



MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE GRAMPIAN VALUATION JOINT BOARD

30 OCTOBER 2009

COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, ELGIN

PRESENT

Councillors I Ogilvie (Convener), J Dunbar, (Depute Convener), J S Cree (substituting for Councillor R Shepherd), B Cormie, S Coull, J Dick, G Penny, A Ross, J Hunter, G Leslie, J Mair, A Milne and R Watson.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors J Hamilton, R Shepherd and M Watt.

IN ATTENDANCE

I Milton, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), M. Wilson, Treasurer, D Whitworth, Head of Personnel Services, Moray Council and R. Ritchie, Senior Committee Services Officer, Moray Council for the Clerk to the Board. Also in attendance M Bruce, Audit Scotland.

1. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 26 JUNE 2009

The Minute of the meeting of the Board dated 26 June 2009 was submitted and approved as an accurate record, subject to correcting the date in the heading at Branch 18.

2. AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2009

There was submitted a report by the Treasurer seeking the Board's approval of the Audited Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2009, a copy of which was included with the meeting papers.

The Treasurer spoke to the report and the meeting noted that whilst there have been minor presentational changes to those Accounts submitted to the Board in June 2009 and the assets transactions detailed in note 8 have been changed to reflect the gross figures for the land swap at the Banff office, there has been no changes to the financial outturn position reported in June 2009. The balance to be returned to Constituent authorities is a surplus of £207,000 after adjusting for FRS 17 and depreciation.

Following consideration the Board agreed to note:-

- (i) the Final Accounts for the year ending 31 March, 2009; and
- (ii) that the surplus of £207,000 for 2008/09 to be returned to the constituent authorities.

3. EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S FINAL REPORT TO MEMBERS FOR 2008/09

There was submitted a copy of the External Auditor's, Audit Scotland, report on the Board's financial statements for 2008/09, which also summarised the key outcomes of the audit of the Board's financial statements for 2008/09 and the key aspects of the Board's reported financial position and performance to 31 March 2009.

M Bruce, Audit Scotland spoke to the report and advised the meeting that the report was an unqualified opinion on the financial statements of the Board for 2008/09, which had been submitted to the Controller of Audit by the deadline of 30 June 2009. She also advised that the final accounts preparation procedures and working papers were good which enabled the audit to progress smoothly and expressed her appreciation of the assistance given to her by the Treasurer and Officers of the Board.

Following consideration the Board agreed:-

- (i) to note the report; and
- (ii) that its' appreciation of the work of the Treasurer be minuted.

4. MONITORING STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2009

There was submitted a report by the Treasurer inviting the Board to consider the Revenue Monitoring Statement for the period 1 April to 30 September 2009, a copy of which was appended to the report as an Appendix.

The Treasurer spoke to the report and the meeting noted that the transactions for the first six months of the year has resulted in an underspend, to date, of £89,000. Of this amount approximately £76,000 has been generated by an underspend in employee costs. The meeting also noted that, previously reported, since the budget was set the employer's contribution for Superannuation has been revised for 2009/10 which will result in a saving of £40,000 by the 31 March 2010.

The Treasurer also advised that whilst accommodation charges will show an anticipated overspend of £17,000 by the end of the financial year, due to receipt of a late invoice for service charges for 2008/09 in respect office accommodation at Woodhill House, the Assessor has been in discussions with Aberdeenshire Council and has agreed procedures so as to ensure this does not happen again.

The meeting also noted that, to date, £17,840 of the specific grant of £36,747, from the Department of Constitutional Affairs for the upgrade of the electoral roll software, has been utilised and that it was anticipated that the grant will be fully utilised by 31 March 2010.

The Assessor & ERO also advised the meeting that, subsequent to the last meeting Gavin Oag had been appointed Depute Assessor & ERO (Aberdeen & Moray) and Mark Adam to

the post of Depute Assessor & ERO (Aberdeenshire). He also advised that there would be further backfilling of internal posts with a vacancy for a post of Valuer being advertised externally.

Following discussion, during which the Treasurer responded to questions, the Board agreed to:-

- (i) note the Revenue Monitoring Statement for the period 1 April to 30 September 2009 and also noted the capital expenditure to 30 September 2009; and
- (ii) note the receipt of a grant for £36,747 for the upgrading of the electoral roll software.

