

**HIGHLAND AND WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD**

**23 January 2014**

Agenda Item	7
Report No	VAL 4/14

**Risk Profile Review**

**Report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer**

**Summary**

This report updates the risk profile that forms part of the Board's governance arrangements.

**1. Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to update the risk profile that forms part of the governance arrangements.

**2. Risk Profile**

An updated version of the department's risk profile is attached. It is intended to present this to the Board annually or more frequently if there is a significant change to the risk profile.

The main changes that have been made to the report reflect the reduced risks as a consequence of the timeous disposal of the revaluation appeals and the clarification of individual electoral registration (IER) legislation. An increased risk of insufficient supply has been identified relating to Individual Electoral Registration.

**3. Recommendation**

The Board is invited to note the content of this report.

Designation: Assessor and ERO

Date: 13 January 2014

Author: William J Gillies, Assessor & ERO

**The Highland & Western Isles Valuation Joint Board  
Risk Profile – January 2014**

↑ Likelihood	<b>A</b>		2		
	<b>B</b>	15	10,13		
	<b>C</b>	3,5,6,11	1,7,8,9,14		
	<b>D</b>		16,18,19 20,21		
	<b>E</b>	17		4,12	
	<b>F</b>				
		<b>IV</b>	<b>III</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>I</b>

**Impact**      →

**Likelihood:**

- A Very high
- B High
- C Significant
- D Low
- E Very low
- F Almost impossible

**Impact:**

- I Catastrophic
- II Critical
- III Marginal
- IV Negligible

**RISK ANALYSIS – SUPPLY AND RESOURCES (NON-STAFFING)**

NO	VULNERABILITY	TRIGGER	CONSEQUENCES	REMEDY
1 CII	Essentially, fixed resources in conflict with variable demand for services at key times.	Rating appeals must be disposed of within statutory timetables and deadlines. Large number of postal voting applications. This tends to arise episodically at the time of elections.	Failure to meet statutory deadlines.	Monitoring workloads. Staff flexibility. Review provision of overtime budget where necessary. Liaison with Appeal Panel and Scottish Government via Assessors Association.
2 All	Inadequate supply.	The budget / staffing is set too low to allow an adequate service to be provided. Sudden increases in supply costs leads to difficulty. Current example is of uncontrollable postal charge increases. Cost of statutory obligations exceeding budgetary provision	Failure to provide adequate service on discretionary elements of functions. Failure to meet statutory timetables. Failure to implement statutory requirements Loss of revenue. Failure of electoral process. Public dissatisfaction and complaint. Loss of morale.	Obtain support of Board for sufficient supply recognising the necessity for a tension being present in the budgetary process in time of public expenditure retrenchment. Seek recognition of the exceptional demands in taxation and electoral work until after the 2015 General Election. Improve efficiency and effectiveness. Make best use of technology. Recognise that some costs require to be met.

NO	VULNERABILITY	TRIGGER	CONSEQUENCES	REMEDY
3 CIII	Inadequate systems and / or use of technology.	Slow systems. Staff frustration. Lagging behind other Assessors in development. Deadlines not being met. Technical capability falls short of operational requirements	Loss of morale and output. Inability to perform at level of similar organisations. Poor service to public. Loss of revenue. Failure of electoral process.	Periodic review of systems to ensure that they are up to date. The 2010 refresh of hardware has mitigated much of the hardware related issue, the existence of which confirmed the view that renewal can be left too long. Planned developments or extension of systems. Taking proper advice of IT Client group as to developments in field. Monitor developments in other Assessor's offices. Development of partnerships to reduce cost of procurements and increase speed of delivery. Monitor capability against requirements
4 EI	Inadequate business recovery arrangements.	Catastrophic technology failure or fire which destroys paper records.	Loss of ability to maintain statutory lists. Possible failure to produce polling place registers etc. Loss of revenue. Failure to meet deadlines. Large expenditure required to replace records. Functional paralysis.	Strict data backup routines, fire safes and offsite data tapes. Development of recovery routines at time of technology upgrades. Developments of substitute hardware arrangements. Long term transfer of all records into data format in concert with developments

