

Lothian Valuation Joint Board

15 June 2020

Meeting held virtually by Skype

Present:

City of Edinburgh Council – Councillors Key (Convener), Corbett, Doggart, Doran, Gordon, Gloyer, Henderson, Rust and Work.

East Lothian Council – Councillor Goodfellow.

West Lothian Council – Councillor McGuire.

1 Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board of 3 February 2020 as a correct record.

2 Assessor's Update Report to the Lothian Valuation Joint Board

An update report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer was presented to the Board. It provided information on the activities of the organisation during the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent closure of the office premises and staff move to home working.

The update also covered the canvass process for 2020, registration applications, elections, non-domestic rates and council tax.

Decision

To note the report.

(Reference – report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, submitted)

3 Members Code of Conduct Report

A management action had been identified by the external auditors in their 2018/19 Annual Audit Report which was considered by the Board in September 2019. It was proposed that a code of conduct for Board members and a register of interests should be established to mitigate the identified risk.

Decision

- 1) To approve the draft Members Code of Conduct.

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- 2) To agree to provide a Register of Interests Declaration Form and once submitted, the information would then be published on the Lothian Valuation Joint Board website.

(Reference – report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer, submitted)

4 Treasury Management Annual Report 2019/20

The Annual Treasury Management report for the financial year 2018/19 was submitted.

Decision

To note the annual report for 2019/20.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted)

5 Unaudited Annual Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2020

The unaudited annual accounts were presented to the Board in accordance with the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, which required that the Annual Accounts for the year 2019/20 be presented to the Board no later than 31 August 2020. The Annual Accounts were required to be presented to external audit by 30 June 2020.

Decision

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To note that the Audited Annual Accounts for 2019/20 would be re-presented to the Board on completion of the external audit.
- 3) To note that a pension adjustment of £0.124m would be made in the Audited Annual Accounts due to a timing issue on receipt of pension information. The pension liability will increase from £6.453m to £6.577m as a result of the return on assets figure being revised from an estimate to an actual. The Board were previously advised of this ongoing annual adjustment between unaudited and audited accounts. This adjustment only affects unusable reserves so will not change the general reserve balance reported in paragraph 2.7 of the report by the Treasurer.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted).

6 Recruitment of a new Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

The current Assessor and ERO had confirmed his intention to retire in June 2020 and recruitment had commenced. The process was suspended in March 2020 due to Covid-19 and the Assessor and ERO agreed to delay his

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retirement until September 2020. It was recommended that one of the Assistant Assessors be appointed on an interim basis with a recommended approach to the permanent position brought back to the Board in June 2020.

Decision

- 1) To note the current Assessor and ERO would retire in September 2020.
- 2) To agree that due to the ongoing uncertainty with COVID-19, to appoint one of the Assistant Assessors on an interim basis, initially for a six-month period.
- 3) To appoint Councillors Goodfellow and McGuire to support the Convener with the interim recruitment process.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted)

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