5. IRRV SCOTTISH CONFERENCE

Under reference to Branch 18 of the meeting of the Board dated 26 June 2009 there was submitted a report by the Assessor & ERO on the 2009 IRRV Annual Scottish Conference 'Scotland –Looking to the Future' held in Crieff on the 2 & 3 September 2009.

The meeting noted that the Board was represented at this year's conference by the Convener, Depute Convener and Assessor. In addition, as a result of the "free place" offer the Assistant Assessor based in Elgin was also in attendance. The meeting also noted that over two very full days delegates the conference provided a broad range of relevant topics on both practical and political fronts.

Following consideration the Board agreed to note the report.

6. REGISTER OF ELECTORS ANNUAL CANVASS

There was submitted a report by the Assessor & ERO informing the Board of progress with the annual canvass, which commenced on 1 September 2009.

The report provided the Board with an update on the current canvass based on Scottish Parliamentary Constituencies as at 1 October 2009, 'opt-outs', postal votes and 'deadwooding'. The meeting also noted that the Electoral Register will be published on 1 December 2009 with copies being provided to elected members, MSP's, MP's etc as prescribed. The report also advised that as a means of improving security and reducing costs a new internet based secure website is being tested which will enable members to download copies of the Electoral Register as opposed to receiving encrypted data discs. It is hoped that this new system will be fully operational by 1 December 2009.

The Assessor & ERO responded to questions and it was noted that house building was still on a downward trend and that clarification in regard to how to deal with updates for the proposed new downloadable Electoral Register would be raised with the IT Project Team.

Following consideration the Board agreed to note the report.

7. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

There was submitted a monitoring report by the Assessor & ERO in regard to non-financial key performance indicators in respect of the Valuation Roll and Council Tax for the period 1 April to 30 September 2009. There was appended to the report as Appendices 1 & 2 respectively comparative statements in respect of the Valuation Roll and Council Tax

showing the positions for 2007/08, 2008/09 and the performance for the first six months (1 April to 30 September) of the current financial year.

The meeting noted that the Board's Code of Corporate Governance provides a framework of Performance measurement and evaluation. This Code identifies a number of key performance indicators that provide quantitative data on the organisation's service delivery. The indicators related to the Valuation Roll and Council Tax Valuation List were reviewed in a report to the Board on 26 June 2009 (Branch 15 of the Minute refers).

Following discussion the Board agreed to note the report.

8. REVIEW OF DISABILITY AND RACE EQUALITY SCHEMES

There was submitted a report by the Assessor & ERO inviting the Board to approve the proposed Disability and Race Equality Schemes for the period 2009-2012 for the purposes of consultation with the Trade Unions and to grant the Assessor & ERO delegated authority to carry out any minor amendments resulting from the consultation process. Copies of the Schemes were appended to the report as Appendices 1 & 2 respectively.

The meeting noted that the revised Disability Equality Scheme (Appendix 1) and Race Equality Scheme (Appendix 2) represent the outcome of the consultative process and enable the Board and its officers to address their statutory duties imposed by existing equalities legislation.

Following consideration the Board agreed to approve the Disability and Race Equality Schemes for consultation with Trade Unions and to grant the Assessor & ERO delegated authority to carry out any minor amendments resulting from the consultation process.

9. STAFFING POLICIES

There was submitted a report by the Head of Personnel Services, Moray Council, seeking the Board's approval of draft staffing policies relating to Special Leave, Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave, Parental Leave, Adoption Leave and Assessor and Depute Assessor Recruitment, subject to consultation with Trade Unions. The report also recommended that the Assessor and Head of Personnel Services, Moray Council, be granted delegated authority to carry out any minor amendments to the policies arising from the consultations. Copies of the draft policies were appended to the report.

Following consideration the Board agreed:-

- (i) to approve the draft staffing policies relating to Maternity Leave, Pay and Benefits Policy; Paternity/Maternity Support Leave and Pay Policy; Parental Leave Policy; Adoption Leave and Pay Policy and Recruitment Procedure for the appointment of Senior Staff, as detailed in the appendices to the report, for consultation with the Trade Unions, subject to amending the policy on 'Recruitment Procedure for the Appointment of Senior Staff' to include reference to training for the Appointments Sub-Committee and Section 1.5 being amended to include reference to the delegated authority being in consultation with the Convener, whom failing the Depute Convener ; and
- (ii) that the Assessor and Head of Personnel Services, Moray Council, be granted delegated authority to carry out any minor amendments to the policies arising from the consultations