



Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board



Minute

Thursday, 5 November 2020, 10:00.

Microsoft Teams.

Present:

Orkney Islands Council:

Councillors Andrew Drever, Robin W Crichton, David Dawson, Barbara Foulkes and Harvey Johnston.

Shetland Islands Council:

Councillors Theo Smith, Alastair Cooper, Allison Duncan, John Fraser and George Smith.

Clerk to the Board:

- Karen A Greaves, Head of Executive Support, Orkney Islands Council.

In Attendance:

- Dennis Stevenson, Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer.

Orkney Islands Council:

- John W Mundell, Interim Chief Executive.
- Gareth Waterson, Head of Finance.
- Hazel Flett, Senior Committees Officer.

Shetland Islands Council:

- Maggie Sandison, Chief Executive.

Apologies:

Shetland Islands Council:

- Jamie Manson, Executive Manager – Finance.
- Marie Gordon, Team Leader – HR Policy and Employment Support.

Not Present:

Shetland Islands Council:

- Jan Riise, Executive Manager – Governance and Law.

Declarations of Interest:

- No declarations of interest were intimated.

Chair:

- Councillor Andrew Drever, Orkney Islands Council, Convener of the Board.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Councillor Andrew Drever, Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting and particularly the recently appointed Clerk, Karen Greaves, together with Committee support provided by Hazel Flett.

The Convener also welcomed two new members from Orkney Islands Council – Councillors Barbara Foulkes and Robin W Crichton.

With Orkney Islands Council now responsible for Board administration, reporting styles would revert to that of Orkney Islands Council.

2. Minute of Special Meeting

After consideration of the draft Minute of the Special Meeting of the Board held on 28 September 2020, copies of which had been circulated, the Board:

Resolved, on the motion of Councillor Theo Smith, seconded by Councillor Barbara Foulkes, to approve the Minute of the Special Meeting of the Board held on 28 September 2020, as a true record.

3. Appointment of Treasurer to the Board

After consideration of a report by the Chief Executive, Orkney Islands Council, copies of which had been circulated, the Interim Chief Executive, Orkney Islands Council apologised to the Chief Executive and senior colleagues at Shetland Islands Council that consultation had not taken place during drafting and finalising the report, although dialogue had remained ongoing in respect of the matter.

Subject to approval of the appointment of the Treasurer, changes would be required to processes and procedures, with 2020/21 being a transition period, for which a plan was being developed. The Interim Chief Executive advised that Colin Kemp would not attend meetings of the Board until formally appointed. Councillor Harvey Johnston reassured Shetland colleagues that Colin Kemp was a long serving, extremely competent member of Orkney Islands Council's Finance team.

In response to a query from Councillor Theo Smith on additional costs during the transition period, the Interim Chief Executive did not expect the cost to be significant and was not aware of any issues to date. The Head of Finance, Orkney Islands Council, confirmed that positive engagement had taken place with the Executive Manager – Finance, Shetland Islands Council, with a view to running all Valuation Joint Board matters through Orkney Islands Council's finance ledgers with effect from 1 April 2021. Pension arrangements would remain with Shetland Islands Council, following advice from the Actuaries.

Councillor Theo Smith took assurance on the proposed appointment of Treasurer and the Convener thanked Shetland Islands Council and their Chief Executive for supporting the move.

The Board noted:

3.1. That the Board must appoint a Treasurer in accordance with the provisions of the Valuation Joint Boards (Scotland) Order 1995.

3.2. The proposal that the provision of financial services to the Board migrate to being provided by Orkney Islands Council.

3.3. That a detailed transition plan would be developed to ensure all the financial elements in connection with the service were considered.

The Board thereafter **resolved**:

3.4. To appoint Colin Kemp, Corporate Finance Senior Manager, Orkney Islands Council, as Treasurer to the Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board.

4. Annual Audit Report 2019/20 – Action Plan

After consideration of a report by the Clerk to the Board, copies of which had been circulated, the Clerk thanked the Board for her appointment and was looking forward to working with the Board going forward, particularly the review of governance.

The Clerk advised that the report provided an update on progress since September and she would appreciate feedback on the format and timing of future updates. Progress was highlighted against Actions 1, 3 and 5, with Action 5 being the subject of a meeting of the Board scheduled for 26 November 2020. Action 6, which was noted as being led by the Assessor, was proposed to be subsumed within Action 1, and the lead officer amended to the Chief Executives of Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council.

Councillor Barbara Foulkes suggested that the format was very clear and easy to read and suggested that a traffic light system be incorporated, so that progress could be tracked.

Councillor Robin W Crichton referred to the lead officer for Actions 4 and 5, which was listed as the Section 95 Officer. He queried that the Board did not have a Section 95 Officer, but did have a Treasurer. The Clerk confirmed that this would be amended to Treasurer.

The Board noted:

4.1. That the Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board considered the Annual Audit Report on the 2019/20 Audit on 28 September 2020.

4.2. That the agreed Action Plan had been updated and was attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Clerk to the Board.

The Board **agreed**:

4.3. That a further update on progress with the Action Plan, to include a traffic light system, be presented to the Board at its meeting to be held in February 2021.

5. Conclusion of Meeting

At 10:20 the Convener declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: