31 March 2019 – see comments under Equal Pay Statement below.

The Board is committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection incorporates the principles of equality and fair treatment of all job applicants and that the workforce reflects as far as possible minority groups within the local community where this contributes to facilitating the delivery of continually improving, efficient and effective services.

During the last two years the service has continued to accommodate requests to move to part-time working or to change the pattern of part-time working in order to allow the workforce to meet their out-of-employment social and family responsibilities. In addition, the flexibility of the Board's Flexible Working Hours scheme has been extended to permit up to two full days or four half days leave within each four week period where the exigencies of the service allow,

6.2 Progress in mainstreaming in our services

Equalities is now a standing agenda item for Management Team meetings to help ensure that our duty to advance equality is meaningful and ongoing.

The Assessor and ERO service has had an extremely busy two year period. Following the local government elections of May 2017 the main

focus of a relatively new senior administration team was to specify, procure and commission a new electoral registration management system to replace the existing in-house system. The principal task of the valuation and technical teams was dealing with a significant response from service users, in terms of both informal enquiries and formal appeal numbers, in respect of the 2017 non-domestic rating revaluation, the timing of which was unfortunate in regard to the challenges faced by ratepayers engaged in business in the changing economic situation in the North-East. Nevertheless progress has been made in regard to mainstreaming and the identified equality outcomes (see Section 7 below for detail.)

7. Equality Outcomes

Equality Outcome 1

Maximise the opportunities for young citizens to register to vote and therefore enable them to participate in the democratic process

The registration of young voters (under 18) for the referendum will mirror the demographic profile of Grampian. Registration statistics will demonstrate progress against census outputs and other sources of young person data. In turn, the early engagement with young citizens should prove beneficial in assisting to establish a culture of engagement in mid-late teens that may be maintained into adulthood.

Activities

- Consult with partner authorities and education providers
- Canvass and publicity plan

- Integration of the equalities element with the Electoral Commission performance standards regime
- Engagement with individual equalities groups to ensure removal of barriers to registration

Measurement

- Registration rates compared to census outputs
- Number of registration corrections and complaints

Progress to April 2019

Registration and voter engagement activities took place in advance of the 2016 Scottish Parliamentary and 2017 local government elections. These activities included providing presentations to Modern Studies teacher groups and school librarians, holding registration campaigns, running a promotional banner and leaflet design competition for school students and collaboration with local authorities including participation in mock elections in schools and manning stalls at engagement events.

Specific work was conducted in partnership with the three local authorities to ensure that children in care, known as looked after children, had the opportunity to register to vote and were given the necessary guidance and assistance. The service also facilitated young voters with anonymous registration where personal safety, or that of another member of the household, was an issue.

There were 12,519 under 18 year olds registered to vote at the date relevant date for the May 2017 Local Government Election. The number registered at 31 March 2019 has fallen to 11,319 and this is no doubt due to the lack of electoral events over the intervening two year period.

Similarly the number of students registered in student accommodation has fallen slightly from 579 to 533 over the period.

Post April 2019 priorities

We will continue to pursue and monitor this outcome. Although there has been a marginal decrease in numbers since the 2017 Local Government Election we will continue to work with the local education authorities and universities to ensure that young people are given every encouragement to register.

Equality Outcome 2

Maximise registration amongst high mobility citizens such as occupiers of houses in multiple occupation and tenanted dwellings.

Research has shown that high mobility citizens and citizens in tenanted dwellings are under-represented in terms of electoral registration. Ethnicity and nationality may be influencing this under-registration.

Activities

- Consult with partner authorities and housing providers
- Canvass and publicity plan
- Integration of the equalities element with the Electoral Commission performance standards regime
- Engagement with individual equalities groups to ensure removal of barriers to registration
- Focus on improved materials using straightforward language tested by relevant groups in partnership with other EROs and the Electoral Commission.

Measurement

- Registration rates compared to census outputs
- Number of registration corrections and complaints

Progress to April 2019

Since April 2017 the service has continued to focus on students and the tenanted housing sector to deliver this outcome. However, the allocation of resources to a critical requirement to procure a new Electoral Management System to replace an existing in-house system that would be problematic to support in the future meant that the level of activity on this outcome was not as originally planned.

Nevertheless the service has continued to work with student associations and tertiary education providers in order to promote registration.

With regard to the tenanted housing sector work began towards the end of the period on a Cabinet Office funded pilot exercise to research the potential benefits of using private sector tenancy deposit scheme data. This research sought to use of data from external agencies to establish whether we can improve canvass outcomes and subsequent registration levels. Our engagement with tenancy deposit scheme operators led to the possibility of a national initiative in promoting registration to new tenants, but unfortunately Cabinet Office resources were directed elsewhere and this aspiration remains unfulfilled at national level.

Post April 2019 Priorities

The online functionality of individual electoral registration provides an ideal opportunity to integrate registration with online student enrolment or information systems and the service is keen to work with tertiary education providers in order to link registration with these services.

The potential of using other data sources will also be considered.

We will continue to identify and engage with under-represented groups.

Equalities Outcome 3

To maximise opportunities for young people to enter the workforce

Youth employment is a key national priority, with the low percentage of employees recruited directly from school identified as a key issue. Whilst the service relies on a significant number of individuals who are required to have tertiary education and be working towards professional qualifications, analysis confirms that Under 25 year olds are under-represented in the service's workforce. Notwithstanding that recruitment is fairly minimal the opportunity nevertheless exists to enhance opportunities for young citizens.

Activities

- Promote work experience opportunities for Under 25 year olds
- Review recruitment advertising media
- Promote career progression schemes to encourage young people to make the service an employer of choice.

Measurement

- Annual workforce monitoring
- Annual work-experience monitoring

Progress to April 2019

Staff turnover has decreased over the last two years and 7 out of the 11 leavers during the period did so as a result of reaching their chosen retirement age. The nature of the vacated posts has not provided the best opportunities to address this outcome.

Recruitment advertising has been reviewed and all employment opportunities are now advertised online.

Post April 2019 Priorities

Continue to pursue and monitor this outcome.

The Barclay Review of Non-Domestic Rates has led to Scottish Government funding that will allow the recruitment and training of four part-time Graduate Trainee Valuers from July 2019 leading to four full time posts from 1 April 2020.

Work experience continues to be made available to Under 25s through our work with education authorities.

8. New Outcomes

Equalities Outcome 4

Our services meet the needs of all service users in our community.

Activities

- Monitor customer satisfaction across all service areas by the protected characteristics.

Measurement

- Detailed analysis of customer satisfaction surveys.

Equalities Outcome 5

The Board is seen as an equal opportunities employer where diversity is welcomed and all staff feel valued and respected.

Activities

- Issue and monitor regular staff questionnaires by the protected characteristics

Measurement

- Detailed analysis of staff questionnaires.

Progress to April 2019

The operational context described in detail at section 5. above, in particular the response to the 2017 Revaluation and the requirement to commission a new electoral registration management system, has led to our aspirations in respect of the two additional outcomes reported in 2017 being unfulfilled to date.

Post April 2019 Priorities

Design, issue and analyse questionnaires to demonstrate progress in achieving equality outcomes 4 & 5.

9. Policies and Practices

Policy and practice reviews are carried out within the terms of section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.

The Board employs the Human Resources expertise of the Moray Council, one of its three constituent authorities, and the majority of policies are reviewed by them on a regular programme in line with the terms of the Equality Act and the Council's own policies.

Other policies and practices are reviewed on a regular basis through a rota of quarterly meetings of the Assessor's Management Team, Administration Group and Technical Group.

10. Gender Pay Gap

In view of employee numbers the Grampian Valuation Joint Board has a duty to publish information on the percentage difference among its

employees between men's average hourly pay (excluding overtime) and women's average hourly pay (excluding overtime).

The following information is based on the employees who were in post on 31 March 2019.

GVJB has 33 male employees with an average hourly rate of pay of £22.36 and 43 female employees with an average hourly pay of £14.22.

The mean (average) gender pay gap is therefore:

$$(22.36 - 14.22) / 22.36 \times 100 = 36.41\%$$

The median gender pay gap is obtained by arranging the hourly rates in descending order for both male and female employees and selecting the mid-point of each range.

