MINUTE of SPECIAL MEETING of CENTRAL SCOTLAND VALUATION JOINT BOARD held within the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on FRIDAY 28 JANUARY 2011 at 9.00 a.m.

PRESENT:	Councillors Biggam, Blackwood, C MacDonald, McLaren, McNeill, Nimmo, Ritchie and Simpson.
CONVENER:	Councillor Simpson.
APOLOGIES:	Councillors Goss and Paterson.
ATTENDING:	Assessor; Clerk; Assistant to Treasurer (L Shaw); Assistant Assessor (P Wildman); Assistant to Clerk (S Barton).
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:	None.

VJB25. MINUTE

There was submitted (circulated) and **APPROVED** Minute of Meeting of Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board held on 26 November 2010.

VJB26. REVENUE BUDGET 2011/2012 to 2013/14

There was submitted joint Report (circulated) dated 19 January 2011 by the Treasurer and Assessor (a) presenting the Draft Revenue Budget for Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board for the financial year 2011/2012; (b) providing for consideration the budget estimates for the years 2012/2013 and 2013/2014, and (c) making recommendations on the allocation of the net costs to Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils.

Discussion took place on the following:-

- recent staff restructuring
- plans for future budget savings

AGREED:-

(1) to formally approve the Valuation Joint Board's Revenue Budget for 2011/2012 of £2,664,600 as detailed in Appendix A to the Report, and

(2) to requisition the constituent authorities for their share of the net expenditure as follows:-

Falkirk Council	£1,313,020
Stirling Council	£ 939,720
Clackmannanshire Council	£ 411,860

CENTRAL SCOTLAND VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Subject: **Risk Assessment Report**
Meeting: **Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board**
Date: **4th March, 2011**
Author: **Brian Byrne, Assessor/Electoral Registration Officer**

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   In November 2010 the Joint Board approved the Risk Management Strategy. Its main purpose was to identify potential risks before they occur, to then establish the potential consequences and finally determine the nature of the Joint Board's response to those risks. There are very good management and operational reasons for having such a strategy. It allows the Management Team time to carefully consider and evaluate risks before they occur, make informed decisions on what resources and actions are required and the priority to be given to those actions. This ensures good strategic planning of resources resulting in financial and operational efficiency.

1.2   The internal audit report to the Board of June 2010 recommended that "a briefing should be given to members on the Risk Strategy". The agreed action was that the Risk Strategy will be presented annually to the Valuation Joint Board with regular updates on risks included in all meetings.

2.   RECENT AMENDMENTS TO IDENTIFIED RISKS

2.1   The latest Risk Analysis for all risks with initial "Risk Score" of 4 or more are shown in appendix 1 along, with any recent changes to "Existing Controls" or "Required Actions". The recent changes are shown underlined in bold text.

2.2   The specific "Elections 2011 Contingency Planner and Risk Register" is constantly updated and the latest version February 2011 is shown in appendix 2.

3.   RECOMMENDATION

3.1   It is recommended that the Valuation Joint Board note the updates to identified risks.

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Brian Byrne
21st February, 2011

Appendices

1.   Extract from Risk Analysis
2.   Updated Contingency planner for Elections 2011

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

nil

Risk No	Category	Risk Description	Existing Controls	L	S	Risk Score	Required Actions	Residual Risk	
1	Technological	Loss/corruption of data	Strict back up regime. Complemented by mirror site at Onyx (Campbell-Lee), Springburn. The ER (Halarose) system is mirrored at Viewforth.	3	3	9	ER system is now mirrored at Viewforth, consider other sites for other mirrors (e.g. other Councils).	3	Depute Assessor/IT Team
2	Technological **(confidential)**	Reliance on third parties for support	Continuing dialogue with main suppliers. Project team to help with communications between suppliers and users. Ensure that we are able to have workarounds if necessary by not having total reliance on any one supplier or one system.	3	3	9	Reduce the risks by having escrow agreement. Investigate other available suppliers for new parts of the system to reduce dependence on any one supplier.	6	
3	Technological	Failure of LAN servers	Strict back up regime. Use of RAID.	3	2	6	Investigate possibility of consolidation of servers to allow full mirroring. Establish realistic lifetimes (with available support) for all servers.	2	
4	Technological	Failure of communications between office and mirror	Tape back ups remain in place to ensure that there is no loss in data.	3	2	6	Investigate resilience with Campbell-Lee. Upgraded line to be in place by end of 2008/09 (Done).	3	IT team
5	Technological **(confidential)**	Loss/failure of assessors (Corona) system	Strict back up regime. Complemented by mirror site at Campbell-Lee, Springburn. Continuing dialogue with main supplier. Project team to help with communications between supplier and users. Corona Users' group involving Central Scotland, Highland, and Borders. Ensure that we are never solely reliant on the Corona system for all aspects, by making use of in-house add-ons, making it easier to put temporary work around in place if necessary.	2	3	6	Investigate other available suppliers for new parts of the system to reduce dependence (as already done with the ER system). **Review Back-up regimes in 2011**	3	Depute Assessor
6	Technological	Failure to accept CAG data	Involvement with the CAG project through direct contacts and FVGIS. Membership of a CAG-Assessors project	3	2	6	Complete the CAG/Assessors project. Take part in any pilots to establish best practice in CAG/Assessors links. Liase with Halarose & user groups on how to import data safely into the Eros stystem	3	Assistant Assessor and Depute ERO
7	Customer/ Citizen	Failure to provide ROs with Election Registers, absent voters etc	Management team monthly report. Guidance from Depute ERO and Halarose instructions briefings for ERO staff	2	3	6	Review and update service plan/Manual. Use Halarose to supply additional support. Liase with RRO for Euro elections.	3	Depute ERO

#	Category	Risk	Description				Action/Mitigation		Responsible
8	Customer/ citizen/ legislation	Election during canvass	The "churn" caused by canvass activities is increased by political activity - e.g. poll cards will be based on out of date register but political activists wil be indentifying the same changes that the canvass forms are designed to identify potentially confusing the elector	2	3	6	The PPE Act 2009 addresses SOME of the issues - we can now treat a canvass return as a rolling register application but canvass deletions from the register cannot be made without other sources of evidence. The EROS system is set up to not action deletions from the canvass until publication; so the register will be "inflated". This issue has been raised with the MoJ and Electoral Commission. It is possible to delay publication date beyond 1st December if an election is called during canvass. There is no assistance from the PPE act for a referendum during canvass. If election is called late in the canvass there will be more manual work in reinstating deletions - this has been raised with Halarose as an issue. Halarose are notified of further development request through User Forum & User Group meetings. Encourage membership of forum by senior ERO staff (and RO staff)	4	ERO
9	External	Lack of experience or knowledge in Electoral Services	High possibility of serious error affecting all users- mitigated by mirroring and backups but it requires all users to report errors quickly	3	2	6	Work with Halarose to improve insulation of councils from each other and from ERO	4	ERO/Depute ERO
10	External	IT Supplier not having a Business Continuity Plan in place resulting in loss of IT System		2	3	6	Check at tender stage that all critical suppliers have a BCP in place. If an existing Contractor does not have one in place, then request that they do so. If that is not possible then look to switch supplier		Assessor & Office Manager
11	Economic	Effects of new legislation (on budget, and workload)	Keep informed of potential changes in legislation through membership of SAA and AEA. Regular monthly (at least) team briefing involving all staff (via line managers). Regular monthly meeting with Accountant	2	2	4	Review and update the Service Plan (including risk register). Review training needs regularly. **Plans reviewed in 2010, risks reviewed regularly**	2	Managemment Team
12	Political	Introduction of Individual Registration increasing costs of canvass	Monitor and react to proposals for individual registration - keep involved in Electoral Commission and MoJ/Cabinet Office groups planning the introduction . **The proposed 5 year voluntary phase starting in 2010 has been abandoned - will now be introduced in 2014**	2	2	4	Continue involvement through SAA, AEA and directly to ensure that plans are practicable - keep and that any additional costs are meet as far as possible directly by Cabinet Office. Now awaiting new government proposals (August 2010) **Cabinet Office now planning on introduction in 2014 but wish to carry out data pilots before then. BB is now a member of the Project Reference Group so can keep involvement with this project even though we are not selected as a pilot area - regular meetings with Cabinet Office throughout 2011**	4	ERO
13	Technological	Misuse of data/internet	Use of computers,email, and internet policy approved by Board and explained to staff in 2005 and has been part of induction for new staff since then. All staff sign acceptance of policy before getting access to systems	2	2	4	Although encryption techniques are used and have been succesful there is a risk of data loss in dealing with legally entitled recipients who are not famililiar with such security. Investigate increased use of other technologies such as SFTP – to be discussed with Depute ERO and IS in 2010. **SAA now investigating use of secure FTP - 2011**	4	Office manager (for new staff) Depute ERO and Assistant Assessor for external

