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“For the Board 2004/5 was a memorable year. It saw the successful end to a number of years hard work aimed at restructuring the organisation, reducing staffing levels and producing budget savings. From this point we focus on providing a high quality customer orientated service to the people of Edinburgh and Lothian.”

Joan Hewton, Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

CUSTOMER FOCUS

Dealing with Council Tax, Non-domestic Rating and the Electoral Register brings the staff of the Joint Board into daily contact with the council tax payers, businesses and electorate of the area. As a result we are aware of the need to be customer focused in all the activities which we carry out.

During 2004/5, apart from staffing on a permanent basis a telephone, e-mail and public counter helpdesk and answering service, we reviewed many of the documents and forms, which we issue on an annual basis to ensure multilingual information was provided. In addition we offer a translation service and have made direct approaches to minority groups.

During 2004, we moved outside the office and with the aid of information stands provided assistance, at a number of venues within the Lothian area, direct to the public.

Preparation for Freedom of Information was a major issue during 2004 and the Board has ensured that it complied with all the requirements within the necessary timetable. All information has been supplied to those making appropriate requests within the 20 day time limit.

Given the nature of the Boards activities close working partnerships are invaluable. The Board works closely with and strives to forge high levels of partnership working with all four of its constituent authorities.

Many senior staff are members of the Scottish Assessors Association, through which consistency of approach on many rating valuation issues within Scotland is achieved. This is also a forum to explore best practise, and partnership arrangements within the Association provide Best Value opportunities.

A particular achievement during 2004/5 was the creation of the Scottish Assessors Web Portal. For the first time this gives the public direct access to information on both the Valuation Roll and the Council Tax List on an all Scotland basis.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2004/5

The Board is funded by each of the four constituent councils it serves, these are City of Edinburgh Council, East Lothian Council, Midlothian Council and West Lothian Council. The budget provided to the Board for 2004/5 amounted to £5.7 million. Using this funding the Board is required to pay all costs associated with an efficient and effective service delivery. The principal items within the budget are employee and property costs, and such supplies as ICT, postages and stationery, and services supplied directly by the constituent authorities.

The financial outcome for 2004/5 was an overspend of approximately 0.14%.

This reflects sound financial management coupled with accurate expenditure forecasting.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION



If your name is not on the Electoral Register, you will not be able to vote! **Check and make sure.**

The Joint Board through the auspices of the Lothian Electoral Joint Committee maintains the Electoral Register for the Edinburgh and Lothian's area.

This is a list of all those persons entitled to vote in local authority, Scottish and Westminster parliamentary, and European elections.

As at 1 December 2004, the annual publication date, there were 586,356 persons entered on the Register.

Lothian Electoral Joint Committee 2004 Canvass Statistics

Council	Electorate as at 1 Dec 2004	No. of Requests for Postal Vote Applications	No. of Electors Opting Out of Edited Register
City of Edinburgh	334,233	33,185	57,050
East Lothian	71,148	4,770	9,055
Midlothian	60,847	5,048	8,290
West Lothian	120,128	10,735	17,281
TOTAL	586,356	53,738	91,676

The Register is maintained by two methods. Firstly, an annual canvass is undertaken every Autumn by issuing every household noted on the Register with a form to complete and return. This involves the processing of in excess of 600,000 forms by Board staff within an 8 to 10 week timeframe. The return rate of these forms for 2004 was **81.39%**.

The second method to update the Register is via Rolling Registration. This allows anyone resident in the Lothian's area to apply to be registered or have his or her current registration changed outwith the canvass period. During 2004, 30,000 such applications were received and processed.



**Don't forget
If you are moving house let us know.**

Electors can now opt to receive postal ballot papers, an option which has been increasingly taken up during 2004 with some 50,000 applications for postal voting received by the Board as a result of the 2004 canvass.

Also, electors can opt not to be shown on the "Edited Register", which is available for purchase.

The processing of both options places significant additional workloads on the Boards' electoral registration staff.

If you want to now more about Electoral Registration visit www.lothian-vjb.gov.uk.

COUNCIL TAX



The LVJB is responsible for creating and maintaining the Council Tax List. This contains an entry for every domestic subject within Edinburgh and the Lothian's. Each dwelling shown is placed in one of 8 bands that reflect an assessed capital value based on 1991 sale prices.