The median gender pay gap calculation is:

$$(19.73 - 10.95) / 19.73 \times 100 = 44.50\%$$

Full time gender pay gap (28 female and 32 male employees): 33.09%

Part time gender pay gap (15 female and 1 male employee): 25.90%

Full time men/part time women pay gap (15 female and 33 male employees): 40.45%

Permanent staff gender pay gap (41 female and 32 male employees): 36.55%

Temporary staff gender pay gap (2 female and 1 male employees):
4.39%

On all bar one of the average measures detailed above it is pleasing to note that the organisation's gender pay gap shows a reduction from that reported two years ago. The temporary staff gender pay gap is very low but has increased slightly because the sole male employee is on the highest point on the salary scale due to greater time served in the role.

11. Equal Pay Statement

The Grampian Valuation Joint Board is committed to the principle of equal opportunities for all, in every aspect of employment. This means all employees should receive equal pay for doing the same or broadly similar work within the organisation.

As at 31 March 2019, the Board had 76 employees. 44 of these are employed in professional and technical posts and are predominantly male (65.91% an improvement from 70.45% two years ago). 33 employees are in clerical and administration posts and are predominantly female (87.88%). 78.79% of the administration and clerical posts are in Grades 1 & 2 whereas 97.73% of the professional and technical posts are on Grade 3 and above. Nevertheless it is pleasing to report that the mean gender pay gap has been reduced since April 2017.

The difference in male and female pay is largely due to the degree of occupational segregation that exists in the organisation. The gender pay gap is higher than the national average. This is due in part to the predominance of Chartered Surveyors within higher grade posts. The surveying profession has traditionally been male dominated with only

8,000 out of 100,000 members being female as recently as 1999 according to RICS figures. The average age of our surveyors is 48 and 6 out of 24 (25%) are female. However the percentage is rising as 4 out of 6 (66.7%) of the organisation's surveyors under 40 and 3 out of 4 (75%) under 35 are female.

In relation to Technical posts figures there is a similar trend with the number of female employees having increased from 4 (26.67%) to 6 (40.0%). It is also worth noting that 100% of the organisations IT Analysts are female.

12. Procurement

Regulation 9 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, imposes a duty on public bodies when considering award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement, to have due regard to whether the award criteria should include considerations which will help it meet its Equality Duty. Any such award criteria should be related to and proportionate to the subject matter of the proposed agreement.

Currently the Board enters into very few procurement contracts directly. Contracts of any substance are normally procured on behalf of the Board by the Moray Council and are subject to their procurement procedures and in accordance with current procurement legislation. Any contracts that the Board does enter into directly are generally small in terms of the service procured and the monetary value of that service. Notwithstanding, the Board will have due regard to whether the award criteria should include considerations to enable us to better perform the Equality duty.

13. Conclusion

The Board will continue to support the Assessor & ERO in mainstreaming equalities throughout the service and monitor progress on an annual basis in relation to the protected characteristics and the specific equality outcomes identified above.

The Board will publish a fresh mainstreaming report and formally report on the progress made to achieve the equality outcomes by 30 April 2021.

Fresh equality outcomes will be identified and reported by 30 April 2023.

Ian H Milton
Grampian Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen AB16 5GE
assessor@grampian-vjb.gov.uk Tel: 01224 068370

Appendix 1:

Workforce Monitoring Statistics for 2 years to 31 March 2019

	<i>Workforce Profile*</i>	<i>Promotion</i>	<i>Leavers</i>
Total	76	9	11
Gender:			
Male	43.4%	66.7%	63.6%
Female	56.6%	33.3%	36.4%
Married/Civil Partnership:			
Yes	38.2%	-	-
No	23.7%	-	-
Prefer not to say	1.3%	-	-
DNA	36.8%	-	-
Sexual Orientation:			
Bisexual	-	-	-
Heterosexual	48.7%	-	-
Gay Woman/ Lesbian	-	-	-
Gay man	-	-	-
Prefer not to Say	2.6%	-	-
DNA	48.7%	-	-
Age:			
16-24	-	-	9.1%
25-29	5.3%	-	9.1%
30-34	9.2%	11.1%	-
35-39	5.3%	11.1%	-
40-44	1.3%	-	-
45-49	10.5%	11.1%	9.1%
50-54	30.2%	33.3%	9.1%
55-59	22.4%	11.1%	9.1%
60-64	15.8%	22.2%	36.4%
65+	-	-	9.1%
Disability:			
Yes	-	-	-
No	43.4%	100%	100%
DNA	56.6%	-	-
Religion:			
C of S	2.6%	-	-
Roman Catholic	2.6%	-	-
Protestant	-	-	-
Christian	25.0%	-	-
No Religion	19.7%	-	-
Other	1.3%	-	-
Prefer not to say	-	-	-
DNA	48.7%	-	-
Ethnicity:			
White			

Scottish	43.4%	-	-
English	-	-	-
British	9.2%	-	-
Welsh	-	-	-
Irish	-	-	-
Northern Irish	-	-	-
Polish	-	-	-
Scottish/ Polish	-	-	-
Any other	-	-	-
<i>Mixed</i>			
Any mixed background	-	-	-
<i>Asian</i>			
Indian	-	-	-
Pakistani	-	-	-
Bangladesh	-	-	-
Chinese	1.3%	-	-
Any other	-	-	-
<i>Black</i>			
Caribbean	-	-	-
African	1.3%	-	-
Any other	-	-	-
Any Other Ethnic	-	-	-
Unidentified	5.3%	-	-
DNA	39.5%	-	-
Gender Reassignment:			
Yes	-	-	-
No	6.6%	-	-
DNA	93.4%	-	-

Appendix 2:

Workforce recruitment monitoring Statistics for 2 year period to 31 March 2019

	<i>Applied (number)</i>	<i>Applied (%)</i>	<i>Shortlisted (Number)</i>	<i>Shortlisted (%)</i>	<i>Appointed (Number)</i>	<i>Appointed (%)</i>
Total	77	100	62	100	31	100
Gender:						
Male	26	33.77	22	35.48	10	32.26
Female	51	66.23	40	64.52	21	67.74
Married/Civil Partnership:						
Yes	39	50.65	30	48.39	15	48.39
No	15	19.48	13	20.97	6	19.35
Prefer not to Say	1	1.30	0	0	0	0
DNA	22	28.57	19	30.65	10	32.26
Sexual Orientation:						
Bisexual	0	0	0	0		
Heterosexual	63	81.82	49	79.03	25	80.65
Gay Woman/ Lesbian	1	1.30	1	1.61	1	3.22
Gay man	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prefer not to say	0	0	0	0	0	0
DNA	13	16.88	12	19.35	5	16.13
Age:						
16-24	3	3.90	2	3.23	1	3.23
25-29	3	3.90	3	4.84	2	6.45
30-34	6	7.79	5	8.06	3	9.68
35-39	7	9.09	4	6.45	2	6.45
40-44	10	12.99	7	11.29	5	16.13
45-49	12	15.58	10	16.13	6	19.35
50-54	10	12.99	8	12.90	4	12.90
55-59	6	7.79	5	8.06	1	3.23
60-64	3	3.90	2	3.23	0	0
65+	3	3.90	3	4.84	3	9.68
Prefer not to say	3	3.90	3	4.84	1	3.23
DNA	11	14.29	10	16.13	3	9.68
Disability:						
Yes	3	3.90	3	4.84	1	3.22
No	62	80.52	48	77.42	25	80.65
DNA	12	15.58	11	17.74	5	16.13
Religion:						
Ch. of Scotland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Roman Catholic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protestant	0	0	0	0	0	0
Christian	29	37.66	23	37.10	11	35.48
No Religion	28	36.37	21	33.87	12	38.71
Other	4	5.19	4	6.45	3	9.68
Prefer not to Say	16	20.78	14	22.58	5	16.13
Ethnicity:						
White						

Scottish	30	38.96	23	37.10	11	35.48
English	9	11.69	7	11.29	2	6.45
British	12	15.58	9	14.52	6	19.35
Welsh	0	0	0	0	0	0
Irish	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Irish	1	1.30	1	1.61	0	0
Polish	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scottish/ Polish	0	0	0	0		0
Any other	4	5.19	2	3.23	2	6.45
<i>Mixed</i>						0
Any mixed background	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Asian</i>				0		0
Indian	2	2.60	2	3.23	2	6.45
Pakistani	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bangladesh	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0
Any other	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Black</i>						0
Caribbean	0	0	0	0		0
African	6	7.79	6	9.68	3	9.68
Any other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Any Other Ethnic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unidentified	13	16.88	12	19.35	5	16.13

Grampian Valuation Joint Board Register of Interests Declaration form		
Name		
Designation		
Property address &/or name of individual, company, organisation, club etc., where there is a potential conflict of interest.		
Description of (Potential) conflict of interest		
Mitigation action taken		
Authorised by		
Additional information		
Signature of officer making declaration		Date:
Officer to whom disclosure made	Name:	Designation:
	Signature:	Date:

Guidelines

In accordance with section 4.4 of the Code of Conduct (February 2019), employees must not allow any private interest, financial or non-financial, to influence their decisions.

