



Grampian Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Public performance report for 2022/23

Introduction

The Grampian Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) is an independent statutory official appointed by the Grampian Valuation Joint Board to value non-domestic properties for rating purposes, allocate dwellings to council tax bands and provide an electoral registration service for the Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray Council areas.

General Information

The Grampian Valuation Joint Board is a public body that funds the Assessor & ERO by means of requisitions from Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray councils and the net expenditure for 2022/23 was £4.402M resulting in an underspend of £0.494M for the financial year. The Board has a full-time equivalent of 82 posts distributed between offices in Aberdeen, Banff and Elgin. As at 31 March 2023 there were 65 full-time equivalent staff in post. In the last year, staff absence due to ill health was 1.7%, a 0.1% increase from 2022/23 but still comparing well to previous years.

A review of our 2022/23 priorities

The following operational priorities were specifically identified in the management commentary for the year. They must however not be considered in isolation and the organisation has a wide range of on-going priorities that relate not only to operational aspects of the organisation but also to our duty to eliminate discrimination and mainstream equalities, manage our records to the satisfaction of the Keeper of Records, protect data and provide information on request and in line with current law.

Conduct a full household canvass under the individual electoral registration (IER) regime.

The annual canvass of households has been the subject of major reform and the 2022 canvass was the third canvass where data matching was used at the outset to help identify those properties where the residents are more likely to have changed, the initial match being a comparison of the electoral register with information held by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Canvass Communication letters (CCA) advising who was on the register were issued to around 192,000 households where we held matched data (Route 1) and a response was only required where there were changes - the issue of a CCA concludes the canvass for Route 1 properties. Different Canvass Communication letters (CCB) were issued to around 100,000 households where there was unmatched data (Route 2) and a response was required from these households. If no response was received from these Route 2 properties, follow up action was required, including, potentially, a personal contact. Around 160 properties, including residential homes, were selected for Route 3 whereby information about the occupants was sought from a "responsible person" rather than the occupants themselves. The revised canvass model means that a comparison of return rates and automated responses with a canvass in the

years prior to 2020 is not appropriate. However, a comparison of the past 3 years is shown below. Households are still encouraged to use our automated response channels in the first instance as they require less back-office processing and are less costly for the public purse and a total of around 60,600 automated responses were received in 2022.

Annual Canvass of households	2020	2021	2022
DWP Match Rate	83.11%	83.09%	83.21%
Number of Properties in Route 1	191,982	198,279	192,288
Number of Properties in Route 2	95,095	91,452	99,818
Route 2 overall response rate (%)	61.40%	60.30%	62.20%
Number of Properties in Route 3	271	227	156
Number of automated responses	69,102	58,954	60,612

Publish revised registers on 1 December 2022.

The revised registers were published on 1 December 2022. The local government franchise electorate rose marginally from 448,607 to 448,915 between 1 December 2021 and 1 December 2022 with the Westminster franchise electorate dropping slightly from 414,534 to 413,739 over the same period.

Register publication date	Local Government Electorate	Number of households canvassed
1 Dec 2022	448,915	292,262
1 Dec 2021	448,607	289,958
1 Dec 2020	448,331	286,999
1 Feb 2020	445,960	282,999
1 Dec 2018	432,135	278,637
1 Dec 2017	438,674	279,278

Deliver the 2023 general revaluation of all non-domestic properties.

The 2022/23 year was an extremely demanding period for the valuation service with a requirement to carry out a general revaluation of over 30,000 non-domestic subjects across Grampian.

Past revaluations were carried out every five years with regard to the levels of value prevailing two years prior to the date the new Roll came into force e.g. for the 2017 Revaluation the “tone” date was 1 April 2015. To align more closely with the market, revaluations now take place every three years and with regard to a “tone” date only one year ahead of the date the new roll is due to come into force i.e. for the 2023 Revaluation that came into force on 1 April 2023, the “tone” date was 1 April 2022. The consequence of this was a considerably reduced window within which to ingather and analyse evidence and then produce and publish valuations. A new legal requirement meant that the Assessor had to publish a draft roll on 30 November 2022 and at the same time issue all proprietors, tenants and occupiers with a draft valuation notice before then issuing them with final valuation notices to reflect the published revaluation roll on 15 March 2023. For various classes of subject there was also a requirement, both at the draft and final notice stages, to provide ratepayers with a list of rented properties that had informed the valuation of their own property.

The table below shows a comparison of the valuation rolls on 1 April of the current and previous revaluation years.

Year	Aberdeen City Council area		Aberdeenshire Council area		Moray Council area		Grampian Valuation Joint Board area	
	No. of entries	Total Rateable Value (£)	No. of entries	Total Rateable Value (£)	No. of entries	Total Rateable Value (£)	No. of entries	Total Rateable Value (£)
2023	10,001	483,565,417	14,537	304,340,570	5,758	145,682,775	30,296	933,588,762
2017	9,543	592,696,360	11,884	286,176,425	4,609	108,241,085	26,036	987,113,870

Maintain complete and accurate Valuation Rolls and Valuation Lists.

These last two priorities use quantitative target-based performance indicators rather than qualitative measures and as such can be misleading at times as achieving the targets relies partly on the timely receipt of information from the owners and occupiers of dwellings and non-domestic properties. Valuer vacancies and the requirement to deliver the 2023 Revaluation, including the survey and valuation of parts of previously exempt public parks, had an impact on the organisation's ability to meet the timescales suggested by the key performance indicators in 2022/23.

Table 1 shows the number of new dwellings added to the Council Tax Valuation Lists in Grampian over the last 5 years and also the percentage that received notification within the 3 and 6 month performance windows. Table 1 also shows the performance thresholds that have been set.

Table 1 The time taken to add new dwellings to the Council Tax Valuation List

Year	Number	Within 3 months		Within 6 months	
		Threshold	Actual	Threshold	Actual
2022/23	2,725	94%	71%	97%	94%
2021/22	2,964	94%	83%	97%	95%
2020/21	2,212	94%	61%	97%	80%
2019/20	3,437	94%	90%	97%	97%
2018/19	3,524	94%	94%	97%	98%

Table 2 shows the number of alterations made to the Valuation Roll over the last 5 years along with the percentage of alterations that were made within the 3 and 6 month performance windows. The performance thresholds are also provided. Alterations include new entries to the Valuation Roll for newly constructed or converted buildings as well as alterations to existing buildings and the correction of errors.

Table 2 The time taken to alter the Valuation Roll

Year	Number	Within 3 months		Within 6 months	
		Threshold	Actual	Threshold	Actual
2022/23	1,732	65%	30%	85%	50%
2021/22	1,683	65%	39%	85%	72%
2020/21	1,430	70%	30%	85%	49%
2019/20	1,984	70%	59%	85%	77%
2018/19	2,668	70%	59%	85%	77%

Conclusion

The nature of the services that are provided by the organisation means that we must have the planning and resources in place to address and react to any new priorities and demands as efficiently and timely as possible whilst still delivering the statutory duties required of the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer. Despite the challenges of delivering the 2023 Revaluation, the organisation has performed very well in fulfilling its statutory requirements to maintain the Valuation Roll, the Valuation List and the Register of Electors. It is a testimony to the hard work and dedication of colleagues that the current level of performance has been achieved and the Management Team is grateful for their effort in achieving this.

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