14	Technological	Loss of programming capability	In House IT Team. Ensure training is kept up to date in programming capability - IT team training in new systems carried out in 2006/07	2	2	4	Review IT workload - design job specification for new staff member. Make more use of outside suppliers of programming capability. (done from 2008/09)	4 — Depute Assessor/IT Team
15	Legislative (confidential)	Responsibility for Ports - Cost of potential cases	Developing communications with the 3 main ports and others. Ensure communications with local assessors are maintained. Expertise on Receipts and expenditure methods available within the office. Docks and Harbours guidance note (regarding liaison) agreed with SAA	2	2	4	Consider Producing a Docks and Harbours Practice Note for SAA approval. Continue to liaise with VOA in national discussions. Although referred to Lands Tribunal no 2005 to 2009 cases involved litigation. **Although agreed with assessors, the draft note needs revison following the lands tribunal case for Cromarty in 2010. In particular the treatment of conservancy will be reconsidered during the appeal process**	2 — Assessor & Asst Assessor
16	Legislative	Change to method of financing Local government	Monthly meeting with accountant (office manager and/or Assessor). Awareness of and input to government policy through SAA	2	2	4		4 — SAA
17	Professional	Inadequate/lack of training	Annual review of individual training needs with rolling 2-year plan. Training issues raised at monthly management team meetings	2	2	4	Encourage use of Conference room facilities for in-house training CPD. Use council supplied training to supplement the 2 year plan. **Management training being sorced for 2011**	2 — Depute
18	Political	Councils dissatisfied with the ERO function	Regular contact with 3 ROs to ensure their needs as "customers" are taken into account. Co-operation on the Eros Election management /registration system	2	2	4	Develop the Service Level Agreement. Liase with Councils and Halarose	3 — ERO, Depute ERO
19	Political	Review by Government and Electoral commission of electoral and registration systems	Respond to consultation documents through SAA and AEA, and direct contact with Electoral Commission, Scotland Office (& Cabinet Office), and Scottish Government	2	2	4	Involve Halarose and user groups to develop required changes. Involvement through SAA ER Committee (and directly) with the Interim Electoral Management Board for Scotland. Encourage membership of Halarose forum among RO staff	4 — ERO
20	Professional	Conflict of interest		2	2	4	All staff should be requred to declare potential conflict of interest Audit action 2010 to have annual declaration of interest - **done 2010**	2
21	Professional	Reliance on any one individual for particular functions	Review of working practices and manuals to eliminate bottlenecks where the skills or expertise of one person is relied on.	2	2	4	Guidance notes and training manuals to be made widely available to ER staff. Ensure use of such guidance is included in general reviews of staff training needs. Restructure of Electoral/Clerical sections in August 2009 into one section with change working practices to reduce bottlenecks but review progress after a year. This has already allowed the Team leader to support the Depute ERO more effectively. Spread knowledge of Electoral matters to Assistant Assessor (already membership of AEA, take up of certificate Course 2009) to allow back up to ERO and Depute ERO. Encourage Councils' staff to use the team leader for most routine issues especially Postal Voting. **Assistant Assessor has now gained AEA certificate (2011). The two Valuation sections were combined in late 2010**	2 — ERO

22	Customer/ citizen	Insufficient staff/time to deal with registration applications received close to the 11 day deadline - for instance large numbers of postal vote applications delivered to the office close to the deadline by one or more political parties.	The risks of late rush are in any case mitigated by proactivity in registration and in postal voting publicity. Team Leader will keep informed of activity by parties and advise ERO accordingly.	2	2	4	There is sufficient staff available over the whole period, including late working at specific times. However, if there is a spate of illness or epidemic, we will re-allocate the workload to non electoral staff that have EROS access for scanning purposes and train them in part of the registration process. Postal Voting timing can be a particular risk because printers operate a queue system and any delay will lose a place in the queue. Candidates and agents will be encouraged to use the Electoral Commission form from the aboutmyvote site and specifically discouraged from using photocopies of any form. All parties should be reminded (via PPP) of the EC guidance on quick return of form to the ERO . Any local party or agent thought to be breaching these rules should be referred to the ERO.	4 Depute ERO
23	Customer/ citizen/ legislation	timing of registers and av lists to parties can cause unnecessary work at election time which may interfere with other timetables	Parties may ask for lists and registers at any time in the run up to the election	2	2	4	We should for every election agree with parties (perhaps jointly with the RO or through IEMB) that we will produce absent voters' lists for political parties on three occasions (dates to be agreed) in the run up to the election and agree specific dates for registers. this would avoid producing unnecessary identical copies of these documents potentially every day. Consider encoraging requests only from candidates etc who will use the data as many are never collected or passwords requested.	4 ERO
24	Customer/ citizen	Local Election during canvass (including Community Council)	The reorganisation of ER Staff into a single team allows further flexibity (August 2009) which should allow easier re-allocation of workload within the team in the event of an election in one area. All staff follow the same procedures; so having to deal with a specific election should cause no difficulty. Remaining staff can continue with canvass activity elsewhere	2	2	4	Review effect of restructure in Late 2010 - **new structure is performing well**	4 ERO
25	Technological	Software becomes obsolete/ inefficient	Expertise within IT Team - continuously review software capabilities and staff needs. IT training organised in line with other training/development	2	2	4	Set up intra office working groups to allow improved communication between users and IT Team. Regular review of IT Team's training needs. **Software maintenance agreements kept in place for key systems**	4
26	Environmental	Inefficient use of resources	Monthly meeting with accountant and Office manager. Joint Framework agreement agreed. Use tendering where appropriate.	2	2	4		4
27	Environmental	Build-up/waste of obsolete PCs	Disposal Arrangements made for nominal fee	2	2	4	**Disposal in 2011 resulted in a credit rather than a fee**	2
28	Financial	Lack of funds/budget cuts	Monthly meeting with accountant and Office manager. Early preparation of Budget - 3 year budgeting	2	2	4		4

#	Category	Risk	Control				Action		Owner
29	Contractual	Poorly specified contracts		2	2	4	use tender process and joint Council framework agreements	2	
30	Political/Legal	being involved in third party actions arising from holding data that is not really needed.	Document retention and disposal policy agreed by management team and VJB (Sept 06) ; to ensure documents are held only for as long as needed. Document retention and disposal policy implemented	2	2	4	Review the Document Retention and disposal policy as required	2	
31	Legal/political	Court Action by Prisoners in run up to elections	establish "Caveats" with all local Courts and Court of Session	2	2	4	Keep in touch with legal dept. of Clacks Council on this issue - **Caveats confirmed for 2011**	4	
32	Physical	Old roll up cabinets - risk of sudden release of catch	Review of cabinet uses carried out in 2008. Cabinets replaced	2	2	4	replacement with modern cabinets. Meanwhile warning notices on any remaining roll up cabinets.	2	
33	External	Late direction by IEMB (or in 2011 by CCO/RCO)	Membership of IEMB (directly or through SAA) to influence and keep in touch with possible late changes	2	2	4		4	ERO
34	External	Out of date Corporate Address Gazetteer resulting in moving away from data standards goals	Use Assessor's address and number. Ensure that new Council Tax properties are added to CT and EROS systems with reference to the Polling District	2	2	4	We will continue to assist CAGs with data from our systems to aid in their awareness of completeness of individual properties and verification of addresses	4	Assistant Assessor and Depute ERO

Bold underlined red text indicates fairly recent new items or comments

indicates Electoral (particularly affecting elections from 2009)

indicates Health and Safety

Electoral Registration Contingency planner and risk register

Scottish Parliamentary general election 2011- (and Referendum)

Date: February 2011 (started July 2010)

