



Minutes of Meeting of Assessor's Management Team **Wednesday 12 July 2017 at 9.30 a.m.**

Action
Req'd
by:

PRESENT

Assessor & ERO, Head of Valuation Services, Principal Admin. Officer, Divisional Assessor (AN&A), Divisional Assessor (AS&E) and Personal Assistant & Office Manager (Minutes).

1.0 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2017 were approved subject to minor alterations.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4.0 PERSONNEL

4.1 General

The successful applicant for the permanent Property Assistant post commenced on 4 July 2017.

The Personal Assistant will no longer work term time with effect from 1 January 2018.

4.2 Absence Statistics

It was noted that the absence statistics for the current year remain acceptable.

One member of administrative staff remains on long term sickness absence.

4.3 Training

The Head of Valuation Services reported that he will organise Stress Awareness Training to be held in August for interested members of staff.

Staff were reminded that the Prevent Strategy Training within COAST should be completed by 31 July 2017.

It was noted that the Healthy Eating Active Living training for staff took place on 5 July 2017 by the Healthy Working Lives Team within the training room.

Quarter 2 of the Joint Staffing Watch Return was made with an FTE of 41.94.

It was noted that the HOVS and the PAO held an Administrative meeting on 21 June 2017 and a Technical meeting with staff on 6 July 2017 to ascertain their views and comments on any issues they wished to discuss.

PDRs will be arranged for Technical Staff at the end of the year.

The Assessor & ERO attended an initial meeting with SAC Head of Employee and Customer Services on 11 July 2017 regarding her PDR.

Staff who attended recent IRRV Seminars will prepare joint presentations on the seminars.

The Core Training document was approved. The Personal Assistant will retain responsibility for updating the training attendance document and attend any relevant meetings.

5.0 REPORTS

5.1 Non Domestic

Targets have been set for Shooting Rights and it is hoped that 650 entries will be complete by September. It was confirmed that the TSU will issue notices.

Discussion took place on outstanding survey cards and the necessity to have those requiring to be carried forward to have more realistic carry forward dates entered.

A Resources Meeting will be arranged with the Assessor and the Divisional Assessors to discuss outstanding work and workloads prior to end of next week.

The DA (AN&A) reported that one of the large industrials has now been settled and withdrawn from the list of Lands Tribunal Cases. It was agreed that an email would be sent to the agent prior to amending values.

No further progress has been made on the remaining appeals at lands tribunal.

If required a joint referral will be made regarding Wind Turbines prior to the end of September 2017. The DA (AN&A) will progress this with Lanarkshire.

The Principal Valuer (AS&E) is progressing with the LTS Telecoms cases and will provide an update.

A Valuer (AS&E) has been allocated Hunterston to progress.

Thanks were given to all involved with the Non Domestic court.

It was agreed that the bulk printing of the 2017 valuations would be carried out in approximately 6-8 weeks' time and will be supported by the TSU. Once this has been done the filing system will be put into street code order within Unitary Authority. The DA's will consider best way forward with regard to Arran filing.

5.2 Council Tax

The VAC hearing took place on 22 June 2017. Thanks were given to all staff involved.

Discussion took place on KPI statistics and it was noted that 4 fell into the 3-6 month category.

It was noted that out of the 104 sold houses, 6 should lead to band increase value changes. 17 require to be checked with Building Standards.

It was reiterated that any over the 12 month target should be referred to the Assessor & ERO.

As a change to the current system, it was agreed that sales input would be processed first. The Process Map requires to be updated by the report authors when time permits.

Discussion took place on the 388 outstanding Council Tax proposals/appeals which have been reduced to 329. The DA (AS&E) reported on the 145 Invalids (92 received since March 2017) and the 175 Valids (88 received since March 2017).

The PI8 allocation to the Property Assistants has been dealt with and a new allocation of 10 each have been given with a clearance date of end of July.

Thanks were given to the Council Tax Team.

The TSU workload will be discussed at the Resource Meeting to be held next week.

6.0 Scottish Assessors' Association

The initial RICS APC Review document was circulated with comments from the Assessor & ERO. This will be discussed further at the Resources Meeting. The requirement to second staff was noted.

The Assessor & ERO will be attending expert panel meetings looking at the RICS in partnership with Skills Development Scotland which investigates how we encourage people into the profession and the various routes taken. The next meeting will be held in July but the Assessor will be unable to attend.

