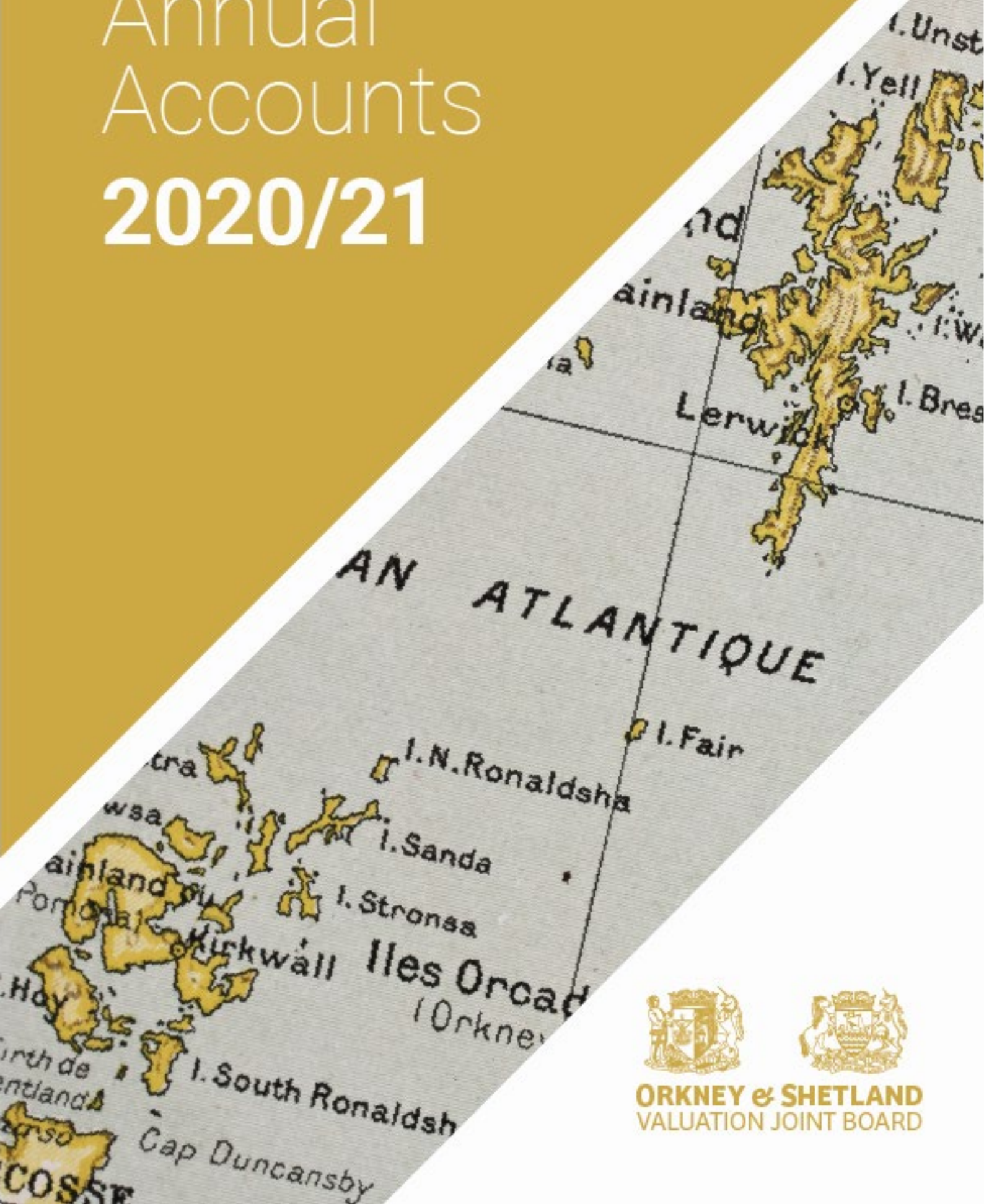


Audited Annual Accounts **2020/21**



ORKNEY & SHETLAND
VALUATION JOINT BOARD

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Management Commentary

The purpose of the Management Commentary is to help all users of the accounts to assess how the Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board ("the Board") has performed during 2020/21 and understand the year-end financial position as at 31 March 2021. In addition, it provides a narrative on the financial outlook for the Board during financial year 2021/22 and beyond.

Introduction

The Valuation Joint Board (VJB) exists for the discharge of statutory functions relating to the preparation, publication and maintenance of both the Valuation Roll and Council Tax List (Valuation List). The Assessor also provides the electoral registration function on behalf of both island areas.

All three documents (Valuation Roll, Valuation List and Electoral Register) are available for public inspection at the Assessor's offices, at the public libraries and offices of the two constituent authorities. As many of the public offices are closed or access may be limited due to COVID-19 a searchable online facility for the Valuation Roll and Council Tax List are available here: <https://www.saa.gov.uk/orkneyandshetland/>

Amendments to the Electoral Register can be processed online at: <http://gov.uk/register-to-vote>

There are 14 Assessors in Scotland, of which four are appointed directly by a single Council and the remaining 10 are appointed by Valuation Joint Boards comprising elected members from two or more Councils. Where a VJB exists, as in Orkney and Shetland the duties, powers and responsibilities of the constituent Councils as Valuation Authorities are delegated to the Board. An Assessor is responsible for the valuation of both domestic and non-domestic properties within one or more Council areas. Each board appoints an independent Assessor to ensure that valuations are free from political influence or interference. This is essential to the performance of the Assessor's statutory duties, which can involve situations where the interests of the local authority and the ratepayer may conflict.

Composition of the Board

The Board is a separate public body from the two constituent authorities, being Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council and draws its

membership from them, each nominating five Councillors to serve on the Board. Board members are as follows:

Members:

Orkney Islands Council
Andrew Drever (Convener)
Stephen Clackson*
David Dawson
Harvey Johnston
John Ross Scott*
Rob Crichton (from 6 October 2020)
Barbara Foulkes (from 6 October 2020)
Shetland Islands Council
Theo Smith (Vice-Convener)
Alistair Cooper
Allison Duncan
John Fraser
George Smith

*Resigned from the Board on 20 August 2020.

Substitute Members:

Orkney Islands Council
Barbara Foulkes (until 5 October 2020)
Steven Heddle
Heather Woodbridge (from 6 October 2020)
Shetland Islands Council
Stephen Leask
Emma Macdonald
Robbie McGregor
Ryan Thomson

Copies of the minutes of meetings and audited accounts of the Board can found on the Board's website: www.orkney-shetland-vjb.co.uk.

Chief Officials

Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer:
Dennis M Stevenson MRICS IRRV

The following appointed office bearers of the Board are employed on a substantive basis by Orkney Islands Council:

Treasurer:
Colin Kemp CPFA – Corporate Finance Senior Manager (from 5 November 2020).

Clerk:
Karen Greaves – Head of Executive Support (from 5 November 2020).

Background

The functions of the Assessor are different from those of most other Local Government Officers, whose duties are to carry out the policies of local authorities, as determined by elected Councillors. The Assessor is required to balance the interests of individual ratepayers against those of others in terms of valuation levels.

The independence of the Assessor is necessary to ensure that decisions are made on considerations of value, without political pressure. The actions of the Assessor are subject to scrutiny however, through an appeals process.

Further detail can be found here:
<http://www.saa.gov.uk/the-assessor.html>

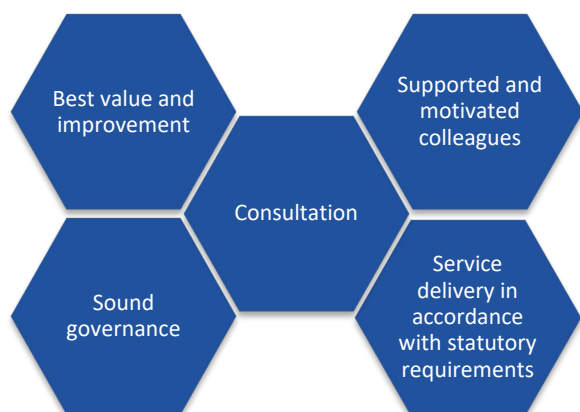
Strategy

Corporate Plan

The Board has a three-year corporate plan covering financial years 2019 to 2022. It sets out the Board's vision as follows:

"to provide a range of valuation and electoral services to the stakeholders of the Valuation Joint Board in accordance with statute and at levels of excellence which meet or exceed their expectations"

Five core strategic objectives have been identified in the corporate plan, as follows:



The Board's senior management team monitors the plan. Any review or update to the plan is reported to the Board through the 6-monthly Best Value progress report.

The five core strategic objectives are always at the forefront of planned activities, which has been tested as the Board conducted business during the COVID-19 pandemic. While recognising the duty to secure the Best Value and Consultation objectives, the focus has been on maintaining a core service within statutory requirements, sound governance and supporting employees throughout the period of remote working.

The corporate plan can be found at:
<http://www.orkney-shetland-vjb.co.uk/THE%20BOARD.html>

Performance Information

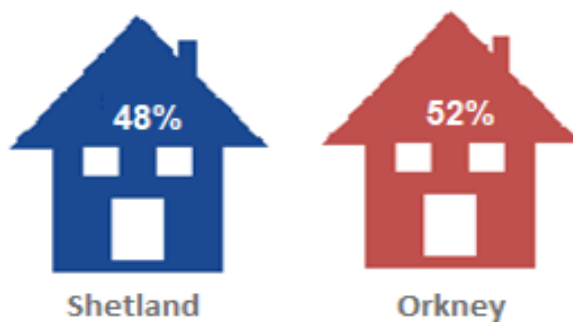
2020/21 was another active year for the Board and its employees involving the continuing citation and negotiation of non-domestic 2017 rating revaluation appeals, which have to be settled by 31 December 2021, in addition to ongoing valuation duties. While there were no planned electoral events in 2020/21, along with the electoral annual canvass, unplanned electoral events included an Orkney Local Government By-Election on 1 October 2020.

Individual Electoral Registration (IER) continues to be a demand on resources. Funding from the Cabinet Office was last received in 2019/20, however with the introduction of Canvass reform in 2020 no further IER Cabinet Office funding is available.

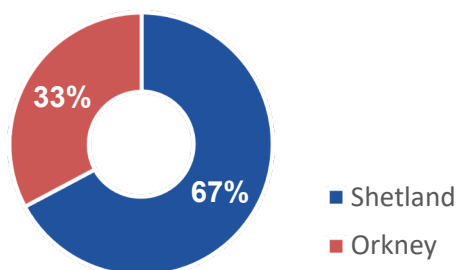
Work on the rolling programme to update and revalue subjects contained in the asset register, along with insurance valuations on behalf of Orkney Islands Council continues to be an extra service provided by the Board. While this service is funded, the impact on the statutory functions of the Board are continually monitored. There has been no adverse impact on existing resources in provision of this valuation service.