NO	VULNERABILITY	TRIGGER	CONSEQUENCES	REMEDY
				<p>arising out of statutory necessity to ease funding requirements.  Development of more detailed plans to deal with business disruption.  Use of partnership to provide offsite options for recovery processes.</p>
5 CIII	<p>Slow flow and availability of financial information makes budget management more difficult.</p>	<p>Lack of awareness of true position of financial ledger until the end of the year.</p>	<p>Possible overspend or, through excessive prudence, concern as to overspend leads to underspend.</p>	<p>Timely information from IS Client and regular billing for internal recharges would assist.  Arrangements for carrying a balance.</p>
6 CIII	<p>Disparity between ratepayers' and their agents' aims in area of statutory deadlines and customer expectations.</p>	<p>Complaints as to slowness of operations from ratepayers.  Complaints as to speed of process from agents.</p>	<p>Appearance of providing poor service.  Ratepayers not satisfied.  Agents not satisfied.  Politicians not satisfied.</p>	<p>Liaison with stakeholders such as Scottish Ratepayers' Forum, SBRSa and Appeals Panel to make intentions clear and identify source of constraints. In current circumstances of annual waves of appeals there is no easy solution available.</p>

### **RISK ANALYSIS – SUPPLY AND RESOURCES (STAFFING)**

NO	VULNERABILITY	TRIGGER	CONSEQUENCES	REMEDY
7 CII	Inadequate Staff Training.	Low morale. Deteriorating performance. Failure to meet deadlines. Complaints as to quality of service. Disproportionate error rate. Failure to meet deadlines.	Low morale. Deteriorating performance. Failure to meet deadlines. Complaints as to quality of service. Disproportionate error rate. Failure to meet deadlines.	Sound communications and feedback as part of the daily round. Specific training initiatives aimed at raising level of capability both generally and in specific areas. Monitoring complaints and appeals to identify areas of weakness. Making full use of external materials such as Electoral Commission manuals.
8 CII	Inadequate duplication of staff capability.	Absence through death or long term illness of a key member of staff. Retirement of a key member of staff.	Immediate loss of functional capability in specific caseload and more general functions. Delay in “filling the gap”. Underperformance due to time taken to develop substitute capability. Increased stress on organisation.	Communication between senior staff as to work in progress. Spread of specialist cases to reduce vulnerability to absence. Development of backup capability by introducing junior staff to increased loading over time. Controlled duplication of functionality in lower levels of clerical and technical divisions.
9 CII	Succession of professional valuation staff.	More fundamental problem than specific absence or retirement. Affects all parts of the organisation	Potentially large impact on the organisation's ability to carry out its functions,	Professional training for some field staff to enable them to become Valuers.

		not merely particular areas.	particularly at peak periods in the cycle and in dealing with complexity and novelty.	Less flat operational structure would make future promotion to senior management easier. Proper succession planning.
10 BII	Difficulty in recruiting clerical staff of the quality required.	Increasing staff turnover. Reduced numbers of applicants for advertised posts. Reduced quality of applicants.	Lack of skills and expertise in staff through the lack of experience. Staff morale and expectations reduced. Level of service impaired.	Review of staffing structure. Investigate ability to reward and promote outstanding staff. Ensure that rewards compare properly with Highland Council gradings for equivalent posts. The effects of recession may ease difficulties in this area for a period.
11 CIII	Requirement to maintain four offices to provide for service needs gives rise to danger of loss of understanding of aims and objectives.	Staff requests for clarification of policy. Discovery of different practices in different offices. Complaints of lack of clear policies.	Loss of staff morale. Danger of poor decision making. Danger of diversification of valuation and other standards. Different levels of service to the public.	Regular briefing meetings both at area offices and at HQ. Training sessions locally and at IT training room in Dingwall. Periodic staff seminars in Inverness to ensure aims, objectives and forward plans are understood.
12 EI	Danger to staff on survey alone.	Adverse incident.	Alarm, injury, loss of confidence.	Mobile phones are routinely carried. Lone working policy to be implemented. Investigation of possibilities of new locational technologies to be undertaken.

