



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 B Scruton (Chairman & Deputy Town Mayor)
Cllr G Scruton (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, on Tuesday, 22nd February 2022 at 7.30pm for the purpose of transacting the business as set out in the agenda below.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beverley Rumsey".

Beverley Rumsey
Town Clerk
16th February 2022

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 2nd November 2021. **Please note:** these were presented at the Ordinary Council meeting on 9th November 2021.

6 STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations of the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee (CGAC) from their meeting on 2nd November 2021 (Minutes #249–264 of 21/22) were adopted by Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 9th November 2021 (Minute #288 of 21/22):

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The amended Statement on Internal Control should be **APPROVED** as per **Attachment K**;
- (ii) The amended Risk Management Statement should be **APPROVED** as per **Attachment K1**;
- (iii) The revised Employee Handbook should be **APPROVED** as per **Attachment K2**;
- (iv) The small salary amendment detailed in the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee paperwork **Attachment G** (excluded) should be **APPROVED**;
- (v) The revisions to the Market Supervisor and Assistant situation should be **APPROVED** (details as per **Agenda Item 18, Attachments M & M1.**)

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 are as follows:

Internal and External Audits: **February 2022** & October 2022 (Dealt with under items 10 & 11)

Internal Audit Programme: October 2022

Statement on Internal Control: October 2022

Insurance Inventory: **February 2022** (Dealt with under agenda item 20)

Asset Register: **February 2022** (Dealt with under agenda item 12)

Internal Risk Register: **February 2022** (Dealt with under agenda item 9)

Staffing Terms and Conditions: **February 2022** & October 2022 (Dealt with under item 22)

Standing Orders & Financial Regulations: **February 2022** (Dealt with under agenda item 8)

Employee Handbook: October 2022

Risk management statement: October 2022

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.

8 STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (Attachments B & C)

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

There have been no recommended changes to the model Standing Orders **(Attachment B)** since the last review and no recommended changes to the Financial Regulations **(Attachment C)**. The Town Clerk has therefore made no change to either document.

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Standing Orders (with no amendments) should be RECOMMENDED for ADOPTION by Council.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Financial Regulations (with no 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 no amendments.

RECOMMENDATION: The current Internal Risk Register should be recommended for ADOPTION by Council.

10 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

Committee is requested to **NOTE** the first visit of the internal auditor will be on 23rd February 2022.

The internal audit report (first interim) will be brought to Council once received.

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

11 EXTERNAL AUDITS

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 8th March 2016 (Minute #475 of 2015/16), Epping Town Council resolved to 'opt in' to the External Audit arrangements (which was recommended in this sector) and whereby Council would be allocated an external auditor from 2017-2022.

The external auditor for 2017-2022 for Essex will remain as PKF Littlejohn LLP.

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

12 ASSET REGISTER

(Attachment E)

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

The current form of the Asset Register was ADOPTED following advice from Peter Lacey of NALC/SLCC and advice from the Audit Commission on 29th March 2010. It was reviewed by Council in October 2012 (Minutes #201 & #222 of 2012/13).

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 11th March 2021, Council RESOLVED to record individual items equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register (Minute #471 (v) of 2020/21).

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 have some acquisitions and disposals during 2021/22 which are reflected in the Asset Register 2022, 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 2022, 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.

13 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

(Attachment F)

Epping Town Council's complaints procedure was APPROVED on 11th March 2021 (Minute #471 (vi) of 2020/21) and is now due for review. It was RESOLVED that some amendments should be made at a later date (Minute #425 (ii) of 2020/21). The Town Clerk is pleased to report that Epping Town Council receive very few formal complaints and the office team try to deal with any issues efficiently, so they do not become a complaint. The Town Clerk has made some amendments to strengthen the procedure and cover additional issues that may arise with a complaint.

RECOMMENDATION: Epping Town Council's Complaints Procedure should be APPROVED as the Complaints Procedure for Epping Town Council, with those amendments.

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

14 RECRUITMENT POLICY

(Attachment G)

Epping Town Council's Recruitment Policy was APPROVED on 12th November 2020 (Minute #299 (ii) of 2020/21) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk has made

some very minor wording changes to the policy. The Recruitment Policy, with these minor revisions, is provided as per **Attachment G**.

RECOMMENDATION: Epping Town Council's Recruitment Policy should be APPROVED as the Recruitment Policy for Epping Town Council, with the amendments made.

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

15 **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY** **(Attachment H)**

Epping Town Council's Health & Safety Policy was APPROVED on 11th March 2021 (Minute #471 (viii) of 2020/21) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk has made no amendments at this time.

RECOMMENDATION: Epping Town Council's Health & Safety Policy should be APPROVED as the Health & Safety Policy for Epping Town Council, with no amendments.

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

16 **GRANT AWARDING POLICY** **(Attachment I)**

Epping Town Council's Grant Awarding Policy was APPROVED on 12th November 2020 (Minute #299 (ii) of 2020/21) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk considers the policy to be relevant to the Council's aims at the current time and has made only minor wording amendments.