Members of staff must not use their position to further their own interests or the interests of others.

You may have a private interest which relates to your employment by the Board and your work for the Assessor and ERO. That interest may be a financial one or one that a member of the public might reasonably think could influence your judgement. In addition, close family members or people living in your household may have financial interests in the Board or the work of the Assessor & ERO. All such interests must be declared to your line manager/supervisor and subsequently passed to the Principal Administration Officer for recording in a register of staff interests.

If you are a member of an organisation or club (eg School Board, Community Council, PTA etc) and membership might result in a conflict of interest in relation to any aspect of your work, you should declare this interest to your line manager who, in turn, should

pass the details to the Principal Administration Officer. This applies equally to membership of organisations or clubs, which are not open to the public (eg Freemasonry). You need only declare interests which relate to your work.

If you declare an interest, you will not normally be required to continue to work or take decisions relative to this interest. In certain circumstances, your activities outside work may be restricted due to your employment, eg political or commercial activities. All conflicts or potential conflicts of interests should be declared and registered in the following circumstances:-

1. Survey and Valuation for Council Tax or Valuation Roll / Electoral Registration

When a member of staff is involved in the survey and/or valuation of any property:-

- (a) which is owned, let to, or occupied by the officer or a close relative or friend,
- (b) where he/she, or any close relative or friend, has any private interest, or
- (c) where he/she, or any close relative or friend is a member of a private club, organisation or voluntary group which owns or occupies that property.

Mitigation action, which might include additional supervision or referring the caseload to an alternative member of staff, must be taken by the relevant line manager in each case and be described in the Register of Interests.

The same obligations apply where a member of staff is dealing with any electoral registration query or matter beyond general processing of change information.

2. Contracts

A declaration and an entry in the Register must also be made when a member of staff, or a close relative or friend, has any personal, private or other interest in any contractual dealings relating to the Grampian Assessor & ERO or Grampian Valuation Joint Board.

In either circumstance the individual declaring the interest should not be solely responsible for decisions affecting entries in the Valuation Rolls, Council Tax Valuation Lists or Electoral Registers, or for determining successful tender bids or agreeing contract terms.

General

Where any member of staff has any doubts about declaring an interest and making an entry in the Register, they should discuss the matter with their line manager, who should advise on the side of caution.

To avoid repetitive paperwork, the home address of all employees (where in Grampian will be automatically included in the register of interests and as such a separate declaration is not required from each member of staff for their home address) The Register of Interests will be maintained by the Principal Administration Officer. The Management Team, internal audit and external audit will have access to the whole Register. Employees can have access to their own entries.



REPORT TO: Grampian Valuation Joint Board on 21 June 2019

SUBJECT: Register of Electors

BY: The Assessor & ERO

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 To update members on IER grant funding from government.
- 1.2 To report on the implementation of the new electoral registration system
- 1.3 To report on the European Union Parliamentary elections.
- 1.4 To report on arrangements for the 2019 canvass.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **The Board consider the content of this report.**

3. Update on IER grant funding

- 3.1 For 2018/19 the Cabinet Office made an initial award of £102,835 to assist with the additional costs imposed by IER. This was substantially below the initial awards of £151,229 for 2017/18 and £174,142 for 2016/17.
- 3.2 The resulting funding gap merited a bid for further financial support by means of the Cabinet Office's justification led bid process. A bid for a further £56,965 was submitted in January 2019. The bid was successful and awarded on 27 March 2019. This resulted in total funding contribution from the Cabinet Office for the IER overhead of £159,800 for 2018/19.
- 3.3 The IER funding awards for 2019/20 are likely to be announced in early July 2019. The UK Government's commitment to meet the additional costs imposed by IER runs to 2019/20, with the anticipation that canvass reform will lead to significant savings when compared to the current canvass regime from 2020/21. To date it has not been possible to quantify the precise impact of the reforms however the Cabinet Office anticipates that the savings will be sufficient to offset the IER grant funding requirements in future years.

4. Electoral Registration System

- 4.1 Planned implementation of the new electoral registration system was scheduled to take place following the Cairngorms National Park elections in March. After an extended period of acceptance testing the system went live on 1 April. Prior to the go-live date all operational staff had received training with dedicated training also provided for the system managers.

5. European Parliamentary Elections 23 May 2019

- 5.1 The elections were called at short notice with the Parliamentary Order being introduced on 8 April and coming into force on 10 April. The immediate challenge was the fact that EU citizens who were not citizens of the UK, Ireland, Cyprus or Malta had to make a declaration if they wished to participate in the elections relative to their UK address rather than an address in their former home nation.
- 5.2 Advance planning enabled the service to publish advice online on the 10 April and a downloadable declaration form on 11 April. A letter was sent to the 21,434 EU citizens already on electoral registers in Grampian advising of the requirement to make a declaration by 7 May and provided each with a pre-populated declaration form (Supplementary European Parliament elections registration form). The letters and pre-populated declaration forms were issued to each elector from 15 April. In order to minimise delay email was used whenever possible.
- 5.3 The service dealt with 5,091 applications to register to vote during the period of 13 April – 7 May, of which 21% of electors were already correctly registered. Corresponding volumes of applications for earlier elections are provided in the table below. 2,765 declaration forms were received from EU citizens.
- 5.4 A summary of application volumes for the last four elections are provided in the table.

Applications	SPE 5/5/16	EUR 23/6/16	LGE 4/5/17	UKPGE 8/6/17	EPE 23/5/19
Registration	14,823	14,540	11,256	17,510	5091
Postal vote	6,728	9,698	4,261	8,866	3,004
Proxy vote	907	3,305	578	3,102	813
Emergency proxy	52	126	15	59	28

- 5.5 Two formal complaints have been made by EU citizens who were not able to participate in the elections on 23 May relative to their Grampian addresses. In both cases they had received declaration forms issued to them by email before 17 April but did not take up the opportunity to make the required declaration. Accordingly their names were not included in the registers supplied to the Local Returning Officers for the elections on 23 May.

- 5.6 Following elections the ERO is required to write to all postal voters who have their absent vote ballot rejected by the Returning Officers. Letters are being issued to 702 voters following the elections on 23 May.

6. Canvass 2019

- 6.1 The 2019 canvass should be the last 'traditional' canvass of all addresses. It will commence in July and follow the now established IER two-stage approach involving a household enquiry form that is used to update household information that in turn will give rise to invitations to register to vote or reviews to remove those electors who are no longer resident at the address in question. With the support of expertise from Moray Council the canvass printing, mailing and response service elements are currently in the procurement process.
- 6.2 A national publicity campaign on a shared costs basis and coordinated by the SAA Electoral Registration Committee will accompany the canvass.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Funding uncertainties remain an issue for the service for 2019/20. The precise shape of the proposed canvass reforms for 2020 and beyond, along with the resultant impact on resources, has yet to be determined.
- 7.2 Implementation of the new electoral registration system took place on 1 April 2019 and the successful delivery of registration services in the subsequent short notice election on 23 May is testament to the dedication and commitment of the personnel involved in the planning and implementation of the administrative and IT services within the organisation.
- 7.3 The 2019 canvass providers are currently in the procurement process with canvass commencement in July.

Author of Report: Ian H Milton



REPORT TO: Grampian Valuation Joint Board on 21 June 2019

SUBJECT: Valuation Roll & Council Tax Valuation List

BY: The Assessor & ERO

1. Reason for Report

- 1.1 To update the Board on progress in appeal resolution and advise the Board of performance levels achieved during 2018/19.
- 1.2 To update the Board on the progress of the reforms to non-domestic rates (NDR) and the related implications for Assessors.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Board note the appeal progress and performance information.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Revaluation appeal resolution is one of the key activities for the service following the 2017 revaluation.
- 3.2 The Board's Code of Corporate Governance requires annual reporting of operational performance. The performance indicators provided in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report have been agreed between the Scottish Government and the Scottish Assessors Association.
- 3.3 Traditionally the target performance thresholds have been reviewed and adjusted every three years. The Board reviewed the valuation roll performance thresholds in 2018/19, setting it at 70% of updates being implemented within 90 days of the date the change that gives rise to the update took place. The Board also reviewed the 2018/19 performance threshold for entering new dwellings on the Council Tax Valuation List, with a target of 94% of dwellings entering the list within 90 days of the dwelling being completed.

