



REPORT TO: Grampian Valuation Joint Board on 5 February 2021

SUBJECT: Valuation Roll & Council Tax Valuation List

BY: The Assessor & ERO

1. Reason for Report

- 1.1 To provide an operational update on the valuation services provided by the Assessor.
- 1.2 To report on developments in the reform of non-domestic rates (NDR).

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Board note the report.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Maintenance of the valuation roll and council tax valuation list has continued throughout the pandemic albeit subject to the operational restrictions imposed by the requirement to work from home and the limitations on carrying out site visits. .
- 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. Target performance thresholds were last reviewed in 2018/19. The next review is due to take place during 2021/22.
- 3.3 The impact of the pandemic has resulted in changes to the Scottish Government's non-domestic rates reform timetable

4. Current Position

4.1 Valuation Roll

- 4.1.1 Appendix 1 provides performance for running roll updates to the valuation roll during the period from 1 April 2020 to 25 January 2021 and the previous two years. Since September 2020 there has been a 200% increase in the volume of updates that have been made to the valuation roll and whilst the percentage of changes that are made within the 90 day performance threshold remain low due the difficulties in verification of details without the benefit of being able to make site visits, the service is continuing

to maintain the valuation roll through working closely with property occupiers, rating surveyors and other bodies such as local authority planning and building control teams. Commercial activity however remains limited and this will be reflected in the year-end figures.

- 4.1.2 Revaluation 2017 appeal resolution has slowed during the last year as the restrictions impact on both the Valuation Appeal Committee hearing schedules and the capacity of both the appellants' and the Assessor's representatives to resolve the more technically challenging appeals that generally prevail at this stage in the revaluation cycle. In the last three months approximately 150 Revaluation 2017 and 500 running roll appeals have been resolved.
- 4.1.3 The challenges presented by the pandemic and their impact on the courts and tribunals of Scotland has been recognised by the Scottish Government with the deadline for resolution of Revaluation and running roll appeals extended by 12 months to 31 December 2021. Legislation to postpone the next general revaluation of non-domestic subjects from 1 April 2022 by 12 months to 1 April 2023 was approved by Parliament on 2 December 2020. This postponement did however include bringing forward the 12 month tone period which was one of the reforms that had been scheduled for implementation with the 2025 Revaluation. Normally there is a 24 month time period between the tone date for values and the revaluation coming into effect. This tone period was scheduled to be reduced to 12 months for the 2025 revaluation. This change has now been brought forward by 2 years to the 2023 Revaluation.
- 4.1.4 As at 31 December there are 1,222 Revaluation 2017 appeals and 10,562 running roll appeals that remain outstanding. It is difficult to project future appeal disposal rates with the prevailing pandemic-related uncertainty over the survey of properties and the operational considerations of valuation appeal committee hearings. The service is however working with the independent Valuation Appeal Panel that makes up the committees and also ratepayer representatives in order to seek to maximise appeal resolution rates.
- 4.1.5 As part of the NDR reforms, Assessors' wider powers to request information and impose civil penalties on parties that do not respond have come into force and Assessors have launched a new online facility for parties to provide rental information.

4.2 Council Tax Valuation List

- 4.2.1 Appendix 2 provides performance for updates to the council tax valuation list. The data shows a significant improvement on the position that was reported in November with the volume of new dwellings being added to the valuation list increasing by 150% since 6 October.2020. The percentage of updates that we achieve with the 90 day initial performance threshold remains below target for a normal year but again reflects the challenging operational environment that currently prevails.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Maintenance activity on the valuation roll and council tax valuation list has increased significantly.
- 5.2 Running roll appeal volumes remain a concern however steps are being taken to seek to address this issue.
- 5.3 The new revaluation framework is gradually taking shape as the revised timetable is set down in law and the new statutory powers for information gathering, along with online developments come on stream.

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