

MINUTES OF THE JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, NEEDHAM MARKET ON MONDAY 19  
JANUARY 2015 AT 10:00 A.M.

PRESENT: **BABERGH**

**MID SUFFOLK**

Dave Busby  
Robert Lindsay  
Brian Riley  
David Rose  
Len Young

Gerard Brewster  
David Burn  
Stuart Gemmill  
Elizabeth Gibson-Harries (Chairman)  
Kathie Guthrie

1 SUBSTITUTES AND APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillors James Cartlidge, Patricia Godden, Duncan Macpherson, Tony Roberts and Jane Storey.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Stuart Gemmill declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 as a Stradbroke Parish Councillor.

3 MINUTES

**RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 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 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2015/16

Members had before them Report [JAC44](#) which presented the proposed Treasury Management Strategy (which included the Annual Investment Strategy for managing surplus funds and borrowing strategy). These were in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code. The Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement were linked to the Budget report that would be presented to Executive/Strategy Committee and Council meetings in February 2015.

The Code of Practice recommended that the strategy was subject to scrutiny before it was presented to Council, which fell within the remit of the Joint Audit and Standards Committee.

The following amendments to the report were noted:

- Appendix F: Institutions Meeting High Credit Ratings Criteria – Add Coventry Building Society (advice from the Councils’ treasury advisors, Arlingclose)
- Appendix D: Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16 – paragraph 13.2 – amend £141 million to £139 million
- Appendix I: Glossary of Terms – omitted from this report but to be included in report to Executive and Strategy Committees.

In response to Members’ questions the Head of Corporate Resources advised that:

- If the credit rating of the Councils’ bank dropped below an A rating, steps would be taken on a daily basis to minimise the cash left with the bank over night
- Investigations were ongoing into the possibility of Babergh District Council lending funds to Mid Suffolk District Council on a short term basis
- Officers would look at the level of funds left with the Councils’ previous banks to cover cheques not yet presented and whether some of these funds could be transferred into the current income stream.

Members expressed concern regarding the proposal to include a provisional sum of £25m for each council in the draft capital programme for 2015/16 for potential prudential borrowing relating to delivery plan projects, and the controls in place to monitor use of the monies.

A motion to amend the recommendations to include the following was proposed and seconded:

- 2.2 (d) That use of the £25m, referred to in paragraph 8.11, to be subject to business cases that will be presented to Executive and Strategy Committees for onward recommendation to Full Council

The vote was unanimous and the amendment became the substantive motion.

It was also felt that paragraph 8.11 in the report required clarification and an explanation of the tables in Appendix G, paragraph 4.2 was necessary. Officers were requested to make these amendments to the report for presentation to the Executive and Strategy Committees in February.

## **RESOLVED**

### **Recommended to Executive and Strategy Committees and both Councils**

- 1. That the key factors and information relating to and affecting treasury management activities set out in Appendices A and B be noted**
- 2. That the following be approved:**
  - a) The Treasury Management Policy Statement set out in Appendix C**
  - b) The Draft Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16, incorporating the proposed changes referred to in paragraphs 8.17 and 8.18 of the report and including the Annual Investment Strategy as set out in Appendix D**
  - c) The Prudential Indicators and MRP Statement as set out in Appendices G and H**
  - d) That use of the £25m, referred to in paragraph 8.11, to be subject to business cases that will be presented to Executive and Strategy Committees for onward recommendation to Full Council**

## **8 PREVENTION OF FINANCIAL CRIME POLICY**

The Corporate Manager – Internal Audit was unable to attend the meeting to present his report and a motion to defer consideration of the item until the 16 March meeting was proposed and seconded.

## **RESOLVED**

**That consideration of the report be deferred to the 16 March meeting**

## **9 COMPLAINTS MONITORING**

The Monitoring Officer advised that this was an interim report and further detail would be provided to the 16 March meeting. It was noted that there were further outstanding complaints in relation to Tostock, Stowupland, Felsham, Beyton, Elmswell, Stoke-by-Nayland and Shotley Parish Councils.

Some discussion arose regarding the increase in complaints received and whether the limited sanctions now available if a complaint was found answerable was a reason for this. Members also questioned the rules governing confidentiality in regard to complaints and whether if a councillor was found guilty of breaching the Code of Conduct this was made public it would be a deterrent to others.

The Monitoring Officer said she would raise this at the Suffolk Monitoring Officers' meeting and look into the procedure used at other Councils to ensure we were working to the same model.

Councillor Stuart Gemmill, Ward Member for Stradbroke, commented on the eight complaints received regarding Stradbroke Parish Council. He said that the procedure for determining a complaint was too long and when finally decided no information was given other than the decision. He felt an explanation should be given to the complainants of the reasons for the decision, particularly if it was decided no action should be taken.

**RESOLVED**

**That the information provided with regard to Complaints Monitoring be noted**

10 UPDATE ON COMPLIANCE WITH THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

At the meeting on 10 November 2014 the Monitoring Officer had been asked to report any further information regarding Aldham Parish Council to this meeting.

The Monitoring Officer advised that a meeting of the Parish Council had been called by the Chairman to discuss the issue and she would provide a further update at the March meeting.

**RESOLVED**

**That the information be noted**

11 WORK PLAN

**RESOLVED**

**That the contents of Report JAC46 be noted**

The business of the meeting was concluded at 11:50am

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Chairman