4. Current Position

4.1 Valuation Roll

- 4.1.1 As at 31 March 2019 the local valuation appeal committees had cited and where necessary heard appeals for 41% of the 10,098 properties under appeal following the 2017 revaluation in Grampian. As reported in the Management Commentary, the 2017 revaluation had a significant impact on ratepayers in the North East. The volume of appeals is 41% greater than had been the case following the 2010 revaluation. The sensitivity of the situation was principally due to the slowdown in the NE property market that became apparent after the valuation date of 1 April 2015 but before the revaluation values came into force on 1 April 2017. Against this backdrop the service has been severely challenged by ratepayers who had been encouraged to lodge appeals against their rateable values through campaigns in mainstream and social media along with advice from high profile professionals and politicians. The resultant heightened level of expectation for significant reductions in values through the appeal resolution process has been proven to be wrong and is evidenced by Grampian Assessor showing the lowest loss of value on appeal across Scotland. The resultant appeal resolution process has therefore been particularly demanding in terms of expertise and resources that have had to be diverted from business as usual running roll update priorities of the valuation roll.
- 4.1.2 Appendix 1 provides performance for running roll updates to the valuation roll during 2018/19 and the previous two years. Performance is clearly impacted by the demands of the appeal resolution process that this service must facilitate.
- 4.1.3 As at 31 March 2019, disputed rateable values for 4,168 of the 10,098 properties subject to Revaluation 2017 appeals had been resolved through the committee process with a further 1,522 appeals in receipt of their 15 week notices for hearings scheduled to take place during the period 1 April to 17 July 2019.
- 4.1.4 In addition to the revaluation appeal caseload the Valuation service has also resolved 3,361 running roll appeals during 2018/19.

4.2 Council Tax Valuation List

- 4.2.1 Appendix 2 to this report provides the position for the year to 31 March 2019. The number of new house completions at 3,524 is 9% greater than the previous year's total and performance in terms of the percentage of new properties being allocated to bands within the first 90 days has increased from 91.3% to 93.7%, which means that 12% more dwellings are being allocated to bands within the 90 day performance timeframe.
- 4.2.2 Accuracy can be measured by establishing the number of successful challenges to bandings. During 2018/19 there were 16 successful proposals relative to 3,524 new or altered bandings. This represents 0.4% of the new dwellings added. The corresponding percentage for 2017/18 was 0.8%. There were 18 entries that relate to an effective date during 2017/18 where more than 12 months elapsed prior to the change being made during 2018/19. This compares to a corresponding total of 30 reported to the Board in June 2018.

5. NDR reform

- 5.1 The Non-domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill 2019 was published on 25 March¹. This Bill lays the foundations for the introduction of three yearly revaluations and a wider package of reforms to NDR in Scotland. This includes requirements for Assessors to add parts of public parks to valuation rolls and show additional markers in valuation rolls to indicate whether an entry on the roll can be considered to be a new build or improvement that is relevant to the Business Growth Accelerator relief.
- 5.2 The Bill also provides for wider information gathering powers for Assessors that involves civil penalties and a more complex two-stage proposal and appeal resolution process which is subject to on-going policy development by Scottish Government.
- 5.3 The significant financial implications for Assessors are recognised by the financial memorandum that accompanied the Bill. The Scottish Parliament Local Government & Communities Committee and Finance & Communities Committee are scrutinising the Bill as part of the Stage 1 consideration of the Bill.
- 5.4 It is anticipated that new powers for information gathering and other aspects of the Bill will be in force for 1 April 2020, the target date for the Revaluation 2022.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The professionalism and commitment of the surveying personnel dedicated to appeal resolution must be recognised for their class-leading appeal resolution performance. Such high level performance does impact on business as usual updates and this is reflected particularly in the key performance indicator data for valuation roll update. Whilst cross-resourcing the appeal disposal programme, the service has nevertheless improved its performance in terms of quantity and turnaround times for the valuation list. Again, this is only possible through the high degree of professionalism and commitment across the service.
- 6.2 The NDR reforms present another unique challenge to the organisation and the Assessor is directly engaged with Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament and COSLA in order to seek to secure reforms that are deliverable on the ground in terms of practicalities and also in terms of financial resources. Recruitment is currently underway as the Management Team implements its plans to achieve the necessary increase in expertise to deliver the reforms in Grampian.

Author of Report: Ian H Milton

¹ <https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/111337.aspx>

Appendix 1

Valuation Roll Performance Indicators as at 31 March 2019

	Time period	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017
Amendments within time periods	0 - 3 Months	1579	1699	1197
The number of amendments made to the valuation roll during the year as a result of material change of circumstances and new subjects.	%	59.2%	66.0%	56.2%
	<i>Threshold %</i>	70.0%	<i>77.0%</i>	<i>60.0%</i>
	3 - 6 Months	481	427	401
	%	18.0%	16.5%	18.8%
The time period is the period between the effective date of the amendment and the date the corresponding Valuation Notice is issued.	<i>Threshold %</i>	15.0%	<i>13.0%</i>	<i>25.0%</i>
	Over 6 Months	609	450	531
	%	22.8%	17.5%	24.9%
	<i>Threshold %</i>	15.0%	<i>10.0%</i>	<i>15.0%</i>
Number of amendments		2,668	2,576*	2,129
Total number of entries	At 1 April	29,305	26,036	25,267
Total Rateable Value	At 1 April	£1,005.58M	£978.11M	£804.15M
Revaluation 2017 appealed assessments	Resolved in year	3,706	462	
	Total resolved	4,168	462	
	Total outstanding	5,930	10,098	
	Loss**	0.4%	0.06%	
Revaluation 2010 appealed assessments	Resolved in year	1	19	9
	Total resolved	7,129	7,128	7,109
	Total outstanding	25	26	45
	Loss***	3.1%	3.1%	2.70%

* Excludes the addition of shooting rights

** Compared to total RV as at 1 April 2017 (£978.11M)

***Compared to total RV as at 1 April 2010 (£728.36M)

Appendix 2

Council Tax Valuation List Performance Indicators as at 31 March 2019

	Time Period	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017
New Entries within Time Periods The time period is the period between the effective date of the amendment and the date the corresponding Banding Notice is issued.	0 - 3 Months	3,303	2,949	3,070
	%	93.7%	91.3%	91.8%
	Threshold %	94.0%	94.0%	94.0%
	3 - 6 Months	161	178	210
	%	4.6%	5.5%	6.3%
	Threshold %	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
	Over 6 Months	60	104	65
	%	1.7%	3.0%	1.9%
	Threshold %	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
Number of New Entries Added The Actual number of new dwellings added to the Valuation List during the year.		3,524	3,231	3,345
Total Number of Entries The actual number of properties shown in the Valuation List as at 1 April annually.		290,004	287,336	284,435
Adjusted to Band "D" Equivalent	Original ratios	287,223	284,132	281,036
	2017 ratios	302,213	298,888	
Number of proposals accepted		16	26	16



REPORT TO: Grampian Valuation Joint Board on 21 June 2019

SUBJECT: Risk Management

BY: The Assessor & ERO

1. Reason for Report

1.1 To advise the Board on the current risk management position.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Board note the current version of the risk register and the plans for future reviews.

3. Background

3.1 The Board's Code of Corporate Governance requires the identification and prioritisation of risks to the Organisation's aims and objectives; the evaluation of the risks being realised and the resultant impact and finally the management of risks.

3.2 The Risk Register is subject to ongoing review with reports submitted to the Board on an annual basis.

3.3 Apart from ongoing reviews by individual risk owners, the Management Team, that meets regularly, has risk management as a standing item on its agenda.

4.0 Current Position

4.1 The strategic risk register that is provided as an appendix to this report was reviewed by the Management Team on 4 April 2019.

4.2 A summary of the risk status is provided in the table below.

Risk Rating	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
High	2	2	3	3	4	3
Moderate	4	4	3	3	3	3
Low	2	2	3	4	4	5
Tolerable	14	14	12	12	12	12
Obsolete	8	8	9	9	9	9
Total number of live risks	22	22	21	22	23	23

4.3 “High” level risks

- 4.3.1 The number of high level risks has been reduced from 4 to 3 over the last 12 months.
- 4.3.2 Risk 1g concerns the Banff server room environmental controls. Remote monitoring has continued over the last 12 months and whilst this is being refined, non-structural improvements are likely to be necessary to control this risk.
- 4.3.3 Risk 5e identifies the possibility of a strategic shift in the taxation ethos as a high level risk for the organisation. The Assessor has an active role in policy development and planning however ultimately the decisions made at government level will dictate outcomes in relation to this risk.
- 4.3.4 Risk 6c concerns the reliance on a small number of IT personnel and is difficult to mitigate to a degree that reduces the net risk to a moderate or low risk rating simply due to the size and resources of the organisation. The move towards externally supplied software solutions driven through the procurement action plan and supported by formal contracts/service level agreements has continued with the new electoral registration system going live on 1 April.

