



# 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 Janet Whitehouse	(Chairman & Deputy Town Mayor)
Cllr G Scruton	(Finance Key Member)
Cllr N Avey	(Administration Key Member)
Beverley Rumsey	(Town Clerk & RFO) (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, 25th February 2025 at 8pm** for the purpose of transacting the business as set out in the agenda below.

**Beverley Rumsey**  
Town Clerk  
19th February 2025

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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).*

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5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

(Attachment A)

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2024. **Please note:** these were presented and APPROVED at the Ordinary Council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

## 6 STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations of the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee (CGAC) from their meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 (Minutes #239–261 of 24/25) were ADOPTED by Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (Minute #285 of 24/25):

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The revised Statement on Internal Control should be APPROVED (~~Attachment J~~);
- (ii) The revised Risk Management Statement should be APPROVED (~~Attachment J~~);
- (iii) The revised Employee Handbook should be APPROVED (~~Attachment J~~);
- (iv) The new Financial Regulations 2024 should be APPROVED as per (~~Attachment J~~);
- (v) The corrected Cemetery Regulations should be APPROVED as per (~~Attachment J~~);
- (vi) The stall allocation policy should be APPROVED as per (~~Attachment J~~);
- (vii) The Investment Strategy should be APPROVED as per (~~Attachment J~~);
- (viii) Investing with CCLA should not be pursued at the current time, but may be revisited in the future if funds allow (~~Attachment J~~);
- (ix) The Safeguarding Policy with no amendments should be APPROVED as the Safeguarding Policy for Epping Town Council (~~Attachment J~~);
- (x) The Volunteering Policy with no amendments should be APPROVED as the Safeguarding Policy for Epping Town Council (~~Attachment J~~).

## 7 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: **February 2025** & October 2025 (Dealt with under items 10 & 11)

Internal Audit Programme: October 2025

Statement on Internal Control: October 2025

Insurance Inventory: **February 2025** (Dealt with under agenda item 22)

Asset Register: **February 2025** (Dealt with under agenda item 12)

Internal Risk Register: **February 2025** (Dealt with under agenda item 9)

Staffing Terms and Conditions: **February 2025** & October 2025 (Dealt with under item 24-26)

Standing Orders & Financial Regulations: **February 2025** (Dealt with under agenda item 8)

Employee Handbook: October 2025

Risk management statement: October 2025

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. The Town Clerk has therefore made no changes to this document.

There have been no recommended changes to the model Financial Regulations since the last review on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024 (Minute #285 (iv) of 2024/25), where the model regulations were rewritten (by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). **(Attachment C)**.

**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 some 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 second visit of the internal auditor will be on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

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

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

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11 EXTERNAL AUDITS

**Statutory Basis:** Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 (Minute #182 of 2022/23), 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 2022-2027.

The external auditor for 2022-2027 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 29<sup>th</sup> March 2010. It was reviewed by Council in October 2012 (Minutes #201 & #222 of 2012/13).

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024, Council RESOLVED to record individual items equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register (Minute #467 (v) of 2023/24).

**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 major acquisition and disposal during 2024/25 which is reflected in the Asset Register 2025, 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 2025, 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 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (Minute #467 (vi) of 2023/24) and is now due for review. 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 no amendments.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Epping Town Council's Complaints Procedure should be APPROVED as the Complaints Procedure for Epping Town Council.

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

14 **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**

**(Attachment G)**

Epping Town Council's Health & Safety Policy was APPROVED on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (Minute #467 (viii) of 2023/24) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk has made no amendments.

**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.

15 **MEDIA POLICY**

**(Attachment H)**

Epping Town Council's Media Policy was APPROVED on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (Minute #449 (ix) of 2022/23) 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 Media Policy should be APPROVED as the Media Policy for Epping Town Council, with no amendments.

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

16 **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**(Attachment I)**

Epping Town Council's Social Media Policy was APPROVED on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (Minute #449 (x) of 2022/23) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk considers the policy to be broadly relevant to the Council's aims at the current time and has made one minor amendment.

