



EPPING TOWN COUNCIL

EPPING HALL, ST JOHNS RD, EPPING, ESSEX CM16 5JU

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TO ALL MEMBERS of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CGAC)

Cllr R Sharif	(Chairman & Deputy Town Mayor)
Cllr G Scruton	(Finance Key Member)
Cllr N Avey	(Administration Key Member)
Beverley Rumsey	(Town Clerk & RFO) (Non-voting member)

(NB: The Town Mayor to be called upon as a voting member if the Committee would not otherwise be quorate.)

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE** to be held in the Conference Room, Epping Hall, on **Tuesday, 24th February 2026 at 8pm** for the purpose of transacting the business as set out in the agenda below.

Beverley Rumsey
Town Clerk
18th February 2026

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies and reasons for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests, along with the nature of those interests, in relation to any item on this agenda.

3 DISPENSATIONS

To receive requests for dispensations from members concerning any item of business on this agenda.

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTION TIME

The Chairman will invite public comments and responses in relation to items on this agenda. *Individuals will be permitted a maximum of three minutes each (total time for this session is limited to ten minutes).*

5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES (Attachment A)

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 28th October 2025. **Please note:** these were presented and APPROVED at the Ordinary Council meeting on 11th November 2025.

6 STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS THAT REQUIRE ACTION

There are no previous recommendations that require action.

7 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT REVIEW

Council **APPROVED** a review of policy and governance documents at the Ordinary Council meeting on 8th March 2016 (Minute #478 of 2015/16).

The list of policies for annual review and the dates for review were as follows (annually):
Internal and External Audits: **February & October** (Now at the closest Council meeting to when received)

Internal Audit Programme: **October** (Now at the Annual Council meeting)

Statement on Internal Control: October

Insurance Inventory: **February** (Working document to inform the Asset Register)

Asset Register: February (Dealt with under agenda item 10)

Internal Risk Register: February (Dealt with under agenda item 9)

Staffing Terms and Conditions: February & October (Dealt with under item 14-16)

Standing Orders & Financial Regulations: February (Dealt with under agenda item 8)

Employee Handbook: **October** (if changes are required. If not, after each new Council (October CGAC)

Risk management statement: October

Please note these were the current recommended review dates, but legislation may amend the dates if an earlier review is required.

Changing regulations and audit comments may add further items to this list.

The CGAC review process leads to recommendations to Council for amendments to documents to be made.

At the Corporate Governance meeting on 25th February 2025 (Minute #420 of 2024/25), Committed RECOMMENDED that the review process should be changed (Minute #463 of 2024/25), with the Town Clerk bringing items for review at the frequency required legally or deemed necessary. The list of policies held would be shared at the Annual Council meeting each year.

Please find attached the revised policy document review schedule, as per **Attachment B**.

Some items still need reviewing annually and these are itemised above and will continue to be placed on the relevant February or October Corporate Governance Advisory Committee agendas.

Committee is requested to **NOTE** the above information.

8 STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (Attachments B & B1, C & C1)

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, sch 12, para 42 ; Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

There have been revisions to the model Standing Orders (14 and 18) since the last review. The existing Standing Orders are provided as per **Attachment B**, the revisions as per **Attachment B1**. The Town Clerk has therefore made the necessary amendments.

There have been changes to the model Financial Regulations (5) since the last review. The existing Financial Regulations are provided as per **Attachment C**, the revisions as per **Attachment C1**. The Town Clerk has therefore made the necessary amendments.

Please note: amendments have been made to our existing documents which are based on the models, but have been updated in accordance with legislation as it has changed.

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Standing Orders (with amendments) should be RECOMMENDED for ADOPTION by Council.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Financial Regulations (with amendments) should be RECOMMENDED for ADOPTION by Council.

9 INTERNAL RISK REGISTER (Attachment D)

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

The Town Clerk has reviewed the Internal Risk Register and made some additions

RECOMMENDATION: The Internal Risk Register with additions should be RECOMMENDED for ADOPTION by Council.

10 ASSET REGISTER (Attachment E)

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 11th March 2025, Council RESOLVED to record individual items equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register (Minute #463 (iv) of 2024/25).

PLEASE NOTE: The Asset Register records all individual items of £1000 or greater. Council have many assets whose value is less than £1000 and these are recorded in Council's inventories which are updated annually. This is standard practice.

There has only been one acquisition and one disposal (individual items over £1000) during 2025/26 which is reflected in the Asset Register 2026, as per **Attachment E**.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** the following RECOMMENDATIONS and make appropriate **RECOMMENDATIONS** to Council:

- (i) Council should continue to record assets as individual items with a value equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register;
- (ii) The Asset Register 2026, as per **Attachment E**, should be APPROVED as a correct record of Council's assets at this time;
- (iii) Any revisions to the draft will be presented to full Council in March.

11 HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

(Attachments F-F3)

Epping Town Council's Health & Safety Policy was APPROVED on 11th March 2025 (Minute #463 (vii) of 2024/25) and is now due for review. The existing policy is provided as per **Attachment F**. The Town Clerk has augmented the Policy adding 3 clauses highlighted by Peninsula as missing, as per **Attachment F1**. There is also a new separate No Smoking policy, appended as per **Attachment F2**. There is also a new separate Alcohol and Drugs policy, appended as per **Attachment F3**.

