



# 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 M Wright	(Chairman & Deputy Mayor)
Cllr G Scruton	(Town Mayor & Finance Key Member)
Cllr N Avey	(Administration Key Member)
Beverley Rumsey	(Town Clerk) (Non-voting member)

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE** to be held in the **Conference Room, Epping Hall, St Johns Road, Epping** on **Tuesday, 22nd October 2019** at **6pm** for the purpose of transacting the business as set out in the agenda below.

**Beverley Rumsey**  
Town Clerk  
16th October 2019

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## 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 26th February 2019.

#### 6 STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations of the CGAC were adopted by Council at the Ordinary Council meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019 (Minute #587 of 2018/19):

- (i) The revised Standing Orders should be **ADOPTED** by Council (CGAC Attachment B);
- (ii) The Financial Regulations should be **ADOPTED** by Council with no amendments (CGAC Attachment C);
- (iii) Financial Regulation 4.5 (a) should be **APPROVED** to remain;
- (iv) The revised internal risk register (CGAC Attachment D) should be **ADOPTED** by Council;
- (v) Council should continue to record assets as individual items with a value equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register;
- (vi) The Asset Register 2019 (CGAC Attachment F) should be **APPROVED** as a correct record of Council's assets at the time;
- (vii) Any revisions will be presented to full Council;
- (viii) Council's Data Protection Policy (CGAC Attachment G1) should be **ADOPTED** as a policy of Epping Town Council;
- (ix) Council's Privacy Statement (CGAC Attachment G2) should be **ADOPTED** as a policy of Epping Town Council;
- (x) Council's Publication Scheme (CGAC Attachment H) should be **ADOPTED** as a policy of Epping Town Council, with revised photocopying charges;
- (xi) Council's Complaints Procedure (CGAC Attachment I) should be **ADOPTED** as a policy of Epping Town Council with no amendments;

- (xii) Council's Health & Safety Policy (CGAC Attachment J) should be **ADOPTED** as a policy of Epping Town Council, with the highlighted amendments;
- (xiii) Council's Equality Policy (CGAC Attachment K) should be **ADOPTED** as a policy of Epping Town Council with no amendments;
- (xiv) Council's Media Policy (CGAC Attachment L) should be **ADOPTED** as a policy of Epping Town Council, with the amendments highlighted;
- (xv) Council's Social Media Policy (CGAC Attachment M) should be **ADOPTED** as a policy of Epping Town Council with no amendments;
- (xvi) Council's Community Engagement Policy (CGAC Attachment N) should be **ADOPTED** as a policy of Epping Town Council, with the amendments highlighted;
- (xvii) Epping Town Council should employ the same external Data Protection Officer from 2018/19 for 2019/20, at a cost of £250-£300 for the year.

## 7 **PREVIOUS OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are no previous outstanding recommendations.

## 8 **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT REVIEW**

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

The list of policies for annual review and the dates for review are as follows:

Internal and External Audits: **October 2019 & February 2020**

**(Dealt with under agenda items 9 & 11)**

Internal Audit Programme: **October 2019 (Dealt with under agenda item 10)**

Statement on Internal Control: **October 2019 (Dealt with under agenda item 12)**

Risk Management Statement: **October 2019 (Dealt with under agenda item 12)**

Insurance Inventory: February 2020

Asset Register: February 2020

Internal Risk Register: February 2020

Staffing Terms and Conditions: **October 2019 & February 2020**

**(Dealt with under agenda item 22)**

Standing Orders: February 2020

Financial Regulations: February 2020

Employee Handbook: **October 2019 (Dealt with under agenda item 13)**

Please note these are 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.

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

## 9 INTERNAL AUDIT

**Statutory Basis:** The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Committee are requested to **NOTE** that the first visit of the internal auditor will be on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

The internal audit report (first interim) will be brought to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2019, once received.

## 10 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAMME (Attachment B)

**Statutory Basis:** The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Members are requested to **NOTE** that the internal auditing programme was reviewed at the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and Auditing Solutions Ltd were appointed as Council's internal auditors for a further period of five years from 2015-2020, based on the scope and detail provided. (Approved at the Ordinary Council meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (Minutes #249 and #267 of 2015/16 refer)).

Committee are requested to **NOTE** this information, once again.

## 11 EXTERNAL AUDIT (Attachment C)

**Statutory Basis:** The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Members are requested to **NOTE** the externally audited Annual Return for 2018/19. This report has previously been considered by Full Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019. (Minute #254 of 2019/20).

The Town Clerk was pleased to report there are no qualifications or comments on the Annual Return (and therefore no matters needing attention).

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

12 **REVIEW OF STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL & RISK MANAGEMENT STATEMENT** (Attachments D & E)

**Statutory Basis:** The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Council is required to maintain a Statement of Internal Control (**Attachment D**) and a Risk Management Statement (**Attachment E**) and ensure that it is reviewed annually. The Town Clerk has made slight revisions to both documents.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** these statements and revisions and make appropriate **RECOMMENDATIONS** to Council.

13 **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK** (Attachment F)

**Statutory Basis:** Local Government Act 1972, s112

The Employee Handbook was reviewed at the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee meeting on 23<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and minor amendments were recommended. This was **APPROVED** at the Ordinary Council meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2018 (Minute #339 of 2018/19).

The Town Clerk has reviewed the Employee Handbook and makes no further recommendations. The broad content is currently adequate for the staffing situation and structure at Epping Town Council.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Employee Handbook should be **APPROVED** with no amendments at the current time.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** this recommendation and **DECIDE** what to do.

