

North Ayrshire Council
Revenues Services

And

Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

**Service
Level
Agreement**

Financial year 2013/14

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Introduction

This Service Level Agreement is between North Ayrshire Council Revenues Service and the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board and is intended to enhance the close working relationship that already exists and demonstrate a joint commitment to improve the services provided, in the interests of Best Value.

The Agreement covers the statutory notification of changes required for the operation of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates and the provision of other related information. It details the information and the frequency with which it will be provided.

The timescales set out in the Agreement for both parties to provide information are intended as guides to inform discussion on regular reviews of the services.

Provision is made for the services provided under the Agreement to be monitored and discussed at an appropriate level to identify potential improvements in performance or recommend changes to the terms of the Agreement for approval by the signatories.

In the Agreement, NAC means North Ayrshire Council, Revenues Service, AVJB means Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board and SLA means Service Level Agreement.

Signatories

This document is the Service Level Agreement between North Ayrshire Council, Revenues Service & Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

Signatories to this agreement

Signed on behalf of North Ayrshire Council, Revenues Service

Chief Revenues & Benefits Officer, North Ayrshire Council

Date _____

Signed on behalf of Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Assessor, Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Date _____

Service and performance standards

The following table lists the services and information to be provided and the standards to form the basis of review.

Council Tax

Assessor & Council Tax requirements	Action required by	Agreed standard
<p>Each April or as soon as possible thereafter the AVJB will in accordance with section 84 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provide NAC with a detailed valuation list of all live Council Tax valuation bands covering their local authority area.</p>	<p>AVJB</p>	<p>The valuation list will be split into each ward and consist of the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ An AVJB cross reference ❖ A postal number & property identifier ❖ A valuation band and effective date ❖ An appeal marker for Valuation Appeal decisions & Court of Session decisions. ❖ A special indicator to denote a garage, Carport or car parking stance & property used for storage of articles of domestic use.

Assessor & Council Tax requirements	Action required by	Agreed standard
<p>The AVJB will send a file of amendments made to the Council Tax Valuation List to NAC.</p>	<p>AVJB</p>	<p>Four access database files will be passed weekly, as follows :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Subject file 2. Valuation Band file 3. Housename 4. Street Index <p>The files will contain the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ward number ❖ Finance property reference ❖ New property start date ❖ New property street code and house number ❖ Flat position & alpha code ❖ Housename ❖ Valuation band & start date ❖ Valuation Band termination date ❖ Full Street index ❖ Post code where available

Assessor & Council Tax requirements	Action required by	Agreed standard
At the end of the financial year the total number of live Council Tax Bands by ward will be passed to NAC for reconciliation purposes.	NAC & AVJB	Full reconciliation can only be achieved at the year-end due to the ongoing system changes. The number of live Council Tax Banded dwellings must be completely reconciled before annual billing is undertaken by NAC.
Notify the AVJB of any enquiry received regarding the Valuation Band of a dwelling	NAC	NAC will send a hard copy of any correspondence relating to Valuation Band issues within 10 days of receipt.
Notify NAC of any new occupier of a new dwelling recently inspected.	AVJB	AVJB will send details of the occupier within 5 days of the property being added to the Council Tax list. This is notified by memo e-mail.
Amendments to the Valuation List which cannot be notified via the weekly interface to be notified to NAC in writing.	AVJB	An e-mail or letter detailing the change to the Valuation List will be sent to NAC as soon as possible after the case is concluded.

Business Rates

Non-Domestic Rates requirements	Action required by	Agreed standard
<p>Each April or as soon as possible thereafter the AVJB will in accordance with section 1(2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975 provide, NAC with a detailed valuation list of all Non-Domestic properties covering their local authority area.</p>	<p>AVJB</p>	<p>The valuation list will be split into each ward and consist of the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ An AVJB street and valuation reference ❖ A property description and situation address ❖ The name of the proprietor ❖ The postal number / flat position ❖ The tenant or occupier of the property ❖ The Net Annual Value split between residential and non residential where appropriate and the Rateable Value of each property

Non-Domestic Rates requirements	Action required by	Agreed standard
<p>Each week the AVJB will notify NAC of any changes to the rateable value, net annual value, property description valuation reference, new properties & property deletions</p>	<p>AVJB</p>	<p>A weekly interface file will be sent to NAC containing the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ New subjects ❖ Rateable Value increases ❖ Rateable Value decreases ❖ Deletions ❖ New / Old Rateable Value and Net Annual Value & net change ❖ Start and end dates of change ❖ Finance reference ❖ Old Valuation reference ❖ New Valuation reference ❖ Ward number ❖ Property description ❖ Property address ❖ Proprietor name(s) ❖ Ratepayer name ❖ Split, Merged or Reorganised indicator ❖ An Access database is sent to NDR Team Leader showing

		cumulative changes each week.
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Non-Domestic Rates requirements	Action required by	Agreed standard
Each week the AVJB will notify NAC of the number of subjects and Rateable Value for each category of property.	AVJB	An Excel file will be sent containing the information at the same time as the above weekly interface.
Amendments to the Valuation Roll that cannot be notified via the weekly interface to be notified to NAC in writing.	AVJB	An e-mail or letter detailing the change to the Valuation Roll will be sent to NAC as soon as possible after the amendment has been made.
Reconciliation between both systems to be undertaken to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the Non-Domestic Rates data.	NAC & AVJB	Each week the total Rateable Value and number of subjects for each ward and the overall total for North Ayrshire will be reconciled. Once the last (year-end) Interface file is received the Rateable Value and number of subjects will be reconciled before annual billing is undertaken by NAC.