Author: Brian Byrne

Document version: 2.01 – changes from v1.02 in red

Defining the level of impact and likelihood of risk

The risk assessment grid

	Impact		
Likelihood	High (3)	Medium (2)	Low (1)
High (4) (certain)			
High (3) (probable)			
Medium (2) (possible)			
Low (1) (unlikely)			

The risk assessment process requires a subjective judgement to be made on the potential impact and likelihood of the risks identified in the risk register. When this is completed, the likelihood should be multiplied by the impact to provide a rating for each risk. **For example**:

Risk description	Likelihood	Impact	Rating	Contingency/action	Responsible officer	Review date
Loss of polling place – school destroyed by fire prior to election.	2	3	6	Identify alternative polling place/order mobile polling station/portacabin		

Electoral Registration Service contingency planner and risk register.
Some elements of these risks are at the interface between Registration and Election Management and should be co-ordinated with the Election Management contingency plans

Risk description	Likelihood	Impact	Rating	Contingency/action	Responsible officer	Review date
1. Challenge to the election						
1.1 Legal action against the ERO (especially in regard to prisoner disenfranchisement)	2	3	6	• Legal support – monitor awareness of issues among currently available legal team. Currently Clacks Legal Services are very well aware of the issues and have been involved in defending the EROs decisions on this matter at the highest level. • Effective training of senior staff to recognise potential issues • Lodging continuous "caveats" with local courts and Court of Session. • Liaise with other EROs and through EMB be aware of current campaigns and legal decisions	ERO	Nov 2010

2. Data security						
2.1 Loss of data in transit	2	3	6	• Ensure all transfer of data is encrypted • Use SFTP transfer to printers • Ask for personal collection of printed versions of the register (get receipt) • Any email or CD transfer must be encrypted (using 7zip rather than weaker formats) • Transfer on behalf of ERO to a supplier must be under a contractual relationship or legal requirement. • Any transfer on behalf of RO must be sanctioned by pre-agreed timing and to named supplier. Check that RO has a contractual relationship with the supplier. Ensure that data protection matters are covered by the contract between RO and Printer • Make training provision to ensure all staff are aware of their legal responsibilities around the supply of information	Depute ERO (as Data Protection officer)	Oct 2010 Feb/Mar 2011

				• Ensure that transfer of data between ERO and RO is via "HALAP" folders and ensure that only nominated RO staff have access to this folder • RO staff must remove data daily from "Halap" folders or when advised and save to a secure location. As such data can cause back-up failure it will be removed as part of the overnight back-up procedures.		

3. External action						
3.1 Planned industrial action which would impact on the availability of some staff	2	2	4	• Ensure project plan allows for delays when some staff may not be available • Develop plan to identify alternative resources as far as possible to provide alternative staff cover. • Work out contingencies to cover the situation where industrial action is scheduled for key election dates	ERO/Depute ERO	Aug 2010

3.2 Lack of awareness and insufficient planning for new legislation and changes in legislation or guidance	1	3	3	Awareness of and input to Government policy through SAA & AEA. Good communications with appropriate departments such as Cabinet Office, Scotland Office, Scottish Government for statutory functions and departments (e.g. Finance, HR/personnel, RO) of the 3 Councils for non-statutory matters. Encourage EROs' involvement in (Interim) Electoral Management Board. Keep software supplier (Halarose) aware of pending developments.	ERO	ongoing
3.3 Boundary changes	4	2	8	Ensure GIS within office can provide the required service. Jan 2011 All Reviews concluded, published and implemented (see note below re Falkirk) Historical note: Liaise with ROs re requirements for Polling Scheme. Particular concerns with any changes to polling schemes as a result of the new Scottish Parliamentary boundaries due in 2010, as the boundary approval is expected to be delayed until Autumn 2010. Council Polling Schemes must be in place before publication of the register in the new boundaries can be achieved. Most Councils have agreed to do this before November 2010 but there is some doubt about Falkirk who may wish to carry out a full review which cannot be completed until just before the election. (August 2010: Falkirk indicated that they would bring forward	Depute ERO	From June 2010

				their review to October 2010 but could not complete it in time for 1 December publication. The options for us to mitigate this risk are 1) To encourage Falkirk to make minimal changes by allocating common polling places rather than redrawing boundaries if possible. 2) Provide the proposed new boundaries to us before 16th November so that we can incorporate these draft boundaries into the register. 3) Ask for the decision to be brought forward to before 16th November. 4) Consider whether re-publication is necessary at all if changes are minor and can be dealt with by notification. 5) Re-publish the Falkirk register on 1st February 2011 Options 1 to 3 have already been requested of Falkirk Council. 4 and 5 can only be actioned after the boundary changes are known) January 2011: Falkirk Council did not complete their review in December and have now decided to postpone until after the May elections. Meanwhile they will progress with minimal polling place changes that have no effect on boundaries.		

4. Loss of premises						
4.1 Office (wholly or partly)	1	3	3	• Develop and improve the Business continuity plan • Prepare list of alternative venues, including making standby arrangements if necessary	Assistant Assessor (West) and Office Manager	From June 2010

				• Ensure that contingency arrangements are DDA compliant • Confirm access to communications (e.g. mobile coverage, available landline) • Check facilities (heating, power, toilets etc.) and fire and security arrangements • Share RO & ERO Business Continuity plans to ensure continuing contact		
5. Failure of IT provision						
5.1 System failure	2	3	6	• Detailed comprehensive and strict back-up regime to disc and/or tape for storage in fire proof safe or off-site • Ensure hard copies of data are available • Maintain a duplicate system capable of replacing the original at short notice or if unaffected by the initial failure to be available almost immediately as a mirror • Halarose can access & provide service via VPN if required	Depute Assessor	ongoing

5.2 Network failure	2	3	6	• standby arrangements with contractor and in-house IT providers		
5.3 Printers / scanners malfunction	3	2	6	• Ensure printers and scanners have maintenance agreements and been fully serviced if necessary, spare toner available, etc. before election commences. February 2011: Printer serviced in December 2010 and warranty renewed. New call out warranties established for the two main scanners – service was not required for the warranty. Three back up scanners are available (multi purpose rented machines) and one stand alone scanner (not under warranty) available if necessary. As we only need two scanners to cope with the expected workload, the provision of 6 with call out service warranty on 5 seems adequate – however review the provision in late March early April, as unnecessary early servicing can itself be a risk. • Call out service for main printer (Apollo) February 2011 call out service warranty renewed in	Office manager/IT	ongoing

				December 2010 • Use identified alternative printers and scanners within the building and ensure necessary network connections are in place. Feb 2011 see note above. • Have sufficient scanning capacity that a breakdown of one scanner will not delay processing unduly. Feb 2011 see note above		
5.4 IT office affected by flood, fire, vandalism, etc.	1	3	3	• Review business continuity plan (BCP) and security arrangements • BCP plan pack held elsewhere e.g., senior officer's homes and Council office • Keep documentation on how to perform functions manually up to date • Consider more formal arrangement with supplier for alternative emergency accommodation	Assistant Assessor & Office Manager	August 2010

5.5 Telecom/fax failure	2	2	4	• In the quarter before election date as part of BCP set up redirection service to mobile phones or alternative location (FAX). For short notice election set up a partial redirection service immediately. **31 January 2011: email from Office Manager to Clive Madge of THUS to follow up on previous advice**	Office Manager	Jan 2011

6. Security and fraud issues						
6.1 Loss of key documentation papers, etc.	2	2	4	• Ensure office kept locked outside of office hours • use safe and locked cupboards for storage of key documentation	Office manager	ongoing
6.2 Unauthorised access to office	1	2	2	• Maintain a list of authorised key holders and others entitled to access the office • Change access codes regularly and whenever staff leave.		
6.3 Any accusations of fraud	1	2	2	• Keep in touch with local SPOC at least once in the year • Make contact with local police	ERO/Depute ERO	Sept 2010

				SPOC in advance of the election period.		
				• Develop media strategy for use in the event of accusations being made		

7. Failure on part of contractor						
7.1 Printers (Poll cards and registers)	2	2	4	• Prepare list of approved contractors • Check out performance of potential suppliers, including any sub-contractors, with other major clients • Consider visiting selected printer premises to inspect capacity, set up and processes • Check printers project plan and quality management processes • Consider contingency arrangements to print products elsewhere in the event of non-delivery (including in house) • Ensure rigorous contracting arrangements are in place, also covering any sub-contractors • Ensure supplier is aware of	Depute ERO	From June 2010