As at 31 March 2021, the Board had:

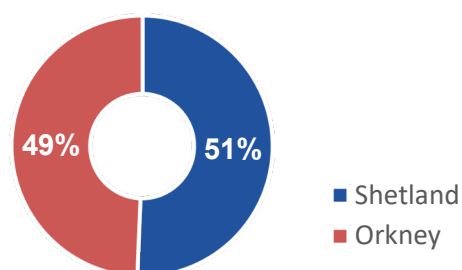
ENTRIES IN VALUATION ROLL - 4,996



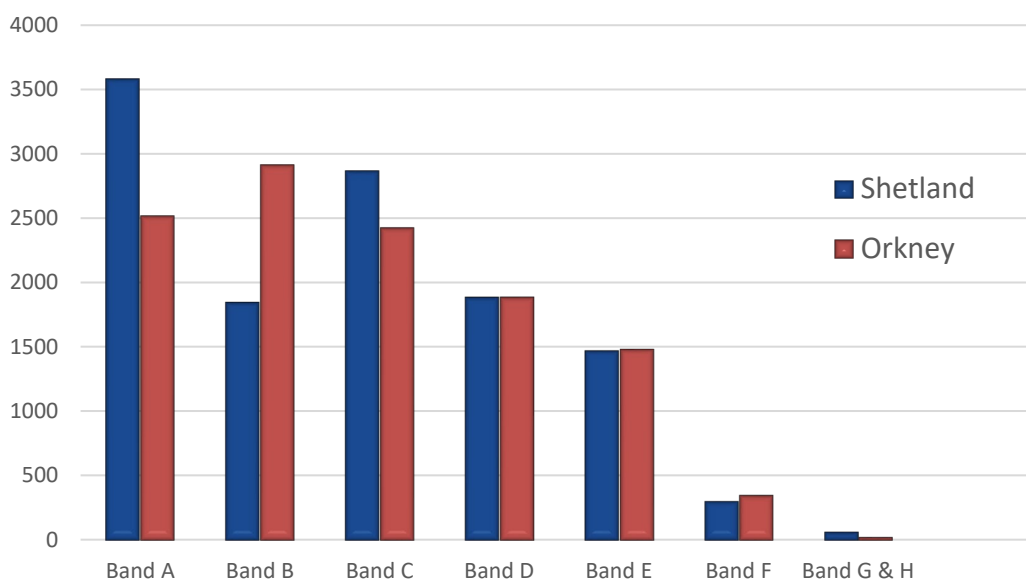
RATEABLE VALUE: £88,735,630



ELECTORS: 35,501



COUNCIL TAX PROPERTIES: 23,667



Key Performance Indicators

The Board has adopted an agreed range of local non-financial Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with reference to those published by other VJB's. Performance targets are set annually by the Assessor with consideration of previous achievements, pressures on resources and anticipated workload.

The non-financial KPIs are:

Council Tax List	2020/21		2019/20
	Target %	Actual %	Actual %
% entered in List within 3 months of occupation	87.00	93.78	97.66
% entered in List within 6 months of occupation	96.00	97.30	99.07
% entered in List more than 6 months after occupation	<4.00	2.70	0.93
Valuation Roll	2020/21		2019/20
	Target %	Actual %	Actual %
% entered in Roll within 3 months of effective date	75.00	81.12	68.91
% entered in Roll within 6 months of effective date	90.00	90.90	81.16
% entered in Roll more than 6 months after effective date	<10.00	9.10	18.84
Total Reduction on appeal	<1.00	3.03	1.04

The non-financial targets have remained the same as for 2018/19 to 2020/21.

The long-term vacant Depute Assessor's post has had an effect on the Valuation Roll non-financial KPIs, along with a resource focus on settling the outstanding 2017 Revaluation non-domestic rating appeals.

The performance targets and outcomes for 2020/21 were duly reported and considered by the Board on 24 June 2021.

The comparison of the actual outturn to budgeted net expenditure is a measure of the effectiveness of financial management. Quarterly revenue monitoring reports inform this key financial indicator of the Board's performance over the financial year and of the affordability of its ongoing commitments.

Financial Management	2020/21	2019/20
Actual net expenditure as a percentage of budgeted net expenditure.	88%	96%

Further information on performance can be found here:

<http://www.orkney-shetland-vjb.co.uk/KPIWeb06.html>

Risks and Uncertainties

The maintenance of a risk register ensures the Board's functions operate effectively under all assessable and identifiable risks. The risk register assesses the likelihood and impact of identifiable risks and provides actions to mitigate or minimise them. A traffic light system is used to show the overall risk rating - green being low risk, amber medium and red high.

Progress against actions are regularly monitored and the latest report was presented to the Board on 18 February 2021. The risk register identified a total of 49 risks and of these no risks are red, six are amber and the remainder are green.

The Board's risks and uncertainties can be summarised as:

- Staffing - particularly in relation to the continued failure to recruit a Depute Assessor to support the valuation functions of the Board;
- Staffing – an inability to appoint sufficient staff to deliver the electoral registration functions of the Board;
- Failure to maintain an up to date Electoral register, through late or non-delivery of household enquiry forms and/or invitations to register; and
- The UK's withdrawal from the European Union has created uncertainty to the legislative intentions of government, particularly in relation to reform of Council Tax, Non-Domestic ratings and the Barclay Review.

Full details on the risks identified along with the steps to mitigate these can be found at:

<http://www.orkney-shetland-vjb.co.uk/THE%20BOARD.html>

Since the most recent presentation of the risk register in February, the Board faces further risks and uncertainties that have not yet been reported:

- The vacancy of the Assessor & ERO position from October 2021 arising from the planned retirement of current postholder, in advance of the vacant Depute Assessor position being filled. These risks have since been managed by the current Assessor & ERO agreeing to delay his retirement to 31 March 2022 to allow the Board to re-advertise the post and the successful appointment of a Depute Assessor effective from 22 November 2021.
- The Annual Governance Statement identifies three further significant governance issues, including: (1) that the Board did not follow its own constitution when holding an informal meeting to discuss the recruitment process for the Assessor & ERO post; (2) some actions taken by officers following this meeting have been identified as being ultra vires in that officers did not have the proper authority to make these decisions; and (3) contract standing orders have not been followed by officers when repeatedly extending the initial appointment of a consultant to provide depute assessor services in 2015. As a result, the Board is no longer compliant with the core principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework. An action plan has been agreed with officers to address these areas of non-compliance

Primary Financial Statements

The accounting framework defines local authorities as Councils constituted under Section 2 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994 and the Valuation Joint Boards (Scotland) Order 1995 and those bodies to which Section 106(1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 applies (i.e. committees, joint committees and joint boards, the members of which are appointed by local authorities and charities, etc.).

The Annual Accounts summarise the Board's transactions for the year and its year-end position at 31 March 2021. The Annual Accounts are prepared in accordance with the International Accounting Standards Board Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements as interpreted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code).

A description of the purpose of the Primary Financial Statements has been included immediately prior to each statement: the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES), Movement in Reserves

Statement and Balance Sheet. These three statements are accompanied by Notes to the Accounts, which set out the Accounting Policies adopted by the Board and provide more detailed analysis of the figures disclosed on the face of the Primary Financial Statements.

There is no Cashflow Statement because the Board does not have a bank account. All transactions are accounted for through Shetland Islands Council as administering authority.

The cash balance at 31 March 2021 of £0 (£120 as at 31 March 2020) represents petty cash held by officers of the Board. Separate petty cash arrangements have since been introduced as part of the financial services provided by Orkney Islands Council with effect from 1 April 2021.

The Primary Financial Statements and notes to the accounts, including the accounting policies, form the relevant Annual Accounts for the purpose of the auditor's report.

Financial Performance

The purpose of the Annual Accounts is to present a public statement on the stewardship of funds for the benefit of both members of the Board and the public. The Board meets several times a year, with its budget meeting taking place in January or February. A proposed budget is presented to the Board annually and takes account of any known commitments and costs pressures. This is viewed within the context of the available resources of the constituent authorities before the Board approves the budget for the year.

The Board's budget is its prime annual planning document and actual expenditure is monitored against it during the year. Any underspend or overspend of budget is reported to the Board in the quarterly revenue monitoring reports and annual requisitions are adjusted accordingly.

The 2021/22 budget was approved by the Board on 18 February 2021 and has been funded by the two constituent authorities.

The CIES presents the full economic cost of providing the Board's services in 2020/21. This differs from the budgeted outturn position shown in the table overleaf as the CIES includes accounting adjustments required to comply with proper accounting practice. The difference between the CIES and the actual outturn position is purely as a result of necessary accounting adjustments in the former. The Cost of Services of

£952k (£778k in 2019/20), which is disclosed on the CIES, has been reconciled to the outturn used for management decision making of £710k (£728k in 2019/20), within Note 1: Expenditure and Funding Analysis, on page 30.

Expenditure (net of income from fees and charges) that is funded from Orkney and Shetland Islands Councils and the Cabinet Office in 2020/21 is summarised in the following table:

	2020/21		
	Revised Budget £	Actual £	Variance £
Expenditure:			
Employee Costs	652,981	536,858	116,123
Operating Costs	198,806	276,576	(77,770)
Income:			
Fees and Charges	(43,200)	(43,311)	111
Specific Grant Income	0	(60,160)	60,160
Net Expenditure	808,587	709,963	98,624

Overall in 2020/21, the Board underspent against its budget. The underspend on employee costs for the year was due in the main to the Depute Assessor post remaining vacant for the whole year. Operating costs were overspent as a result of external consultants brought in to provide additional capacity to support valuation work; together with systems development work that was funded by additional grant funding from Scottish Government during the year. Savings on administration costs also arose as a result of restrictions on staff travel and subsistence during the year, which was offset in part by the need for additional equipment to support home working.

The Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2021

The Balance Sheet sets out the total net worth of the Board at a snapshot in time. When comparing the net worth of the Board at 31 March 2021 to that of the prior year, an overall increase in the net liabilities of the organisation of £528k (£327k increase in 2019/20) can be seen.

This has been driven by an increase in pension liabilities that represent a long-term commitment for the Board and do not require to be met in any single year. The increase results from updated pension assumptions which interact in complex ways. For example, a decrease in the net discount rate has the effect of increasing pension liabilities, as a higher value

is placed on benefits paid in the future. Changes in these assumptions are further discussed in Note 16: Defined Benefit Pension Schemes on page 36.

Material Transactions

Pension Liability

In order to comply with International Accounting Standard (IAS) 19 - Employee Benefits, a valuation of the Shetland Islands Council Pension Fund was made by the Fund Actuary as at 31 March 2021. This indicated a net pension liability for the Board of £2.435m compared to a net pension liability of £1.925m as at 31 March 2020. The movement in the year is influenced by actuarial assumptions and changes to these assumptions have increased the valuation as at 31 March 2021.

The pension fund is a long-term commitment and is subject to a triennial actuarial valuation; the last valuation at 31 March 2020 recorded a funding level of 75% and determined that the contributions the Board makes to the pension fund should increase in line with the actuary's valuation and recommendations.

Given the net pension liability is an actuarial estimation, i.e. an attempt to look into the future which is dependent on complex judgments, its value is subject to a high degree of uncertainty. The actual results could therefore be materially different from estimates however, such effects can be measured. The effects of changes of assumptions are further discussed in Note 16: Defined Benefit Pension Schemes on page 36.

Detailed information on the Shetland Islands Council Pension Fund can be found here:

http://www.shetland.gov.uk/about_finances/

Looking Ahead 2021/22 Budget

Looking forward, the Board approved its 2021/22 budget at the Board meeting on 18 February 2021. The approved budget has been set at £923k, which is an increase of £114k (14%) on the 2020/21 revised budget and principally included an allowance for the outcome of a pay and grading review process that is due to reach a conclusion in 2021/22. This will allow the Board to discharge its duties and meet the challenges it faces in response to the planned reform of business rates.

The Scottish Government has allocated £60k to each constituent Council in 2021/22 to support the additional costs on implementing the Barclay Review recommendations. This funding is included in the above approved budget of £923k.

