

MINUTES of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEEHeld at by **Zoom** on Tuesday 23rd February 2021 at 5pm.

PRESENT: Cllr M Wright (Chairman & Deputy Town Mayor)
Cllr G Scruton (Town Mayor & Key Member Finance)
Cllr N Avey (Key Member Administration)

OFFICER: Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk)

413 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

414 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received from members.

Agenda item 28 relates to the Town Clerk's Conditions. The Town Clerk left the meeting at this point. Cllr B Scruton attended the meeting as the Chairman of Personnel to discuss this item with the Committee.

415 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

416 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions or comments.

417 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee held on 27th October 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

418 STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations of the CGAC (from their meeting on 27th October 2020) were adopted by Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 10th November 2020 (Minute #299 of 2020/21):

- (i) The work of the internal auditor should be **NOTED**;
- (ii) The internal audit programme should be **APPROVED** by Council as per ~~Attachment N1~~ and Council should request a change of auditing personnel (from the same company) from 2022 to 2025;
- (iii) The external audit (AGAR) should be **NOTED**;
- (iv) The Statement on Internal Control & Risk Management Statement should be **APPROVED** as per ~~Attachment N2~~ and ~~Attachment N3~~;
- (v) The revised Employee Handbook should be **APPROVED** as per ~~Attachment N4~~;
- (vi) The half-year financial position should be **NOTED** with no further action required at this time;
- (vii) The new website tender document should be **APPROVED** as per ~~Attachment N5~~ and ~~Appendix 1~~;

- (viii) The staff terms & conditions/payscale, as **NOTED** by the Committee, should be **APPROVED**. (Please note: all job descriptions and salary scales have been through Council prior to officer appointments.);
- (ix) There are no staffing matters to **NOTE** at the current time.

***Please note:** the Attachment nos with a ~~line through~~ refer to the Attachment number from the relevant CGAC meeting.

Committee **NOTED** the above information.

419 **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 2021** & October 2021

(**Dealt with under agenda items 10 & 11**)

Internal Audit Programme: **October 2021**

Statement on Internal Control: **October 2021**

Insurance Inventory: February 2021 (**Dealt with under agenda item 22**)

Asset Register: February 2021 (**Dealt with under agenda item 12**)

Internal Risk Register: February 2021 (**Dealt with under agenda item 9**)

Staffing Terms and Conditions: **February 2021** & October 2021 (**Dealt with under agenda item 24**)

Standing Orders & Financial Regulations: February 2021 (**Dealt with under agenda item 8**)

Employee Handbook: **October 2021**

Risk Management Statement: **October 2021**

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 **NOTED** the above information.

420 **STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

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

Cllr B Scruton entered here.

There have been some recommended changes to the model Standing Orders (**Attachment B**) since the last review and no changes to the Financial Regulations

(Attachment C). The Town Clerk has therefore made some amendments to our Standing Orders but no amendments to our Financial Regulations (which are based on the models). Please note:

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.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Standing Orders (with amendments) should be RECOMMENDED for ADOPTION by Council;
- (ii) The Financial Regulations (with no amendments) should be RECOMMENDED for ADOPTION by Council;

421 **INTERNAL RISK REGISTER**

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

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

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

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The revised Internal Risk Register should be recommended for ADOPTION by Council.

422 **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS**

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

Committee **NOTED** that the second remote work of the internal auditor for the 2020/21 financial year was on 23th February 2021.

The internal audit report (second interim) would be brought to the Ordinary Council Meeting once received.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) No further action was required at the current time.

423 **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 **NOTED** this information.

424 **ASSET REGISTER**

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 10th March 2020, Council RESOLVED to record individual items equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register (Minute #496 (iii) and (iv) of 2019/20).

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 been a number of acquisitions and disposals during 2020/21 which were reflected in the Asset Register 2021, as per **Attachment E**.

Committee considered the following RECOMMENDATIONS.

- (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 2021, 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.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The three RECOMMENDATIONS above would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council.

425 **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Committee considered the amended Complaints Procedure, as per **Attachment F**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The current Complaints Procedure, as per **Attachment F**, should remain at the current time, and be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council;

- (ii) The proposed revised Complaints Procedure should be revisited for amendment at a later date.

