

HIGHLAND AND WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD

23 September 2022

Agenda Item	7
Report No	VAL/12/22

Revenue Monitoring Report Period to 31 August 2022

Report by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer

Summary

This report sets out the revenue monitoring position of the Board for the period to 31 August and the projected year end position.

CURRENT POSITION

The attached monitoring statement shows the position for the period to 31 August 2022. Net expenditure to date is £1.232m and represents 34% of the annual budget of £3.646m.

YEAR-END PROJECTION

At this point in the year, the overall outturn is expected to be an underspend of £0.180m, however, as in previous years, this projection is sensitive to the eventual outturn of the annual electoral canvass. Plans are being made for a hybrid of home and office working and some additional expenditure may be required to accommodate the new working arrangements. Work on digitisation of council tax files has commenced with two temporary staff recruited to assist with this project.

Staff costs

Salaries including NI, superannuation and overtime

There is an estimated underspend on salary costs however, as previously reported, it has been difficult to recruit to some vacant clerical and valuer positions. Two new clerical members of staff have been appointed to the Wick Office, with a senior valuer vacancy being filled internally. Interviews for a further two clerical posts based in Inverness will be undertaken in the coming weeks.

Some overtime is being worked by staff across the department to deliver the annual canvass of electors and preparation work associated with the 2023 Revaluation of non-domestic properties.

Travel and subsistence

The actuals to date show an underspend on travel and subsistence at this point in the financial year however, as preparation work for the 2023 Revaluation gathers pace, survey

visits will increase by valuation staff. It is anticipated that doorstep visits for the annual canvass will be carried out from early October.

Other staff costs

Other staff costs are projected to be overspent by the end of the financial year. This is largely due to training costs for staff undertaking professional qualifications.

Property costs

Rent, rates and water

Period to date actuals would suggest an overspend on rent, rates and water to date however, rates bills for the financial year have been paid in advance.

Administrative Costs

Printing, stationery and photocopying

As the majority of staff are currently working from home, there has been a reduction in spend on stationery and printing costs however, as more staff return to the office environment, there may be an increase under this budget heading towards the end of the financial year.

Postages

Expenditure on postages for the period to date would indicate a small overspend however, postage costs for canvass communications has fallen in the first part of the financial year.

As part of the 2023 revaluation preparation work, the Assessor will be issuing a notification of provisional rateable values to all ratepayers in November 2022. This may result in an overspend on postage costs at the end of the financial year.

Legal Expenses

Whilst there is a significant underspend at this point in the financial year, there may be some scope for LTS Referral charges to be paid before the end of March 2023.

Other administration costs

This budget head shows an underspend in the period to date actuals. This is in part due to audit fees which have still to be paid and printing costs for annual canvass reminder forms which are scheduled to be posted on 15 September 2022.

Transport Costs

Period to date actuals show a slight overspend in transport costs. With the closure of the Dingwall office, removal expense fees were incurred. As previously mentioned, valuation staff will be carrying out increased survey work and due to mileage travelled, hire cars may be used as set out in the Board's travel and subsistence policy. This may result in a small overspend at the end of the financial year.

Supplies and Services

Computer charges

Payments for computer charges are projected as being within budget however, some additional equipment is being purchased to allow for a hybrid working approach. Scanners used for valuation and electoral purposes are becoming outdated and permissions for certain business as usual tasks has to be carried out by ICT Services due a software design fault. A replacement scanner is currently being tested, with a view to replacing 6 scanners across the organisation. Additional software costs may also be incurred. It is estimated that scanners will cost in the region of £0.013m.

Valuation Appeal Committee Expenses

There is uncertainty relating to the costs associated with Valuation Appeal hearings. It is anticipated that there will be no fees incurred for the final quarter of the financial year due to the introduction of the new Local Taxation Chamber of the First Tier in January 2023. At this point in the year, there is a projected underspend of £0.010m but as previously reported, the Assessor has no control over Valuation Appeal Committee costs.

Recommendation

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

Designation: Assessor and ERO

Date: 9 September 2022

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Office & Support Manager

HIGHLAND & WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD

**REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23
MONITORING STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 August 2022**

Heading	Period to date		Annual		Year End Estimated variance £000
	Budget £000	Actual £000	Budget £000	Actual outturn £000	
Staff costs					
Salaries including NI, superann	989	782	2,374	2,160	(214)
Overtime	4	16	10	37	27
Salaries including NI, superann and overtime	993	798	2,384	2,197	(187)
Travel and subsistence	23	13	54	54	-
Other staff costs	19	26	45	50	5
	1,035	837	2,483	2,301	(182)
Property costs					
Heating, lighting and cleaning	15	8	37	37	-
Rent, rates and water	86	135	207	207	-
Other property costs	5	(2)	12	12	-
	106	141	256	256	-
Administrative costs					
Printing, stationery and photocopying	8	4	18	18	-
Postages	52	66	125	135	10
Telephone and fax costs	5	1	11	11	-
Advertising	1	-	2	2	-
Legal expenses	12	(2)	30	30	-
Digitisation costs	-	-	50	50	-
Other administration costs	46	22	62	62	-
	124	91	298	308	10
Apportioned Costs					
Central service support	25	-	60	60	-
Transport costs	1	3	3	5	2
Supplies and services					
Computer charges	168	127	403	403	-
	168	127	403	403	-
Board expenses	3	-	8	8	-
Valuation Appeal Committee expenses	58	34	140	130	(10)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,520	1,233	3,651	3,471	(180)
Income	(2)	(1)	(5)	(5)	-
NET EXPENDITURE	1,518	1,232	3,646	3,466	(180)