Further information on the Barclay Review can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/08/3435>

<https://www.saa.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Barclay-Report-SAA-Recommendation-12-action-plan-20170929.pdf>

COVID-19

Prior to the start of financial year 2020/21, the Board's senior management team reacted to the UK and Scottish Government's announcement on a countrywide lockdown towards the end of March 2020 by introducing a range of temporary measures. These measures focused on, amongst other things, the welfare of staff, and enabling homeworking in order that statutory undertakings could continue to be carried out where possible. Arrangements put in place to deal with all correspondence, both electronic and by post, and for Board staff to have access to IT systems have since been maintained for the duration of financial year 2020/21, to facilitate the following:

- The Valuation Roll for non-domestic rating to be maintained, however activity in this area did reduce in respect of alterations where physical survey were required. Appeals continued to be dealt with where possible. Staff are dealing with an increase in correspondence in relation to Valuation Roll entries, in particular in respect of the new COVID-19 grant legislation put in place by the Scottish Government. Additionally, over 180 appeals had been received against Valuation Roll entries as a result of the pandemic as at April 2020, with another 170 appeals received by April 2021;
- The Valuation List for Council Tax to be maintained, new entries added to the List including any band increases as a result of dwellings being materially altered and then subsequently sold where information existed which allowed such changes to be made without the need to undertake site visits. Proposals and appeals continued to be dealt with where possible; and
- The Electoral Registers to be maintained and monthly updates produced as normal. Invitation to Register forms to be issued and processed as appropriate, although there is a current halt on

any door-to-door visits. Working processes and gearing up resources, with the aid of funding, for the Scottish Parliamentary Election on 6 May 2021.

Beyond 2021

The Board successfully recruited to the vacant Depute Assessor post in 2021, a position that had been vacant since May 2015. Efforts to recruit a Depute Assessor had been put on hold during 2020 as a result of the impact of COVID-19 and. As a response to long running recruitment and retention challenges the Board decided to commission an Independent Consultant in 2020 to look at the current structure in place for pay and grading to consider if it meets the current and future needs of the Board. This review process concluded in May 2021 when a revised pay and grading model was approved by the Board. The Board has been unable to recruit to the Assessor & ERO post in 2021 following the current postholder giving early notice of his intention to retire on 6 October 2021. This key risk has since been managed by the current Assessor & ERO agreeing to delay his retirement to 31 March 2022 to allow the Board to re-advertise the post.

Close monitoring will also be given to the IER work and Canvass Reform 2020 and any external funding availability.

Further information on staffing and IER can be found here:

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=24714>

A medium-term financial plan (MTFP) is being developed for the Board to forecast its income and expenditure requirements over the medium-term. The MTFP will allow the Board to demonstrate value for money and improved transparency by setting out where it will deploy its available resources and any opportunities for efficiencies which may exist. The development of the MTFP has however been delayed until 31 March 2022, partly as the Shetland Islands Council decided to defer the revision of the Council's MTFP, together with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and latterly the as a result of the change in chief officials and transfer of the administering authority remit to Orkney Islands Council in 2020. Competing pressures of work have also contributed to this delay.

Acknowledgements

Finally, we would like to acknowledge all the hard work of the officers in both Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council and the officers of the Board who have had a role in the preparation of these Annual Accounts and those who have worked diligently throughout the year in the delivery of the Board's objectives.

.....
Andrew Drever
Convener
Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board
20 January 2022

.....
Colin Kemp CPFA
Treasurer
Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board
20 January 2022

.....
Dennis M Stevenson MRICS IRRV
Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer
Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board
20 January 2022

Annual Governance Statement

Scope of Responsibility

The Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board's responsibilities are to:

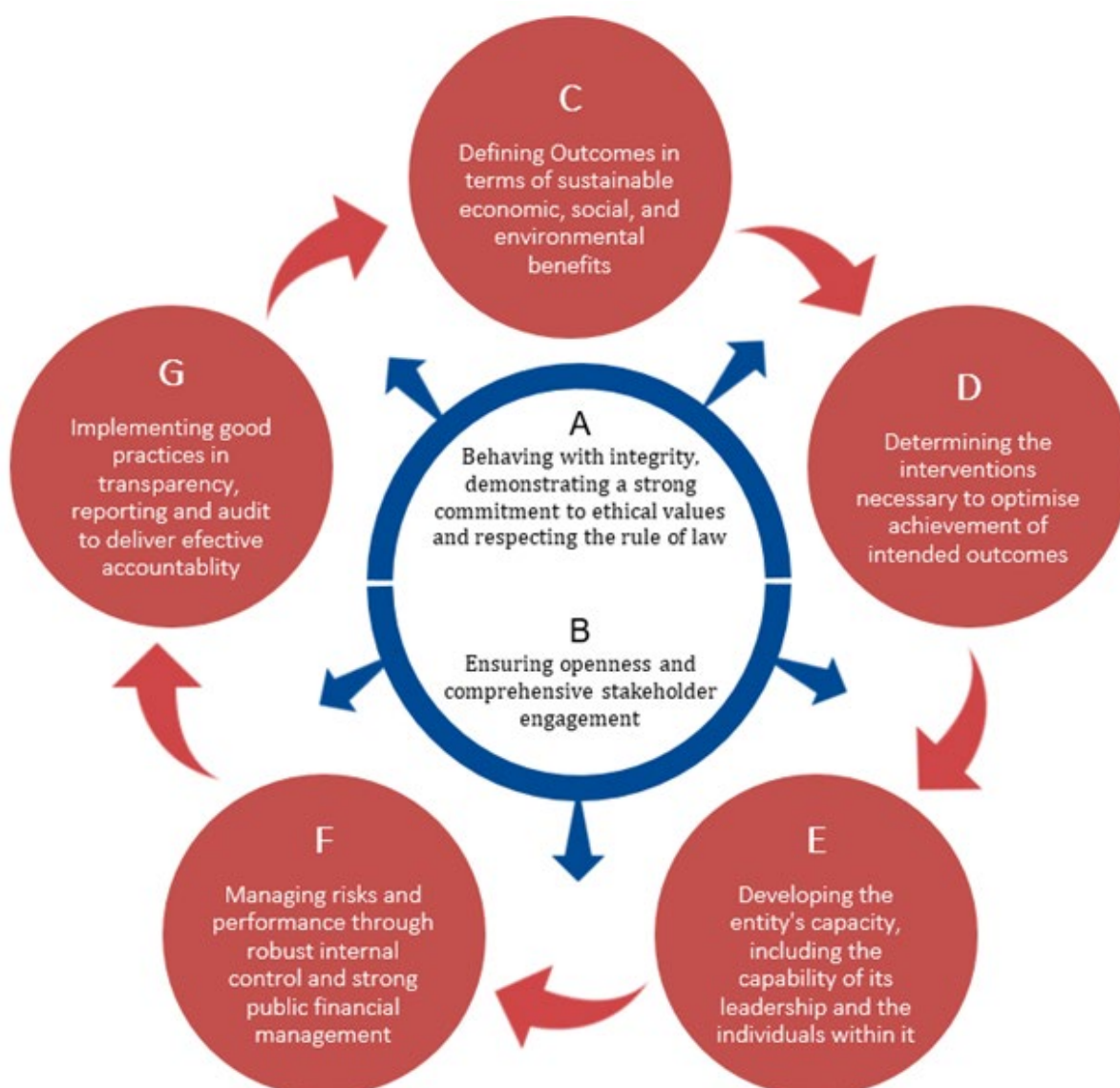
- Ensure its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards;
- Safeguard and properly account for public money; and
- Use public money economically, efficiently and effectively.

To discharge the Board's responsibilities, the Board must put in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, to facilitate the effective exercise of its functions which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The Governance Framework



The Board is committed to the pursuit of proper corporate governance throughout the services it delivers and to establishing the principles and practices by which this can be achieved. The governance framework is the system by which the Board leads, directs and controls its functions and relates to the community and other stakeholders. It includes the systems, processes, culture and values through which the Board strives to adhere to the principles of good governance of openness, inclusivity, integrity and accountability.




The Board's governance environment is consistent with the seven core principles of the revised 2016 CIPFA/SOLACE framework pictured below, which shows each of the seven principles and their interactions.



Principles A and B contain the overarching principles of good governance which percolate down through the remaining principles.

The table below summarises the Board's compliance with the CIPFA/SOLACE framework and gives examples where the board demonstrates adherence to each of the seven principles.

Principle	Compliance	Comment
A – Behaving with integrity, demonstrating a strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law		<p>Elected members and officers from both constituent authorities are expected to abide by their respective codes of conduct. In order to avoid duplication, the Board relies on the register of interests and gifts maintained by the relevant constituent authorities for elected members. These can be found at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orkney Islands Council - Register of Interests & Gifts • Shetland Islands Council - Register of Interests & Gifts <p>The Assessor is bound by the policies of the Board and also must adhere to the professional standards and ethics regime set by the RICS.</p> <p>There were no recorded breaches of codes of conduct by officials or members during 2020/21.</p> <p>Standing orders regulate the form and content of Board meetings and the Board's financial regulations, modelled on those of Shetland Islands Council, provide a scheme of delegation for financial decisions. They can be found here:</p> <p>https://www.shetland.gov.uk/downloads/download/260/constitution-governance-downloads</p> <p>An informal meeting of the Board was held on 6 September 2021 to discuss the failure to recruit to the Assessors post which was due to become vacant on 6 October 2021. The informal meeting was invalid and actions were taken by officers as a result of this meeting. Some of these actions have been assessed as being ultra vires in that officers did not have the proper authority to make these decisions. A separate report on this subject is being presented to the next meeting of Board on 20 January 2022, including an action plan to address this issue.</p>
B – Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement		<p>The Assessor's annual public performance report and annual accounts are available on the Board's website:</p> <p>http://www.orkney-shetland-vjb.co.uk/THE%20BOARD.html http://www.orkney-shetland-vjb.co.uk/KPIWeb06.html</p> <p>The Assessor also makes significant use of media to communicate relevant items of news. For example, to publicise the annual electoral canvass the Assessor pre-recorded a broadcast on BBC Radio Orkney.</p> <p>Procedures are in place to meet requests made under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act. Community engagement is driven by the priorities of the particular aspect of the service under consideration. This is particularly evident during the lead up to elections when the information supplied and personal engagement through the media, gives timely information to the voting public of timescales to meet and the value to be gained, for example, by maximising absent voting options.</p> <p>The financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements in the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016). Following the resignation of the</p>