Based upon on these bands, households are charged council tax by the local authority.

The Council Tax List as at 31 March 2005 contained 368,444 entries.

Council	Number of Council Tax Entries	
	Number as at 01/04/04	Number as at 31/03/05
Edinburgh	221,041	223,150
East Lothian	40,840	41,192
Midlothian	33,640	33,734
West Lothian	69,192	70,368
TOTAL	364,713	368,444

As new house building is a growth area within the Lothian's, maintaining the Council Tax List represents an activity where substantial effort is required from the staff of the Board.

During 2004/5, **4,391** new dwellings were entered onto the Council Tax List.

91.5% of these new houses were entered on to the list within 6 months of the date of occupation.

Council Tax Banding can be reviewed at the time your house is sold, however a banding change may only occur if there has been a material physical alteration made to the property since the original banding was placed on it. This is known as a 'Point of Sale' consideration. Since the commencement of Council Tax in 1993, staff have considered in excess of 250,000 domestic property sales, and from this around 10% have been matched to information relating to physical alterations.



The exercise involves considerable effort to undertake. Data received from external agencies is manipulated and matched to other data sets held within the organisation. From here staff are involved in external survey work and the careful consideration of all the information before them, prior to making judgements on possible band changes.

If you would like to find the Banding for your house, or find out more about Council Tax, please go to www.saa.gov.uk.

VALUATION ROLL



The LVJB is responsible for creating and maintaining a list of all non-domestic properties in the City of Edinburgh, East, West, and Mid Lothian area. This list is known as the Valuation Roll and shows for each entry the assessed annual rateable value.

The Rateable Value is an assessed annual rent based on 1998 open market rents.

This Rateable Value is used in the calculation of commercial rates that are paid to the appropriate local authority by the tenants and occupiers of the properties listed.

As at 1 April 2004 there were 28,572 properties shown on the Valuation Roll which had a combined Rateable Value of £901 million.

Council	Number of Valuation Roll Entries	
	Number as at 01/04/04	Number as at 31/03/05
Edinburgh	18,045	18,098
East Lothian	3,128	3,068
Midlothian	2,531	2,526
West Lothian	4,868	4,838
TOTAL	28,572	28,530

94 of the properties in the Roll each have a Rateable Value in excess of £1million.

During 2004/5, nearly **2,966** changes were made to the Valuation Roll and **66%** of these were undertaken within 6 months of the effective date of change.



The assessed values showing on the Roll remain unchanged, unless there has been a material change to circumstance, for example a physical extension to a property, for five years at which point all values are re-assessed. This is known as a Revaluation.

2005 is a year of Revaluation, and as at 1 April 2005 all entries in the Valuation Roll shall have been re-assessed.

To undertake such a task involves considerable preparatory work and 2004/5 saw staff working towards preparing the new assessments. In total over 28,000 entries in the Valuation Roll were re-valued and the result of this was to increase the total Rateable Value for the Lothians area from £886.71 million to over £1 billion.

If you would like to more about the Valuation Roll or if appropriate find your Rateable Value then view the information on "www.saa.gov.uk."

Category	Valuation Roll Entries in Major Property Categories	
	Number as at 01/04/04	Number as at 31/03/05
Shop	9,309	9,192
Office	5,112	5,318
Factory/Warehouse	5,141	5,572
Others	9,010	8,448
TOTAL	28,572	28,530

INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

ICT impacts on every activity carried out by the Board and staff are dependent on having at their disposal systems which are robust, effective and fully supportive of the work of the organisation.



The Board has a dedicated ICT team that provides the majority of the software and hardware requirements needed.

Due to the specialist nature of the work, the ICT team are required to create and maintain a number of bespoke systems. For the 2005 Revaluation a commercial valuation system was developed and implemented. Without this, completing the Revaluation on time would have been difficult.

ICT is a resource that exists to support the staff with the work they have to carry out. As staffing levels have reduced recently within the Board a greater call has been made on ICT to provide higher levels of development and sophistication all aimed at ensuring that staff can concentrate efforts on providing a quality service through front line activities.

