

MINUTES OF THE JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES CORKS LANE HADLEIGH ON MONDAY 3
MARCH AT 9.30 A.M.

PRESENT:

BABERGH

Mr P D Burgoyne
Mr D M Busby (Chairman)
Mr J R Cartlidge
Mr D C Rose

MID SUFFOLK

Mr G M Brewster
Mr D Burn
Mr S J Gemmill
Mrs P M R Godden
Mrs J C Storey

1 SUBSTITUTES AND APOLOGIES

The following Members were unable to be present:

BABERGH

Miss D L Kendall
Mr B Riley
Mr C A Roberts
Mr L H Young

MID SUFFOLK

Mr T A Curran
Mrs E Gibson-Harries
Mr D J Macpherson

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Storey declared non-pecuniary interests in the matters referred to as follows:-

Minute No 6 ([Paper JAC20](#)) as she is assisting a constituent with a related case.
Minute No 9 ([Paper JAC23](#) – Appendix 1B) – non-pecuniary interest recorded for planning application.
Minute No 10 ([Paper JAC24](#)) – in her capacity as the Ward Member and County Councillor for Tostock.

Councillor Storey indicated that she was able to speak and vote on the items.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on [4 November 2013](#) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4 PETITIONS

None received.

5 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

6 MANAGING THE RISK OF FRAUD AND CORRUPTION – ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013/14

John Snell, Corporate Manager – Internal Audit, introduced a report from the Head of Corporate Organisation ([Paper JAC20](#)) outlining the current approach to preventing and detecting fraud and corruption.

He emphasised the corporate, proactive approach which operates across the two Councils, and referred to the Chief Executive's role as a champion in this area to encourage investment in counter-fraud activity.

The Corporate Manager then introduced Siobhan Martin (Head of Internal Audit – Ipswich Borough Council) who was present at the meeting to explain the way in which the three partners in the SRP work together in this area, and how the work is funded. Members noted the recovery rates reported for the three Councils. Both officers responded to questions from Members about a number of matters. The following were among aspects of the report which were queried or referred to during the course of the discussion.

- Identifying / investigating / prosecuting are carried out by Ms Martin's team, with recovery being the responsibility of Evelyn Crossland (SRP Manager)
- The costs of this work versus the deterrent effect of pursuing offenders, together with the need to show a return to the Department of Work and Pensions, which funds the Debt Recovery Team costs
- Anticipated timings for the introduction of Universal Credit, and its likely effect
- The basis of the cost-sharing arrangements as built into the SRP Business Plan
- Identification of deliberately fraudulent actions as opposed to genuine 'mistakes' which might be made by eg the elderly
- Relevant policies are being updated in 2014/15
- The full year's performance figures for Benefit Fraud Activity will be reported to the next meeting of the JAC

RESOLVED

That the progress made in ensuring there are effective arrangements and measures in place across both Councils to minimise the risk of fraud and corruption, as detailed in [Paper JAC20](#), be noted together with the content of the Corporate Counter Fraud Business Plan 2014/15, as set out in Appendix A to the report.

7 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2014/15

John Snell, Corporate Manager – Internal Audit, introduced a report from the Head of Corporate Organisation ([Paper JAC21](#)) asking Members to review, assess and approve the Plan (Appendix A to the report).

Members noted that the 75 days built into the Plan for TEGs support could be increased if required or provided under the transformation process.

RESOLVED

That the Prioritised Internal Audit Plan for 2014/15 (Appendix A to Paper JAC21) be approved.

8 UPDATE ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

The Monitoring Officer presented a report ([Paper JAC22](#)) updating the Committee on the measures taken to comply with the requirements within Chapter 7 of the Localism Act. Members were asked to identify any further actions required to secure compliance.

Members noted that the Register of Interest forms from two Babergh District Councillors which remained outstanding at the previous meeting had now been received. They also noted the improved position with regard to the forms awaited from Parishes and considered how best to progress this aspect.

RESOLVED

(1) That the measures taken to comply with the requirements within Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011, as set out in [Paper JAC22](#), be noted.

(2) That in order to secure compliance, the Monitoring Officer be asked to continue her contact with the Parishes referred to in paragraph 8.2.3 of the report with an offer if necessary to attend a relevant meeting, accompanied by the Ward Member if considered appropriate.

9 STANDARDS MONITORING REPORT: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS/GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY (1 OCTOBER TO 31 JANUARY 2014 FOR BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL AND 25 SEPTEMBER 2013 TO 15 JANUARY 2014 FOR MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL)

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report ([Paper JAC23](#)) setting out the relevant information for monitoring purposes. Members asked the Monitoring Officer to look at the issue of consistency in relation to Members' interests and to include, where appropriate, reference to dispensations.

RESOLVED

That the information relating to Members' Interests declared at meetings (Appendices 1A and 1B to [Paper JAC23](#)) and the nil returns for Gifts and Hospitality (Appendices 2A and 2B) for the periods 1 October 2013 / 25 September to 31 January 2014 / 15 January 2014 be noted.

10 COMPLAINTS MONITORING REPORT

The Monitoring Officer submitted [Paper JAC24](#) detailing Code of Conduct complaints for the last quarter.

In response to a comment from a Member, the Monitoring Officer agreed to look into the wording of Complaint Ref 37211 – Tostock Parish Council.

RESOLVED

That the content of Paper JAC24 be noted.

11 WORK PLAN

The Head of Corporate Organisation submitted a report ([Paper JAC25](#)) relating to items that had been identified on the Committee Work Plan, and reported additions to the business for the June meeting, which would now include the Benefit Fraud Performance figures for the full year 2013/14 and a further update on Compliance with the Localism Act.

RESOLVED

That the content of [Paper JAC25](#), as amended above, be noted.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 10.35 a.m.

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Chairman