The Clerk has also been issued with a suite of Health and Safety documents from Peninsula to review and this will be done as time allows.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Epping Town Council's revised Health and Safety Policy (**Attachment F**) should be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL as a policy of Epping Town Council.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Epping Town Council's Fit for Work Policy (Appendix to the Health and Safety Policy) (**Attachment F1**) should be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL as a policy of Epping Town Council.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Epping Town Council's No Smoking Policy (Appendix to the Health and Safety Policy) (**Attachment F2**) should be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL as a policy of Epping Town Council.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Epping Town Council's Alcohol and Drugs Policy (Appendix to the Health and Safety Policy) (**Attachment F3**) should be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL as a policy of Epping Town Council.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** these RECOMMENDATIONS and **DECIDE** what to do.

12 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

13 NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) POLICY (Attachment G)

As part of the new Assertion 10 requirements for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), Council are required to have an IT Policy. A model IT Policy, adapted for Epping Town Council, is provided as per **Attachment G**. This has been checked by our external IT partner and some alterations to our IT arrangements are required to ensure compliancy and best practice. The adjustments suggested are added as tracked highlights.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** the IT Policy and **DECIDE** whether to **RECOMMEND** to Council that it is **DEVELOPED** towards a policy of Epping Town Council, once the Town Clerk and Council's IT provider have shaped it. It will then be brought back to Committee for approval.

14 INSURANCE POLICIES (CONTRACTS) & RECONCILIATION

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972 s111; Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members & Officers) order 2004

Council awarded a three-year contract to Zurich Municipal starting on 1st July 2025 (Minutes #69 and #108 of 2025/26). This used to be reviewed on 1st April each year but was moved to 1st July in 2018. The policy is due for its mid term annual renewal on 1st July 2026. This includes Council's main insurance policy, motor fleet insurance policy and any other maintenance/engineering insurance, such as lifts.

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 9th July 2019 (Minute #129 of 2019/20), Epping Town Council **RESOLVED** to take out cyber insurance. Council's income and expenditure exceeds £500,000 so the cyber insurance policy required for Epping Town Council is more complex than basic cover. This cost £1092.59 in July 2025 (per annum), including IPT at 12%, and will be due for renewal in July 2026. Cyber insurance information will be included in the documentation brought to Council in June 2026 if it arrives early enough.

Council's assets must be recorded in an Asset Register which forms part of the externally audited Annual Return each year. It is necessary to ensure the current levels of insurance are adequate for Council's assets on an annual basis. **Please note:** the total approved budget for insurance 2026/27 is £27,540.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** this information and **DECIDE** if any further action is required at the current time.

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Epping Town Council staff are governed by the terms and conditions of the NJC (National Joint Council) (set by NALC and SLCC). The current staff pay scales are listed as per **Attachment H**.

The pay scales which came into effect on 1st April 2025, were received in July 2025 and backdated. This delivered an increase across all scale points of 3.2%. It is very common for any pay awards to arrive up to November of the relevant financial year and when they are received after the 1st April, salaries are backdated accordingly. Please note: discussions on the 2026/27 staff pay awards are still ongoing at union level. The Town Clerk has built an increase of approximately 4% into the 2026-27 budget.

The Essex Pension Fund (which relates to all relevant staff employed with Epping Town Council prior to 2018) employer pension contribution rate from 1st April 2025 is 24.8% (1st April 2023-1st April 2026). We have been advised that the employer pension contribution rates for the 2026/27 fund year will be 23.8%, 22.8% for the 2027/28 fund year and 21.8% for the for 2028/29 fund year. The employer pension contribution rate for NEST (which relates to all relevant staff employed with Epping Town Council after 2018) is currently 8% (a minimum of 3% from the employer, 5% from the employee: 4% from the employee, 1% tax relief) (from 6th April 2019 onwards). We have not received any alternative NEST rates for 2026 at the time of writing.

Committee is requested to **NOTE** this information.

16 STAFFING MATTERS and STAFF TERMS & CONDITIONS

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Staffing matters has previously been an agenda item on the February and October Corporate Governance Advisory Committee agendas. The Town Clerk **RECOMMENDS** that this agenda item remains to provide a registered 'slot' for discussion should it be required, but if there is nothing of significance to note, the agenda item reads:

There are no staffing matters requiring attention at the current time.

Should a staffing matter arise, it would be dealt with at point of need and brought to Council if needed.

Staffing terms (& conditions) has also been a regular Corporate Governance agenda item. Should there be a requirement to change any staff terms and conditions, this would be brought to the Committee, but if there is no recommended or statutory change to staff terms and conditions (apart from noting annual pay scales as Committee do separately), then the Town Clerk **RECOMMENDS** that no agenda item should be included here.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** these **RECOMMENDATIONS** and **DECIDE** if they are happy to **RECOMMEND** them to Council.

17 TOWN CLERK APPRAISAL

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

The Town Clerk was formally appointed Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer on 1st February 2016 (Minute #392 of 2015/16). The Town Clerk joined Epping Town Council as Deputy Town Clerk on 5th January 2015 and was made Interim Town Clerk on 14th July 2015 (Minute #100 of 2015/16).

The Town Clerk's Review and Development is now due and will be undertaken in February 2026. The Review and Development process for the Town Clerk will be completed by the Chairman of Council (Cllr Janet Whitehouse: 2025-26).

Committee are requested to **NOTE** this information.

(NB: The matters on this agenda have a statutory basis under the Local Government Act 1972 in sections 101 and 111, in addition to those stated.)