

# BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>From: Monitoring Officer</b>	<b>Report Number: JAC10</b>
<b>To: Joint Audit and Standards Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 2 September 2013</b>

## UPDATE ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the measures taken to comply with the requirements within Chapter 7 of the Localism Act and to identify any further actions required.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the measures taken to comply with the requirements within Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 be noted.
- 2.2 That the Committee identifies any further steps required to be taken.

### 3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 None directly arising from this report. The new measures have however impacted upon staff resources.

### 4. Risk Management

- 4.1 Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
The Council breaches its obligations under the Localism Act	Low	Marginal	All measures already undertaken except publication of parish registers on website at MSDC
Register of interests forms are not completed by all councillors	High	Critical	MO continues to pursue outstanding forms

### 5. Consultations

None

### 6. Equality Analysis

- 6.1 Not relevant to this report.

### 7. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

- 7.1 None

## 8. Key Information

- 8.1 This report identifies the actions outstanding to secure full compliance with Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 by (i) the Councils, (ii) parish/town councils and (iii) councillors.
- 8.2 Chapter 7 came into effect on 1 July 2012 and introduced a new standards regime for all councils. A new Local Code of Conduct has been adopted across Suffolk, a new complaints system has been put in place and a pool of 'independent persons' has been appointed. These arrangements were made at the outset and appear to be working effectively. There are however still some outstanding actions as follows:-

### District Councillor Register of Interests

- 8.2.1 Across both Councils all but one Babergh councillor have completed updated Register of Interests forms. A series of reminders have been issued to the councillor, the latest on 13 August 2013. The Register should have been completed by 29 July 2012.

### Parish Council Register of Interests

- 8.2.2 Likewise, all town/parish councillors were required to complete new Register of Interests forms which are held on a public register by the district council. 84% of parish councillors within the Babergh district and 78% of those within the Mid Suffolk district have submitted completed forms. There are 7 out of 66 parish/town councils in Babergh and 19 out of 122 parish councils in Mid Suffolk from whom no Registers have been received, as identified in the Table below. Reminders have been sent out by the Monitoring Officer once more to the clerks of those councils. The Suffolk Association of Local Councils has also previously issued reminders.

<b>Babergh district</b>	<b>Mid Suffolk district</b>	
Aldham	Ashbocking	Stonham Aspal
Elmsett	Debenham	Stuston
Little Cornard	Denham	Thrandeston
Semer	Earl Stonham	Thurston
Shotley	Finningham	Wattisfield
Sudbury	Gosbeck	Westhorpe
Wherstead	Great Blakenham	Wetheringsett-Cum-Brockford
	Henley	Wingfield
	Norton	Yaxley
	Stoke Ash & Thwaite	

## Publication of Registers

- 8.2.3 All of the completed district council Register of Interests forms have been placed on the Councils' respective websites as required by the Localism Act. The Babergh parish/town council registers have been placed on its website although this has meant individually checking and scanning hundreds of forms. It is understood that the technical ICT problems in hosting the Mid Suffolk parish/town registers have finally been overcome and they are in the process of being uploaded. In future, these difficulties will be avoided as all Registers will be submitted electronically and training will be provided to clerks to enable this to happen.

## **9. Appendices**

- 9.1 None

## **10. Background Papers**

- 10.1 None

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