

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Grampian Valuation Joint Board

Friday, 18 June 2021

remote locations via video conference,

PRESENT

Councillor Frank Brown, Councillor Charles Buchan, Councillor Marion Buchan, Councillor Bill Cormie, Councillor Gordon Graham, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Neil MacGregor, Councillor Avril Mackenzie, Councillor Stephen Smith, Councillor Judy Whyte

SUBSTITUTES

Councillor John Cooke (for Councillor Neil Copland), Councillor Wendy Agnew (for Councillor Andy Kille), Councillor Isobel Davidson (for Councillor Ron McKail), Councillor Sandra Macdonald (for Councillor John Reynolds)

APOLOGIES

Councillor Neil Copland, Councillor Andy Kille, Councillor Ron McKail, Councillor John Reynolds, Councillor Derek Ross

IN ATTENDANCE

1. Chair

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Graham Leadbitter.

2. Declaration of Member's Interests

In terms of Standing Order 25 and the Councillor's Code of Conduct there were no declarations from Members who were present at the meeting where any item of business in which they have any financial or other interest is to be dealt with.

3. Welcome

The Chair welcomed Mark Adam, the newly appointed Assessor and ERO to his first meeting of the Grampian Valuation Joint Board.

The Assessor and ERO thanked the Chair and introduced himself to the Board.

4. Minute of Meeting of 5 February 2021

The minute of the meeting of the Grampian Valuation Joint Board on 5 February 2021 was submitted and approved by the Board.

5. Unaudited Annual Accounts for 2020-21

A report by the Treasurer to the Board asked the Board to consider the unaudited Annual Accounts from the Grampian Valuation Joint Board for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The Treasurer highlighted to the Board that it has been an exceptional year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and underspends in staffing were mainly round the difficulties in being able to recruit over the last year. She further added and asked the Board to note that the Management Commentary had been written by the previous Assessor and ERO.

Cllr Brown sought clarification on whether a review of the vacancies is going to take place.

In response the Assessor and ERO confirmed that at the next management team consideration will be given as to whether all the vacancies still require to be filled.

In response to a question from Councillor Whyte regarding the delivery of the service and staff wellbeing, the Assessor & ERO agreed to bring back a report on accommodation requirements and working from home to the meeting in November 2021.

Following further consideration the Board agreed to note the unaudited Annual Accounts of the Grampian Valuation Joint Board for the year ending 31 March 2021.

6. Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement 1 April to 31 May 2021

A report by the Treasurer to the Board asked the Board to consider the Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 May 2021.

Following consideration the Board agreed to note the Revenue Monitoring Statement to 31 May 2021.

7. Governance

A report by the Assessor and ERO advised the Board of equalities mainstreaming activities.

Councillor Davidson sought clarification on what steps are being taken to close the gender pay gap.

In response, the Assessor and ERO confirmed that the report identifies a new equalities outcome which is hoped will help reduce the gap. The Assessor and ERO also agreed to check what initiatives the RICS were carrying out to recruit more women into the profession.

Following consideration the Board agreed to note the content of the report.

8. Risk Management

A report by the Assessor and ERO reported to the Board on risk management.

Councillor Whyte sought an update on the office review and when the review will be reported back to the Board.

In response, the Assessor and ERO confirmed that he has been approached by Moray Council as they are currently carrying out a review on their office accommodation and whether the Assessors office wished to be included in the review as it has already been identified that there are access issues with the Elgin office.

Councillor Whyte asked whether it would be possible to receive a schedule of reports and also to create an action sheet from each meeting as she was aware that a number of reports had been requested and it would be beneficial to be able to track the progress.

In response the Assessor and ERO confirmed that he had created a schedule of reports following his commencement in post and was happy to share with the Board. The Clerk confirmed that she would provide an action sheet following each meeting.

Following consideration the Board agreed to note the risk register and the plans for the future.

9. Valuation Roll and Council Tax Valuation List

A report by the Assessor and ERO reported on progress in appeal resolution and advised the Board of performance levels achieved during 2020/21 and make recommendations for performance targets for the next three years.

The Depute Assessor and ERO introduced the report. The Chair noted that the appeals upheld on behalf of the assessor are high and sought clarification on the number of appeals submitted by public bodies.

In response the Depute Assessor and ERO said that he did not have the figures to hand but was aware that Aberdeenshire Council had submitted appeals against the valuation of their properties. He further advised that he would obtain the figures in relation to appeals lodged by public bodies and circulate to the Board.

Following further consideration the Board agreed to:

- i) note the appeal progress and performance information; and
note the recommendations in respect of the Valuation roll and Council Tax
- ii) Valuation List performance thresholds for the 3 year period from 2020/21 to 2022/23.

10. Register of Electors

A report by the Assessor and ERO updated the Board on developments in electoral registration. The Principal Admin Officer introduced the report.

Following consideration the Board agreed to note the content of the report.

11. Complaints Handling Performance

A report by the Assessor and ERO updated the Board on complaints handling performance for 2020-21.

It was acknowledged that only 5 complaints had been received during the year, which is considerably lower than in previous years.

Following consideration the Board agreed to note the complaints handling performance.