During 2004 exciting work commenced on the introduction of imaging and workflow technology. This involves the integration of a third party product with existing systems. It is currently being applied to the Electoral Registration process and shall move into the areas of Valuation Roll and Council Tax during 2005. The aim is to minimise paper handling, reduce costs, and again maximise the time available to staff to provide a customer focused quality service.



SCOTTISH ASSESSORS' ASSOCIATION WEB PORTAL

Scottish Assessors

Home SAA Home Contact Us Help Site Map

Local Council Area: City of Edinburgh, East & West Lothian, Midlothian

Lothian

Please enter your address below

New Search Search by Region

almondvale, ALMONDVALE Lothian

Council Tax Search Rates Search

GO

Advanced Search >>

Found 147 matches. Displaying 1 to 10. Last updated 14/04/2005 08:36

Ref No.	Description	Property Address	Occupier	Rateable Value	More Information
318A464AW (87A)	WORKSHOP	(87A) ALMONDVALE CENTRE LIVINGSTON WEST LOTHIAN EH54 6NB	RAVENSEFT PROPERTIES LTD. 5 STRAND LONDON WC2N 5AF	2,300	More on WORKSHOP (87A) ALMONDVALE CENTRE
318A464AW (A)	SUPERMARKET	(A) ALMONDVALE CENTRE LIVINGSTON WEST LOTHIAN EH54 6NB	ASDA STORES LTD. ASDA HOUSE SOUTHBANK GREAT WILSON STREET LEEDS LS11 5AD	2,760,000	More on SUPERMARKET (A) ALMONDVALE CENTRE
318A464AW (A1)	ATM SITE	(A1) ALMONDVALE CENTRE LIVINGSTON WEST LOTHIAN EH54 6NB	ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND PLC PROPERTY & FACILITIES DRUMMOND HOUSE, P.O. BOX 1727 1 REDHEUGHS AVENUE EDINBURGH EH12 9JN	6,300	More on ATM SITE (A1) ALMONDVALE CENTRE
318A464AW (A2)	ATM SITE	(A2) ALMONDVALE CENTRE LIVINGSTON WEST LOTHIAN EH54 6NB	NATIONWIDE BUILDING SOCIETY PROPERTY SERVICES NATIONWIDE HOUSE PIPERS WAY SWINDON SN38 1SN	6,300	More on ATM SITE (A2) ALMONDVALE CENTRE

A major milestone was achieved during 2004 in terms of access and provision of information.

Through collaborative working with the other Assessor areas within Scotland, Open Scotland and product supplier Connect, the Board is proud to have participated in the creation of the Scottish Assessors' Web Portal.

For the first time information on Council Tax banding and non-domestic rates covering the whole of Scotland can be accessed from one site.

The web Portal provides information on 2.3 million domestic and nearly 300,000 non-domestic properties.

In addition helpful advice and information is given about each of the Assessors' activities with forms available for download and direct e-mail access to each Assessor is provided.

Tom McCabe, Scottish Office Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform commented, ".....this provides a consistent and high quality service and it is tremendous to see online technology put to such good effect".

Have a look at www.saa.gov.uk.

INVESTING IN STAFF

The largest resource at the Board's disposal is its staff.

It is of great importance therefore, in order to continue to provide a high quality service, that staff are appropriately trained, supported and motivated.

Throughout 2004/5 we have continued to support and assist those staff undertaking professional qualifications while at the same time ensuring training and guidance is provided on such matters as time management, team building and leadership, effective communication, customer care, the requirements of Data Protection and Freedom of Information, health and safety etc.

In addition to making use of the training resources available to us through our constituent authorities, the Board has created its own Learning Resource Centre. Here staff can receive customised one to one training on issues relating to the specific activities of their job and can also improve their IT skills by the use of intuitive interactive training software.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you would like to know more about the information contained in this report, the activities of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board, or have a specific enquiry please contact us by writing to:-

The Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Lothian Valuation Joint Board, Chesser House, 500 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh, EH11 3YJ

or call us on (0131) 469 5986

or go to our web site www.lothian-vjb.gov.uk

or visit the Scottish Assessors' Association web site www.saa.gov.uk

or call in at our offices at the above address.

If you require information on services provided by other council organisations please view the following web sites:-
www.edinburgh.gov.uk; www.eastlothian.gov.uk; www.midlothian.gov.uk; and www.westlothian.gov.uk