		<p>previous office bearer the Board appointed a new Treasurer on the 5 November 2020 which will ensure the Board's financial management arrangements are sound and robust.</p>
C – Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable, economic, social and environmental benefits		<p>Progress and performance reports are presented to Board meetings on a regular basis. Records of decision-making, meeting agendas, reports (and any supplementary appendices) and minutes of Board meetings are published timeously on Shetland Islands Council's committee services website, and more recently Orkney Islands Council's website.</p>
D – Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of intended outcomes		<p>Key performance indicators have been established for the service and performance against these indicators are reported through the Assessor's annual report.</p> <p>Standing orders and schemes of delegation are in place that set out the type of decisions that are delegated, and those reserved for the collective decision-making of the Board.</p> <p>An area that requires improvement is the development of a medium-term financial plan (MTFP). The current lack of a Board-specific MTFP inhibits any medium or long term financial planning beyond that of a single-year budgeting cycle. A MTFP for the Board would provide some certainty to both constituent authorities with regards to resource requirements in future years.</p> <p>The informal meeting of the Board was held on 6 September 2021 was invalid but led to officers taking actions, some of which have been assessed as being ultra vires. A follow-up report to the Board on the 30 September 2021 to homologate these actions was considered incomplete as to the status of the situation. A separate report on this subject is being presented to the next meeting of Board on 20 January 2022, including an action plan to address this issue.</p>
E – Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it		<p>Functions and roles of statutory posts including the Assessor, Clerk, Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) and Treasurer have clearly defined job descriptions.</p> <p>Member development plans are in place for elected members in Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council, which are refreshed each year. Additionally, elected members have access to the improvement service CPD framework for elected members.</p> <p>Officers are supported in achieving their continued personal development obligations to remain professionally competent.</p> <p>Standing orders and schemes of delegation are in place that set out the type of decisions that are delegated, and those reserved for the collective decision-making of the Board. These are due to be reviewed in 2021/22.</p> <p>Some actions taken by officers following the informal meeting of the Board on the 6 September 2021 have been assessed as being ultra vires in that they did not have the proper authority to make these decisions. It is also recognised that there is a need to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities between the Board and the constituent local authorities going forward. A separate report on this subject is being presented to the</p>

		<p>next meeting of Board on 20 January 2022, including an action plan to address this issue.</p>
<p>F – Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</p>	<p>×</p>	<p>The Board reviews and approves the Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>Scrutiny is secured through internal and external audit.</p> <p>Decisions of the Assessor are subject to public scrutiny and scrutiny via an appeal and complaint process to the respective judicial bodies and external stakeholders that monitor performance, such as the Electoral Commission and the Electoral Management Board for Scotland.</p> <p>The provision of objective advice that supports evidenced-based decision making, in terms of policy or strategic direction, is an important element in how the Board demonstrates it manages its risks effectively. The Board made appointments to the two vacant proper officer roles of Clerk and Treasurer during the year in order to address identified weaknesses in the internal control environment.</p> <p>Following the appointment of a consultant to provide depute assessor services in 2015 proper process has not been followed with the contract repeatedly extended in contravention of the requirements of the contract and good practice. Most recently this occurred in April 2021 when an increase in the hourly rate of pay was agreed and the contract extended to March 2022. As contract standing orders were not followed it is not possible to demonstrate that best value has been achieved in the decisions taken and use of public funds. A follow-up review will assess the robustness of the Boards processes and controls, compliance with them, and whether relevant individuals have sufficient training to implement them.</p>
<p>G – Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability</p>	<p>×</p>	<p>The Board maintains a website where users can find further information about the Board's performance and the financial accounts, including feedback from external auditor in the form of the external audit report and action plan.</p> <p>The Board adopts the Scottish Information Commissioners' "Model Publication Scheme" and publish on their website a guide to information. This is valid for 3 years effective from 31 May 2021. Information published include the Boards' data protection policy, data retention policy and privacy notices.</p> <p>The administering authority function transferred to Orkney Islands Council during 2020, with the provision of financial services to follow with effect from 1 April 2021.</p> <p>Audit recommendations and action points are now routinely reported to and monitored by the Board.</p> <p>It is noted that an informal meeting of the Board was held on 6 September 2021 to discuss the failure to recruit to the Assessors post which was due to become vacant on 6 October 2021. The informal meeting was invalid and actions were taken by officers as a result of this meeting. Some of these actions have been identified as being ultra vires in that they did not have the proper authority to make these decisions. Although the Board</p>

		duly considered a report on the 30 September 2021 to homologate the actions of officers, the reporting was considered incomplete as to the status of the situation. The Board is not able to retrospectively approve unlawful actions. A separate report on this subject is being presented to the next meeting of Board on 20 January 2022, including an action plan to address this issue.
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Review of Effectiveness

The Board has a responsibility for ensuring the continuing effectiveness of the governance framework and systems of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by:

- Progress towards key strategic and service objectives, as demonstrated through regular performance reporting on targets and key performance indicators;
- Financial and budget monitoring;
- Internal audit reviews on the systems of the Council as used by the Board;
- The work of managers within the Board;
- The Annual Accounts; and
- External audits.

During the year, no specific internal audits were carried out for the Board. Internal audits undertaken within Shetland Islands Council that focused on the internal control environment found no serious deficiencies that impacted on the Board's activity. Further information can be found in the Council's Annual Report and Accounts which is available at: http://www.shetland.gov.uk/about_finances/

Although no specific internal audit opinion has been expressed by internal audit for the VJB, the Board is satisfied that the internal audit opinion provided to the Council also covers the activity of the Board and therefore takes assurance from that audit opinion, (which can be found on page 26 of the Council's Annual Accounts).

Audit Glasgow provide the strategic planning, professional management and reporting for the internal audit function of Shetland Islands Council and this includes the activities of the Board. The internal audit function will now be provided by Orkney Islands Council following the transfer of the administering authority function during the year and the provision of financial services with effect from 1 April 2021.

The Board acknowledges in the table above, that while progress has been made over the last year to strengthen its compliance with the CIPFA/SOLACE principles of good governance, further work is still required.

The Improvement Service was commissioned by the Board to carry out an independent review of their governance arrangements in 2020. This review was concluded in 2021 with the findings duly reported to the Board on 25 March 2021. Overall, the findings of the report was positive with no significant weaknesses identified. An action plan was agreed to reaffirm respective roles and responsibilities and including member training.

However, further weaknesses in the governance arrangements of the Board have since been identified through the external audit process. This includes the use of an informal meetings to discuss the business of the Board which was invalid and led to actions being taken by officers some of which have been assessed as being ultra vires. A separate report on this subject is being presented to the next meeting of Board on 20 January 2022, including an action plan to address these issues. Also, an established practice whereby a consultancy contract for the provision of depute assessor services from 2015 has been repeatedly extended in contravention of the requirements of the contract and good practice is evidence that the contract standing orders were not being followed. As a result it is not possible to demonstrate that best value has been achieved in the decisions taken and use of public funds. It has since been agreed that a follow-up review will assess the robustness of the Board's processes and controls, compliance with them, and whether relevant individuals have sufficient training to implement them.

Significant Governance Issues

The system of governance can provide only reasonable, and not absolute, assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions are authorised and properly recorded, material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period and all the significant risks impacting on the achievement of our objectives have been mitigated. Two significant governance issues were identified during 2020/21, and which arose between the reporting date and the date on which the 2019/20 accounts were authorised for issue as detailed in the table below:

Significant Governance Issues	Responsible Officer(s)	Agreed Action	Target Date
The Board has not yet appointed substantive proper officers to replace the Clerk and Treasurer to the Board, who both resigned shortly after the financial year end. The Board does not have ready access to objective advice on finance, governance and legal matters which compromises the Board's ability to make evidenced-based decisions on policy and strategic direction. Furthermore, the Board is required to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The appointment of a proper officer for finance, or Treasurer, will allow the Board to resolve this significant governance concern.	Chief Executive - Orkney Islands Council and Chief Executive - Shetland Islands Council.	The Board is actively considering the appointment of proper officers roles to replace the previous role-holders. A report will be presented to the Board to able the appointments process to begin.	30 September 2020
<p>Progress update:</p> <p>Reports to the Board during 2020 resulted in the following appointments to proper officer roles - the positions of Clerk to the Board on 28 Sept 2020, and Treasurer on 5 November 2020.</p> <p>The appointment of the Clerk to the Board saw the administering authority remit for assisting the Board to discharge its roles and responsibilities in terms of governance and decision making transfer from Shetland Islands Council to Orkney Islands Council with effect from 28 September 2020.</p> <p>Following the Treasurer's resignation, it was agreed that Shetland Islands Council would continue to provide financial services to the Board on a temporary basis to ensure continuity and to allow the Board to meet its financial reporting obligations. Jamie Manson was appointed as Acting Proper Officer for Finance to the Board until such time as a substantive Treasurer could be appointed by the Board. This arrangement ended on the 5 November 2020, following the appointment of a Treasurer to the Board, and it has since been agreed that Orkney Islands Council will provide financial services to the Board with effect from 1 April 2021.</p>			

Significant Governance Issues	Responsible Officer(s)	Agreed Action	Target Date
<p>In addition to the resignation of two proper officers (as outlined in the issue above), three members of the Board have also resigned since the end of the financial year. During the 2019/20 external audit, a number of weaknesses have been identified with respect to governance of the Board. The Board needs to address the weaknesses identified by the external auditor and seek appointments from both constituent authorities to fill the vacancies that have arisen in the Board's membership to ensure it can provide the strategic direction required.</p>	<p>Chief Executive - Orkney Islands Council and Chief Executive - Shetland Islands Council.</p>	<p>The Board is committed to addressing weaknesses in its governance framework and will seek to commission an external review of its governance framework. Following this review, the Board will seek to arrange training for Board members and officers to clarify the different roles and responsibilities that officers and elected members fulfil.</p>	<p>31 July 2021</p>
<p>Progress update: The Improvement Service was commissioned by the Board to carry out an independent review of their governance arrangements in 2020. This review concluded in 2021 with the findings duly reported to the Board on 25 March 2021. Overall, the findings of the report was positive with no significant weaknesses identified. An action plan was agreed to reaffirm respective roles and responsibilities and including member training.</p>			

Update on Significant Governance Issues previously reported

The following table details the actions taken to address the significant governance issues previously reported in the Annual Governance Statement.

Prior Years Significant Governance Issues	Responsible Officer	Agreed Action	Progress
The Board does not have a MTFP or current financial strategy in place. The Board had been waiting for further information about the implementation of the Barclay Review in order to more realistically determine the likely level of resources required to deliver services in the short and medium terms beyond the 2019/20 financial year.	Acting Proper Officer for Finance	A commitment to develop a MTFP and revised financial strategy for presentation to the Board before the end of 2019.	The development of the MTFP has been delayed until late 2020, partly as the Shetland Islands Council decided to defer the revision of the Council's MTFP together with impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and latterly as a result of the change in office bearers and transfer of the administering authority remit to Orkney Islands Council in 2020. This has subsequently been delayed until 31 March 2022 due to competing pressures.
Unsuccessful recruitment of the Depute Assessor Post.	Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer	That the Board keep the situation under constant review and the Assessor reports on recruitment options in 2019/20.	There were two recruitment exercises carried out in 2019/20. Each exercise led to an offer being made to a preferred candidate, but ultimately neither exercise resulted in a substantive appointment to the Depute Assessor role. Efforts to recruit a Depute Assessor were subsequently put on hold in lieu of the outcome of the pay and grading review. While a revised pay and grading model has now been approved by the Board for implementation early in 2021/22, this issue has now been further compounded by the planned retiral of the current Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer in 2021. A separate recruitment exercise was carried out for each post in 2021 leading to the successful appointment of a Depute Assessor effective from 22 November 2021. The exercise was however unsuccessful for the position of Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer. The current post holder has since agreed to delay his planned retirement to the 31 March 2022 to allow the Board to re-advertise the post for a second time on improved terms and conditions.

COVID-19

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that has quickly spread across the globe, prompting the World Health Organisation, on 11 March 2020, to declare the outbreak a pandemic and a public health emergency of international concern. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted both constituent authorities, the Board and the residents of Orkney and Shetland, resulting in changes to the way services are delivered across the Isles.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the board can be summarised under three areas:

- Service delivery and administration;
- Governance arrangements; and
- Longer-term consequences.