4.4 “Moderate” level risks

- 4.4.1 The number of risks with a ‘moderate’ overall rating has remained unchanged over the last 12 months.
- 4.4.2 Risks 5h and 5i concern business continuity planning and the introduction of electoral registration policy changes. The previously reported business continuity control measures that help reduce the risk to Moderate include full Public Service Network accredited IT health checks have now been supplemented with Cyber Essentials plus accreditation being achieved during the last 12 months.
- 4.4.3 Risk 6a identifies inadequate numbers of trained/skilled personnel being available to fulfil the statutory function of the Assessor & ERO. In common with many areas of professional practice in the NE Scotland public sector, this risk continues to challenge the management team and advice continues to be taken from the Treasurer and Moray Council Head of Personnel. Recruitment of qualified chartered surveyors is proving particularly challenging and current terms and conditions do not compete with those available in the private sector. This is driving the Management Team to review task allocation.

4.5 “Low” level risks

- 4.5.1 There is little change to the existing low level risks in the last 12 month period. Risk 5f (inadequate funding) was re-evaluated by the Management Team following the publication of the Financial Memorandum to the NDR (Scotland) Bill 2019. To maintain this risk rating the Board will need to ensure that it requisitions the necessary baseline funding and secures the additional NDR Reform funding identified in the the Financial Memorandum.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The identification, evaluation and control of risk are continuous processes and remain live issues for the Management Team and the organisation as a whole. The stability of the risk rating profile over time reflects the fact that the organisation is constantly improving controls to respond to the emergence of new threats and risks or the alteration of existing threats and risks. The risk register provides a useful risk evaluation tool, not only for the management and staff of the organisation, but also for Board members and officials, internal and external audit and the wider stakeholder community against a dynamic landscape of threat and risk.

Author of Report: Ian H Milton

Risk Description	Worst Case Outcome Scenario	Likelihood of actual occurrence (score 1 - 5)	Impact if exposure occurs (score 1- 5)	Gross Score (L x I)	Initial Risk Rating	Current Controls	Quality & Effectiveness of Controls	Net Score	Revised Risk Rating	Risk Owner	Action Proposed	Review Date	Review Cycle
							Good x 0.5						
							OK x 0.8						
							Poor x 1.5						
Current Risks													
1. SAFEGUARDING PEOPLE & PROPERTY													
1a Workforce Health & Safety exposure in a varied, sometimes hazardous environment; lone working, seasonal climate, violence & aggression	Staff injury, assault; low morale, stress; sickness absence; litigation and insurance claim; backlogs and overtime cost; bad publicity; criminal prosecution	4	3	12	MOD	Risk Assessment Programme - Technical + Office + Field activities; Recognised reporting protocols; Issue of Personal Protective Equipment, where appropriate; External advice on control measures; Employee induction. Call in/out procedures documented. Mobile phones in use. Lone working devices procured and being rolled out in May 2019	good	6	TOL	GMO	Response to Audit in progress. PPE review completed. Risk assessments to be reviewed. Lone working policy required. Lone working mobile devices in procurement	01/09/2019	6 monthly
1b Fraudulent activity by employee (Valuation Roll, Council Tax and Electoral Registration)	Adverse publicity; Elected Member concern; senior staff reprimand; systems replacement; internal inquiry uses valuable resource. Removal of IER Accreditation.	3	3	9	LOW	Audit staff records; Staff training/awareness e.g. conflict of interest; Stringent checks on Valuation Roll and Valuation List amendments improved reporting from 2012/13; Audit reconciliations. ER postal vote number threshold check in place. ER duplicate name check procedure in place. Disclosure Scotland checks carried out on existing staff and new employees. Information protection course has been completed by all staff and now part of new start induction process. Disclosure refreshed every 4 years.	good	4.5	TOL	IHM	Access to ER/VR/CT on operational grounds. Review procedures to account for the ongoing changes systems including IER.	01/09/2019	6 monthly
1c Fraudulent activity by employee (Financial)	Misappropriation of funds; adverse publicity; Elected Member concern; senior staff reprimand; systems replacement; internal inquiry uses valuable resource	2	2	4	TOL	Financial controls, Banking reviewed; Staff training/awareness; External check by Finance staff + audit reconciliations. Purchase card transaction logging and approval system	good	2	TOL	IHM LHS	IHM to continue close liaison with Treasurer and Accountant.	01/09/2019	4 monthly
1f Elgin office accommodation may be unfit for current demands of service. Concern regarding DDA.	Health & Safety of staff compromised; poor security; inadequate storage; failure to comply with legislation e.g. DDA; poor image, operational inefficiency; morale damage	4	2	8	LOW	Service responsiveness to assessed risks. Replacement windows installed, maintenance and refurbishment programme underway. Disabled access arrangements with ground floor accommodation occupier.	ok	6.4	TOL	JAB	Alternative options to be considered as part of a wider review of estate requirements	01/08/2019	6 monthly
1g Environmental controls for IT Server accommodation inadequate	IT outages due to inadequate environmental controls	4	4	16	HIGH	Mechanical ventilation installed, remote monitoring and alerts.	Poor	24	HIGH	DGY	Monitor conditions following the installation of mechanical ventilation. Estimates to be obtained for improvements	01/08/2019	2 monthly

Risk Description	Worst Case Outcome Scenario	Likelihood of actual occurrence (score 1 - 5)	Impact if exposure occurs (score 1- 5)	Gross Score (L x I)	Initial Risk Rating	Current Controls	Quality & Effectiveness of Controls	Net Score	Revised Risk Rating	Risk Owner	Action Proposed	Review Date	Review Cycle
							Good x 0.5						
							OK x 0.8						
							Poor x 1.5						
2. QUALITY, SECURITY, INTEGRITY & COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION													
2a Inadequate engagement with the Board on Governance matters in general and risk management in particular	Adverse audit report; failure to achieve service improvements; No overall organisational recognition of strategic direction	2	3	6	TOL	Financial and operational performance information reported to the Board at all meetings. The Board review the operational performance thresholds periodically. Risk analysis is presented to the Board annually.	good	3	TOL	IHM	Monitor risk. Further Board member training scheduled for June 2019.	01/08/2019	Annually
2b The service is heavily reliant upon ICT systems; loss or serious interruption of data or service e.g. fire, hacking, virus, patching, employee misuse - intentional or accidental	Loss of data and essential records; disclosure of confidential records; cost of recovering systems and data reinstatement; loss of data integrity; Elected Member concern; Partner councils' concern; adverse publicity. Increased issue of ransomware.	4	4	16	HIGH	Rigid protocols for data back-up; Disaster Recovery Server; Data share with councils; Strategy of outsourcing systems and support to maximise resilience. PSN accreditation in place. New network infrastructure in place. Periodic IT health checks programmed in accordance with PSNA requirements. PSN connection compliance certified to 9 October 2019 Cyber Essential plus certification to 31 October 2019.	good	8	LOW	DGY	Staff training and testing required to raise awareness and reduce risk from ransomware.	01/10/2019	6 monthly
2c Inadequate corporate policy documents	Errors and omissions; avoidable accidents and loss; employee dispute and claims; adverse audit report; fraud; low morale; breach of legislation; inability to change or improve; failure to meet Corporate Governance obligations	4	2	8	LOW	HR and governance policies review programme in place. IT policy documents reviewed to comply with PSN requirements. Records Management Plan approved by Keeper.	ok	6.4	TOL	IHM	Policy review programme to continue	01/09/2019	6 monthly
2d Inadequate procedure documents	Errors and omissions; avoidable accidents and loss; employee dispute and claims; adverse audit report; fraud; low morale; breach of legislation; inability to change or improve; failure to meet Corporate Governance obligations	4	2	8	LOW	IT, CT and VR manuals and procedures constantly reviewed. CT and VR last updated 6/2018.	ok	6.4	TOL	MJA GMO LHS	Ongoing review. Documentation for manuals and procedures for new electoral registration system.	01/09/2019	6 monthly

