

MINUTES OF THE JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES CORKS LANE HADLEIGH ON MONDAY 1  
JULY 2013 AT 9.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

**BABERGH**

**MID SUFFOLK**

Mr P D Burgoyne  
Mr D M Busby (Chairman)  
Mr B Riley  
Mr D C Rose  
Mr L H Young

Mr G M Brewster  
Mr D Burn  
Mr T A Curran  
Mr S J Gemmill  
Mr D J MacPherson  
Mrs J C Storey

The following Members were unable to be present:

**BABERGH**

**MID SUFFOLK**

Mr J R Cartlidge  
Miss D L Kendall  
Mr C A Roberts

Mrs E B Gibson-Harries  
(Chairman)  
Mrs P M R Godden

1 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None declared.

2 PETITIONS

None received.

3 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

4 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE COMMITTEE

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper JAC1](#)) asking the Committee to consider suggested revisions to its Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix B to the report, and to make an appropriate recommendation via the Joint Constitutional Review Group.

Kathryn Seward, Monitoring Officer, referred to the main effects of the proposed revisions which were intended to correct some inaccuracies/omissions and to make the Terms of Reference more generic, without altering their substance, and she answered Members' questions about various aspects. There was discussion about a possible addition to (viii) under the **Role and Function** section to cover a review of officer expenses and a suggested wording was proposed. After further consideration, a slight variation to the proposed additional wording was agreed upon, to be included as an additional item. It was noted that a specific item of business would be added to the Committee's Work Plan.

Members accepted the revised Terms of Reference, subject to minor amendments to the **General** section, together with a minor addition to the **Role and Function** section.

**RESOLVED**

**That the Joint Constitutional Review Group be asked to recommend approval of the revised Terms of Reference for the Joint Audit and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in Appendix B to [Paper JAC1](#) together with the further minor amendments set out below:-**

**In the ‘General’ section:-**

- **Paragraph 1.1 – to be deleted**
- **Paragraph 1.2 – to be deleted**
- **Paragraph 1.3 – first sentence and first two words of second sentence to be deleted. Paragraph to be re-numbered as 1.1, commencing at ‘To ensure a consistent approach ..... ‘**

**In the ‘Role and Function’ section, the addition of a new (xv):-**

- **To peruse, review and comment upon the non-salaried expenses of Council officers**

Note: Subsequent to the meeting and as a result of further legal advice, the final approval on any recommendation to approve amended Terms of Reference will be made to both full Councils.

**5 JOINT INTERNAL ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT 2012/13**

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper JAC2](#)) summarising the outcomes of internal audit work in 2012/13.

Katherine Steel, Head of Corporate Resources presented the report in the absence of the Corporate Manager – Internal Audit. She updated the Committee on the two audits for which reports assessed as ‘ineffective’ had been issued (paragraph 8.4 of Paper JAC2 refers). Members noted that the two areas identified, Dangerous Trees and Data Management, will be followed up through the Joint Internal Audit Plan 2013/14.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That the outcomes of internal audit work in 2012/13 and the conclusion of the Corporate Manager – Internal Audit that both Councils’ overall internal audit control arrangements provide an acceptable level of assurance, as detailed in Appendix A to Paper JAC2, be noted.**
- (2) That the contents of Resolution (1) above be reflected in the Annual Governance Statement to be submitted to the Joint Committee for approval later in the year.**

6 BENEFIT FRAUD PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY – UPDATE 2012/13

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper JAC3](#)) containing the 2012/13 benefit fraud performance figures, as requested by the former Scrutiny Committees of both Councils.

Katherine Steel, Head of Corporate Resources introduced David Whitmore, the Counter Fraud Manager who is based at Ipswich Borough Council but supports Ipswich, Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils. His team undertakes the fraud work. Mr Whitmore explained the technical reasons why some of the information requested for 2012/13 was not available and confirmed that going forward, this would be provided through the Shared Revenues Partnership. Members asked for changes to the way in which figures are produced, to assist their monitoring role and noted that this will be included in future reports, including more comprehensive comparisons.

Mr Whitmore answered Members' questions on various matters, including the operating arrangements of the Counter Fraud role and its position within the Ipswich, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney audit partnership, and Katherine Steel also responded to questions.

**RESOLVED**

**That the full year's performance figures for 2012/13 across the two Councils, as set out in Appendix A to Paper JAC3, be noted.**

7 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS FOR BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS – QUARTER FOUR 2012/13 – BALANCED SCORECARD AS AT 31 MARCH 2013

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper JAC4](#)) to enable Members to review the current reports and reporting process for Performance Management.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) That the contents of the Performance Management Reports appended to Paper JAC4 be noted.**
- (2) That the reporting process for Performance Monitoring be adjusted as follows:-**
  - **Full details to be reported to the Joint Committee on an annual basis, with key exceptions being reported as and when**
  - **Further consideration being given to the future presentation of the information.**

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS / GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 FEBRUARY 2013 TO 31 MAY 2013

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report ([Paper JAC5](#)) setting out the relevant information for monitoring purposes.

**RESOLVED**

**That the information relating to Members' Interests declared at meetings (Appendices 1A and 1B to Paper JAC5) and Gifts and Hospitality (Appendices 2A and 2B) for the period 1 February 2013 to 31 May 2013 be noted.**

9 DRAFT WORK PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1 FEBRUARY 2013 TO 31 MAY 2013

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper JAC6](#)) relating to items that had been identified on the Committee Work Plan. Members noted that the Head of Corporate Resources will be organising training for Members on various aspects of the Committee's remit, including Treasury Management and Statement of Accounts.

**RESOLVED**

**That the contents of Paper JAC6 be noted.**

10 COMMENCEMENT TIMES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OF JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Head of Corporate Organisation referred to the Timetable of Meetings 2013/14 which was approved by the Council meetings on 23 and 25 April 2013. Individual Committees were requested to consider and agree commencement times for future meetings.

**RESOLVED**

**That commencement times of future meetings be 9.30 a.m.**

11 COMPLAINTS MONITORING REPORT

The Monitoring Officer submitted [Paper JAC7](#) detailing Code of Conduct complaints for the last quarter. In response to a question from a Member, she explained that although the name of any Councillor subject of a complaint would not be specifically included in the report, the Councillor concerned would have had prior notice of the complaint.

**RESOLVED**

**That the content of Paper JAC7 be noted.**

Following consideration of this item, the Chairman of the Committee thanked Kathryn Saward for her advice and contribution as Monitoring Officer and Solicitor, and wished her every success in the future.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 10.50 a.m.

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Chairman

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