Service Delivery and Administration

The Board activated business continuity arrangements and put a range of measures in place to facilitate the continuity of service and to protect the safety and wellbeing of staff and customers. The Board enacted business continuity plans to ensure the essential services were delivered remotely. Arrangements were put in place to facilitate remote working through ICT and the management of correspondence to ensure continuity of workflow.

Governance Arrangements

As the Board follows the Shetland Islands Council scheme of delegations, arrangements were made so that virtual Board meetings could be held to ensure elected members and officers from both constituent authorities adhered to national guidance on social and physical distancing. These temporary arrangements have been in place for the duration of financial year 2020/21, and will be kept under review as circumstances develop over the coming months.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Financial Statements.

Longer-term consequences

It is becoming clearer that the world will be living with COVID-19 for the foreseeable future. Whilst our attention focuses on rolling out a programme of vaccinations as a means of containing the virus, efforts to date are being thwarted by human behaviour and more virulent strains of the virus as national restrictions on travel and social distancing are lifted.

The consequences arising from the pandemic, from both a health and an economic perspective will be felt for many years to come. There remains uncertainty over the longer-term impact of COVID-19 on public sector funding, especially as UK public sector net debt reaches new historic levels, which may influence future funding levels of the Board.

Long-term health implications arising from COVID-19 are not yet fully known, which may have consequences on the wider global economy and temper any efforts for societies across the world to resume 'normal' life. In turn, that will also influence the extent to which the Board is able to resume a normal service, and how those services may be delivered.

Conclusion

The Governance Framework has been in place for the financial year ended 31 March 2021 and up to the date of approval of the annual accounts. Effective governance arrangements remains a key priority for the Board and having made good progress in addressing the previously identified weaknesses in the governance arrangements of the Board it is disappointing to have further weaknesses being identified now. Whilst we do not underestimate the seriousness of any actions by officers of the Board being identified as being ultra vires, it should be recognised that the Board remains in a period of transition with an unprecedented number of changes in the governance arrangements of the Board being managed by officers during the year. This includes, for example, the appointment of new officer bearers and transfer of support services from Shetland Islands Council to Orkney Islands Council, a process that remains ongoing. Also, the completion of a pay and grading review which had already commenced but was behind schedule and the well documented issues surrounding the failure to recruit to the vacant deputy assessor post and more recently the post of assessor. These urgent and important issues were a significant contributory factor to explain why the wider review of the governance arrangements which the Board had committed to, including provision of training, has not been completed as originally planned.

Notwithstanding the additional governance weaknesses identified above, overall, we consider that the governance and internal control environment operating in 2020/21 provides reasonable and objective assurance that any significant risks impacting on the achievement of our principal objectives will be identified, and actions taken to avoid or mitigate their impact.

.....
Andrew Drever
Convener
Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board
20 January 2022

.....
Dennis M Stevenson
Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer
Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board
20 January 2022

Remuneration Report

Introduction

The Remuneration report is set out in accordance with the Local Authority (Scotland) Regulations 2014 (SSI 2014/200). These regulations require various disclosures on the remuneration and pension benefits of senior Councillors and employees.

All disclosures in the tables below in relation to remuneration, pay bands, exit packages and pension benefit are audited by Deloitte LLP. The other sections of the Remuneration Report are reviewed by Deloitte LLP to ensure that they are consistent with the Financial Statements.

Remuneration arrangements of Senior Councillors

The remuneration of Councillors is regulated by the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) SSI No. 2018/38 and the (Remuneration) Regulations 2007 (SSI No. 2007/183). The Regulations provide for

the grading of Councillors for the purposes of remuneration arrangements, as the leader of Council, the Convener of the Council, Senior Councillors and Councillors. These regulations set out the amounts a Councillor may be paid for being a Convener or Vice-Convener of a Joint Board. This is inclusive of any amount payable to them as either a Councillor or Senior Councillor. The Convener and Vice-Convener are the only two Senior Councillor positions recognised by the Board.

The Board has an arrangement with each constituent authority to reimburse that Council for the additional costs of the Councillor arising from them being a Convener or Vice-Convener of the Board. The disclosures made in this report are limited to the amounts paid to the Council by the Board for remuneration and do not reflect the full value of the remuneration that may be paid to the Councillor.

The Convener and Vice-Convener of the Board are remunerated by the Council of which they are an elected member. The regulations permit remuneration of Senior Councillors to one position held.

Disclosure of remuneration for Senior Councillors

Name	Designation	2020/21			2019/20
		Salary, fees and allowances £	Taxable Expenses £	Total Remuneration £	Total Remuneration £
Andrew Drever	Convener	4,426	0	4,426	4,365
Theo Smith	Vice-Convener	3,278	0	3,278	3,291

Remuneration of Senior Employees

The employees of the Board are employed on the same terms and conditions as the employees of Shetland Islands Council. The Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee (SJNC) for Local Authority Services sets the salaries for the Chief Executives of Scottish Local Authorities. Circular CO/150 details the salaries paid to Chief Officers. Senior employees are defined as having responsibility for the management of the Board to the extent that they can direct or control the major activities of the Board.

Disclosure of remuneration for Senior Employees

Name	Designation	2020/21			2019/20
		Salary, fees and allowances £	Taxable Expenses £	Total Remuneration £	Total Remuneration £
Dennis M Stevenson	Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer	75,839	0	75,839	73,642

Remuneration of Officers

The number of officers who received remuneration (excluding pension contributions) in excess of £50k, disclosed in bands of £5k, for the financial year is shown below:

Remuneration Bands	Number of Employees	
	2020/21	2019/20
£75,000 - £79,999	1	1

The Treasurer and the Clerk to the Board do not receive remuneration from the Valuation Joint Board. The duties of the posts are covered by the post holders' substantive posts in Shetland Islands Council and Orkney Islands Council. Details of their salaries are included in the remuneration report for Shetland Islands Council and Orkney Islands Council where appropriate.

Exit Packages

The Regulations require the Board to disclose in bands the number of exit packages agreed and the cost of those packages to the Board in the financial year in rising bands of £20k up to £100k, and bands of £50k thereafter.

The Regulations also require disclosure of the number of compulsory redundancies and other agreed departures.

Exit packages include compulsory and voluntary redundancy costs, pension contributions in respect of added years, ex-gratia payments and other departure costs.

The numbers of exit packages with total cost per band of the compulsory and other redundancies are set out in the table below:

Exit package cost band (including special payments)	Number of compulsory redundancies		Number of other departures agreed		Total number of exit packages by cost band	
	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20
£0 - £20,000	0	0	0	1	0	1

The total cost of the exit package outlined above, being within the bracket of £0 - £20,000, has not been disclosed as this may enable the identification of the individual's exit package.

Pension details of Senior Councillors

The pension disclosure for Joint Boards for a Convener or Vice-Convener is limited to the contribution the Board has been asked to make to that person's pension by the Council of which the Convener or Vice-Convener is a member. No accrued pension benefit needs to be disclosed. Local Government Finance Circular 8/2011 (revised) details the disclosure requirements for Senior Councillors of Joint Boards.

Pension employer contributions – Senior Councillors

Name	Designation	In-Year Employer Pension Contributions	
		Year ending 31 March 2021 £	Year ending 31 March 2020 £
Andrew Drever	Convener	752	768
Theo Smith	Vice-Convener	682	685

Andrew Drever is a member of the Orkney Islands Council Pension Fund. Theo Smith is a member of the Shetland Islands Council Pension Fund.

Pension details of Senior Employees

Pension benefits for local government employees are provided through the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The LGPS is a funded pension scheme, consisting of contributions received from members of the scheme as well as from employers.

From 1 April 2015, the LGPS moved away from a final salary pension scheme to a career average revalued earnings scheme (CARE). This means that pension benefits from 1 April 2015 onwards, are worked out using career average revalued earnings rather than final salary.

The scheme's normal retirement age for employees is now linked to their state pension age, with the minimum age of 65.

From 1 April 2009, a tiered contribution system was introduced, with contributions from scheme members ranging from a minimum contribution of 5.5% to a maximum contribution of 12%.

This is designed to give more equality between the cost and benefits of scheme membership. Prior to 2009 contributions were set at a fixed rate of 6% for all non-manual employees.

If a person works part-time, their contribution rate is worked out on their actual pay for the job. There is no automatic entitlement to a lump sum. Members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum of up to 25% of their pension value at retirement. The accrual rate guarantees a pension based on 1/49th of actual pay (prior to 1 April 2015 the actual rate guaranteed a pension based on 1/60th of final pensionable salary and years of pensionable service). Prior to 2009, the accrual rate guaranteed a pension based on 1/80th and a lump sum based on 3/80th of final pensionable salary and years of pensionable service).

The tiered contribution rates are as follows:	2020/21
On earnings up to and including £22,200	5.50%
On earnings above £22,201 and up to £27,100	7.25%
On earnings above £27,201 and up to £37,200	8.50%
On earnings above £37,201 and up to £49,600	9.50%
On earnings above £49,601	12.00%

Pension benefits – Senior Employees

The accrued pension benefits have been calculated to 31 March 2020. These are standard benefits, without reduction on account of its payment at that age; without exercising any option to commute pension entitlement into a lump sum; and without any adjustment for the effects of future inflation.

Name and Designation	In-Year Employer Pension Contributions			Accrued Pension Benefits		
	Year ending 31 March 2021 £	Year ending 31 March 2020 £		As at 31 March 2021 £	As at 31 March 2020 £	Increase / (Decrease) £
Dennis M Stevenson - Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer	19,339	20,841	Pension	37,448	35,032	2,416
			Lump Sum	62,513	60,702	1,811

.....
 Andrew Drever
 Convener
 Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board
 20 January 2022

.....
 Dennis M Stevenson MRICS IRRV
 Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer
 Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board
 20 January 2022

Statement of Responsibilities for the Annual Accounts

The Board's responsibilities

The Board is required to:

- Make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that the appointed Treasurer has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs (section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973). For the Board, that officer is the Executive Manager – Finance of Shetland Islands Council. Since 1 May 2020, The Executive Manager- Finance, of Shetland Islands Council, has fulfilled this role as Acting Proper Officer for Finance role on a temporary basis. From 28 September 2020, The Head of Finance of Orkney Islands Council was appointed to the role of Treasurer;
- Manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and to safeguard its assets;
- Ensure that the Annual Accounts are prepared in accordance with legislation (The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014) and, so far as is compatible with that legislation, in accordance with proper accounting practices (section 12 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003); and
- Approve the Annual Accounts for signature.

I confirm that these Annual Accounts were approved for signature by the Board at its meeting on 20 January 2022.

Signed on behalf of the Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board.

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Dennis M Stevenson MRICS IRRV
Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer
Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board
20 January 2022

The Treasurer's responsibilities

The Treasurer, or Proper Officer for Finance, is responsible for the preparation of the Board's Annual Accounts in accordance with proper practices as required by legislation and as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

In preparing these Annual Accounts, the Proper Officer has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- Made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- Complied with legislation; and
- Complied with the Code (in so far as it is compatible with legislation).

The Treasurer/Proper Officer for Finance has also:

- Kept adequate accounting records which were up to date; and
- Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

I certify that the Annual Accounts give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board at the reporting date and the transactions of the Board for the year ended 31 March 2021.