426 PUBLICATION SCHEME

Committee considered the amended Publication Scheme, as per **Attachment G**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The revised Publication Scheme, as per **Attachment G**, would be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council.

427 HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Committee considered the amended Health & Safety Policy, as per **Attachment H**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The revised Health & Safety Policy, as per **Attachment H**, would be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council.

428 EQUALITY POLICY

Committee considered the amended Equality Policy, as per **Attachment I**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The revised Equality Policy, as per **Attachment I**, would be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council.

429 MEDIA POLICY

Committee considered the Media Policy, as per **Attachment J**, with no amendments.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Media Policy, as per **Attachment J**, would be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council.

430 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Committee considered the Social Media Policy, as per **Attachment K**, with no amendments.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Social Media Policy, as per **Attachment K**, would be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council.

431 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Committee considered the amended Community Engagement Policy, as per **Attachment L**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The revised Community Engagement Policy, as per **Attachment L**, would be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council.

432 DATA PROTECTION POLICY

Committee considered the amended Data Protection Policy, as per **Attachment M**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The revised Data Protection Policy, as per **Attachment M**, would be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council.

433 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** 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.

434 INSURANCE POLICIES (CONTRACTS) & RECONCILIATION

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

Committee discussed the forthcoming insurance renewal in July 2021. The Town Clerk will prepare the necessary documentation in advance of the renewal.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) This item be **NOTED** at the current time.

435 DATA PROTECTION (GDPR) OFFICER

Statutory Basis: General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679

Committee discussed monitoring the situation regarding a Data Protection Officer.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Council should monitor the situation regarding a Data Protection Officer and appoint one at point of need, should it be necessary, as per the Town Clerk's criteria recommendations (eg: independent, former Clerk).

436 STAFF TERMS & CONDITIONS/PAYSCALES

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **NOTED** that 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 are included as per **Attachment N**.

Staff received a salary review in April 2020 for 2020/21.

Please note the rebanding or restating of pay grades from 2019. This is a restating only, with the financial implications remaining comparable to previous terms (this was to remove any scales points that would be below minimum wage).

Staff received a salary review in April 2020. These were received in August 2020, **NOTED** by Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 10th September 2020 and backdated to April 2020.

The Town Clerk has built an increase of approximately 2% into the 2021-22 budget. The Clerk is now awaiting confirmation regarding the potential public sector pay freeze in 2021.

The Essex Pension Fund (which relates to all relevant staff employed with Epping Town Council prior to 2018) has advised Council of an employer pension contribution rate from 1st April 2021 of 23.3%. This was 23.3% in 2020 and is set until 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) (from 6th April 2019 onwards). This continues to be the rate for 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) No further action was required at the current time.

437 STAFFING MATTERS

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **CONSIDERED** the staffing update as per **Attachment O**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) All staff should be thanked for their hard work, particularly in this difficult year;
- (ii) Particular thanks should be given to the grounds staff over their work with the cemetery, at the request of the Town Clerk;
- (iii) No further action was required at the current time.

438 STAFF COMBINED ROLE

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **CONSIDERED** the staff combined role information as per **Attachment P**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The post would be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council as Cemetery, Market and Administration Officer, as per **Attachment P**;
- (ii) The SCP for this combined full-time role be amended to SCP14-17, 14 from 1st April 2021.

439 TOWN CLERK APPRAISAL

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **NOTED** the Town Clerk's appraisal which was scheduled for Wednesday 24th February 2021, by the Chairman of Council 2020-21, Cllr G Scruton, and the Chairman of Personnel, Cllr B Scruton.

The Town Clerk left the meeting for agenda item 28, as the item relates to the Town Clerk's Conditions.

440 TOWN CLERK CONDITIONS

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee discussed the Town Clerk's conditions, as per **Attachment Q**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Town Clerk should receive London weighting from 1st April 2021, in line with all other staff;
- (ii) The Town Clerk should be paid for the London Weighting 2015-2021 that has been previously omitted, in twelve monthly instalments from April 2021 to March 2022, as per **Attachment Q** of the CGAC Committee meeting (23-02-21).

The Chairman closed the meeting at **6.10pm**.

(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.)

Signature of Chairman

Date