				• and takes account of data protection issues • Even if continuing with previous printers, check/monitor as thoroughly as would with a new printer		
7.2 Stationery/equipment, etc.	1	1	1	• Review existing stock levels and prepare inventory • Place orders to replenish stocks • Arrange early planning meeting with provider to confirm overall requirements • Check wording of official documents to ensure compliance with legislation • Depute ERO to check that our website and stationary stock are current versions • Confirm that RO staff have checked that only current versions of forms are provided in libraries and available via Council websites	Office Manager/ Depute ERO/	From June 2010
7.4 Royal Mail (Poll Cards)	2	2	4	• Establish contact with Account Manager • Set up regular review meetings with Royal Mail	Depute ERO/Office Manager.	From August 2010

				• Ensure early receipt of business reply numbers, etc. •		

8. Poll cards						
8.1 Inclusion of inaccurate or incomplete information	2	2	4	• RO staff to check their polling scheme files before advising Depute ERO when to extract files. Any addresses not in polling scheme cannot be extracted for printers • Early agreement with election offices on issue date of pollcards. January 2011: 22 March has been agreed and this is in line with a possible direction from the EC for issue by 28 March • Early agreement on wording for each version of poll-card. Final versions to be sent to printers immediately after the agreed deadline. January 2011: Electoral Commission have taken responsibility for wording but there is a risk of delay. Have alternative wording in place. See ERO response to	Depute ERO/ Election Office Falkirk on behalf of all three Councils	From August 2010 From January 2011

					Depute ERO/	From August 2010
				IEMB on EC template 5 January 2011 • Decide as part of election planning whether certain poll cards will be printed "in-house" or as part of contract with supplier (proxy poll cards, postal proxy poll cards, anonymous poll cards) • Agree export formats with printer and selection criteria (whether overseas address selected separately or not) • Robust proofing procedures including ERO & each RO to have access to printer's SFTP site for data transfer and proof checking. • Include quality checks in contract or in any in-house arrangements prior to issue • Confirm contingency arrangements with supplier • Reprint poll cards or consider alternative means of notification of all relevant details (e.g. by letter) • Ensure our own large printer is available as contingency (to		

				- issue by letter) or to use for anonymous or other unusual cards if not part of suppliers service (IBM call out service in place) - Ensure RO and polling staff are aware of the fact that details on the issued poll card can be changed in the register by election day. Although a new card or letter is issued the old one cannot be withdrawn and an elector may mistakenly (or deliberately) turn up with the old card Start testing systems in January/February 2011 see email from RT to 3 election offices 17 January			
8.2 Problems (or past problems) with delivery	2	2	4	- Maintain regular contact with Royal Mail or other distributor - Discuss alternative options for emergency hand delivery, in limited problem area, with Returning Officer staff or any other alternative provider. For example to cover the loss of a polling station.	Depute ERO/	From August 2010

9. Postal votes						
9.1 Actions of Political canvassers	2	2	4	Attend any pre–election briefing by ROs for Parties and candidates to emphasise the importance of the relevant guidelines in safeguarding the voters' interests Through Electoral Commission and PPP raise awareness of potential problems with Absent votes	ERO	From March 2011 ongoing
9.2 Absent Vote data supply problems	3	3	9	Work out a detailed plan to ensure that data is supplied as early as possible. Agree this plan with ROs; indicating where the risks lie. For example set a time limit by which no more input of postal votes received on the last day will be accepted. Check and produce a register at that time, store and produce the absent vote list from	ERO/Depute ERO	From August 2010

| | | | | that register and send data to each supplier.

After data is accepted, resume input of any outstanding absent votes to produce the "pull out" list. This ensures that data is sent as early as possible but can result in additional "pull out" work for printers ROs and ERO.

Discuss with RO staff & printers proposed timetables for supply of any early list & system for pulls and additional postal vote data.

The plan should include a procedure & solution with RO staff re changes in register up to midnight after absent list closes at 5pm for electors with postal votes (Name changes and /or address changes)

Once agreed, any later suggestions from RO staff, for example regarding "pull outs", that are incompatible with this plan should be referred to the ERO and the appropriate RO.

It is important to note that the time | | |

				taken by the system to produce a register, store absent vote lists, and to verify receipt of data can be several hours; so it may be necessary to set the "no more update" limit close to, or earlier than, the 5pm deadline for applications, depending on the data receipt "slot" agreed by ROs. As in 2010 arrange overtime working to ensure that all postal vote applications are added to the system on day of receipt - including weekend working to prevent backlog building up on Saturdays. This worked well in 2010, and if repeated will mean that an early cut off will only affect applications received on the last day, although that could still be considerable numbers. Obtain written confirmation of requirements in data format direct from the printer/supplier – do not rely only on information from RO staff or memory of previous elections. Where there is a difference report this to ERO.		

9.1 Verification of identifiers delaying the count	2	3	**6**	• As part of election plan ensure that Election teams request an early copy of images for testing and have an agreed timetable for such tests. • Suggest that after the election those rejected which need further investigation to be forwarded to SPOC and or Team Leader as necessary within 30 days	Depute ERO	January 2011
9.10 Major system failure (ROs system)	2	2	**4**	• Transfer data including images to "Halap" folders. Confirm that RO staff can then access a secure copy via any required laptop or other contingency. If "Halap" is unavailable for transfer of such large files copy to CD/DVD as necessary and hand deliver to named contact.	Depute ERO	April 2011

10. Staffing						
10.1 Insufficient competent staff	2	2	4	• Early agreement on staff availability • Well documented recruitment procedures • Comprehensive training	Depute ERO	August 2010

					programme carried out early		
10.2 Insufficient staff to deal with registration applications received close to the 11 day deadline	2	2	4	• Daily monitoring of mail , e-mails etc - including assessor's portal addresses • Authorise overtime as required to ensure no backlog occurs • Second staff from Assessor and Councils if necessary • Ensure VJB staff have sufficient skills to be able to assist	Depute ERO/ ERO & Team Leader	Generally from August 2010 Practice in place from January 2011
10.5 Mistakes by inexperienced staff or by staff not fully aware of changes to legislation	3	2	6	• Training to be scheduled for all registration related staff to ensure competence to undertake duties. • Provide guidance notes to relevant staff • Carry out election refresher training for core staff during the six months prior to the election • Checking system is in place to ensure that every application is verified by 2 staff members • Share details of staff training documents between ERO & RO staff. PO's etc	Depute ERO	From Dec 2010
10.6 Over reliance on key staff	2	3	6	• ERO and Depute ERO membership of SAA ER committee as source of advice	Management Team	ongoing

				on shared election issues. Dissemination of that advice to other key staff • Ongoing development of procedures manuals/instructions • Similarly ERO Depute ERO and Assistant Assessors membership of AEA • Encouragement of Election teams to use ERO Team Leader as main point of contact for most issues (especially postal voting) • Team Leader to attend meetings with RO staff and with suppliers. • Identify named deputies for RO senior staff and obtain up-to-date structure lists. Share contact details with Election Teams. • All VJB staff to be provided with a checklist to allow completeness checks on hand delivered application forms so that they can be verified as fully complete before the elector leaves the building		

				• This checklist to be provided to Council staff for similar use.		
10.7 Problems with access rights to the Halarose Eros system	3	2	6	• There is a balance to be struck between access and security. Tighter control since 2009 by the administrator has protected ERO and RO data but we should investigate the specific areas where control may now be capable of relaxation • Experience in 2009 was that access allowed for one reason resulted in damage to other Councils' and ERO's core areas. • ERO to identify areas where Halarose Eros access can be open to non administrators in ERO staff (subject to Halarose amending the system) • Depute ERO has previously requested RO staff to provide details where direct access is required. Minutes of SHUG meeting June 2010 requires all members to supply information by 31/07/10 for June Nelson (DABVJB) to collate. • Until such details are provided	ERO	July 2010

					and Halarose supply a solution to access problems any requests can be made via Depute ERO (as system administrator) for consideration of the potential impact on ERO data and other Councils' data. The IT team and Halarose (via VPN) can also act as administrators to carry out the specific task in the absence of the Depute ERO. • Ideally Councils should nominate local administrators for adding, deleting staff and password control. Halarose could then be asked to make appropriate changes to security for those actions		
10.8 Not closing down Eros processes; preventing later user login.				• This caused several problems early in the 2010 election as RO staff began to set up elections. Halarose has implemented a solution suggested by the IT team and this seems to have removed the problem. However as busier election times approach all staff (ERO and RO) should	Depute ERO	Jan 2010

				be reminded to close down processes or if unable to do so for some reason, report this to the ERO's IT team so that any ensuing problem can be rectified or allow back-up processes to be temporarily rescheduled		

