

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL**

<b>From: Monitoring Officer</b>	<b>Report Number: JAC60</b>
<b>To: Joint Audit and Standards Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 17 August 2015</b>

**UPDATE ON COMPLIANCE WITH PART 7 OF 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 2011 since the last update provided to Committee on 16 March 2015.

**2. Recommendation**

2.1 That the measures taken to comply with the requirements within Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 be noted.

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

**3. Financial Implications**

3.1 None directly arising from this report.

**4. Risk Management**

4.1 Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Breach of duties and obligations under the Localism Act 2011	Low	Marginal	Training provided and guidance issued to all Members to explain their requirements under the Code.  Introduction of e-forms and provision of training.
Register of interest forms not completed promptly or not return to the Monitoring Officer by all Councillors.	High	Critical	The Councils' Monitoring Officer is working with Parish Clerks to ensure that accurate, up-to-date data is being used and impressing upon the Clerks the importance of returning outstanding forms.

## **5. Consultations**

5.1 None.

## **6. Equality Analysis**

6.1 Not relevant to this report.

## **7. Shared Service / Partnership Implications**

7.1 The same procedures and working practices are applied across both Councils.

## **8. Key Information**

8.1 This report identifies the actions to secure full compliance with Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 by:

- (i) Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
- (ii) The Parish/ Town Councils within the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts of Suffolk, and
- (iii) The Councillors

8.2 Since 2012, Councils have been operating a Standards regime introduced by the Localism Act 2011. A Local Code of Conduct was adopted across Suffolk and a complaints system has been put in place. As required under the 2011 Act a pool of three “independent persons” have been appointed for two years. Their term of office will end in September 2016. The arrangements appear to be working very effectively. There are however still some outstanding actions in relation to the Register of Interest forms which are listed below.

### District Councillors’ Register of Interests

8.3 All Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councillors have now completed the Register of Interest forms following the local elections on 7 May 2015. All Councillors are aware of the importance of keeping these records up to date and are doing so in a timely fashion.

### Parish Councillors’ Register of Interests

8.4 All Parish/ Town Councils within the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts of Suffolk were required to complete new Register of Interest forms following the local elections on 7 May 2015. As at 6 August 2015, 93% of Parish Councils within the Mid Suffolk District and 95% of Parish Councils within the Babergh District have completed at least one form.

8.5 As at 6 August 2015, 12 Parish/Town Councils identified in the Table below as of yet, have not returned any Registers of Interest forms.

<b>Babergh District</b>	<b>Mid Suffolk District</b>
Aldham	Ashbocking
Copdock and Washbrook	Brundish
Leavenheath	Debenham
Semer	Finningham
	Haughley
	Hinderclay
	Redlingfield
	Tostock

### Publication of Registers

- 8.6 All of the completed District Councils Register of Interests forms have been placed on the Councils' respective websites as required by the Localism Act 2011. All of the Parish/Town Council Registers of Interest forms received thus far have also been placed on the Councils' respective websites.
- 8.7 With regard to the forms either not received or been fully completed the Monitoring Officer and her deputies will continue to follow the relevant Parish/ Town Councils.
- 8.8 Members may recall that on 16 March 2015 a report was presented to this Committee outlining an e-form solution to enable Parish/ Town Clerks to electronically submit Register of Interest forms for their Parish/ Town Councillors.
- 8.9 This was launched with effect from 7 May 2015 and after some initial technical issues the process overall has been successful. However, not all Parish/Town Clerks have chosen to use the e-form solution. The Monitoring Officer and her deputies will continue to encourage Parish/Town Councils to use the e-form process when submitting Register of Interests.

### **9. Appendices**

- 9.1 None.

### **10. Background Papers**

- 10.1 None

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