Risk Description	Worst Case Outcome Scenario	Likelihood of actual occurrence (score 1 - 5)	Impact if exposure occurs (score 1- 5)	Gross Score (L x I)	Initial Risk Rating	Current Controls	Quality & Effectiveness of Controls	Net Score	Revised Risk Rating	Risk Owner	Action Proposed	Review Date	Review Cycle
							Good x 0.5						
							OK x 0.8						
							Poor x 1.5						
3.SPECIFIC BUSINESS RISKS													
3a Referencing of our Valuation Roll, Council Tax and Electoral Registration data may be inefficient	Regular duplication of work; confusion in use of multiple references for same property	4	2	8	LOW	Staff training, Shared Directories	ok	6.4	TOL	MJA DGY	Work practices under constant review. CT & ER Manuals. File naming convention in hand as part of our records management procedure. Rationalisation of data storage. Review of security settings on access to network folders is underway as part of records management procedure.	01/09/2019	6 monthly
4.SPECIFIC GOVERNANCE RISKS													
4a Data protection	There is an unauthorised release of information.	4	3	12	MOD	Working with colleagues on SAA Governance Committee. Fol group formed at SAA. GDPR training undertaken in Spring 2018. Privacy notices have been updated. DPO has been appointed. Suppliers contracts include data processing agreements	ok	9.6	LOW	MJA	Working with SAA Governance Committee and stakeholders on data agreements.	01/09/2019	6 monthly
5. BUSINESS PLANNING & MANAGEMENT													
5e A strategic shift in the taxation ethos	GVJB may cease to exist; function may be contracted, regionalised; staff redundancies; low morale, staff required to run down existing systems whilst preparing for replacement procedures; Errors, loss of data	4	4	16	HIGH	Largely a political issue outwith specific control of the service; the SAA is actively engaged in the new devolved taxation bodies which include Revenue Scotland, the Devolved Tax Collaborative and the Tax Consultation Forum.	poor	24	HIGH	IHM	Monitor situation which might be subject to policy changes. Short to medium term changes are anticipated through the NDR reform programme that followed the Barclay Review. This reduces the revaluation cycle to 3 yrs (3YR) from 2022 and tone date period from 24 months to 12 months. SAA Workstreams currently reviewing process and procedures, Grampian work will need to mirror this review. Domestic taxation continues to feature in policy discussion but a realistic alternative has yet to be identified.	01/10/2019	6 monthly
5f Inadequate funding	Essential equipment and Systems upgrade/replacement placed on hold; inability to recruit, retrain or develop staff; poor morale; service improvement opportunities lost; staff leakage	5	4	20	HIGH	Board can requisition at their required level. We currently have cross discipline working practices in place. Revised contract of employment adopted.	good	10	LOW	IHM	Monitor performance closely for early detection of service degradation. Keep staff informed and involved, encourage innovation and flexible working. Increase Board / Assessor interaction to ensure clarity on resourcing issues	Monthly	Monthly
5h Inadequate business continuity planning	Inability to maintain or restore essential business functions within required timescale. Failure to meet statutory deadline; audit censure, intervention; dispute with partner councils; Member concern, adverse publicity; loss of records; financial penalties; waste of time and essential resource through inability to control crisis situation	5	5	25	HIGH	Plan approved and implemented. IT system meets PSN requirements. Breach notification procedure in place.	good	12.5	MOD	IHM	Contingency plan under constant review	01/10/2019	6 monthly

Risk Description	Worst Case Outcome Scenario	Likelihood of actual occurrence (score 1 - 5)	Impact if exposure occurs (score 1- 5)	Gross Score (L x I)	Initial Risk Rating	Current Controls	Quality & Effectiveness of Controls	Net Score	Revised Risk Rating	Risk Owner	Action Proposed	Review Date	Review Cycle
							Good x 0.5						
							OK x 0.8						
							Poor x 1.5						
5i Introduction of Registration policy changes	Degradation of Register completeness and accuracy	5	3	15	MOD	Risk and issues register in place. Active voter engagement strategy in place.	ok	12	MOD	IHM	Risk and issues regsiter to be standing item on Admin Group agenda. Continue to seek to strengthen degree of engagement with Cabinet Office, IER DS and Scottish Government particularly following Scotland Act that further devolves elements of registration, plus inter-ERO liaison	Monthly	Monthly

Risk Description	Worst Case Outcome Scenario	Likelihood of actual occurrence (score 1 - 5)	Impact if exposure occurs (score 1- 5)	Gross Score (L x I)	Initial Risk Rating	Current Controls	Quality & Effectiveness of Controls	Net Score	Revised Risk Rating	Risk Owner	Action Proposed	Review Date	Review Cycle
							Good x 0.5						
							OK x 0.8						
							Poor x 1.5						
6. SERVICE, PROCESS & DELIVERY													
6a Inadequate numbers of trained / skilled staff to fulfil statutory functions	Failure to meet statutory deadline; errors, omissions; stress, sickness absence; audit censure; public, media concern	3	5	15	MOD	Our internal recruitment policy and RICS training scheme assists retention/recruitment of trained staff. Individual training plans for graduates/trainees prepared and maintained. Skills audit of administrative personnel. Absence Management Policy applied across all offices and staff groups.	ok	12	MOD	MJA	Arrange external opportunities for experience. Monitor vacancies. Widen training across disciplines. Progress training of all Admin staff in CT, VR & ER work. Planning for introduction of 3YR - wide ranging procedure review required to determine precise requirements - systems and personnel.	01/04/2019	6 monthly
6b Inadequate staff development	Inability to retain staff	4	3	12	MOD	SRDS has been implemented.	ok	9.6	LOW	IHM	IHM to seek advice from HR on refreshing SRDS	01/04/2019	6 monthly
6c Over-reliance upon a small number of key Information Technology & Systems specialists.	Backlogs, error and omission; stress; inability to recruit, unattractive prospect; staff leakage, stress; insurance claims; quality deficit, deadlines missed; low morale; inability to plan and schedule	4	5	20	HIGH	Advance planning - with the exception of snap elections demands are programmed. Outsourcing of services with Service Level Agreements in place. Electoral registration system outsourced to increase long-term resilience. Password management arrangements in place.	ok	16	HIGH	DGY	Moves to broaden skill-base of IT personnel and improve support/resilience provided by third parties.	01/10/2019	6 monthly
6d Inconsistency of approach to tasks due to geographical spread of offices and different councils involved	Imbalance in standards and levels of performance arising out of the differing "capabilities" of our constituent councils; friction with partner councils; audit censure; loss of flexibility	5	2	10	LOW	Regular management administrative and technical group meetings, Operational manuals and Statutory requirements.	good	5	TOL	GMO	Wholesale review current procedures required and to be informed by SAA NDR reform workstreams. At a national level the SAA Action Plan first published October 2017 includes an issues log, a local issues log implementation scheduled for 2019.	01/02/2020	Annually

Risk Description	Worst Case Outcome Scenario	Likelihood of actual occurrence (score 1 - 5)	Impact if exposure occurs (score 1- 5)	Gross Score (L x I)	Initial Risk Rating	Current Controls	Quality & Effectiveness of Controls	Net Score	Revised Risk Rating	Risk Owner	Action Proposed	Review Date	Review Cycle
							Good x 0.5						
							OK x 0.8						
							Poor x 1.5						
6e Failure of external contractor at crucial point in service cycle. (ER)	Missed deadline; contractual dispute; GVJB blamed for contractor failure; additional expense; re-tendering exercise; audit censure; media comment; friction with partner councils;	3	4	12	MOD	Revised procurement procedures implemented and supported by Moray Council Procurement team. A procurement action plan is in place. Canvass Risk Register maintained. Canvass Plan & Performance Evaluation submitted to Electoral Commission. Additional infrastructure has been procured to increase resilience.	good	6	TOL	LHS	Regular monitoring.	01/09/2019	6 monthly
6f Failure of external contractor at crucial point in service cycle. (IT)	Missed deadline; contractual dispute; GVJB blamed for contractor failure; additional expense; re-tendering exercise; audit censure; media comment; friction with partner councils;	3	4	12	MOD	Revised procurement procedures implemented and supported by Moray Council Procurement team. A procurement action plan is in place. Requirement for contingency planning by contractors. Backup network in place. PSN accreditation in place.	good	6	TOL	DGY	Regular monitoring.	01/09/2019	6 monthly
6h Out of hours working for statutory events	Staff not available to process last minute registration or absent vote applications	3	3	9	LOW	Overtime payments or time off in lieu is granted for out of hours working. Employment contracts amended from March 2013 to provide out-of-hours availability	good	4.5	TOL	IHM		01/10/2019	6 monthly
6i Industrial action by Employees	Reduce capability	3	3	9	LOW	Local Level - close liaison with union reps. National level - negotiations & dialogue via COSLA.	ok	7.2	LOW	IHM	Active monitoring	01/10/2019	6 monthly
Notes					Key					MT	Management Team		
Likelihood & Impact of each incident are first multiplied to provide an initial score.					CT	Council Tax				DGY	David Yeaman		
Both Likelihood & Impact are measured on a scale of 1 = Low, 5 = High.					ER	Electoral Registration				FMIM	Fiona McKelvie		
					KPI	Key Performance Indicator				GMO	Gavin Oag		
The initial assessment is a consideration of the risks without regard to any controls or procedures that may be in place. This provides a gross score which is an indication of the					IT	Information Technology				IHM	Ian Milton		
potential scale of any problems. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT GROSS SCORE IS NOT BENEFICIALLY INFLUENCED BY CONSIDERATION OF EXISTING OR INTENDED CONTROLS.					VR	Valuation Roll				JAB	Jim Barron		
										LHS	Linda Smith		
The manager or group then review the CONTROLS that are or should be in place to reduce the various exposures (with reality testing as appropriate) and adjust the gross score by weighting factors (good = 0.5, OK = 0.8, poor = 1.5) to provide a net risk score.										MJA	Mark Adam		
										SD	Steve Dunbar		
Net risk scores are graded -													
TOLERABLE = < 6.5; LOW = 6.5 up to 10; MODERATE = > 10 up to 15; HIGH = > 15													
Any risks still assessed as HIGH or MODERATE should be programmed for corrective action. This should be agreed with the risk owner who should assign responsibility for taking													
action and the appropriate timescales. e.g. High = commence within 4 weeks;													
Moderate = commence within 4 months; Low = commence if resource available; Tolerable = No action													