11. Polling day						
11.1 Polling day enquires from the public or from election staff	4	1	4	• Ensure expert staff available on election day • IT availability on election day depending on RO requirements • Ensure IT and other staff are aware of named contacts in Election Offices • Pre agree (well before the election) with election offices the procedures for correcting clerical errors	ERO/Depute ERO	From Dec 2010
11.2 Problems with voter dissatisfaction or aggressive behaviour	2	2	4	• Provide guidance to frontline staff, including FAQs to assist with giving answers to common queries • Provide guidance on dealing with aggressive customers, drawing on resources	Team Leader	Dec 2010

				developed by other council departments		
11.3 Mistakes by RO staff, PO, & PC	3	2	6	• Suggest ERO staff are involved in pre-election training so that it covers relevant aspects of registration and register display • Ask for draft of election notices and Council advertising of registration before publication. • Avoid using registration "jargon" when dealing with inexperienced RO staff. They may not hear what you think you are saying and this can lead to mistakes or misunderstandings. For example the Halarose activity "Storing Postal Votes" at the very end of postal voting processing may be wrongly interpreted as "stockpiling postal vote applications" • Feedback forms from Election Day staff re problems to form part of post election review. • Post election review to be held within 14 working days of polling day	Depute ERO	Aug 2010
11.4 Polling station fire or	2	3	6	• If register destroyed, duplicate	Election Team	As

similar disruption during election day				can be provided by RO staff from original copy supplied, or can request Depute ERO to provide a fresh copy.	(Depute ERO if requested)	required

CENTRAL SCOTLAND VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Subject: **Elections Report**
Meeting: **Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board**
Date: **4th March, 2011**
Author: **Russell Taylor, Depute Electoral Registration Officer**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report outlines the planning and procedures in place for the forthcoming election and referendum on 5th May, 2011.

2. REPORT ON ELECTORAL WORK

2.1 At every election Electoral Registration Officer's (ERO) staff contact Returning Officer's (RO) staff in each council to start preparation for the election.

2.2 The Returning Officer is responsible in law for running the election, however local practice has evolved so that some of the RO's duties are undertaken by staff in the Registration Office (mainly in relation to Polling Cards). The ERO also has specific duties that have to be carried out prior to an election. This report is to highlight the many tasks which are needed and the necessary timetable to deliver a successful election to all stakeholders.

2.3 For the referendum the RO acts also as Counting Officer (CO) under a Chief Counting Officer (CCO) and Regional Counting Officer (RCO).

3. ELECTION DETAILS

3.1 A registration and electoral management system (EROS) was purchased in 2006 which all three Returning Officers and the ERO's staff use. It is essential that we work together to ensure that when the election is added to the computer system it has the correct eligible dates and the correct electors are able to vote in that type of election (European citizens, Lords and Overseas Electors have restricted voting rights).

4. POLL CARDS

4.1 The Depute ERO arranges with our selected printer for the printing and postage of all poll cards and postal poll cards for an election. Because of the smaller volumes the ERO arranges for the in-house printing and local posting of poll cards to postal proxy voters, proxy voters and anonymous electors.

4.2 The Depute ERO is normally the contact with Royal Mail for arrangements on the issue of poll cards. (He must ensure the correct license and artwork is quoted on each poll card – ROs each ensure they have the relevant license for posting the poll cards).

4.3 RO Staff and senior ERO staff consult in the design of the poll cards with printers and where variable data is allowed decide what information and dates should be printed on the poll cards. This is usually the last dates for registration, applying for a postal vote, applying for a proxy vote, obtaining a replacement ballot paper etc. along with the contact details for enquiries or obtaining forms.

4.4 It is normally the ERO's contact details which are listed on each different type of poll card as the majority of telephone calls and emails received in response to the poll cards are registration or absent voting enquiries.

4.5 The ERO and ROs agree dates when test data files are created and sent to the printers as well as when the live data is sent.

4.6 Each RO has to create a polling scheme for an election and the polling scheme must be added to the database before poll cards are created. The polling scheme lists the polling place for each street/address and is printed on the poll card.

4.7 All the printing costs plus the postage costs of the poll cards sent locally require to be identified for each RO as the ERO arranges payment and then has to arrange for an invoice to be sent for payment to each RO. Poll cards are created and posted before an election register is finalised. For 5th May election this year our poll card data will be sent to the printers on 11th March for posting no later than 28th March but the last date for registration is 15th April. The ERO therefore has to ensure that he has a system to identify the electors who require a poll card or letter because their details have been amended since the poll cards were printed.

4.8 Should a change to a polling place be made after the poll cards are printed then RO staff can make the database change and if time permits contact the ERO to request that new poll cards are printed and posted.

5.   ABSENT VOTING

5.1   This includes voting by post, proxy and postal proxy.   All applications to vote by post or by proxy are dealt with by ERO staff.   Any forms received by RO staff must be forwarded to the ERO to check and action as necessary.

5.2   The receipt of "duplicate" postal vote forms for existing postal voters can impact detrimentally on processing new valid applications due to the time spent checking these forms (legally they must replace the previous application therefore they must be scanned and updated). Dependent on the printer chosen by the RO the ERO must supply data on postal voters to them when required for printing the necessary ballot papers and security statements. Currently the Stirling RO has contracted with a supplier to print and issue ballot papers and they require delivery of data as soon as possible after the close of applications at 5pm on 14th April. Both Falkirk & Clackmannanshire ROs have contracted with another supplier to print ballot papers and they require data on 30th March and a supplementary list and a list of alterations on 15th April.

5.3   The ERO staff must keep lists of any cancellations or amendments by existing postal voters from the dates information is sent to the printers to ensure that they are withdrawn before issue or amended. As the RO employs the printer it is the responsibility of the RO staff to ensure that the printers carry out their instructions as required.

5.4   The Chair of the Electoral Commission is the Chief Counting Officer (CCO) for the referendum on 5th May and has directed that ballot papers for the referendum and Scottish Parliament election should be posted on 18th April, but that applications for electors not included in the 1st April Register of Electors cannot be posted until 27th April (those registered by 10th March on 18th April those registered by 15th April on 27th April).

5.5   All applications for a postal vote must be issued with a written acknowledgement from the ERO.

5.6   All applications received too late for an election must be advised in writing by the ERO as soon as possible. Letters are issued which, if appropriate, advise of the entitlement to apply to vote by proxy before the relevant closing date.

6.   ISSUE OF POSTAL BALLOT PAPERS

6.1   This is an RO function which they arrange with their appointed printers. Replacement ballot papers are issued locally by RO staff.

7. REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS

7.1 All applications to register to vote are processed by ERO staff. Applications are now accepted if received by post, in person, by fax and by scanned email attachments. Applications received by midnight eleven working days before polling day must be included in the Register of Electors being used on polling day (15th April, 2011 for 5th May, 2011 elections). Any incomplete applications or refused applications must be informed as soon as possible to enable the elector to supply the required information. This year because of Easter Monday not being included in the registration timetable the last date for registration in time for 5th May is thirty one hours after the last date for receipt of postal vote applications. This may require arrangements being made by RO staff and printers to deal with any current postal voter changing their registration address between 5pm 14th April and midnight 15th April.

8. SUPPLY OF REGISTERS AND ABSENT VOTE LISTS

8.1 Legislation allows candidates and political parties and registered referendum campaign groups to obtain copies of the Register of Electors and absent vote lists prior to the election. The ERO prepares an application form and information for candidates advising the dates on which he/she will make lists available and in which formats. Candidates and parties are encouraged to obtain the lists as soon as possible and so ensure that existing postal voters are not contacted with new applications when they are not required. The ROs are also supplied with the relevant Registers and absent vote lists that they require for the election and referendum.

