

Item 3

Lothian Valuation Joint Board

Edinburgh, 16 April 2018

Present:

City of Edinburgh Council – Councillors Key (Convener), Booth, Doggart, Henderson, Rust and Work.

East Lothian Council – Councillors Goodfellow and Henderson.

Midlothian Council – Councillor Russell.

West Lothian Council – Councillor McGuire (Vice-Convener).

1 Appointment of Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

Decision

To note the decision of the Joint Board's Appointment Committee on 29 March 2018 to appoint Graeme Strachan as the permanent Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.

2 Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board of 5 February 2018 as a correct record.

3 External Audit Plan 2017/18

The Accounts Commission had appointed Scott-Moncrieff as external auditor of the Joint Board for the five year period 2016/17 to 2020/21.

A summary of the work plan for the 2017/18 External Audit was presented. The core elements of the work included:

- An audit of the 2017/18 financial statements and related matters
- A review, where applicable, of arrangements for governance and transparency, financial management, financial sustainability and value for money
- Any other work requested by Audit Scotland.

Decision

To note the External Audit Plan for 2017/18.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted)

4 Assessor and ERO's Report to the Joint Board

The Assessor presented an update on the service overview and priorities, current issues and the future direction of the Joint Board.

The 2017 annual canvass had concluded on 1 December 2017 with the publication of the new electoral register. A return rate for household enquiry forms of 74% had been recorded which compared favourably with previous years – 2016 70% and 2015 72%.

The future nature of the annual canvass remained under consideration by the Cabinet Office with the outcome of various pilot exercises currently under evaluation.

Service priorities over the next three months included:

- 2018 AVP1 refresh
- Continue to process all applications received for electoral registration, absent votes, opt out and change of name applications
- Continue with engagement activities
- Council tax
- 2017 revaluation appeals
- Engagement with ratepayers and their representatives
- Transformation and cultural change programme
- Governance, best value and risk group

A facility now existed which provided automatic notification via email to members when registration data was available and, if requested, could then issue and record that information had been sent.

Decision

- 1) To note the report.

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- 2) To approve a trial by Board members of an automated delivery system of legally entitled electoral register data.
- 3) To approve the adoption of twice yearly meetings of the Governance, Best Value and Risk Group at which Board member and other external stakeholder representation would be requested.

(References – Lothian Valuation Joint Board 21 August 2017 (item 11); report by the Assessor and ERO, submitted)