Risk Description		Worst Case Outcome Scenario		Likelihood of actual occurrence (score 1 - 5)	Impact if exposure occurs (score 1- 5)	Gross Score (L x I)	Initial Risk Rating	Current Controls	Quality & Effectiveness of Controls	Net Score	Revised Risk Rating	Risk Owner	Action Proposed	Review Date	Review Cycle	
									Good x 0.5							
									OK x 0.8							
									Poor x 1.5							
Risk Matrix - Likelihood																
Likelihood	Description															
5	Almost certain	Will undoubtedly happen, possibly frequently	Over 90%	Annual	Imminent/near miss											
4	Likely	Will probably happen, but not a persistent issue	Up to 90%	3 year	Has happened in the past											
3	Possible	May happen occasionally	Up to 65%	10 year	Has happened elsewhere											
2	Unlikely	Not expected to happen, but is possible	Up to 20%	25 year	Not known in this activity											
1	Remote	Very unlikely this will ever happen	Less than 5%	100 year	Force majeure											
Risk Matrix - Impact																
Impact Score	Description															
		Impact on Service Objectives	Financial Impact	Impact on People	Duration of Impact	Impact on Reputation										
5	Catastrophic	Unable to function, inability to fulfil obligations	Severe financial loss (> £)	Death	In excess of 2 years (days) to recover pre event position	Highly damaging, severe loss of public confidence										
4	Major	Significant impact on service provision	Major financial loss	Extensive injury, major permanent harm	Between 1 year - 2 years (days) to recover pre event position	Major adverse publicity, major loss of confidence										
3	Moderate	Service objectives partially achievable	Significant financial loss	Medical treatment required, semi permanent harm up to 1 year	Between 6 months to 1 year (½ to 1 day) to recover pre event position	Some adverse publicity, legal implications										
2	Minor	Minor impact on service objectives	Moderate financial loss	First aid treatment, non permanent harm up to 1 month	2 to 6 months (hours) to recover	Some public embarrassment, no damage to reputation										
1	Negligible	Minimal impact, no service disruption	Minimal financial loss (< £)	No obvious harm/injury	Minimal - up to 2 months (hours) to recover	No interest to the press, internal only										

Risk Description	Worst Case Outcome Scenario	Likelihood of actual occurrence (score 1 - 5)	Impact if exposure occurs (score 1- 5)	Gross Score (L x I)	Initial Risk Rating	Current Controls	Quality & Effectiveness of Controls	Net Score	Revised Risk Rating	Risk Owner	Action Proposed	Review Date	Review Cycle
							Good x 0.5						
							OK x 0.8						
							Poor x 1.5						
Obsolete Risks													
1d Storage accommodation (on and off site) may be unfit for current demands of service. Concerns regarding amount of storage space.	Inadequate storage; operational inefficiency	0	0	0	TOL	Service responsiveness to assessed risks.	good	0	TOL	MT	No longer a current risk.		
1e Banff office accommodation may be unfit for current demands of service	Health & Safety of staff compromised; cost of running repairs; poor security; inadequate storage; failure to comply with legislation e.g. DDA; poor image,	0	0	0	TOL	Regular building surveys; Patch & mend repairs as necessary; Fire and security protections and	good	0	TOL	MJA	Building now vacated and staff have moved to new purpose built office. No longer a current risk.		
4a Lack of certainty regarding duty of disclosure under Freedom of Information	No longer considered to be an issue and likelihood minimal.	1	1	1	TOL	Scottish Assessors Association - pooled expertise; Register created on types of information request received to provide guidance; Controls untested, but increasing level of staff understanding obtained from practical experience	good	0.5	TOL	IHM	Revised publication scheme implemented.		
5a Relocation of Banff office	Loss of records; interruption to service and missed deadline; contractor failure; inadequacies in facilities at new site; staff injury, complaint, claim; dispute with contractor; additional, unbudgeted costs	0	0	0	TOL	Tight project plan; Close monitoring of plan. Selective timing; Appointment + monitoring of reputable contractors	good	0	TOL	GMO	Move completed successfully. No longer a current risk.		
5b Relocation of main HQ at future date.	Uncertainty over final location; partner timeframe does not recognise essential GVJB service or Statutory deadlines; damage to staff morale; disruption to service; systems failure and related "snagging" problems at new site; staff injury, complaint; loss or damage to equipment; failure by removal contractor: unforeseen costs	0	0	0	GOOD	Move completed successfully	good	0	TOL	AWH DGY	Move completed in June 2007, new 10 year lease.		
5c Outstanding matters in connection with new lease of HQ accommodation	Uncertainty over final location; partner timeframe does not recognise essential GVJB service or Statutory deadlines; damage to staff morale; disruption to service; systems failure and related "snagging" problems at new site; staff injury, complaint; loss or damage to equipment; unforeseen costs.	5	3	15	MOD		good	12	MOD	IHM	Lease finalised.		
5d We may be required to carry out a Council Tax revaluation	Inadequate staff resource - competencies and number; Media management; Member agendas; quality or deadline slip in ongoing service; public resistance and volume of appeals; increased staff costs	1	2	2	TOL	Records are currently maintained up to date in readiness for a Revaluation at any time	good	1	TOL	MT	Revaluation now unlikely.		
5g We may have difficulty managing the outcome of the staffing review; (equal pay legislation). Staffing review completed and Career Grade Scheme approved but not yet fully implemented.	Industrial action; poor staff morale; staff leakage; inability to replace, recruit; increased financial cost.	0	0	0	TOL	Career grade scheme to be implemented.	good	0	TOL	IHM	Review successfully completed and Career Grade Scheme implemented.		

Risk Description	Worst Case Outcome Scenario	Likelihood of actual occurrence (score 1 - 5)	Impact if exposure occurs (score 1- 5)	Gross Score (L x I)	Initial Risk Rating	Current Controls	Quality & Effectiveness of Controls	Net Score	Revised Risk Rating	Risk Owner	Action Proposed	Review Date	Review Cycle
							Good x 0.5						
							OK x 0.8						
							Poor x 1.5						
6g Risk of Solar Flare	There is a heightened risk of increased solar flare activity peaking in 2013. Any magnetic media (disk or tape) could be wiped by such an occurrence.	1	5	5	TOL	Data in Woodhill House is located in basement, this may offer some protection. Banff and Elgin data vulnerable. Elgin archived data stored at Woodhill House.	ok	4	TOL	DGY	Industry standard precautions taken	01/03/2016	6 monthly



REPORT TO: Grampian Valuation Joint Board on 21 June 2019

SUBJECT: IRRV Scottish Conference 2019

BY: The Assessor & ERO

1. Reason for Report

- 1.1 To advise the Board in relation to the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation (IRRV) Annual Scottish Conference and to seek approval for representation at the conference.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **The Board consider attendance at the conference.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Board has supported the Scottish annual conference that addresses local taxation issues, focussing on valuation, revenues and benefits along with the performance and service improvement agendas.
- 3.2 Attendance normally extends to the Convenor, Depute Convenor and Assessor (or substitutes) and a free delegate place allocated to a member of the surveying staff. In addition, four other surveying staff usually attend the technical sessions as half-day delegates.
- 3.3 The conference sessions have proven to be a valuable source of professional development training for the Board's surveying staff who are members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).
- 3.4 In line with other professional bodies, and in accordance with the terms of the Institution's Royal charter, the RICS requires its qualified members to complete 20 hours of professional development training per year. Trainee members must complete 48 hours of professional development training each year.