9. POLLING STATION REGISTERS

9.1 Prior to the election, dates are agreed with the ROs as to when they require polling station registers to be made available to them. The layout of the registers and which records are highlighted or "scored through" are agreed prior to printing. ERO staff then arrange the printing of the required registers, absent vote lists and if necessary streets lists for each polling station and ensure they are delivered by the required dates.

10. TRAINING

10.1 ERO staff have provided information on the Register of Electors for inclusion in training manuals for polling station staff and offer their services at RO training sessions. ERO staff have offered to take part in any education initiatives being organised locally and nationally on election matters.

11. CROSS BOUNDARY ISSUES

11.1 When elections cross local authority boundaries then arrangements need to be made with the ERO and RO responsible for the "outwith" area to ensure that data is received from them or sent to them when required and in the correct formats.

12. ENQUIRIES

12.1 Electors contact the ERO by email, telephone, by letter and by calling at our office. Advice and forms are made available to them as requested. Once the various dates are known for issue of ballot papers staff are informed so they can advise electors whether a postal or proxy vote is appropriate for this election. The relevant last dates and times are highlighted in order that the elector knows the importance of returning fully completed forms promptly.

13. POLLING DAY

13.1 ERO staff provide a service to the electorate and ROs from 7am to 10pm on every polling day. As part of their training, staff in polling stations are given the ERO contact details to allow them to contact us with any questions on behalf of electors regarding registration entitlement. Any clerical errors identified have to be granted by the ERO and communicated to the polling staff, RO and elector. Any applications for an Emergency Proxy must be received before 5pm and again the ERO must communicate his/her decision to the RO and polling station staff as well as the elector. ERO I.T. staff are also available from 7am to 10pm to ensure that advice on the database is available to all staff.

14. PUBLICITY

14.1 ERO staff issue press releases regarding the election timetable, and work with RO staff, Council communication staff and the Electoral Commission on publicising elections.

15. TIMETABLE FOR 5TH MAY, 2011

15.1 10th March   Last date for registration for 1st April update to Register of Electors.
11th March   Data file to printers for poll card printing.
28th March   Date by which CCO requires poll cards to be posted.

14th April   5pm last date and time for receipt of valid postal vote application.

	Postal vote data to be issued to Stirling as soon as possible after all applications processed after 5pm.
15th April	Midnight last date and time for receipt of valid application to register to vote in time for 5th May election.
18th April	Date by which CCO requires ROs and printers to issue postal vote packs to valid postal voters (those registered by 10th March).
21st April	5pm last date and time for receipt of a valid application to vote by proxy on 5th May.
22nd April	Public Holiday
25th April	Public Holiday
26th April	Last date for receipt of any objection to an application to register to vote prior to 5th May election.
28th April	Date by which CCO requires ROs and printers to issue all remaining postal vote packs (including those registered after 10th March).
29th April	Public Holiday
2nd May	Public Holiday
5th May	Polling day 7am to 10pm.
5.00 p.m.	Last applications for proxy due to medical emergency.
9.00 p.m.	Last time to alter the Register due to clerical error.
10th May	Last date for registration for 1st June update to Register of Electors.

16. POST ELECTION

16.1 Rechargeable costs are identified and invoices prepared for ROs. Applications which were too late to register for 5th May and valid postal vote applications for all elections are updated. Electors are deleted from information received and application forms issued to potential new electors from information received. After the election letters can be sent to postal voters to review their signatures, dates of birth if existing applications were rejected.

17. RECOMMENDATION

17.1 The Valuation Joint Board is asked to note the report.

………………………………………………….
Author: Russell Taylor
Date : 11th February, 2011

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS
nil

CENTRAL SCOTLAND VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Subject: Internal Audit Report - Purchases & Payments
Meeting: Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board
Date: 4th March 2011
Author: Revenues and Payments Manager

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   The purpose of this report is to present to the Joint Board the final Internal Audit Report in relation to Purchases & Payments attached as an Appendix to this Report.

2.   BACKGROUND

2.1   Internal Audit based within Clackmannanshire Council provide Internal Audit services to the Valuation Joint Board and the Assessors. Within their Annual Plan for 2010-11 an audit of the purchases and payments arrangements was scheduled.

2.2   This report summarises the Internal Audit findings.   An Action Plan to address the areas for improvement has been agreed and progress against this Action Plan is monitored quarterly.

3.   RECOMMENDATION

3.1   The Joint Board is asked to note the contents of this report.

…………………………………..
Revenues and Payments Manager

APPENDIX
1.   Final Internal Audit Report - Purchases & Payments

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS
nil

APPENDIX

INTERNAL AUDIT
Purchases & Payments (VJB)

Issued To:-

Brian Byrne	Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer
Linda Pirie	Office Manager, Assessors
Susan Mackay	Revenue and Payments Manager

Annual Plan	**2010-11**
Date Report Issued	**January 2011**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report details the recommendations arising from the Internal Audit review. Internal Audit reviewed the Purchase and Payment processes within Assessors. This review was approved at the Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board meeting of 18 June 2010.

1.2 Responsibility for a sound internal control environment rests with management. The role of Internal Audit is to ensure that such controls exist and are being adhered to at all times. The audit work undertaken is designed so that material irregularity has a reasonable probability of being uncovered; however, collusive fraud can override even sound control systems.

1.3 The matters raised in this report are only those which came to the attention of the Internal Audit Officer during the course of the Internal Audit review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all the improvements that might be made.

2. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The scope of the audit included review of controls in place within the purchasing and payment arrangements at the Assessors to manage the risk affecting this area. The scope did not include review of Purchase Card use.

2.2 The objective of the audit was to provide assurance on the controls within the Assessors purchasing and payment arrangements. Six key controls were identified and tested and the adequacy of the internal controls was established. These internal controls can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against misstatement or loss. A definition of the assurance assessments is provided in Appendix A. The key controls and assessments are as follows:

Key Control	Assurance Assessment	Number of Recommendations
Officers are aware of the Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders and documented guidance is available corporately and at a service level.	Reasonable	2
Purchase orders are raised, completed and authorised appropriately.	Limited	3
Purchase invoices are checked, matched, authorised appropriately and passed for payment timeously.	Reasonable	3
Payments through the purchase ledger are approved by the Authorised Signatory(ies) and for items which have been appropriately authorised and reconciled.	Reasonable	1*
Payments made for items other than trade creditors are duly checked and authorised.	Reasonable	2

Payments made directly from the Council's bank account(s) are authorised and reconciled.	Significant	None *

* Two areas for improvement were identified, one within control objective 4 and one within control objective 6 for the Creditors section of the Council. However, as they have been already raised and incorporated within the Action Plan for the Purchasing and Payments audit report issued in May 2010, they are not reraised in the Action Plan in Appendix B. The areas for improvement are however summarised in paragraph 3.5.

3. SYSTEM OVERVIEW AND AUDIT OPINION

3.1 The Assessors invoices are classified as invoices in Corporate Services and are keyed in by officers within Creditors in Finance Services. Internal Audit maintains an authorised database of all authorised signatories within the Council and this includes officers at the Assessors. The number and value of Assessors invoices processed in 2009/10 was 547 and £631,773 respectively. The number and value of Assessors invoices processed from 1 April 2010 to 31 October 2010 was 260 and £358,502, respectively.

3.2 There are reasonable controls in place in relation to the Purchase and Payment processes at the Assessors. There is guidance available to officers at the Assessors in the Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. Both of these documents can be accessed electronically through the Assessors intranet site. There is clear segregation of duties, together with independent verification of transactions. The Office Manager at the Assessors raises the Purchase Orders and the Assessor authorises the majority of invoice payments.

3.3 The three Creditors officers within Finance Services who input invoices to the Purchase Ledger system, also input the invoices for the Assessors.

3.4 From the testing undertaken, the following strengths were identified:
Assessors:
- The Office Manager at the Assessors is very aware of trying to achieve best value when purchasing goods and services. This will include purchasing from Council contracts;
- Assessor officers responsible for purchasing and payments have been made aware of the Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board Financial Regulations and Standing Orders;
- Invoice Certification Forms selected in the sample for the Assessors were signed by an authorised signatory and within their authorised signatory limit;
- Invoice Certification Forms were authorised timeously by the Assessor and forwarded to Creditors promptly for processing.