.....
Colin Kemp CPFA
Treasurer
Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board
20 January 2022

Independent Auditor's Report

Independent auditor's report to the members of Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board and the Accounts Commission

Reporting on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on financial statements

We certify that we have audited the financial statements in the annual accounts of Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board for the year ended 31 March 2021 under Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The financial statements comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Movement in Reserves Statement, Balance Sheet and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) as adopted by the European Union, and as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 (the 2020/21 Code).

In our opinion the accompanying financial statements:

- give a true and fair view in accordance with applicable law and the 2020/21 Code of the state of affairs of the body as at 31 March 2021 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with IFRSs as adopted by the European Union, as interpreted and adapted by the 2020/21 Code; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, and the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)), as required by the [Code of Audit Practice](#) approved by the Accounts Commission for Scotland. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We were appointed by the Accounts Commission on 31 May 2016. The period of total uninterrupted appointment is 5 years. We are independent of the body in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. Non-audit services prohibited by the Ethical Standard were not provided to the body. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern basis of accounting

We have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Risks of material misstatement

We report in a separate Annual Audit Report, available from the [Audit Scotland website](#), the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement that we identified and our judgements thereon.

Responsibilities of the Responsible Financial Officer and Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities, the Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with the financial reporting framework, and for such internal control as the Treasurer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Treasurer is responsible for assessing the body's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless deemed inappropriate.

The Orkney and Shetland Valuation Joint Board is responsible for overseeing the financial reporting process.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities outlined above to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. Procedures include:

- considering the nature of the board's control environment and reviewing the board's documentation of their policies and procedures relating to fraud and compliance with laws and regulations. We also enquired with management, internal audit and those charged with governance about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities;
- obtaining an understanding of the applicable legal and regulatory framework and how the body is complying with that framework;
- identifying which laws and regulations are significant in the context of the body;
- assessing the susceptibility of the financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur; and
- considering whether the audit team collectively has the appropriate competence and capabilities to identify or recognise non-compliance with laws and regulations.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework that the body operates in, and identified the key laws and regulations that:

- had a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. This included the Valuation Joint Boards (Scotland) Order 1995.
- do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which may be fundamental to the body's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. These included the Data Protection Act 2018 and relevant employment legislation.

We discussed among the audit engagement team regarding the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the organisation for fraud and how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements.

As a result of the performing the above, we identified the greatest potential for fraud was in relation to the recognition of income from the constituent Councils. The risk is that the Councils do not provide additional income to cover any overspends incurred. In response to this risk, we tested the income recognised to ensure that the correct contributions have been received in accordance with that agreed as part of the budget process.

In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override. In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluated the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

In addition to the above, our procedures to respond to the risks identified included the following:

- reviewing financial statement disclosures by testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- performing analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud;
- enquiring of management, internal audit and internal legal counsel concerning actual and potential litigation and claims, and instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations; and
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and reviewing internal audit reports.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the body's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

Irregularities that result from fraud are inherently more difficult to detect than irregularities that result from error as fraud may involve collusion, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. The capability of the audit to detect fraud and other irregularities depends on factors such as the skilfulness of the perpetrator, the frequency and extent of manipulation, the degree of collusion involved, the relative size of individual amounts manipulated, and the seniority of those individuals involved.

Reporting on other requirements

Opinion prescribed by the Accounts Commission on the audited part of the Remuneration Report

We have audited the part of the Remuneration Report described as audited. In our opinion, the audited part of the Remuneration Report has been properly prepared in accordance with The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014.

Statutory other information

The Treasurer is responsible for the statutory other information in the annual accounts. The statutory other information comprises the Management Commentary, Annual Governance Statement, Statement of Responsibilities and the unaudited part of the Remuneration Report.

Our responsibility is to read all the statutory other information and, in doing so, consider whether the statutory other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this statutory other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the statutory other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon except on the Management Commentary and Annual Governance Statement to the extent explicitly stated in the following opinions prescribed by the Accounts Commission.

Opinions prescribed by the Accounts Commission on Management Commentary and Annual Governance Statement

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Management Commentary for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with statutory guidance issued under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003; and
- the information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016).

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We are required by the Accounts Commission to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the audited part of the Remuneration Report are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- there has been a failure to achieve a prescribed financial objective.

We have nothing to report in respect of these matters.

Conclusions on wider scope responsibilities

In addition to our responsibilities for the annual accounts, our conclusions on the wider scope responsibilities specified in the Code of Audit Practice, including those in respect of Best Value, are set out in our Annual Audit Report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the parties to whom it is addressed in accordance with Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and for no other purpose. In accordance with paragraph 120 of the Code of Audit Practice, we do not undertake to have responsibilities to members or officers, in their individual capacities, or to third parties.

Pat Kenny, CPFA (for and on behalf of Deloitte LLP)

110 Queen Street

Glasgow

G1 3BX

United Kingdom

20 January 2022

Primary Financial Statements

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 March 2021

The CIES shows the accounting cost in the year of providing the service in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation by way of central government grant-in-aid and amounts requisitioned from Orkney and Shetland Islands Councils. Where accounting costs are different from those to be funded from taxation in the year (e.g. pension costs) the difference is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

2019/20 £	Note	Orkney Islands Council £	Shetland Islands Council £	2020/21 £
582,776	Employee Costs	295,636	295,636	591,272
31,827	Property Costs	20,233	11,000	31,233
52,109	Supplies and Services	27,440	27,634	55,074
24,453	Transport Costs	911	911	1,822
154,297	Administration Costs	77,467	105,698	183,165
5,210	Payments to Other Bodies	2,666	2,616	5,282
(32,456)	Sales, Fees and Charges	(21,535)	(21,776)	(43,311)
(40,608)	Specific Grant Income	(14,704)	(45,456)	(60,160)
777,608	Cost of Services	388,114	376,263	764,377
55,000	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure Pension Interest Cost and Expected Return on Pension Assets			45,000
(728,032)	Taxation and non-specific grant income Requisitions from Member Authorities	(360,906)	(349,057)	(709,963)
104,576	Deficit on the Provision of Services			99,414
(432,000)	<i>Items that will not be reclassified to the (surplus) or deficit on the provision of services</i> Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability/(asset)			429,000
(432,000)	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			429,000
(327,424)	Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			528,414

Movement in Reserves Statement

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Board, analysed into usable reserves (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure) and other unusable reserves. The Board has no usable reserves.

2020/21	Usable Reserve £	Pension Reserve £	Employee Benefits Reserve £	Total Unusable Reserves £	Total Reserves £
Balance at 1 April 2020	0	1,925,000	10,514	1,935,514	1,935,514
Movement in reserves during the year					
Total comprehensive income and expenditure	99,414	429,000	0	429,000	528,414
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis per regulations (Note 6)	(99,414)	81,000	18,414	99,414	0
Decrease/(Increase) in year	0	510,000	18,414	528,414	528,414
Balance at 31 March 2021	0	2,435,000	28,928	2,463,928	2,463,928

Comparative movements in 2019/20	Usable Reserve £	Pension Reserve £	Employee Benefits Reserve £	Total Unusable Reserves £	Total Reserves £
Balance at 1 April 2019	0	2,257,000	5,938	2,262,938	2,262,938
Movement in reserves during the year					
Total comprehensive income and expenditure	104,576	(432,000)	0	(432,000)	(327,424)
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis per regulations (Note 6)	(104,576)	100,000	4,576	104,576	0
Decrease in year	0	(332,000)	4,576	(327,424)	(327,424)
Balance at 31 March 2020	0	1,925,000	10,514	1,935,514	1,935,514

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2021

This shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Board.

As at 31 March 2020 £		Note	As at 31 March 2021 £
227	Other Long-term Debtors		0
227	Long-Term Assets		0
44,212	Short-term Debtors	8	81,009
120	Cash in hand		0
44,332	Current Assets		81,009
(55,073)	Short-term Creditors	9	(109,937)
(55,073)	Current Liabilities		(109,937)
(1,925,000)	Pension Liability	16	(2,435,000)
(1,925,000)	Long-Term Liabilities		(2,435,000)
(1,935,514)	Net Liabilities		(2,463,928)
(10,514)	Employee Benefits Reserve	10	(28,928)
(1,925,000)	Pension Reserve	10	(2,435,000)
(1,935,514)	Total Reserves		(2,463,928)

The Financial Statements were issued on 20 January 2022.

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Colin Kemp CPFA
Treasurer
Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board
20 January 2022

Notes to the Financial Statements

Note 1: Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The objective of the Expenditure and Funding Analysis is to demonstrate how the funding available to the Board for the year has been used in providing services in comparison with those resources consumed or earned in accordance with accounting practices.

2020/21	Net Expenditure chargeable to VJB £	Adjustments for pensions net change £	Other adjustments £	Net Expenditure in the CIES £
Employee Costs	536,858	36,000	18,414	591,272
Property Costs	31,233	0	0	31,233
Supplies and Services	55,074	0	0	55,074
Transport Costs	1,822	0	0	1,822
Administration Costs	183,165	0	0	183,165
Payments to Other Bodies	5,282	0	0	5,282
Sales, Fees and Charges	(43,311)	0	0	(43,311)
Specific Grant Income	(60,160)	0	0	(60,160)
Net Cost of Services	709,963	36,000	18,414	764,377
Other Income and Expenditure:				
Requisitions from Member Authorities	(709,963)	0	0	(709,963)
Net Interest Expense	0	45,000	0	45,000
Deficit	0	81,000	18,414	99,414

2019/20	Net Expenditure chargeable to VJB £	Adjustments for pensions net change £	Other adjustments £	Net Expenditure in the CIES £
Employee Costs	533,200	45,000	4,576	582,776
Property Costs	31,827	0	0	31,827
Supplies and Services	52,109	0	0	52,109
Transport Costs	24,453	0	0	24,453
Administration Costs	154,297	0	0	154,297
Payments to Other Bodies	5,210	0	0	5,210
Sales, Fees and Charges	(32,456)	0	0	(32,456)
Specific Grant Income	(40,608)	0	0	(40,608)
Net Cost of Services	728,032	45,000	4,576	777,608
Other Income and Expenditure:				
Requisitions from Member Authorities	(728,032)	0	0	(728,032)
Net Interest Expense	0	55,000	0	55,000
Deficit	0	100,000	4,576	104,576

Note 2: Accounting Standards Issued and Adopted in year

Adoption of new and revised Standards

- a) Standards, amendments and interpretations effective in the current year

In the current year, the Board has applied a number of amendments to IFRS Standards and Interpretations that are effective for an annual period that begins on or after 1 January 2019. Their adoption has not had any material impact on the disclosures or on the amounts reported in these Financial Statements:

- Amendments to References to the Conceptual Framework in IFRS Standards;
- Amendment to IFRS 9: Applying IFRS 9 with IFRS 4;
- Amendment to IFRS 3: Definition of a Business;
- Amendments to IAS 1 and IAS 8: Definition of Material;
- Amendments to IAS 39, IFRS 4, IFRS 7 and IFRS 9: Interest Rate Benchmark Reform (Phase 1);
- Annual Improvements to IFRS Standards 2015-2017 Cycle.

