



MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE GRAMPIAN VALUATION JOINT BOARD

FRIDAY 26 JANUARY 2018 AT 10:30 am

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MORAY COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, HIGH STREET, ELGIN

PRESENT

Councillors G Leadbitter (Convener), B Cormie (Vice Convener), C Allard, C Buchan, G Cowie, A Kille, R McKail, M Roy, R Shepherd, S Stuart, B Topping and J Whyte.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillors A Donnelly, G Graham and J Reynolds.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr I Milton, Grampian Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), Ms M Bruce, Audit Scotland, Mrs L Paisey, Treasurer, Mr Atholl Scott, Audit Manager and Mrs T Sutherland, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Board (all Moray Council)

1. DECLARATION OF GROUP DECISIONS AND MEMBERS INTERESTS

In terms of Standing Order 25 and the Councillors' 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. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE GRAMPIAN VALUATION JOINT BOARD DATED FRIDAY 27 OCTOBER 2017.

The minute of the meeting of the Board dated 27 October 2017 was submitted and approved by the Board.

4. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL TO 31 DECEMBER 2017

A report was submitted by the Treasurer to the Board to consider the Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement for the period 1 April to 31 December 2017.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to consider the Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement for the period 1 April to 31 December 2017 and the Estimated Outturn position for the year 2017/18.

5. REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2018/19

A report was submitted by the Treasurer to the Board to consider the Revenue Budget for 2018/19 and to agree the 2018/19 requisitions for the three constituent authorities.

Councillor McKail, seconded by Councillor Kille, moved to maintain the revenue budget for 2018/19 at the current year's requisition level of £4.039 million, and not to accept the increase of £253,000 as set out in the table in paragraph 4.1 of the report. Therefore each Local Authority retains the same level of requisition as currently forecast in the current financial year.

Councillor McKail stated that he recognised that Grampian Valuation Joint Board just like Local Authorities are under increasing financial pressures and therefore must make difficult decisions and accept a greater degree of risk when setting budgets whilst maintaining a certain level of service. He was of the opinion therefore, that the current year's requisitions should be maintained and the Assessor tasked with managing within this figure and report back to the Board throughout next year with updates.

As an amendment Councillor Leadbitter, seconded by Councillor Cormie, moved that the budget be approved as detailed in the report.

Mrs Paisey, as Treasurer, advised the Board that in her opinion the motion was not competent due to no alternative budget having been proposed and that a balanced budget would need to be agreed.

Following further discussion during which the advice given by the Treasurer regarding the competency of the motion was questioned the Chair sought the agreement of the Board to have a short adjournment to enable further clarification to be sought. This was unanimously agreed.

On resumption of the meeting, Councillor Leadbitter stated that he had considered the advice he had been given and in terms of Standing Order 42 ruled that Councillor McKail's motion was not competent and therefore the motion fell. Accordingly the amendment proposed by Councillor Leadbitter's became the motion.

As an amendment Councillor McKail, seconded by Councillor Kille, moved that the decision on the budget be deferred to allow those members who would have voted for the original motion to work on an alternative budget and to bring an amended report to a special meeting of the Board at a date to be agreed.

On a division there voted:-

For the Motion (6)	Councillors G Leadbitter, B Cormie, C Allard, G Cowie, R Shepherd and S Stuart
For the Amendment (6)	Councillors R McKail, A Kille, C Buchan, M Roy, B Topping and J Whyte

Abstentions (0)

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

Therefore, the Board agreed:-

- i) to note the additional workload placed on the Assessor's services as set out in paragraph 3.2.
- ii) to note the additional expenditure requirements of the service due to the necessary replacement of computer and telephone systems.
- iii) to note the impact of the projected reduction in central government grant funding considered in paragraphs 3.13. and 3.14 along with the potential costs of any pay award.
- iv) the budget for 2018-19 is set at £4,292,000 as detailed in Appendix 1; and
- v) the requisitions for 2018/19 to the constituent authorities are set at £4,292,000 as detailed in the table at paragraph 6.2.

6. VALUATION ROLL & COUNCIL TAX VALUATION LIST

A report was submitted and noted by the Assessor & ERO to advise the Board of current activities and performance levels achieved during the period 1 April to 31 December 2017.

7. REGISTER OF ELECTORS – PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENTS

A report was submitted by the Assessor & ERO to report electoral registration performance details following the publication of the revised registers on 1 December 2017 and to update the Board on current developments in the electoral registration.

Councillor Topping thanked Mr Milton and his staff for their hard work during the year and asked that the Board's appreciation be noted.

Councillor Shepherd left the meeting during discussion of this item.

Councillor McKail sought clarification on the costs of an appeal. In response the Assessor and ERO confirmed that costs are variable and can cost as much as £2,000 per day.

Councillor Leadbitter sought further clarification on the court costs. The Assessor and ERO confirmed that court charges £500 per 30 minutes for each party and that expenses are not generally awarded in the Lands Valuation Appeal Court.

Following consideration the Board noted the performance and the update on current developments with regards to electoral registration.

8. GOVERNANCE

A report was submitted by the Assessor & ERO to update the Board on the policy refresh programme and preparation for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Following consideration the Board agreed to:-

- i) note the current position on the policy refresh programme and preparations for GDPR coming into force; and
- ii) note the proposed means of designation of a Data Protection Officer (DPO).

9. DRAFT ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2017-18

A report was submitted by the External Auditor to update the Board on the Audit Plan for 2017/18.

Following consideration the Board noted the update of the Audit Plan for 2017/18.

10. GVJB INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

A report was submitted by the Treasurer advising the Board of the proposed internal audit coverage of the Assessor's Service for the financial year ended 31 March 2018.

Following consideration the Board agreed to note the report.

11. QUESTION TIME

There were no questions raised.