Creditors:
- The Assessors invoice details are being accurately input to the Purchase Ledger by the three Creditors staff;
- Assessors invoices and Daily Payment Vouchers are being coded to the correct ledger codes;
- From the sample of bank reconciliations selected, all agreed to the creditors account in the general ledger and the Council's Number 2 bank

account.

3.5 From the testing undertaken, the following areas for improvement were identified:

Assessors:
- The Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board Financial Regulations and Standing Orders had not been reviewed since 2005;
- The Assessors procedures for the Ordering and Passing of Invoices and Receipt of Goods had not been reviewed since 2005;
- Of 46 Purchase Orders selected for testing, 36 were raised after the invoice had been received.

Creditors:
- The three officers within Creditors who input invoices, have access to the suppliers master file and can therefore amend and add new suppliers; *
- The purchase ledger control account in the general ledger is not agreed on a monthly basis to the reports totals in the Aged Creditors Report in the purchase ledger;*
- On average 400 BACS Remittance Advices are posted by second class mail to suppliers each week, rather than being sent by email;
- Creditor officers did not query that 1 out of 7 Daily Payment Vouchers received, had not been properly authorised at the Assessors.

* As detailed in paragraph 2.2, these areas for improvement have already been raised in the Purchasing and Payments audit report issued in May 2010 and are not reraised in the action Plan within this report.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 A summary of the recommendations raised from this audit is included in a Management Action Plan in Appendix B. Management comments, the date for implementation and Responsible Officer have been reflected within the Action Plan.

4.2 The Management Action Plan contains the following priority of recommendations. Definitions for the priority assessments are provided in Appendix B.

Priority Assessments	Number	
	Assessors	Creditors
Priority 1		
Priority 2	1	1
Priority 3	7	1
Priority 4	1	

5. HISTORY OF THE AUDIT REPORT

5.1 The table below sets out the history of this report.

Issue of Draft Report	10 November 2010
Issue of Revised Draft Report	20 December 2010
Receipt of Management Comments	23 December 2010
Issue of Final Report	11 January 2011

Assurance Assessments

Assurance	Definitions
Significant Assurance	There are sound controls operating within the system and these are complied with and adhered to consistently.
Reasonable Assurance	There are controls operating within the system, however adherence does not always occur and the control environment could be further improved.
Limited Assurance	There are minimal controls operating within the system and the control environment requires to be improved.
No Assurance	There are no controls operating within the system or no reliance can be placed on the controls and a control environment must be established.

MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

Ref	Finding	Risk Implication	Recommendation	Priority	Comments	Officer	Target Date
Control Objective 1							
6.1	The Assessor recognises that the Central Scotland Valuation Joint Board, Financial Regulations and Standing Orders are due for a review, as the last review took place in 2005.	Potential risk of misinterpretations or errors if staff are referring to outdated procedures.	The Assessor should ensure that a review of the Central Scotland (VJB) Financial Regulations and Standing Orders are carried out in financial year 2010/11 and updated as required.	3	Agreed. The Clerk for the VJB to review the Standing Orders and the Treasurer to review the Financial Regulations. Assessor to liaise with Clerk and Treasurer to ensure reviews are carried out.	Assessor.	30/06/11
6.2	The Assessors procedures for the Ordering and Passing of Invoices and Receipt of Goods prepared by the Assessors Office Manager have not been updated since 2005.	Potential risk of misinterpretations or errors if staff are referring to outdated procedures.	The Office Manager should ensure that a review of the Assessors procedures for the Ordering and Passing of Invoices and Receipt of Goods is carried out.	3	Agreed.	Office Manager, Assessors.	31/03/11
Control Objective 2							

1	There is a fundamental absence of control(s) which should be addressed immediately.	2	There is an absence of control(s) which should be addressed at the earliest opportunity.	3	There is an immaterial breakdown in control(s) which should be addressed as soon as practically possible.	4	A matter for consideration which is a point of good practice or could improve the effectiveness of the arrangements.

Ref	Finding	Risk Implication	Recommendation	Priority	Comments	Officer	Target Date
6.3	The Office Manager is raising Purchase Orders after the invoice has been received. This occurred in 36 out of 46 Purchase Orders selected for testing. This contravenes the Central Scotland (VJB) Financial Regulation number 10.3.	Goods are ordered that have not been approved by an officer with the proper authorisation.	Purchase Orders should be raised before invoices are received.	2	Agreed.	Office Manager, Assessors.	31/03/11
6.4	1 out of 46 Purchase Orders selected in the sample had been authorised for an amount above the authorisation limit of the officer concerned.	Inappropriate goods and services could be purchased.	All relevant Assessor officers should be reminded that they must not authorise Purchase Orders above their authorisation limit. .	3	Agreed. To be discussed at the next Assessor's Management Team Meeting on 2 February 2011.	Assessor.	31/03/11
6.5	35 out of 46 Purchase Orders selected in the sample did not have the address of the supplier clearly shown on the order.	The Purchase Order could be sent to the wrong address if the address details are not clear.	All Purchase Orders should be fully completed, to ensure that the Assessor can agree the invoice to the order.	3	Agreed. Practice already corrected.	Office Manager, Assessors.	31/03/11
Control Objective 3							

1	There is a fundamental absence of control(s) which should be addressed immediately.	2	There is an absence of control(s) which should be addressed at the earliest opportunity.	3	There is an immaterial breakdown in control(s) which should be addressed as soon as practically possible	4	A matter for consideration which is a point of good practice or could improve the effectiveness of the arrangements.

Ref	Finding	Risk Implication	Recommendation	Priority	Comments	Officer	Target Date
6.6	In 2 out of 46 Purchase Orders selected, the Assessor countersigned the Purchase Orders, as the value was above the Office Manager's authorisation limit of £5,000. The Assessor also authorised the invoices for these Purchase Orders.	No segregation of duties if the same officer is authorising the Purchase Order and Invoice.	Consideration should be given to increasing the Purchase Order authorisation limit to £10,000 for certain Assessor officers.	3	Agreed. Assessor has contacted Internal Audit and Principal Accountant to get limits changed for nominated officers.	Assessor.	31/03/11
6.7	In 1 out of 46 invoices selected, it took more than 30 working days to pay the invoice from the date invoice was received. There was a query with the ledger code and this was not resolved until the Assessors Accountant returned from holiday.	Overdue delays in the authorising invoices at the Assessors could have a knock on effect of paying invoice within 30 days. If payment was over 30 days the Council could be financially liable under Late Payment legislation.	All invoices should be authorised timeously.	3	Agreed. Authorised signatory limits have been reviewed and amended. To look at streamlining the authorisation process.	Assessor. Assessor.	31/03/11 31/03/11

1	There is a fundamental absence of control(s) which should be addressed immediately.	2	There is an absence of control(s) which should be addressed at the earliest opportunity.	3	There is an immaterial breakdown in control(s) which should be addressed as soon as practically possible	4	A matter for consideration which is a point of good practice or could improve the effectiveness of the arrangements.

Ref	Finding	Risk Implication	Recommendation	Priority	Comments	Officer	Target Date
6.8	In 11 out 12 cases where goods were received the date had not been recorded on the Purchase Order. However, the Goods Received Note had been attached to the yellow copy of the Purchase Order.	If a claim is to be made against a supplier about the condition of goods received, the date received could be critical, if a claim is to be raised within a tight timeframe.	The date should be recorded on Purchase Orders when goods are received.	4	Agreed. Practice already corrected.	Office Manager, Assessors.	31/03/11
Control Objective 4							
6.9	On average 400 BACS Remittance Advices are posted by second class mail to suppliers each week rather than being sent by email.	BACS Remittance Advices could get lost in the post. Also there is the unnecessary financial cost to the Council.	It should be investigated to find out if it would be possible to email the Remittance Advices to suppliers each week.	4	Agreed	Revenue and Payments Manager	30/06/11
Control Objective 5							
6.10	Creditors officers did not query that 1 Daily Payment Voucher had not been properly authorised at the Assessors.	A lack of proper authorisation of payments with a risk of inappropriate payments being made.	Creditors should ensure that all Daily Payment Vouchers are authorised by officers who have the authorisation to do so.	2	Agreed.	Revenue and Payments Manager	31/03/11

1	There is a fundamental absence of control(s) which should be addressed immediately.	2	There is an absence of control(s) which should be addressed at the earliest opportunity.	3	There is an immaterial breakdown in control(s) which should be addressed as soon as practically possible	4	A matter for consideration which is a point of good practice or could improve the effectiveness of the arrangements.