RECOMMENDATION: Epping Town Council's Grant Awarding Policy should be APPROVED as the Grant Awarding Policy for Epping Town Council, with the minor wording amendments.

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

17 **PROCUREMENT POLICY** **(Attachment J)**

Epping Town Council's Procurement Policy was APPROVED on 12th November 2020 (Minute #299 (ii) of 2020/21) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk considers the policy to be relevant to the Council's aims at the current time and has made no amendments.

RECOMMENDATION: Epping Town Council's Procurement Policy should be APPROVED as the Procurement Policy for Epping Town Council, with no amendments.

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

18 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT (Attachment K)

Epping Town Council's Training and Development Statement was APPROVED on 12th November 2020 (Minute #299 (ii) of 2020/21) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk considers the statement to be relevant to the Council's aims at the current time, but has made some minor amendments.

RECOMMENDATION: Epping Town Council's Training and Development Statement should be APPROVED as the Training and Development Statement for Epping Town Council, with these minor amendments.

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

19 INVESTMENT STRATEGY (Attachment L)

Epping Town Council's Investment Strategy was APPROVED on 11th June 2019 (Minute #85 of 2019/20) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk has made no amendments, at the current time.

RECOMMENDATION: Epping Town Council's Investment Strategy should be APPROVED as the Investment Strategy for Epping Town Council, with no amendments.

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

20 BALANCE OF TRADE POLICY (MARKET) (Attachment M)

Epping Town Council's Balance of Trade Policy for Epping Market was APPROVED on 12th November 2019 (Minute #316 of 2019/20) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk has made some amendments.

RECOMMENDATION: Epping Town Council's Balance of Trade Policy (Market) should be APPROVED as the Balance of Trade Policy for Epping Town Council's Market, with these amendments.

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

21 CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS POLICY (Attachment N)

Epping Town Council's Climate & Environmental Awareness Policy was APPROVED on 12th November 2020 (Minute #302 of 2020/21). The Town Clerk has no made amendments.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** the Climate & Environmental Awareness Policy as per **Attachment N** and **DECIDE** if any amendments or additions are required at the current time.

22 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.

23 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 WPS Hallam Brokers (The Military Mutual and ERS Motor Insurance) on 1st July 2021 (Minute #105 of 2021/22). This used to be reviewed on 1st April each year but was moved to 1st July in 2018. Council review the policy annually to ensure it is adequate for Council's needs and covers assets, but the provider and policy will remain the same for these three years, apart from operational changes and amendments. The Town Clerk will provide an insurance reconciliation in June 2022 at full Council. Insurance Premium Tax is currently 12% (this is expected to remain at 12% for this financial year; it is set by Government). The insurance premium for 2021/22 was £10,139.13, plus £660.42 for engineering inspections and £299.99 for cyber insurance. This includes the main insurance policy and motor fleet insurance. At the Ordinary Council meeting on 9th July 2019 (Minute #129 of 2019/20), Epping Town Council RESOLVED to take out cyber insurance. This cost £299.99 in July 2021 (per annum), including IPT at 12%, and will be due for renewal in July 2022. This will be included in the documentation brought to Council in June 2022.

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 2022/23 is £14,330.

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

24 DATA PROTECTION (GDPR) OFFICER

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 12th November 2019 (Minute #312 of 2019/20), following the RECOMMENDATION of the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee (Minute #279 of 2019/20), Council decided to monitor the situation regarding Data Protection and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and possibly appointing a Data Protection Officer (DPO) at point of need. **Please note:** if such a DPO were necessary, the Town Clerk would recommend an independent person, perhaps a retired Clerk or similar, employed on a retaining or ad hoc basis.

The Town Clerk would RECOMMEND that continuing to monitor the situation should be sufficient at the current time.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** whether to RECOMMEND to Council continuing with the monitoring of the situation and appointing someone should it be necessary.

25 STAFF TERMS & CONDITIONS/PAYSCALES

(Attachment O)

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 O**.

The pay scales for 2021 were **nil** increase.

The pay scales for 2022 have not yet been received. This is quite common and when they are received after the 1st April, salaries are backdated accordingly. The Town Clerk has built an increase of approximately 2% into the 2022-23 budget. The Clerk is now awaiting confirmation of any pay increases for 2022/23, following the public sector pay freeze in 2021.

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 2021 is 23.3%. This was 23.3% in 2020 and is set until 2022. We have not received the Essex Pension Fund rates for 2022 at the time of writing.

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) (from 6th April 2019 onwards). This is the rate for 2021. We have not received any alternative NEST rates for 2022 at the time of writing.

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

26 STAFFING MATTERS

(Attachment P)

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

The Town Clerk has provided an update on staffing matters as per **Attachment P**.

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

27 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 2016/17). 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 2022. The Review and Development process for the Town Clerk will be completed by the Chairman of Council (Cllr M Wright: 2021-22) and the Chairman of the Task & Finish Personnel Committee (Cllr B Scruton).

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.)