14 **HALF-YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY POSITION**

**Statutory Basis:** Local Government Act 1972, s111

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019, Council approved the draft budgets as **working drafts** (first estimates) (Minute #253 of 2019/20) with second estimates to be discussed at the Ordinary Council meeting in November/December and the final budget set at the Ordinary Council meeting in January 2020.

**Please note: no decisions on the precept levels were agreed at this first meeting.**

Council's draft budget (first estimate) showed Council's half-year expenditure (on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018) was 52.4% of the agreed budget. Council's income to that date was 50% of the agreed budget.

The early projected outturn figure shows a deficit of £29,365 against a surplus budget of £1,168. This is due to some of the previous year's Stonards Hill refurbishment project expenditure being finalised in this financial year. Early adjustments to the market budget and possible lower than anticipated cemetery income may also contribute to this. This is subject to much change and the income/expenditure will continue to be monitored each month at full Council.

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

## 15 **GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION UPDATE**

**Statutory Basis:** General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679)

The Town Clerk is pleased to report there have been no data breaches to date.

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019, Epping Town Council RESOLVED to enlist a Data Protection Officer (Minute #587 (xvii) of 2018/19). As there have been no data breaches to date, the Town Clerk has not appointed a Data Protection Officer (**please note:** we are not obligated to do so) and is monitoring the situation on an ongoing basis and would RECOMMEND doing so at point of need.

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019, Epping Town Council RESOLVED to take out cyber insurance (Minute #129 of 2019/20). This insurance policy is now in place.

Committee is requested to **NOTE** this information and **DECIDE** if any further action is required at the current time regarding the data protection officer or whether they are happy to RECOMMEND the ongoing monitoring.

## 16 **CARD PAYMENTS**

**(Attachment G)**

**Statutory Basis:** Local Government Act 1972, s111

The Town Clerk has looked at a number of card payment terminals to determine whether it would be beneficial for Epping Town Council to take card payments. We currently take payments by cash, cheque and bank transfer.

The Town Clerk has provided some information and a RECOMMENDATION as per **Attachment G**.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** this information and **DECIDE** what to do.

17 **FINANCIAL SYSTEMS** **(Attachment H)**

**Statutory Basis:** The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 ; Local Government Act 1972, s111

The Town Clerk has provided some information about Epping Town Council's payment systems as per **Attachment H**. Epping Town Council do not currently make BACS or online payments, as one off payments.

Committee is requested the consider Council's payment methods and **DECIDE** what **RECOMMENDATIONS** to make to Council.

18 **TOWN COUNCILLOR EMAIL ADDRESSES**

**Statutory Basis:** Local Government Act 1972, s111

Epping Town Councillors currently use their own personal email addresses for Town Council business. Best practice would be for councillors to have their own dedicated Town Council email address. Some councillors may prefer to keep their existing email addresses for Council business, but GDPR has highlighted that dedicated email addresses would be preferable. They would however, cost £8 per month, per councillor, totaling £1152 per annum, in addition to the operational time to implement this.

One option may be for town councillors to set up their own free town councilor email address, using a free service such as Yahoo, Hotmail or Gmail and which is password protected and accessed by that councillor only. Any council emails that are not required to be kept should then be deleted.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** this information and **DECIDE** what **RECOMMENDATION** to make to Council.

19 **INVESTMENT FUNDS**

**Statutory Basis:** The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 ; Local Government Act 1972, s111

The Town Clerk has been advised of a Public Sector Deposit Fund & Local Authorities' Property Fund, which many Councils are now investing with.

A meeting is being scheduled to learn more about these Funds and once more information is available, it will return to Committee or Council, as appropriate. Committee is requested to **NOTE** this information.

## 20 WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY

**Statutory Basis:** Local Government Act 1972, s142; Local Government Act 1972, s111

New legislation regarding website accessibility will be coming into force in September 2020. Epping Town Council use a Wix.com website and the website is managed within the office team. This generally works to an acceptable level, but should there be any problems with the website, we have no real support. This has been rare.

The new accessibility requirements may mean we need some additional support with our website, using an external company. The Town Clerk will bring this matter back to Committee in February once more information has been gathered.

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

## 21 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.

## 22 STAFF TERMS & CONDITIONS/PAYSCALES (Attachment I)

**Statutory Basis:** Local Government Act 1972, s112

Epping Town Council staff are governed by the terms of conditions set by the NJC (National Joint Council) (set by NALC and SLCC). The current spine points were noted at the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019 (Minute #550 of 2018/19).

Staff received a salary review in April 2019 (for 2018/19) and are expected to receive a further salary review in April 2020. The figures for 2020 are not yet available. In the 2019/20 budget first draft estimates, the Town Clerk has budgeted increases of 2% for staff above a certain scale point, with increases



ranging from 3-6% for the lower scale points, in line with the 2018/19 increases. More accurate calculations will be made once the figures are available.

**Please note:** the scale points were number regraded from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, to eliminate some of the lowest scale points and remain in line with minimum wage levels. The scales are lower in number, but constant in monetary terms. Increments will follow the same format as previously, though the values may vary year on year, depending on the level determined by the NJC.

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

## 23 STAFFING MATTERS

(Attachment J)

**Statutory Basis:** Local Government Act 1972, s112

An overall staffing update is provided as per **Attachment J**.

The Town Clerk has provided a **RECOMMENDATION** in **Attachment J**.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** this information and **RECOMMENDATION** and **DECIDE** what **RECOMMENDATIONS** to make to Council.

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