

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MIDSUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Head of Corporate Organisation	Report Number: N62
To: Council	Date of meeting: 26 September 2013 27 September 2013

RECOMMENDED REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

General

1.1 To ensure a consistent approach, avoid duplication of resources and improve joint working between both Councils, the two Councils have agreed to establish a joint committee known as the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Audit and Standards Committee. This Committee will only seek to address matters which are being progressed across both Councils. Issues that are pertinent only to a single Council area will remain the preserve of the Mid Suffolk Audit Committee or the Babergh Audit Committee.

Note: There are separate Terms of Reference for the Mid Suffolk and Babergh Audit Committees which set out their specific roles and functions.

1.2 Neither the Chairmen of the Councils nor the members of the Strategy or Executive Committees shall be entitled to be appointed as members of the Joint Audit and Standards Committee

Role and Function

The Joint Audit and Standards Committee will have the following roles and functions:

- (i) Undertake the Council's responsibilities in relation to financial governance issues
- (ii) Receive Internal Audit's charter, annual plan and progress against the plan that includes an annual report from the head of internal audit.
- (iii) Consider the effectiveness of the joint risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti fraud and anti corruption
- (iv) Be satisfied that the joint Annual Governance Statement properly reflects the risk environment and any actions taken to improve it.
- (v) Ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit, inspection agencies and other relevant bodies and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted.
- (vi) Review and consider the annual Treasury Management Strategies of both councils, receive reports on performance during the year and ensure appropriate Member training and guidance is provided.
- (vii) Design, monitor and review the ethical framework of the Councils to promote a culture of openness, accountability and probity in order to ensure the highest standards of conduct.

- (viii) Exercise the functions of the Councils in relation to the ethical framework and standards of conduct of the Councils, Parish/Town Councils, Joint Committees and other bodies, as relevant.
- (ix) Advise the Councils on the adoption or revision of a Code of Conduct for Members. Overview codes of good practice, protocols and policies with regard to probity and ethics.
- (x) Oversee and manage programmes of training and development on ethics, standards and probity for Councillors. Issue advice and guidance on standards related matters.
- (xi) Receive reports on complaints made under the Code of Conduct for Members
- (xii) Support the Monitoring Officer in his or her statutory role and the issuing of guidance on his or her role from time to time.
- (xiii) Support the section 151 officer responsible for the administration of the relevant Council's financial affairs in his or her statutory role in connection with financial probity and the issuing of national guidance on his or her role from time to time.
- (xiv) To peruse, review and comment upon the non-salaried expenses of Council officers.

Terms of Reference Adopted by both Full Councils in April 2013**BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE****General Role**

- 1.1 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have agreed to integrate the staff and services across the two Councils.
- 1.2 The Babergh – Mid Suffolk integration programme seeks to deliver benefits and savings arising from economies of scale, sharing of senior managers, pooling of scarce skills and expertise, increased capacity and resilience to deliver services to the community, and reductions in the cost of democracy.
- 1.3 As a consequence of these actions there will be a significant amount of similarity in how the two Councils operate at a strategic level. In order to ensure a consistent approach, avoid duplication of resources and improve joint working between both Councils the two Councils have agreed to establish a joint committee known as the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Audit and Standards Committee. This Committee will only seek to address matters which are being progressed across both Councils. Issues that are pertinent only to a single Council area will remain the preserve of that Mid Suffolk Audit Committee.

Neither the Chairman of the Councils nor the Leader of the Council/Chairman of Strategy Committee shall be entitled to be appointed as a Member of the Joint Audit and Standards Committee

Role and Function

The Joint Audit and Standards Committee will have the following roles and functions:

- (i) Approve (but not direct) internal audit's strategy, plan and performance
- (ii) Review summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising and seek assurance that the action has been taken where necessary.
- (iii) Consider the reports of External Audit and inspection agencies excluding reports in the Statement of Account.
- (iv) Consider the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti fraud and anti corruption arrangements. Seek assurances that action is being taken on risk related issues identified by auditors and inspectors.
- (v) Be satisfied that the authority's Statement of Internal Control properly reflects the risk environment and any actions taken to improve it.
- (vi) Ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit, inspection agencies and other relevant bodies and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted.

- (vii) To design, monitor and review the ethical framework of the Councils. The Committee's powers shall include responding to consultation documents and the development of codes of conduct and guidance on standards related matters. The adoption and revisions to a code of conduct for councillors shall be reserved to the Full Council.
- (viii) To promote a culture of openness, accountability and probity in order to ensure the highest standards of conduct.
- (ix) To promote the values of putting people first, valuing public service and creating a norm of the highest standards of personal conduct.
- (x) To oversee and manage programmes of guidance, advice and training on ethics, standards and probity for Councillors.
- (xi) To be responsible for the Council's public register of Councillors' interests and to receive reports from the Monitoring Officer on the operation of the register from time to time.
- (xii) To be responsible for written guidance and advice on the operation of the system of registration of Councillors' interests and to receive reports from the Monitoring Officer on the operation of the system from time to time.
- (xiii) To establish, monitor and issue advice and guidance to Councillors on a system of dispensations to speak on, or participate in, matters in which they have interests and to grant dispensation in appropriate cases on matters relating to the Councils' Code of Conduct.
- (xiv) To exercise the functions of the Council in relation to the ethical framework and standards of conduct of Parish Councils, Joint Committees and other bodies.
- (xv) To receive reports from the Monitoring Officer and any independent person appointed by the Council pursuant to the Localism Act 2011.
- (xvi) To consider and grant exemptions for politically restricted posts.
- (xvii) To determine appropriate action on matters referred to the Joint Standards Committee by the Monitoring Officer, Council or its Committees. To receive, consider and make decisions on reports received from the Strategy/ Executive or Scrutiny Committees
- (xviii) To support the Monitoring Officer in his or her statutory role and the issuing of guidance on his or her role from time to time.
- (xix) To support the section 151 officer responsible for the administration of the Council's financial affairs in his or her statutory role in connection with financial probity and the issuing of national guidance on his or her role from time to time.
- (xx) To establish and maintain a process to consider complaints against Councillors, including the issuing of sanctions, as appropriate (subject to statute, regulations and Government guidance).
- (xxi) To consider and determine any issues in connection with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 or any other legislation which appears to the Committee to be relevant.
- (xxii) To provide advice and guidance to Councillors and make arrangements for training in connection with any matters within the terms of reference of the Committee.