## RISK ANALYSIS – LEGISLATION AND GOVERNANCE

13 BII	Legislation being passed late relative to operational deadlines.	New legislation.	Inability to meet timetable. Excessive pressure on staff and suppliers to deliver. Resort to overtime working and “over a barrel” contract payments. Disruption to other programmes and level of service. Failure to meet targets, loss of revenue etc.	Engagement with legislators and provision of advice as to realistic, if challenging, timetables. Working through Scottish Assessors Association and stakeholder groups to make the Legislature aware of the practicalities for implementation of new measures. Forewarning Board of possible need for additional supply to meet deadlines. Lobbying of Legislators for adequate additional funding to meet any expedited timetables.
14 CII	Uncertainty as to legislative intent. Difficult interactions of separate programmes.	Unanticipated legislation changing current regimes in a manner that requires data not held or radical changes to work practices against a problematic timetable. Conflicting demands on resources and problematic impacts of legislation in different lines of business.	An example is the current approach to the continuation of council tax and form of tax and programme, if an amended property tax is favoured. Inability to define adequately what will be required to implement scheme of uncertain character. Lack of clear mandate to carry out preparatory work	Essentially impossible to predict with sufficient certainty. Communication with legislators and other stakeholders vital. Willingness of Board to provide resources at short notice important to ensure early progress. Agreement with other Assessors as to timescales and level of resources



			and incur expenditure. Contingent pressure to meet difficult timetables with consequent impact on budget, staffing and service in other areas once intent becomes clear.	required important to ensure a consistent approach.
15 BIII	Size and scarcity of the area makes PIs more difficult to achieve.	Poor performance relative to other Assessors' Departments. Complaints from the public.	Possible link between electoral funding and PIs in future. Outstanding performance always more difficult to evaluate. Trade off between cost and performance.	Balance to be struck between costs and level of performance. Must be made clear that geography and demography play a key role.
16 DII	FOI request could outstrip resources available to deal with them.	Large numbers of requests from agents / journalists / academics or other professional data miners.	Direction of resources from core business. Failure to meet FOI deadlines. Reduction in level of service.	Monitoring of all such requests by senior management. Tendency towards routine publication of greater amounts of information. Agreed policy for handling such requests by SAA. Refusing requests where merited in terms of FOI Act. System to monitor compliance.

### RISK ANALYSIS - MISCELLANEOUS

17 EIII	Error leading to an elector losing his or her vote.	Complaint after last date for amending clerical errors has passed.	Full enquiry, invocation of complaints procedure, perhaps as far as Scottish Public Ombudsman. Possible involvement of elected representatives.	None at that stage other than full apology. Staff training vital in such cases. Possible change to legislation may make later amendments possible in future.
18 DII	Missed opportunities for partnerships to increase quality of service, develop joined up working or reduce cost.	Identification of potentially advantageous developments that have been missed.	Participation may be precluded. Adoption, if possible, will be delayed. Loss of advantage of initial involvement at design stage. Benefits lost or deferred.	Openness to partnership arrangements. Continuous communication with likeliest partners. Investigation of all plausible schemes. Early commitment where possible. Building on established joint arrangements.
19 DII	Inability to meet partnership deadlines.	Failure to meet deadlines. Definition of aims affected by capability of "slowest". Delay of development work.	Organisational stress. Deferral of benefits. Disruption to partnerships. Service poorer than hypothetically achievable.	Good communication and planning around projects. Setting of realistic programmes that encourage success rather than ensure failure. Provision of adequate resources both of finance and staffing consistent with meeting programme.
20 DII	Compliance with information management and security arrangements, including the Data Protection Act, Public Information	Complaints from the public. Press attention.	Possible legal action.	Staff sign confidentiality agreements and are reminded regularly of the need for care and compliance

	Act and valuation and electoral law.			with the law, particularly that pertaining to the register of electors. Policies to comply with terms of legislation.
21 DII	Compliance with the requirements of equalities legislation.	Complaints from the public.	Possible legal action.	Regular liaison with equalities experts at the lead authority to ensure up to date and appropriate policies and working practices.