There are no new standards, amendments or interpretations early adopted this year

Note 3: Accounting Standards Issued but not yet Adopted

Standards, amendments and interpretations issued but not adopted this year

At the date of authorisation of these Financial Statements, the Board has not applied the following new and revised IFRS Standards that have been issued but are not yet effective:

- IFRS 16: Leases. HM Treasury have agreed to defer implementation until 1 April 2022;
- IFRS 17: Insurance Contracts. Applicable for periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023;

- Amendment to IAS 1: Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-Current. Applicable for periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023;
- Amendment to IAS 1: Disclosure of Accounting Policies. Applicable for periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023;
- Amendment to IAS 8: Definition of Accounting Estimates. Applicable for periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023;
- Amendments to IAS 16: Property, Plant and Equipment proceeds before intended use. Applicable for periods beginning on or after 1 January 2022;
- Amendments to IAS 37: Onerous Contracts, cost of fulfilling a contract. Applicable for periods beginning on or after 1 January 2022.
- Amendments to IAS 39, IFRS 4, IFRS 7 and IFRS 9: Interest Rate Benchmark Reform (Phase 2). Applicable for periods beginning on or after 1 January 2021;
- Annual Improvements to IFRS Standards 2018-2020 Cycle. Applicable for periods beginning on or after 1 January 2022.

The Board does not expect that the adoption of the Standards listed above will have a material impact on the Financial Statements in future periods, except as noted below.

IFRS 16 Leases supercedes IAS 17 Leases and is being applied by Local Government Accounting Code from 1 April 2022. IFRS 16 introduces a single lessee accounting model that results in a more faithful representation of a lessee's assets and liabilities and provides enhanced disclosures to improve transparency of reporting on capital employed.

Under IFRS 16, lessees are required to recognise assets and liabilities for leases with a term of more than 12 months, unless the underlying asset is of low value. While no standard definition of 'low value' has been mandated, the Council have elected to utilise the capitalisation threshold of £10,000 to determine the assets to be disclosed. The Board expects that its existing finance leases will continue to be classified as leases. All existing operating leases will fall within the scope of IFRS 16 under the 'grandfathering' rules mandated in the Code for the initial transition to IFRS 16. In future years new contracts and contract renegotiations will be reviewed for consideration

under IFRS 16 as implicitly identified right-of-use assets. Assets recognised under IFRS 16 will be held on the Balance Sheet as (i) right of-use assets which represent the Board's right to use the underlying leased assets; and (ii) lease liabilities which represent the obligation to make lease payments.

The bringing of leased assets onto the Balance Sheet will require depreciation and interest to be charged on the right-of-use asset and lease liability, respectively. Cash repayments will also be recognised in the Statement of Cash Flows, as required by IAS 7.

Due to the need to reassess lease calculations, together with uncertainty on expected leasing activity from April 2021 and beyond, a quantification of the expected impact of applying the standard in 2021/22 is currently impracticable. However, the Board does not expect the implementation of this standard to have a material impact on the Financial Statements.

Note 4: Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies, The Board is obliged to highlight whether it has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. A critical judgement has been made in the Annual Accounts:

In line with the Code, the Board, does not recognise a loss allowance for expected credit losses on a financial asset where the counterparty for a financial asset is central government or a local authority for which relevant statutory provisions prevent default. For its remaining short-term debtors, based on historical observed default rates over their lifecycles the expected credit loss is judged to be negligible.

Note 5: Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty

The Financial Statements contain estimated figures that were based on assumptions made by the Board about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from assumptions and estimates.

There is one item on the Board's Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2021 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year as shown in the table below:

Pension Liability
Uncertainties - estimate
Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. Actuaries are engaged to provide the Board with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.
Effect if actual results differ from assumptions
The effects on the net pensions liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured. For instance, a 0.5% decrease in the discount rate assumption would result in an increase of £567k in the pension liability.

Note 6: Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under regulations

This note, as disclosed in the tables below, details the adjustments that are made to the total CIES, recognised by the Board in the year, in accordance with proper accounting practice, to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Board to meet future expenditure. Such adjustments involve the Pension Reserve and Employee Benefits Reserve by amounts charged for holiday pay to the CIES that are different from the cost of settlements chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements.

2020/21	Usable reserves £	Unusable reserves £
Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve:		
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the CIES (Note 16)	(183,000)	183,000
Employer's pension contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	102,000	(102,000)
Adjustments involving the Employee Benefits Reserve:		
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the CIES on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(18,414)	18,414
Total Adjustments	(99,414)	99,414
2019/20	Usable reserves £	Unusable reserves £
Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve:		
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the CIES (Note 16)	(211,000)	211,000
Employer's pension contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	111,000	(111,000)
Adjustments involving the Employee Benefits Reserve:		
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the CIES on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(4,576)	4,576
Total Adjustments	(104,576)	104,576

Note 7: Specific Grant Income

2019/20 £		2020/21 £
(40,608)	Scottish Government - Electoral Registration	(60,160)
(40,608)	Total	(60,160)

Note 8: Short-term Debtors

As at 31 March 2020 £		As at 31 March 2021 £
41,941	Other Local Authorities	80,796
2,271	Other Entities and Individuals	213
44,212	Total	81,009

At the end of 2020/21, £69.2k was owed to the Board from Shetland Islands Council (£38.4k in 2019/20).

Note 9: Short-term Creditors

As at 31 March 2020 £		As at 31 March 2021 £
(23,676)	Other Local Authorities	(56,356)
(13,682)	Other Entities and Individuals	(37,515)
(17,715)	Public Corporations and Trading Funds	(6,066)
0	S/T Grant Received in advance	(10,000)
(55,073)	Total	(109,937)

At the end of 2020/21, the Board owed Orkney Islands Council £57.6k (£16k in 2019/20).

Pension Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions.

The Board accounts for post-employment benefits in the CIES as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Board makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the resources set aside by the Board to meet the benefits earned by past and current employees. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

2019/20 £		2020/21 £
2,257,000	Balance at 1 April	1,925,000
(432,000)	Actuarial (gains)/losses on pensions assets and liabilities	429,000
211,000	Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the CIES	183,000
(111,000)	Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(102,000)
1,925,000	Balance at 31 March	2,435,000

Note 10: Unusable Reserves

As at 31 March 2020 £		As at 31 March 2021 £
(1,925,000)	Pension Reserve	(2,435,000)
(10,514)	Employee Benefits Reserve	(28,928)
(1,935,514)	Total	(2,463,928)

Employee Benefits Reserve

The accrual is charged to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

2019/20 £		2020/21 £
(5,938)	Balance at 1 April	(10,514)
5,938	Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year	10,514
	Amounts accrued at the end of the current year:	
(10,514)	Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the CIES on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(28,928)
(10,514)	Balance at 31 March	(28,928)

Note 11: Nature and Extent of Risks Arising from Financial Instruments

A variety of financial risks may be faced by the Board in holding financial instruments. An assessment on their impact on the Annual Accounts is detailed below:

Credit risk

The possibility that other parties might fail to pay amounts due to the Board. This is considered immaterial on the basis of past experience and the fact that most debt payable to the Board is due from other public bodies.

Liquidity risk

The possibility that the Board might not have funds available to meet its commitments to make payments. Given the Board's statutory responsibility to have a balanced budget and its constituent authorities' obligations to fund its activities, this risk is considered immaterial.

Interest rate risk

The possibility that the Board might be exposed to interest rate movements on borrowing and investments. The Board did not hold any borrowing or investments at 31 March 2021.

Price risk

The possibility that fluctuations in equity prices have a significant impact on the value of financial instruments

held by the Board. The Board does not currently invest in equity shares.

Foreign Exchange risk

The possibility that fluctuations in exchange rates could result in losses to the Board. The Board conducts all its transactions in £ Sterling.

Note 12: Events after the Reporting Period

The Annual Accounts were authorised for issue on 24 June 2021. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the Financial Statements or notes. Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31 March 2021, the figures in the Financial Statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

Note 13: External Audit costs

2019/20 £		2020/21 £
20,198	Fees payable with regard to external audit services carried out by the appointed auditor	8,603
20,198	Total	8,603

Note 14: Related Parties

The Board's related parties are those bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or significantly influence the Board, or to be controlled or significantly influenced by the Board. The Board is required to disclose material transactions that have occurred with related parties and the amount of any material sums due to or from related parties. Related party relationships require to be disclosed where control exists, irrespective of whether there have been transactions between the related parties.

To enable the Board to carry out its objectives, the member authorities of the Board have contributed requisitions in the following proportions:

- Orkney Islands Council: 50.9% (£349.4k)
- Shetland Islands Council: 49.1% (£337.5k)

The Board pays the member authorities for services.

2019/20 £		2020/21 £
	Shetland Islands Council:	
20,464	Support Services	22,553
11,000	Property Services	11,000
8,462	IT Services	10,669
	Orkney Islands Council:	
0	Support Services	10,335
16,305	Property Services	15,099
4,000	IT Services	4,000
60,231	Total	73,656

The Board in turn provides services to the member authorities:

2019/20 £		2020/21 £
	Orkney Islands Council:	
(30,000)	Valuation Services	(40,000)
(30,000)	Total	(40,000)

Note 15: Operating Leases

The Board leases a property in Orkney from Orkney Islands Council. The lease covers a three-year period and is due to expire in June 2021.

The expenditure charged to the CIES during the year in relation to this lease was:

2019/20 £		2020/21 £
13,200	Minimum lease payments	13,200
13,200	Total	13,200

The minimum lease payments due under non-cancellable leases in future years are:

2019/20 £		2020/21 £
13,200	Not later than one year	
2,829	Later than one year and less than five years	0
16,029	Total	0

Shetland premises are provided by the Shetland Islands Council. There is no formal lease agreement. The Board's only obligation is to fund the actual running costs of their share of the building, which was £11k for 2020/21 (£11k for 2019/20).

Note 16: Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

Participation in Pension Schemes

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers, the Board makes contributions towards the cost of post-employment benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Board has a commitment to make the payments (for those benefits) and to disclose them at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

The Board participates in two post-employment schemes:

- The Local Government Pension Scheme, administered locally by Shetland Islands Council, is a funded defined benefit career average related earnings scheme, meaning that the Board and employees, pay contributions into a fund,

calculated at a level intended to balance the pension liabilities with investment assets; and

- Arrangements for the award of discretionary post-retirement benefits upon early retirement – this is an unfunded defined benefit arrangement, under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. However, there are no investment assets built up to meet these pension liabilities and cash has to be generated to meet actual pension payments as they eventually fall due.

The Shetland Islands Council Pension Scheme is operated under the regulatory framework for the Local Government Pension Scheme and the governance of the scheme is the responsibility of the Pension Fund Committee of Shetland Islands Council. The Committee comprises of elected members of Shetland Islands Council.

Policy is determined in accordance with the Pensions Fund Regulations. Management of the Fund's investments is carried out by Shetland Islands Council, which receives recommendations from the Pension Fund Committee. Shetland Islands Council selects and appoints a number of external investment managers/partners and periodically monitors their investment performance.

The principal risks to the authority of the scheme are the longevity assumptions, statutory changes to the scheme, structural changes to the scheme (i.e. large-scale withdrawals from the scheme), changes to inflation, bond yields and the performance of the equity investments held by the scheme. These are mitigated to a certain extent by the statutory requirements to charge to the contributing authorities the amounts required by statute as described in Note 17: Accounting Policies on page 41.

Impact of McCloud judgement

When the LGPS benefit structure was reformed in 2015 transitional protections were applied to certain older members close to normal retirement age. The benefits accrued from 1 April 2015 by these members are subject to an 'underpin' which means that they cannot be lower than what they would have received under the previous benefit structure. The underpin ensures that these members do not lose out from the introduction of the new scheme, by effectively giving them the better of the benefits from the old and new schemes.

