

Lothian Valuation Joint Board

Edinburgh, 26 June 2009

Present: -

City of Edinburgh Council – Councillors McIvor (Convener), Blacklock (substituting for Councillor Burns), Edie, Perry, Rust and Wheeler.

East Lothian Council – Councillor Bell.

Midlothian Council – Councillor Beattie (Vice Convener).

1 Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Lothian Valuation Joint Board of 23 March 2009 as a correct record.

2 Unaudited Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2009

The unaudited report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2009 were presented.

The final accounts would be submitted to a future meeting of the Joint Board on completion of the External Audit.

Decision

- 1) To note the report by the Treasurer.
- 2) To note that the Accounts would be re-presented to the Board on completion of the External Audit.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted.)

3 Public Finance: Policy and Service Implications

Details were provided of the impact the national economic position was having on public finances, and the implications this raised for the Board policy, services and finance.

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Decision

- 1) To recognise the financial challenges faced by the public sector and, potentially Board services.
- 2) To note that budget planning for 2010/11 and beyond would be commenced over the summer months.
- 3) To note that an update on budget development would be reported to the Board in December 2009.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted.)

4 Internal Audit – Annual Report

An update was given on the work carried out by Internal Audit during the financial year 2008-2009. Action plans had been agreed with management on all recommendations made within the reports issued and appropriate follow-up arrangements had been put in place.

Decision

- 1) To note the report by the Chief Internal Auditor.
- 2) To note the statement of internal financial control as set out in Appendix 2 of the Chief Internal Auditor's report.
- 3) To note the report on Corporate Governance contained in Appendix 3 to the Chief Internal Auditor's report which recommended the need to adopt the revised Local Code of Governance as detailed in the Assessor's report.

(Reference – report by the Chief Internal Auditor, submitted.)

5 External Audit Annual Audit Plan

The 2008/09 External Annual Audit Plan laid out the main areas of work to be covered by the External Auditors relating to the financial year to 31 March 2009 and how it was intended to resource this work.

Decision

To note the External Annual Audit Plan.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted.)

6 New Local Government Pension Scheme Policy Proposals for Employer Discretions

Policy proposals on the employer discretions associated with the new Local Government Pension Scheme were presented, together with details of arrangements to deal with disagreements on pension decisions that may arise, and a change in the eligibility criteria for Scheme membership.

Decision

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To approve the summary of discretions and proposed policy as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.
- 3) To approve the revised draft Policy on Early Payment of Pension as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.
- 4) To note that a further report would be submitted in the second half of 2009 with proposals for retirement policy, including Flexible Retirement.
- 5) To note that a further report would be submitted on the discretion to make a one-off third tier ill-health payment.
- 6) To note the outline process to deal with formal disagreements on pension scheme decisions made as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report.

(Reference – report by the Assessor, submitted.)

7 Managing Occupational Road Risk

Approval was sought for the introduction of a policy on managing occupational road risk. The Policy had been derived in order to give guidance to staff and managers in an attempt to mitigate the risks associated with driving at work.

Decision

To approve the Policy on Managing Occupational Road Risk.

(Reference – report by the Assessor, submitted.)

8 Report on the Arrangements for Corporate Governance

Approval was sought for the adoption of a Local Code of Corporate Governance in line with the CIPFA/SOLACE document 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' which had been published in 2007/08.

Decision

- 1) To note the work outlined with regard to compliance with the principles and requirements of Corporate Governance.
- 2) To approve the adoption of the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

(Reference – report by the Assessor, submitted.)

9 Annual Public Report 2008/09

The Annual Public Report for 2008/09 was presented. The report gave an overview of the work undertaken by the Assessor Service in relation to electoral registration, council tax and the valuation roll.

Decision

To approve the publication of the Annual Public Report 2008/09.

(Reference – report by the Assessor, submitted.)

10 Annual Report on Equalities Schemes 2009

Details were provided of the Board's policies on gender, age, equal opportunities, disability and race equality.

Decision

To approve the Annual Report on Equalities Schemes 2009.

(Reference – report by the Assessor, submitted.)

11 Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 – Lothian Valuation Joint Board Publication Scheme – Update

Public Authorities were required to submit new Publication Schemes to the Scottish Information Commissioner prior to the expiry of their existing scheme.

A revised Lothian Valuation Joint Board Publication Scheme, setting out information which was made available to the public and other stakeholders under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, was presented.

Decision

To approve the revised Publication Scheme.

(Reference – report by the Chief Executive and Clerk 19 June 2009, submitted.)