Ref	Finding	Risk Implication	Recommendation	Priority	Comments	Officer	Target Date
6.11	1 out of 7 Daily Payment Vouchers checked had not been properly authorised at the Assessors. The two officers who signed for the DPV are not authorised to sign for cheque requests as per their authorisation limits. However, both officers have the authority to authorise invoice payments and the value was within their authorisation limits.	A lack of proper authorisation of payments with a risk of inappropriate payments being made.	The Assessor should ensure that all Daily Payment Vouchers are authorised by officers who have the authorisation to do so.	3	Agreed. Depute Assessor authorisation has been changed to include signing cheque requests.	Assessor.	31/03/11

1	There is a fundamental absence of control(s) which should be addressed immediately.	2	There is an absence of control(s) which should be addressed at the earliest opportunity.	3	There is an immaterial breakdown in control(s) which should be addressed as soon as practically possible	4	A matter for consideration which is a point of good practice or could improve the effectiveness of the arrangements.

CENTRAL SCOTLAND VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Subject: **REVENUE BUDGET 2010/11 – REVIEW AS AT 31.01.11**
Meeting: **CENTRAL SCOTLAND VALUATION JOINT BOARD**
Date: **4th March, 2011**
Author: **TREASURER**

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   The purpose of this report is to advise the Joint Board of the forecast outturn for the financial year ending 31 March 2011.

2.   BACKGROUND

2.1   The budget for the financial year 2010/11 is £2.771 million. The projected outturn against the budget shows an underspend of £44K (see Appendix A).

2.2   The main reason for the reported underspend relates to a reduction in Employee Costs.

3.   RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   The Joint Board is asked to note the contents of this report.

…………………………………..
Treasurer

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1.   Various working papers associated with the production of the outturns.

Any person wishing to inspect the above background papers should contact Clackmannanshire Council, Finance Services, on Alloa (01259) 452072.

January Outturn

Analysis of actual variation to Budget

Employee
Depute Assessor left. Outturn assumes post not being filled
Assistant Secretary left. Outturn assumes post not being filled
Assistant Assessor due to leave End December. Outturn assumes post not being filled
However future savings in Assistant Assessor post off-set by additional strain payments
Actual inflationary pay award 0.65% previously outturned on 1%

Underspend   (£92,620)

Property costs
Saving in rates off-set by additional water charges

Overspend   £90

Transport Costs
Saving in car allowances - no Depute Assessor
Additional Staff Travel anticipated in line with previous years

Overspend   £980

Supplies and Services
Additional purchase of Equipment
Removal charges due to internal office moves

Overspend   £4,640

Administration
Additional Legal Fees - Council Tax and ATM
Additional Election postage costs off-set by additional income

Overspend   £65,350

Computer Equipment
Additional IT equipment £25K approved at previous meeting.

Overspend   £26,160

Third Party Payments
No Variance

Nil   £0

Support Services
Additional costs associated with implementation of Single Status

Nil   £5,000

Income
Additional income to cover postage costs etc - Election

Nil   (£53,740)

Underspend   (£44,140)

CENTRAL SCOTLAND VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Summary

Outturns

Jan-11

	Budget 2010/2011 £	Budget to Jan-11 £	Actual to Jan-11 £	Outturns @ 31-Mar-11 £
Employee Costs				
Gross Salaries	1,641,860	1,389,014	1,257,121	1,519,730
Employer's Superannuation	303,740	256,964	218,204	281,150
Employer's National Insurance	126,780	107,256	96,965	117,350
Overtime	0	0	8,094	8,100
Canvassers	10,000	8,333	9,124	9,130
Long Service Awards	0	0	1,000	1,000
Superannuation Annual Charges	17,260	12,940	11,252	16,880
Strain Payment to Pension fund	0	0	0	55,680
Employee Training	5,500	4,583	2,522	4,000
Conf. Exp.& Subsistance	1,500	1,250	0	1,000
Other Employee Costs	1,500	1,250	480	1,500
	2,108,140	1,781,590	1,604,764	2,015,520
				(92,620)
Property Costs				
Repairs & Maintenance	14,000	11,666	17,033	18,000
Heat & Light - Gas	1,700	1,417	1,660	2,200
Heat & Light - Electricity	12,540	10,450	4,853	12,540
Property Rental	136,000	136,000	127,295	136,080
Service Charge	11,460	11,460	10,901	11,460
Rates	62,830	62,830	58,374	58,370
Water Charges	6,200	5,166	4,929	6,470
Cleaning Materials	1,500	1,250	901	1,500
Cleaning Services	13,780	11,483	7,956	13,480
Insurance	2,520	2,520	0	2,520
	262,530	254,242	233,902	262,620
				90
Transport Costs				
Staff Travelling Expenses	22,000	18,612	16,390	23,740
Staff Travel - Home To Work	0	0	715	720
Client Travel	0	0	36	40
Car Allowances	14,430	12,208	10,200	12,910
	36,430	30,820	27,341	37,410
				980

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APPENDIX A

	Budget 2010/2011 £	Budget to Jan-11 £	Actual to Jan-11 £	Outturns @ 31-Mar-11 £
Supplies and Services				
Furniture	500	417	0	500
Equipment	0	0	2,874	2,870
Removal Charges	0	0	2,173	2,170
Materials	0	0	158	160
Clothing	300	250	0	300
Vending Leasing	0	0	139	140
Bottled Water	1,200	1,000	610	1,000
Hospitality	2,000	1,667	668	1,500
	4,000	3,334	6,622	8,640
				4,640
Administration				
Office Equipment - New	0	0	482	480
Office Equipment - Rental	0	0	408	410
Office Equipment Maintenance	5,000	4,167	6,878	7,000
Printing	9,000	7,500	1,273	6,000
Photocopying	6,000	5,000	0	6,000
Stationery	11,000	9,166	13,547	15,000
Publications	5,000	4,167	4,548	5,000
Advertising	5,000	4,167	1,024	2,000
Insurance	13,200	10,853	13,285	13,290
Postages	87,500	72,914	113,416	139,500
Telecommunications	10,000	8,333	12,018	12,000
Legal Fees	6,000	5,000	14,725	15,000
Court Fees	0	0	600	600
Subscriptions	0	0	170	170
Miscellaneous Supplies	500	417	453	500
	158,200	131,684	277,146	223,550
				65,350
Computer				
Computer Hardware Purchase	2,000	1,667	25,440	27,000
Disaster recovery	24,860	20,716	15,965	24,860
Computer Hardware Maintenance	4,120	3,433	8,747	5,560
Computer Software Purchase	1,000	833	266	1,000
Computer Software Maintenance	59,400	49,498	59,613	59,620
Computer Peripherals	1,000	833	0	1,000
Computer Consumables	1,000	833	130	500
Computer Services	28,130	23,441	21,817	28,130
	121,510	101,254	131,978	147,670
				26,160

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	Budget 2010/2011 £	Budget to Jan-11 £	Actual to Jan-11 £	Outturns @ 31-Mar-11 £	£
Third Party Payments					
Accounts Commission - Audit Fees	9,650	8,041	(1,250)	9,650	
Payments to Contractors	5,000	4,167	967	5,000	
Other local authorities	8,000	6,666	7,472	8,000	
	22,650	18,874	7,189	22,650	
					0
Support Services					
Financial Services	27,990	0	0	27,990	
HR Services	23,690	0	0	28,690	
Clerking of the Board	9,620	0	0	9,620	
	61,300	0	0	66,300	
					5,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	2,774,760	2,321,798	2,288,942	2,784,360	
					9,600
Income					
Electoral Roll - Sales	0	0	(56,690)	(56,690)	
Other Income	(4,000)	(3,333)	(1,045)	(1,050)	
	(4,000)	(3,333)	(57,735)	(57,740)	
					(53,740)
NET EXPENDITURE	2,770,760	2,318,465	2,231,207	2,726,620	
					(44,140)

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