In December 2018 the Court of Appeal upheld a ruling ("McCloud/Sargeant") that similar transitional protections in the Judges' and Firefighters' Pension Schemes were unlawful on the grounds of age discrimination. The implications of the ruling apply to the LGPS.

LGPS benefits accrued from 2015 may therefore need to be enhanced so that all members, regardless of age, will benefit from the underpin. Alternatively, restitution may be achieved in a different way, for example by paying compensation. In either case, the clear expectation is that many more members would see an enhanced benefit rather than just those currently subject to these protections. There will therefore be a retrospective increase to members' benefits, which in turn will give rise to a past service cost for the Fund employers.

An allowance for the estimated impact of the McCloud judgement was included within the March 2020 funding valuation position. The impact was calculated based on the eligibility criteria of being included within the proposed solution for the McCloud judgement (i.e. any active member who was a participant in the Fund as at 1 April 2012 will be given the greater of the final salary pension or CARE pension upon retirement).

Transactions Relating to Post-employment Benefits

The Board recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the reported cost of services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. The charge required to be funded in the year, however, is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post-employment / retirement benefits is reversed out via the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The following transactions have been made in the CIES via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year:

2019/20 £	Local Government Pension Scheme	2020/21 £
	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	
	Cost of Services:	
168,000	Current service cost	138,000
(12,000)	Past service cost (including curtailments)	0
	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure:	
55,000	Net interest expense	45,000
211,000	Total Post-Employment Benefit Charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	183,000
	Other Post-Employment Benefit Charged to the CIES	
337,000	Return on plan assets (excluding the amount included in the net interest expense)	(842,000)
(193,000)	Actuarial (gains) and losses arising on changes in demographic assumptions	(124,000)
(546,000)	Actuarial (gains) and losses arising on changes in financial assumptions	1,133,000
(30,000)	Actuarial (gains) and losses arising from other experience	262,000
(221,000)	Total Post-Employment Benefit Charged to the CIES	612,000
	Movement in Reserves Statement	
211,000	Reversal of net charges made to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services for post-employment benefits in accordance with the Code	183,000
	Actual amount charged against the General Fund balance for pensions in the year:	
(111,000)	Employers' contributions payable to scheme	(102,000)

Pensions Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

The amount included in the Balance Sheet arising from the Board's obligation in respect of its defined benefit plan is as follows:

2019/20 £		2020/21 £
(5,164,000)	Present value of the defined benefit obligation	(6,378,000)
3,239,000	Fair value of assets in the Local Government Pension Scheme	3,943,000
(1,925,000)	Net liability arising from Defined Benefit Obligation	(2,435,000)
(1,879,000)	Local Government Pension Scheme	(2,388,000)
(46,000)	Unfunded liabilities for Pension Fund	(47,000)
(1,925,000)	Total Pension Reserve	(2,435,000)

Reconciliation of the Movements in Fair Value of the Scheme (Plan) Assets

2019/20 £		2020/21 £
3,488,000	Opening balance at 1 April	3,239,000
84,000	Interest income	74,000
	Re-measurement gains and (losses):	
(337,000)	Return on assets excluding amounts included in net interest	654,000
111,000	Employer contributions	102,000
25,000	Contributions by scheme participants	26,000
(132,000)	Benefits paid	(152,000)
3,239,000	Closing balance at 31 March	3,943,000

Reconciliation of Present Value of the Scheme Liabilities (Defined Benefit Obligation)

2019/20 £		2020/21 £
5,745,000	Opening balance at 1 April	5,164,000
168,000	Current service cost	138,000
139,000	Interest cost	119,000
25,000	Contributions by scheme participants	26,000
	Remeasurement (gains) and losses:	
(193,000)	Actuarial (gains) and losses from changes in demographic assumptions	(124,000)
(546,000)	Actuarial (gains) and losses from changes in financial assumptions	1,133,000
(30,000)	Actuarial (gains) and losses from other experience	74,000
(12,000)	Past service cost (including curtailments)	0
(132,000)	Benefits paid	(152,000)
5,164,000	Closing balance at 31 March	6,378,000

Analysis of Pension Fund's Assets

The Board's share of the Pension Fund's assets at 31 March 2021 comprised:

2019/20 £		2020/21 £
26,600	Quoted prices in active markets:	
	Cash and Cash Equivalents (Liquidity Fund)	32,400
	Quoted prices not in active markets:	
	<i>Property:</i>	
372,400	UK Property	453,300
2,400	Overseas Property	2,900
374,800	Sub-total Property	456,200
	<i>Investment Funds and Unit Trusts:</i>	
2,050,600	Equities	2,496,400
259,500	Bonds	315,900
527,500	Other	642,100
2,837,600	Sub-total Investment Funds and Unit Trusts	3,454,400
3,239,000	Total Assets	3,943,000

Basis for Estimating Assets & Liabilities

The Board's share of the liabilities of Shetland Islands Council Pension Fund have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method: an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent upon assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc.

Both the Local Government Pension Scheme and discretionary benefits liabilities have been assessed by Hymans Robertson, an independent firm of actuaries, and estimates are based on the latest full valuation of the Pension Fund at 31 March 2020, projected forward to 31 March 2021.

The significant assumptions used by the actuary were:

2019/20		2020/21
	Long-term expected rate of return on assets in the Scheme:	
2.59%	Investment Funds and Unit Trusts	1.88%
	Mortality Assumptions:	
	<i>Longevity at 65 for current pensioners (in years):</i>	
21.4	Men	20.8
23.2	Women	23.1
	<i>Longevity at 65 for future pensioners (in years):</i>	
22.7	Men	22.3
25.0	Women	25.3
2.80%	Rate of inflation (RPI)	3.30%
2.40%	Rate of increase in salaries	2.85%
1.90%	Rate of increase in pensions (CPI)	2.85%
2.30%	Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	2.00%
50.00%	Take-up of option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum (Pre-April 2009)	50.00%
75.00%	Take-up of option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum (Post-April 2009)	75.00%

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analyses below have been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes for each change that the analysed assumption changes, while all the other assumptions remain constant. The estimations in the sensitivity analysis have followed the accounting policies for the scheme, i.e. on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method.

Change in assumptions as at 31 March 2021	Approximate increase to employer liability %	Approximate monetary amount £
0.5% decrease in Real Discount Rate	9%	567,000
0.5% increase in the Salary Increase Rate	1%	80,000
0.5% increase in the Pension Increase Rate (CPI)	7%	473,000

The Pension Funds do not have an asset and liability matching strategy.

Impact on the Board's Cash Flows

The objectives of the scheme are to keep the employers' contributions rate as constant as possible. The Pension Funds have agreed a strategy with the scheme's actuary to achieve a funding level of 100% in the longer term. The Fund takes account of national changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme in Scotland such as the move from 1 April 2015 to the CARE scheme for future accruals.

Employer's contributions have been set at 25.5% for 2020/21. The three years set out in the latest triennial valuation as at 31 March 2020 are as follows:

Year	Employer contributions
2021/22	29.00%
2022/23	32.50%
2023/24	36.00%

The total contributions expected to be made by the Board to the Pension Fund in the year to 31 March 2022 is £0.110m.

The weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligation for scheme members is 19 years for 2020/21 (19 years for 2019/20).

Note 17: Accounting Policies

A General principles

The Financial Statements summarise the Board's transactions for the 2020/21 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2021. The Board is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, which Section 12 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 requires to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices.

These practices, under Section 21 of the 2003 Act, primarily comprise the Code, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and statutory guidance issued under Section 12 of the 2003 Act.

The accounting convention adopted in the Financial Statements is principally historical cost, modified by the valuation of pension assets and liabilities where appropriate. The Financial Statements have been prepared on a going concern basis

B Accruals of income and expenditure

Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received. In particular:

- Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is recognised when (or as) the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract.
- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made; and
- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue in financing and investment income and expenditure for the income that might not be collected.

C Employee benefits

Benefits payable during employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end, such as wages, salaries, paid annual leave, paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits (e.g. cars) for current employees, and are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Board.

An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements (or any form of leave, e.g. time off in lieu) earned by employees but not taken before the year-end, which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the wage and salary rates applicable in the following accounting year, being the period in which the employee takes the benefit.

The accrual is charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday entitlements are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

Termination benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Board to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits and are charged on an accruals basis in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement at the earlier of when the Board can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Board recognises costs for a restructuring.

Post-employment benefits

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers, the Board makes contributions towards the cost of post-employment benefits. These benefits will not become payable until employees retire. The Board has a commitment to make the payments that need to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

Current employees of the Board are members of the Shetland Islands Council Local Government Pension Scheme which is administered locally, as are all current pensioners except two who are members of the Orkney Islands Local Government Pension Scheme.

The Local Government Pension Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefits plan.

The liabilities of the Shetland Islands Council's Pension Fund attributable to the Board are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method, i.e. an assessment to the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc., and projections of earnings for current employees.

Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices using a discount rate derived from a corporate bond yield curve constructed from yields on high quality bonds and recognising the weighted average duration of the benefit obligation determined at the most recent actuarial valuation.

The pension fund assets attributable to the Board are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:

- Quoted securities – current bid price;
- Unquoted securities – professional estimate;

- Unitised securities – current bid price; and
- Property – market value.

The change in the net pension liability is analysed into the following components:

- **Current service cost** – the increase in defined benefit obligation as a result of employee service in the current period;
- **Past service cost** – the change in defined benefit obligation arising from current year decisions whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years, which is debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the CIES;
- **Net interest cost on the defined benefit liability, i.e. net interest expense of the Board** – the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability that arises from the passage of time charged to the CIES. This is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability at the beginning of the period, taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments;
- **Return on plan assets** – excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability which are charged to the CIES;
- **Actuarial gains and losses** – changes in the net pension liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation, or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions. Actuarial gains and losses are charged to the CIES; and
- **Contributions paid to the pension fund** – cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities which are not accounted for as an expense.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the amount payable by the Board to be the amount paid directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards in the CIES.

In the Movement in Reserves Statement this means that there are transfers to and from the Pension Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the Board of being required to account for retirement

benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits earned by employees.

Discretionary benefits

The Board has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies that are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

D Overheads and support services

Whereby, under agreement with the Board, the constituent authorities place their own staff at the disposal of the Board, the Board pays to that authority such amounts as may be agreed for such services in accordance with the Board's arrangements for accountability and reporting financial performance. Certain support service costs are provided under a Service Level Agreement between the Board and the service provider.

E Leases

Operating Leases - Board as Lessee: rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the CIES as an expense of the services benefitting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease; even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

F Government grants and other contributions

Whether paid on account, by instalments or in arrears, government grants, third party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Board when there is reasonable assurance that:

- The Board will comply with the conditions attached to the payments, and
- The grants or contributions will be received.

Amounts recognised as due to the Board are not credited to the CIES until conditions attaching to the grant or contribution have been satisfied.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are

satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the Specific Grant Income line in the CIES.

G Events After the Reporting Period

Events after the Balance Sheet reporting period are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the Balance Sheet date and the date when the statement of accounts is authorised for issue.

Two types of events can be identified:

- Those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period, whereby the Financial Statements are adjusted to reflect such events; and
- Those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period, whereby the Financial Statements are not adjusted to reflect such events; where a category or events would have a material effect, disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Financial Statements.

H Value Added Tax

VAT payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. VAT receivable is excluded from income.