

**AGENDA ITEM 10
REPORT NO. VAL/5/18**

HIGHLAND AND WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Date: 18 January 2018

Report Title: Secretariat to the Valuation Appeals Panel

Report By: Clerk to the Board

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report invites the Board to consider a request to review the remuneration of the Valuation Appeals Panel Secretariat.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Agree the proposed increase in both the annual retainers and hourly rate
- ii. Advise the Sheriff Principal of the Board's agreement to the revised rates
- iii. Agree that the Clerk will liaise with the Assessor and Secretary to the Valuation Appeal Panel to agree a revised approach to submission and payment of fees.

3. Background

- 3.1 Valuation appeal committees are the bodies which consider applications, in the first instance, from proprietors, tenants or occupiers who wish to appeal or complain against an entry in the valuation roll. The committees are drawn from members of the local valuation panel who are appointed by the Sheriff Principal. The Sheriff Principal also appoints a Chair and such numbers of Deputy Chair as he considers necessary.
- 3.2 The Valuation Appeal Panels and Committees (Scotland) Regulations 1996 also provide that the Sheriff Principal shall appoint a secretary of the panel and, if he considers it necessary, an assistant secretary. The Regulations provide that the remuneration and allowances to be paid to the secretary and any assistant secretary shall be such as may be agreed between the authority and the Sheriff.

4. Current Position

- 4.1 The role of Secretary to the Highland and Western Isles Valuation Appeal Panel is undertaken by Mr Donald MacKenzie of the Mackenzie Law Practice, Inverness. The Assistant Secretary to the Panel is Mr Tom Hillis of Messrs Munro and Noble.
- 4.2 The Secretary supports the work and meetings of the Highland and Western Isles Valuation Appeals Panel. This also extends to participation in the Scotland wide Valuation Appeals Panel body. On a practical level the Secretary has responsibility for all work and correspondence involved in the preparation for, organisation of, hearing and disposal of appeals.
- 4.3 The Secretary has written to the Assessor to suggest that with a new valuation appeals cycle about to get underway this may be an opportune time to review the level of remuneration for the Panel Secretariat. It is almost nine years since the last review was undertaken.
- 4.4 The proposal from the Secretary is as follows:-
- Annual Retainer Secretary – increase from £1500 to £1800
Annual Retainer Assistant Secretary – increase from £750 to £900
Hourly rate – increase from £150 to £180 per hour
- Given the passage of time since the previous review and the fact that the proposed rate is believed to be below that commonly charged for private client work in Inverness it is recommended that the Board agree the proposed increases and seek the approval of the Sheriff Principal.
- 4.5 Further, the current arrangement that has developed involves the submission of Fee Notes from the Secretary to the Assessor for approval and payment. It is proposed in order to maintain the independence of the Appeals Panel and the Assessor that in future all Fee Notes be submitted in the first instance to the Clerk to the Board. The Clerk to the Board will then authorise and instruct payment.

Designation: Clerk to the Board

Author: Stewart Fraser - 10 January, 2018