

At a MEETING of the **TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD** held remotely on 28th August, 2023.

Present:-

Representing Angus Council:-

Councillor Serena Cowdy  
Councillor Brenda Durno  
Councillor George Meechan  
Councillor Martin Shepherd

Representing Dundee City Council:-

Depute Lord Provost Kevin Cordell  
Bailie Christina Roberts  
Councillor Lynne Short  
Councillor Pete Shears  
Councillor Wendy Scullin

Representing Perth and Kinross Council:-

Bailie Chris Ahern  
Councillor Dave Cuthbert  
Councillor Iain MacPherson (for Bailie Mike Williamson)  
Councillor Sheila McCole  
Councillor Frank Smith

Depute Lord Provost Kevin Cordell, Convener, in the Chair.

**I APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Bailie Fraser Macpherson (Dundee City Council) and Bailie Mike Williamson (Perth and Kinross Council).

**II DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**III MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minute of meeting of the Tayside Valuation Joint Board held on 19th June, 2023 was submitted and approved.

**IV BEST VALUE – PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/2023**

There was submitted Report No TVJB16-2023 by the Assessor, appraising of the performance levels achieved by the Assessor and his staff during financial year 2022/2023, and presenting the Board's Annual Public Performance Report.

The Joint Board agreed:-

- (i) to approve the Joint Board's Annual Public Performance Report for the year 2022/2023, which was attached as Appendix 1 of the report;
- (ii) to note the information submitted by the Assessor to the Scottish Government in respect of the Key Performance Indicators concerning the Valuation Roll and Council Tax Valuation List, which was attached as Appendix 2 of the report; and
- (iii) to note the position concerning the Customer Satisfaction Survey, which was attached as Appendix 3 of the report.

## **V FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION**

There was submitted Report No TVJB17-2023 by the Assessor, presenting current statistical data and relevant background information in relation to matters arising in respect of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information issues.

The Joint Board agreed to note the content of the report.

## **VI HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT**

There was submitted Report No TVJB18-2023 by the Assessor, presenting the Assessor's annual report on Health and Safety matters, in accordance with the Joint Board's Health and Safety Policy Statement.

The Joint Board agreed to note the content of the report.

## **VII INTERNAL AUDIT**

There was submitted Report No TVJB19-2023 by the Assessor, presenting the Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2023/2024 which was attached as an Appendix to the report.

The Joint Board agreed to approve the Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2023/2024.

## **VIII DATA PROTECTION ANNUAL REPORT**

There was submitted Report No TVJB20-2023 by the Data Protection Officer, presenting the current status and relevant background information in relation to matters arising in respect of Data Protection issues.

The Joint Board agreed to note the content of the report.

## **IX ELECTORAL REGISTRATION – ELECTIONS ACT 2022**

There was submitted Report No TVJB21-2023 by the Assessor, providing an update on additional duties requiring to be carried out by the Electoral Registration Officer following introduction of the Elections Act 2022.

It was the view of the majority of the members present that, while the UK Government had stated it had enacted this legislation for the reasons stated in Paragraph 5.1 of the report, these were not the actual reasons why the legislation had been enacted.

The Joint Board then agreed:-

- (i) to note that the Elections Act brought in a requirement for voters to show an approved form of identification at certain polls and in Scotland came into force from 4th May, 2023 onwards for recall petitions and UK Parliamentary by-elections. Voter identification would apply in UK Parliamentary General Elections from 5th October, 2023 onwards. Where an elector did not have an approved identity document (passport, driving license etc), they may apply for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC);
- (ii) to note that the VAC service for electors went live on 16th January, 2023. On that date the ERO Portal, a service provided by the UK Government, began accepting applications. Applications were accessed by Tayside Valuation Joint Board staff who determined and processed them. At the date of writing this report sixty six applications had been received (thirty four for Angus area and thirty two for Perth and Kinross);
- (iii) to note that The Electoral Commission intended to roll out a public awareness campaign in relation to the above change in Scotland ahead of a UK Parliament General Election. Meantime the Commission had designed a leaflet suitable for use in

Scotland informing electors of the need to show photo ID to vote in person at the above elections and to apply for a VAC if required. Locally, the leaflet had recently been issued with all paper annual canvass communications and reference to voter ID/VACs also included in canvass e-communications;

- (iv) to note that on 6th July, 2023, the statutory instrument to implement changes to postal and proxy voting and introduce an online application service for these voting methods was laid before Parliament. These changes were currently scheduled to come into effect in October 2023;
- (v) to note a change to Postal Voting for UK Parliamentary General Elections and recall petitions, where postal vote signature refresh arrangements would be limited to a maximum of three years, following which the elector would need to make a fresh application. This would apply to any postal vote applications made after 31st October, 2023. Transitional arrangements would be in place – any postal voters with an existing arrangement in place prior to 31st October, 2023 would not need to reapply until 31st January, 2026. The existing five year refresh period for Scottish elections would continue to apply;
- (vi) to note a change to Proxy Voting change for UK Parliamentary General Elections and recall petitions, where the total number of electors for whom a person may act as a proxy for would be limited to four, of which no more than two could be for 'domestic electors' – i.e. an elector that is neither an overseas elector nor a service voter. This would apply to any proxy vote appointments made after 31st October, 2023. Transitional arrangements would be in place – any proxy voters with an existing arrangement in place prior to 31st October, 2023 would need to reapply for their proxy vote by 31st January, 2024;
- (vii) to note that a new online service would be introduced to allow electors to apply for a postal or proxy vote online. This service, hosted on GOV.UK would be a new feature within the ERO Portal, and would be in addition to the current application process, with paper applications continuing to be available. Identity checking would be introduced for all absent vote applications other than those for emergency proxies. The online service and the identity verification requirements would apply to UK Parliamentary General Elections and recall petitions only;
- (viii) to note that the online service and associated changes to existing Electoral Management Software systems were currently being tested/further developed and staff training in their use would be rolled out in due course, with new processes being implemented accordingly. Members should however be aware of the potential for elector confusion and administrative complexity due to the divergence that would exist between Scotland and the rest of the UK as a result of the above changes. Clear communications would be required to ensure voters are aware of the different arrangements for different polls;
- (ix) to note a further change related to removal of the 15 year limit on voting rights for British citizens living overseas, currently scheduled to come into force in January, 2024. Overseas electors would be able to register at a UK address where they were previously registered, or if never registered, at the UK address where they were last resident. The registration period would be extended from one year up to three years. This change applied to the right to vote in UK Parliamentary elections only; and
- (x) to note that in order to cope with the increased workload which would be generated as a result of the above changes, the Electoral Registration Officer intended to put in place additional capacity by upskilling five existing members of clerical staff to enable them to contribute to electoral registration work as required.

**X REVENUE MONITORING FOR 4 MONTHS TO 31ST JULY, 2023**

There was submitted Report No TVJB22-2023 by the Treasurer, appraising of the latest monitoring position on its 2023/2024 Revenue Budget, based on the actual spend to 31st July, 2023.

The Joint Board agreed:-

- (i) to note the Revenue Monitoring position as at 31st July, 2023; and
- (ii) note that the Treasurer and the Assessor would continue to monitor the Joint Board's projected outturn for 2023/2024 and endeavour to ensure that the final outturn was within the approved Revenue Budget.

**XI DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Joint Board agreed to note that the next meeting of the Joint Board would be held remotely on Monday, 20th November, 2023 at 9.00 am.

Kevin CORDELL, Convener.