

MINUTES OF THE JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, CORKS LANE, HADLEIGH ON MONDAY,
10 NOVEMBER 2014 AT 10:00 A.M.

PRESENT:

BABERGH

MID SUFFOLK

Dave Busby (Chairman)
Robert Lindsay
Brian Riley
Tony Roberts
David Rose

Gerard Brewster
David Burn
Elizabeth Gibson-Harries
Patricia Godden
Jane Storey

1 SUBSTITUTES AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors James Cartlidge, Stuart Gemmill, Kathie Guthrie, Frank Lawrenson, Duncan Macpherson and Len Young.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Gerard Brewster subsequently declared a local non-pecuniary interest in relation to Minute No. 8 in his capacity as a Stowmarket Town Councillor.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4 PETITIONS

None received.

5 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None received

6 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

7 MID YEAR REPORT ON TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2014/15

The Corporate Manager – Finance presented a report ([Paper JAC38](#)) from the Head of Corporate Resources setting out treasury management activity for the first half of 2014/15.

Members supported the recommendation in 2.1 of the report, noting the Councils' compliance with the relevant Prudential Indicators and that performance was in line with the approved Treasury Management Strategy.

In considering whether the respective Councils should be asked to amend the Strategy as proposed in 2.2 and 2.3 of the report, Members took into account the potential for added risk to be introduced if BBB+ were to be adopted as the minimum credit rating criteria at this time, and it was agreed that this proposal, as set out in recommendation 2.2 of Paper JAC 38, should not be supported. The Councils' Section 151 officers do not have any major issues with this approach.

The amendment to the Strategy to lower the maximum investment in approved counterparties (A- or higher) was accepted.

Members were aware that various options referred to during the meeting would be discussed with the Councils' treasury advisors and an update provided in the New Year.

Note: It is a requirement of the Code of Practice on Treasury Management that full Council notes the Mid-Year position.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

- (1) That it be noted that treasury management activity for the first six months of 2014/15 (Paper JAC38 refers) was in accordance with the Councils' approved Treasury Management Strategy and that both Councils have complied with all Prudential Indicators for this period.**
- (2) That the Treasury Management Strategy be amended to lower the maximum investment in banks and other organisations whose lowest published long-term credit rating from Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's is A- or higher from £2m to £1m.**

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee thanked Barry Hunter for his contribution to both Councils and wished him well for his forthcoming retirement.

8 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2014/15

The Corporate Manager – Internal Audit introduced a report ([Paper JAC39](#)) from the Head of Corporate Resources outlining the work carried out by Internal Audit for the first half of the year. He responded to Members' questions on various aspects of the report, and confirmed that he would ask the Corporate Manager – Information Management and ICT to report back to Members in the event that the implementation of the Data Management – Follow Up Audit was likely to be delayed beyond the currently scheduled date of 31 March 2015.

RESOLVED

That the contents of Paper JAC39 together with Overview of Internal Audit Work (Appendix A) and Summary of Internal Audit Reports issued to September 2014 (Annex) be noted.

9 REFRESH WORKSHOP OF THE SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK REGISTER

The Corporate Manager – Internal Audit reported that the half day refresh workshop held in August had resulted in the production of a draft register which links closely with the Strategic Priorities and Delivery Programme.

Members were advised that a further workshop would be held later in the year, following which Internal Audit would be in a position to update the joint Risk Management Strategy and present it to Members for approval.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

10 UPDATE ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

Jonathan Reed, Senior Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer, presented Paper [JAC40](#), outlining the current position on compliance with the Act, and the options available to the Committee regarding Aldham Parish Council following the Monitoring Officer's attendance at the Parish Council's September meeting. Members were informed that non-compliance could be reported to the Police by anyone, without the need for a Council decision to do so.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the measures taken to comply with the requirements within Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011, as set out in Paper JAC40, be noted.**
- (2) That the Monitoring Officer be asked to provide a further update to the next meeting regarding Aldham Parish Council.**

11 STANDARDS MONITORING REPORT: DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS / GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY (19 JUNE TO 31 OCTOBER 2014 / 22 MAY 2014 TO 31 OCTOBER 2014)

The Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced Paper [JAC41](#) 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 JAC41) and the nil returns for Gifts and Hospitality for the periods 19 June to 31 October 2014 for Babergh District Council and 22 May to 31 October 2014 for Mid Suffolk District Council be noted.

12 COMPLAINTS MONITORING REPORT

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented Paper [JAC42](#) detailing Code of Conduct complaints received or determined in the last quarter. Members noted that the dates of individual complaints and an indication of whether they are new / on-going, as requested at the previous meeting, were yet to be included and that consideration was still being given to an alternative to the current way in which letters are used to identify Councillors.

In response to a query about the time required to deal with complaints, Members noted that the appointment of the Suffolk Independent Persons in September 2014 was helping to address this aspect, and asked for an update to be reported to the next meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the content of Paper JAC42 be noted.**
- (2) That further updates on the progress of the complaints in Paper JAC42 be reported to the next meeting.**

13 WORK PLAN

RESOLVED

That the contents of Paper [JAC43](#) be noted.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 11.35 a.m.

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Chairman