4.0 Current Position

- 4.1 The draft conference programme is provided as an appendix to this report and includes a number of sessions that will be particularly relevant for Board members, qualified and trainee personnel. The keynote address is set to be provided by Kate Forbes MSP, Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy and sessions will focus on the NDR reform agenda, council tax, revenues and collection and shared service delivery models.
- 4.2 The delegate fees are £479 with the fourth place provided free of charge. The half-day technical sessions are available at £160 where at least two full delegates attend the conference.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The conference provides an excellent opportunity for the Board towards meeting its professional development and training responsibilities. The fees are reasonable when compared to alternative training providers.
- 5.2 The Board is invited to consider attendance at the 2019 conference.

Author of Report: Ian H Milton

IRRV Annual Scottish Conference & Exhibition 2019

Item 11.

The Crieff Hydro Hotel, Crieff, 4th – 5th September

Engaging minds, Empowering success



Overall Conference Sponsor

SCOT++CO
Results Matter

 **irrvscotland**

The Institute is delighted to announce details of its 2019 Scottish Conference. The Conference is – by popular demand – returning to the Crieff Hydro Hotel, where conference attendees will have the opportunity to enjoy the excellent recreational facilities set in beautiful surroundings.

The theme of this year's Conference – **"Engaging minds, Empowering success"** – highlights the emphasis on quality and improvements as themes that run through the delivery of Scottish public services and the subjects discussed and debated at Scottish Conference 2019.

Conference comes at an important time for Scotland and will look in-depth at the key issues facing the public services, with particular emphasis on valuation, benefits and revenues issues and wider public service reform issues.

There are many significant issues affecting revenues, valuation, benefits and welfare reform ahead and the IRRV Scottish Conference will again live up to its long-standing reputation of being at the forefront of debating key issues and solutions.

We are delighted to have invited Kate Forbes MSP, Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy, Scottish Government has been invited to give the Ministerial Address to conference this year. We have also invited Ruth Davidson MSP, Leader of the major opposition group in the Scottish Parliament to give an address on an alternative approach to local government finance reform.

In addition to delivering key updates on these big issues and encouraging debate about these, conference will also examine the improved delivery of Scottish public services in a time of financial challenge and will examine how to provide quality services, with an emphasis on continuing improvement into the future.



The Institute is again indebted to Scott and Co who are our Overall Conference Sponsor at Crieff 2019.

EXHIBITION AND AWARDS AREA

A key feature of any Conference is the exhibition, which in recent years has grown substantially in both number and range of stands, providing delegates with the opportunity to visit companies specialising in many areas of interest. We are pleased to announce that there will also again be a Scottish Awards Area, where Scottish organisations entered for the IRRV Performance Awards will have the opportunity to showcase their entries.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

This year's Conference programme is both wide-ranging and will be of great interest to all who have a role to play in local taxation, valuation, benefits and related fields.

The afternoon sessions are designed to appeal particularly to those at the 'sharp end' of service delivery. Special rates are available for those attending afternoon sessions only, when accompanied by a full or day delegate. The Institute is also pleased to advise that IRRV Students will again have their own Seminar at the Scottish Conference (on Thursday 5th September) and this will also enable them to attend several of the main Conference sessions. Details will be sent to students directly.

This conference and accompanying exhibition is a major event in the Scottish local government calendar and offers everyone with an interest in local government and related fields, the opportunity to debate key issues, listen to new ideas and make a contribution by expressing their opinions

EXCELLENT VALUE DELEGATE RATES

The IRRV Scottish Conference remains excellent value for money, making it one of the best value major events in the Scottish calendar. These are as follows:

Rate A – Full Residential Delegate

£479.00 (plus £95.80 VAT)

Rate B – Non-Residential Delegate

£395.00 (plus £79.00 VAT) (excludes Gala Dinner)

Rate C – Day Delegate (per day)

£255.00 (plus £51.00 VAT)

Note: IRRV members will receive a 10% Discount on Rates A & B

WHAT'S INCLUDED

The IRRV Scottish Conference offers outstanding value for money : two buffet lunches, the Conference Gala Dinner, bed and breakfast accommodation at the Crieff Hydro Hotel (subject to availability) including free use of parking and leisure facilities, coffee and tea at various times, all conference documentation including speakers' handouts, and free entrance to the conference exhibition – all for £479.00 (plus £95.80 VAT).

The Institute is again including excellent delegate offers to encourage attendance. Every fourth delegate (of the same Delegate Rate Type) from the same organisation comes entirely free of charge. Additionally, where an organisation has at least two full delegates (ie Rate A or B), it will be permitted to send up to 4 "half day" delegates to the afternoon sessions only on either day of the Conference for only £160 + £32.00 VAT.

ADDITIONAL NIGHT'S ACCOMMODATION

For residential delegates also wishing to stay on Tuesday 3rd September, we are able to arrange Bed and Breakfast accommodation at the Crieff Hydro Hotel for an additional £91.00 plus £18.20 VAT (subject to availability). Should you require this, please tick the appropriate box on the booking form.

GOLF COMPETITION

We are delighted to advise that there will be a golf competition as part of Scottish Conference again this year, now organised and sponsored by the IRRV Scottish Association. Please contact the IRRV Scotland Office on 01382 456029 – scotland@irrv.org.uk – for an application form and further details.

COMMERCIAL ORGANISATIONS

The Institute reserves the right to charge a supplementary fee of £250.00 plus £50.00 VAT per person to representatives of commercial organisations not exhibiting or supporting the Conference and wishing to register delegates.

PROGRAMME CHANGES

All speakers are subject to confirmation. The Institute reserves the right to alter the programme as necessary without notice.

HOW TO BOOK

All bookings must be made in writing using one of the following options:

FAX 01382 456029

E-MAIL scotland@irrv.org.uk

POST IRRV Scotland, 2a Argyle Street, DUNDEE DD4 7AL

All telephone enquiries should be made to Fraser Macpherson, IRRV Manager for Scotland and Northern Ireland, on Dundee (01382) 456029.

VAT RECEIPTS

On receipt of the registration form, the IRRV will issue a VAT invoice at the prevailing rate.

KEY CONFERENCE SESSIONS 2019

This year's Scottish Conference and Exhibition sees the **key issues facing public services and our professions being fully explored. Conference sessions include:**

- Ministerial Address : Kate Forbes MSP, Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy – invited
- Barclay Review – the implementation challenge
- Collection and recovery challenges in the environment of welfare reform
- Collaboration and shared services in practice
- Local government finance – an alternative approach
- Universal Credit Managed Migration – a progress report from DWP
- Local authority anti-poverty strategies – a case study
- Council Tax and Council Tax Reduction reform – the issues
- Changing culture and improving collection – a case study
- Delivering Scottish Social Security
- Alternatives to Council Tax – Looking at Land Value Tax
- Corporate Fraud Teams
- A paperless office – creating a modern digital workspace
- Achieving real organisational change – a case study
- Artificial intelligence – is there a real role for automation in service delivery?
- Manager or Leader? You decide! – An entertaining presentation on leadership

This year sees a comprehensive programme of sessions for valuation professionals, including:

- The future of the appeals process
- Private Practice Revaluation – Valuation Office Ireland
- Valuation of Hydro Electricity Generation Subjects
- Value of occupation for other than commercial gain
- Right First Time – Improved information flow
- Plant & Machinery rating review – next steps
- The Hypothetical Tenant – Mexford House Case
- Lessons to learn for experts appearing in Committee, Tribunals and the Courts



**TO DOWNLOAD
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IRRV Conference Diary 2019

BENEFITS AND REVENUES TRAINING COURSES – SCOTLAND

Glasgow, Falkirk and Grangemouth, September – December 2019

UK ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

Telford International Centre, 7th – 9th October 2019

MONEY ADVICE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION CONFERENCE

A joint event with Money Advice Scotland

Glasgow, November 2019

SCOTTISH BENEFITS AND WELFARE REFORM CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

Grangemouth, November 2019

Overall Conference Sponsor

SCO+++CO

Results Matter