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 (Minute #355 of 2024/25), the Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, as Council's Proper Officer, reminded members how important it is to adhere to Council's Social Media Policy, Code of Conduct and all of Council's policies.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Epping Town Council's Social Media Policy should be APPROVED as the Social Media Policy for Epping Town Council, with a minor amendment.

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

**17 PUBLICATION SCHEME (Attachment J)**

Epping Town Council's Publication Scheme was APPROVED on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (Minute #449 (xiii) of 2022/23) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk considers the Publication Scheme to be appropriate at the current time and has made no amendments other than deleting any out-of-date information (hard copies of Town Guide).

**RECOMMENDATION:** Epping Town Council's Publication Scheme should be APPROVED as the Publication Scheme for Epping Town Council, with no formal amendments.

**18 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY (Attachment K)**

Epping Town Council's Community Engagement Policy was APPROVED on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (Minute #449 (xi) of 2022/23) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk has made some minor amendments.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Epping Town Council's Community Engagement Policy should be APPROVED as the Community Engagement Policy for Epping Town Council, with the minor amendments.

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

**19 DATA PROTECTION POLICY (Attachment L)**

Epping Town Council's Data Protection Policy was APPROVED on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (Minute #449 (xii) of 2022/23) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk has made no amendments.

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

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

**20 COMPLIANCE FAILURE POLICY (Attachment M)**

Epping Town Council's Compliance Failure Policy was APPROVED on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (Minute #496 (vi) of 2020/21) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk has made no amendments.

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

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

## 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 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 on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 (Minute #105 of 2022/23). This used to be reviewed on 1<sup>st</sup> April each year but was moved to 1<sup>st</sup> July in 2018. The policy is due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025. The Town Clerk will be working on obtaining quotations for Council's insurance obligations over the coming months. This will include Council's main insurance policy, motor fleet insurance policy and any other maintenance/engineering insurance, such as lifts.

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> 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 £1067.60 in July 2024 (per annum), including IPT at 12%, and will be due for renewal in July 2025. Cyber insurance information will be included in the documentation brought to Council in June 2025.

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 2025/26 is £25,910.

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

## 23 DATA PROTECTION (GDPR) OFFICER

(Attachment N)

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> 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. This has been the position year on year since. **Please note:** if such a DPO were necessary, the Town Clerk has recommended an independent person, perhaps a retired Clerk or similar, employed on a retaining or ad hoc basis. The Clerk took some further advice on this in 2024 and this should be a suitably qualified person (advice detailed as per **Attachment N**).

The Town Clerk would **RECOMMEND** that continuing to monitor the situation should be sufficient at the current time, but if a DPO were necessary in the future, they should be suitably qualified.

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

## 24 STAFF PAY SCALES

(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 which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, were received in November 2024 and backdated. 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 1<sup>st</sup> April, salaries are backdated accordingly. Please note: discussions on the 2025/26 staff pay awards are still ongoing at union level. The Town Clerk has built an increase of approximately 4% into the 2025-26 budget.

The Essex Pension Fund (which relates to all relevant staff employed with Epping Town Council prior to 2018) employer pension contribution rate from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 is 24.8% (1<sup>st</sup> April 2023-1<sup>st</sup> April 2026). This was raised from 23.3%. 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 6<sup>th</sup> April 2019 onwards). We have not received any alternative NEST rates for 2025 at the time of writing.

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

## 25 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.

## 26 STAFF TERMS

(Attachment Q)

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

The Town Clerk has provided a staffing **RECOMMENDATION** as per **Attachment Q**.

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

**27 TOWN CLERK APPRAISAL**

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

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

The Town Clerk's Review and Development is now due and will be undertaken in February 2025. The Review and Development process for the Town Clerk will be completed by the Chairman of Council (Cllr C McCredie: 2024-25).

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.)**