The SAA attended a final meeting regarding the Barclay Review and await the recommendations.

The DA (AS&E) reported that the SAA requested additional information regarding public houses.

The BCIS subscription is due for renewal and the SAA are giving consideration to the length of the renewal etc.

7.0 ICT

7.1 Electoral Management System

The PAO is working with the new EMS system and the electoral management company to resolve any remaining issues in connection with data migration. The UPRN's are giving some cause for concern and work is currently being undertaken to resolve this issue. The adding of UPRNs will continue after the system has gone live.

The DA's will investigate why currently Eastings and Northings are not supplied from East Ayrshire Council and North Ayrshire Council.

The new system will "go live" on 17 July 2017. Further refresher training will be given to staff and "floor walkers" will be available for assistance. It is hoped that the various issues highlighted to the supplier will be resolved in order that the canvass can be run on the new system. The ERO thanks all those involved during this particularly challenging time.

7.2 Core System Review

The PAO will make contact with Fife Council ICT and plan a future date to view their system operated by the Fife Assessor. The Lanarkshire and Central Assessors systems will also be viewed. Appropriate staff will also be attending.

7.3 AVJB Website

The Management Team were reminded of their website obligations contained within the AVJB Website Document.

It was reported that a complaint had been received regarding the visibility of Electoral Registration documentation around the time of the election. There will be a minor amendment to the site prior to the next election.

7.4 SharePoint

A few comments have been made by staff regarding SharePoint content location. The Assessor & ERO is currently looking at this issue. It was also felt that there may be training issues in connection with Alerts and the search facility within SharePoint.

It was further reported that SharePoint is an invaluable tool for Data Protection and Records Management.

8.0 ER Update

8.1 General

The Principal Admin. Officer reported that we are currently in the process of tidying up the current system for migration. A back-up will be taken on 14 July 2017.

An AEA survey was received on the UKPGE. AVJB have submitted a response which has been placed on SharePoint.

8.2 Elections

There are no planned elections within the next 12 months; however there is always a possibility of an unplanned election. Thanks were given to all staff involved with the elections which are always difficult when they are back to back.

9.0 GOVERNANCE

9.1 Suggestions Box

There were no new suggestions.

The previous suggestion received regarding installing LED lighting as part of a cost saving exercise is currently being investigated by the Head of Valuation Services. It was felt that there is merit in moving to LED lighting. Contact will be made with the SAC Property Officer. However the Assessor is looking at cost saving measures in general terms, including all staff and managers relocating to the rear building at which time some refurbishment works would be required and the lights may form part of that if it goes ahead.

HOVS

Suggestion No. 402 regarding a Self-Catering Unit Questionnaire was referred to the OCD Group. It was noted that the Portal Working Group is currently investigating this topic.

9.2 Mail Logging

There were no outstanding mail log items.

9.3 Board Meetings/Reports

The next Board Meeting will take place on the 5 September 2017.

For this meeting the Assessor & ERO will put forward reports on her PDR, Risk Register, Service Plan, Annual Report and an Electoral Registration Report. The Head of Valuation Services will present reports on Valuation & Performance, Staffing including Equalities, Business Continuity and Absence Management.

9.4 Budget

Budget pressures continue and it is likely to get more intense through time. The Board did hold more than adequate resources with regard to reserves, however, these have been seriously depleted. The last financial year and this financial year, in order to sustain our resources there was/will be a draw from reserves. The sum for this financial year is £225,000.

The IER funding for 2017/18 has been announced and is a reduction in previous funding. Although there was a UKPGE the representative from the Cabinet Office felt that Ministers would continue IER funding until financial year 2019/20. After this date it is unknown how we will fund IER, the expectation is business as usual. Each financial year as the funding is received there will be a reduction in the sum given taking into account costs saving measures.

The Assessor has not yet engaged with the Treasurer to the Board regarding the 2018/19 financial year and associated budget. It is expected that the constituent authorities will look at cost saving measures and the Assessor is currently working on where savings can be made without impacting on staff resources.

The Assessor also has to consider costs saving options for 2019/20 and one option may be that staff currently located within the front building move to the back building and the front building is sub-let. Savings will be made on various resources eg rates, gas, electricity etc associated with such a move.

