

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS

Minutes of the meeting of the **JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held in the Frink Room (Elisabeth) - Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Monday, 11 March 2019

PRESENT:

Councillor: Jennie Jenkins (Chair)

Councillors:	Peter Beer	James Caston
	Michael Creffield	Derek Davis
	John Hinton	Lesley Mayes
	Suzie Morley	Dave Muller (Co-Chair)
	Mike Norris	Nick Ridley
	Kevin Welsby	

In attendance:

Officers: Corporate Manager - Internal Audit (JS)
Senior Governance Support Officer (BN)

Apologies:

Councillors: Tony Bavington
Tom Burrows
Frank Lawrenson
John Levantis
Peter Patrick

31 SUBSTITUTES

31.1 Councillor Andrew Stringer was unable to be present.

31.2 Councillor Peter Beer substituted for Councillor Peter Patrick and Councillor Nick Ridley substituted for Councillor Frank Lawrenson.

32 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

32.1 There were no declarations of interests.

33 JAC/18/18 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2019

33.1 Page 2, it was noted that the wording to the question "6.1 What is the status of the government guidance which councils have chosen not to follow?" and the extract from the guidance read as a double negative implying the guidance was not being followed and this was not thought to be the case.

33.2 Page 6, Funding Circle - a suggestion was made that for future reference numbers be written as a decimal rather than a fraction ie. £1/4 million be referred to as 0.25 million.

33.3 It was noted that a request to minute the weak attendance by Babergh Councillors attending meetings of this Committee had been omitted from the Minutes.

It was RESOLVED:-

That, subject to an addendum being added to the Minutes to include the weak attendance by Babergh Councillors to meetings of this Committee, that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2019 be confirmed as a true record.

34 PETITIONS

34.1 There were no petitions received.

35 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

35.1 None received.

36 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS

36.1 None received.

37 JAC/18/19 MANAGING THE RISK OF FRAUD AND CORRUPTION - ANNUAL REPORT

37.1 John Snell, Corporate Manager – Internal Audit, introduced Paper JAC/18/19 detailing the current arrangements in place across both Councils to ensure there is a pro-active corporate approach to preventing fraud and corruption and creating a culture where fraud and corruption will not be tolerated. The report provided details of the proactive work undertaken by Internal Audit to deter, prevent and detect fraud and corruption.

37.2 The Officer pointed out a typographical error on page 11, within the third bullet point to paragraph 4.11, the year should read “2019” and not 2109.

37.3 In response to questions from Councillors, the Corporate Manager – Internal Audit advised that the following information would be made available outside of the meeting:

- Housing Tenancy Fraud Investigations – What agencies do we work alongside to help prevent tenancy fraud and the level of engagement Housing Officers have with the Councils’ Enforcement Team?

- Pre-employment checks carried out by Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR & OD) on Officers of a senior grade i.e. Senior Leadership Team (SLT) officers. Would it include their financial status – credit checks; past/present company ownership etc? Such checks would help determine a candidate’s suitability in a senior post where they would be required to make important and rational decisions affecting the Councils.
- Funding secured by the Shared Revenues Partnership (SRP) from Suffolk County Council (SCC) to carry out a monthly review of single resident discount during 2018/19. The report provided a table showing the current number of discounts removed and the value of debt created since April. How does this compare to other authorities?
- Regarding Housing Benefit cases classified as ‘claimant error’ (paragraph 4.16 – page 12), how many ‘authority error’ cases were there?

37.4 The Officer provided clarification on a question raised regarding paragraph 4.23, Illegal Occupation, confirming the wording should read “Tenancy ended following Notice to Quit served to the tenant” and not “served from the tenant”.

37.5 In response to a question seeking clarification on the entry “Withdrawn after Offer Notice sent” contained in the table headed “Reason for Withdrawal/Denied” in paragraph 4.26 on page 15, the Officer considered this would be due to a change in the applicant’s circumstances, eg. unable to get the necessary funding etc.

37.6 A question was raised on fraud detection within the other organisations we are working alongside eg. CIFCO. The officer reported that Internal Audit check the holding companies, he was also in liaison with Emily Atack, Corporate Manager – Assets and Investments on the assurances being received on those investments. Councillor Ridley provided some clarification on CIFCO, confirming it is a fully audited company with external auditors as well as internal audit.

37.1 The Corporate Manager – Internal Audit included a caveat, providing a distinction between what Internal Audit do and what is actually the responsibility of Management, outlining the three lines of defence:

- First line: Management oversight – management responsible for;
- Second line: Operational issues – Corporate Managers looking at risk management and controls;
- Third line: Internal Audit.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Peter Beer and seconded by Councillor Dave Muller. By unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

That the contents of the Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption - Annual Report (Paper JAC/18/19) detailing the progress made in ensuring there are effective arrangements and measures in place across both Councils to minimise the risk of fraud and corruption has been reviewed and noted.

38 JAC/18/20 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2019/20

38.1 The Corporate Manager – Internal Audit introduced Paper JAC/18/20 detailing the proposed Internal Audit Plan for the next financial year 2019/20 providing Councillors with a view of the variety and scope of projects and corporate activities that will be supported through the work of the team.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Dave Muller and seconded by Councillor Suzie Morley. By unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED:-

That the contents of the Internal Audit Report 2019/20 (Paper JAC/18/20), supported by Appendix A, has been reviewed and noted.

39 JAC/18/21 FORWARD PLAN

It was RESOLVED

That the Committee Forward Plan set out in Paper JAC/18/21 be noted.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 10.18 am.

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Chair