Non-Domestic Rates requirements	Action required by	Agreed standard
Change of Ratepayer details to be notified to the AVJB	NAC	A hard copy of all change of occupier correspondence will be sent to the AVJB within 10 days of receipt. Where possible the correspondence should be scanned and e-mailed. Until this is available then staff will e-mail the details of the correspondence and follow up with the hard copy being posted.
Notify the AVJB of any enquiry received regarding the valuation of a subject	NAC	NAC will send a hard copy of any correspondence relative to valuation issues within 10 days of receipt.
The AVJB will provide information for the CIPFA return when requested by the NAC	AVJB	Information required to complete the CIPFA return is provided by the AVJB as soon as possible after request.

The AVJB will provide an estimate of the Ratable Value loss when requested by NAC.	AVJB	As soon as possible after the request the AVJB will provide an estimate of the Ratable value loss.
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Benefit Fraud Investigations

Benefit Fraud Investigation	Action required by	Agreed standard
To assist in Benefit Fraud Investigations and confirm from the Register of Electors the signatory of an "A Form." In accordance with Section 29(1) of the Data Protection Act 1998	AVJB	Written confirmation of the signatory to be provided to the NAC Benefit Fraud Investigator within 5 days of the request.

Reviews and monitoring arrangements

Reviews

The Service Level Agreement will be reviewed three months after its initial signing and thereafter on an annual basis.

Monitoring Arrangements

To promote improvements, monitoring arrangements will be put in place to review the standards achieved against those set out in the Agreement.

The monitoring arrangements will include:

- ❖ Annual meetings of nominated officers to discuss the performance under the SLA.
- ❖ Reviews of sample data files and copy correspondence transferred between both parties.
- ❖ Agreed improvement plans where levels of performance fall below acceptable standards. Senior Management will be informed of progress against the plan.
- ❖ Signing an annual performance certificate by NAC & AVJB as a joint statement that the Service Level Agreement has been reviewed and that the monitoring arrangements have been complied with.

Role of the nominated officer

North Ayrshire Council and the Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board will each appoint a nominated officer to oversee the operation of the Service Level Agreement. The nominated officers will:

- ❖ Attend an annual liaison meeting that may involve other interested parties (for example Information Technology) to make effective contributions towards closer working.
- ❖ Respond to and resolve any queries that cannot be dealt with through normal channels.
- ❖ Provide up to date lists of telephone numbers, facsimile numbers email addresses and contact addresses.
- ❖ Gather information to monitor SLA performance.
- ❖ Keep Senior Management informed of SLA performance and any issues arising.

The nominated officers for 2013/14 financial year are:

Organisation	Nominated officer	Title	Contact number
North Ayrshire Council	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]	01294-[REDACTED] [REDACTED]@north-ayrshire.gov.uk
Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]	01292-[REDACTED] [REDACTED]@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Change control management and resolution of matters arising

Under normal circumstances the SLA will be reviewed annually but there may be occasions when in-year changes are appropriate.

The following process details the change control action to be taken:

- ❖ It is important that any matters arising regarding the service received or given are resolved at the lowest practicable level between NAC rating or Council Tax staff and AVJB technical or administrative staff. If issues cannot be resolved then they must be referred to the nominated officers.
- ❖ Proposed changes or unresolved issues arising from this code of practice should be raised with the respective nominated officers. Nominated officers will discuss the proposed change or the unresolved issue as soon as possible thereafter and keep a record of discussions and any decisions made. Any changes to the Agreement will be proposed to the Assessor and Chief Revenues & Benefits Officer for approval and formal amendment of the Agreement. Any unresolved issues will be notified at the earliest opportunity to the Assessor and Chief Revenues & Benefits Officer.
- ❖ The Agreement may only be amended with the approval of both the Assessor and Chief Revenues & Benefits Officer. Replacement pages will be inserted accordingly and the date of change recorded.

Appendix 1

Certificate of Performance 2013/14

The attached statement of performance details the standards reached during the 2013/14 financial year. This statement is accepted as an accurate record of the SLA during the course of the year and is approved by North Ayrshire Council & Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board.

Signed on behalf of North Ayrshire Council, Financial Services

Chief Revenues & Benefits Officer, North Ayrshire Council

Date _____

Signed on behalf of Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Assessor, Ayrshire Valuation Joint Board

Date _____

Appendix 2

Statement of performance 2013/14

Section of SLA / Code of practice	Standards achieved or not achieved	Comments
Council Tax Performance		
Business Rates Performance		
Dealing with any disagreements		
Monitoring of Service Level Agreement		