9.5 Audit – Internal/External

The Assessor is awaiting contact from Deloitte regarding this year's audit.

The Audit Action Plan has been updated.

9.6 Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan is due for review in 2018 and the Assessor & ERO will undertake this task and present it to the Board at the appropriate time.

9.7 Service Plan

The above document has been placed on SharePoint within "Documents under Review". Comments require to be made prior to 5 August 2017. The Assessor will prepare a Board Report on the Service Plan for the 5 September 2017 Board Meeting.

9.8 Risk Register

The Risk Register has been updated and is available on SharePoint. Comments should be made on the Register prior to 5 August 2017. The Register will then be presented to the 5 September 2017 Board Meeting.

9.9 Record Management and Retention

Work has commenced on the Data Protection Regulations which come into force mid-2018. The SharePoint Content Document has been updated to reflect the Regulations and 3 additional columns have been inserted (Source/Sharer/Data Processing – Legal Basis) and appropriate information added. Similarly the Information Asset Register derived from the Records Management Plan has had the same three columns added with appropriate information inserted.

This will form part of the review of our shared drive. There will be a number of directories, five in total i.e. Corporate, Information Technology, Statutory Functions, Electoral & Information and Communication. The Corporate drive is now complete.

9.10 Business Continuity

The Business Continuity Plan was updated on 25 June 2017 and handed out to appropriate members of staff who will securely store the plan at home.

9.11 Complaints and Letters of Appreciation

The HOVS reported that three direct complaints have been received since last reported, two electoral and one valuation. One indirect complaint was also received regarding Council Tax.

Four letters of appreciation have been received, two for the Assessor, one for the PAO and one for the Admin Supervisor (ER).

9.12 Freedom of Information and Data Protection

One FOI request has been received since last reported regarding obtaining local Practice Notes.

9.13 Equalities

The HOVS attended an Ayrshire Equalities Partnership meeting on 15 June 2017 where there was a presentation given on Black History Month. The presentation has been placed on SharePoint.

Equality Duty will be reported to the Board meeting on 5 September 2017.

Work on the Equalities Outcomes continues.

The HOVS attended a SAC Equalities Champions meeting on 23 June 2017.

9.14 Health and Safety

The revised Health and Safety Policy and the associated documents which have now been approved will be placed on SharePoint.

The Health and Safety meeting due to be held on 9 June 2017 was cancelled due to the cut off. The next meeting will take place on 18 September 2017.

9.15 Elected Member Enquiries

The Head of Valuation Services reported that 6 MP, 1 MSP and 3 Councillor enquiries had been received since the last meeting.

9.16 Policies and Procedures – new/review/updates

Comments have been made on the AVJB IT Strategy. The PAO will review the changes. The Strategy will be presented to the January Board Meeting but will be uploaded to SharePoint in draft format meantime.

Minor amendments will be made to the Authorised Signatures document which will then be circulated to relevant staff for signing.

The Ill Health Retirement Guidance, Prevent Strategy, Recruitment Policy and Handbook, Standing Orders and Travel and Subsistence Policy were approved.

The Managing Workforce Change framework was approved subject to minor alterations.

The Exit Interview Policy has now been removed and has been replaced with a new questionnaire to be completed by staff. The Questionnaire will be placed on SharePoint.

The HOVS is currently reviewing the Lone Working Policy.

9.17 Customer Questionnaire

The Customer Questionnaire Group has not met since last reported. It was agreed that questionnaires will not be issued in paper format unless a paper copy has been specifically requested.

9.18 Property Matters

The back building kitchen and first floor boilers will be replaced on 15 July 2017.

The PA&OM has contacted three companies with regard to obtaining quotes for internal and external cleaning of the office windows.

The PA&OM will be changing the confidential waste supplier prior to the contract ending in March 2018.

The Assessor & ERO is considering the removal of all office bins with a view to having two central points within the front and back buildings. This exercise would be to help reduce the 2018/19 budget cleaning costs.

South Ayrshire Council Property Maintenance has referred the double glazing window issue to an external company for advice.

An external company will visit the office to inspect the loose vinyl on the front building stairs.

11.0 A.O.C.B.

11.1 Resource Meeting

It was agreed that the Assessor and the DA's would meet next week with regard to various points.

12.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on 22 August 2017.