

MINUTES of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEEHeld at Epping Hall, St. John's Road, Epping on **Tuesday 26th February 2019 at 8.15pm.**

PRESENT: Cllr G Scruton (Chairman, Deputy Town Mayor & Key Member Finance)
Cllr N Avey (Town Mayor)
Cllr J A Smith (Key member Administration)

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr Mrs C McCredie, Cllr Mrs B Scruton

OFFICER: Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk)

527 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

528 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

529 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

530 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions or comments.

531 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee held on 23rd October 2018 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

532 STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations of the CGAC from their meeting on 23rd October 2018 (Minutes #290–308 of 18/19) were adopted by Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 13th November 2018 (Minute #339 of 18/19):

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Audit Commission Act s9 to 11 and the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.
- (ii) The Statement of Internal Control and Risk Management Statement, with the Town Clerk's amendments, should be **APPROVED** by Council.
(~~Attached as Attachment K1~~);
- (iii) The Employee Handbook with the minor revisions should be **APPROVED** by Council (~~Amendments attached as Attachment K2~~);
- (iv) The Data Protection Officer/GDPR support package should be reviewed in February 2019

- (v) No further action was required regarding internal audit reports at this time;
- (vi) No further action was required regarding the internal audit programme at this time;
- (vii) No further action was required regarding external audits at this time;
- (viii) No further action was required regarding the half-year financial position at this time;
- (ix) No further action was required regarding staffing terms, conditions & pay scales at this time;
- (x) The staffing situation should be monitored, particularly the caretaking team to reflect changing circumstances;
- (xi) Committee request that the Ledbury Case is **NOTED** ~~as per Attachment K3~~. This case highlights that any grievance issues between employees and councillors that cannot be resolved informally, should be dealt with by the monitoring officer (at Epping Forest District Council).

Council **NOTED** the Ledbury Case.

Committee **NOTED** the above information.

533 **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 2019** & October 2019 (Dealt with under items 10 & 11)

Internal Audit Programme: October 2019

Statement on Internal Control: October 2019

Insurance Inventory: **February 2019** (Dealt with under agenda item 22)

Asset Register: **February 2019** (Dealt with under agenda item 12)

Internal Risk Register: **February 2019** (Dealt with under agenda item 9)

Staffing Terms and Conditions: **February 2019** & October 2019 (Dealt with under item 24)

8) Standing Orders & Financial Regulations: **February 2019** (Dealt with under agenda item

Employee Handbook: October 2019

Risk management statement: October 2019

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.

534 **STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

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

There have been some **recommended** changes to the model Standing Orders (**Attachment B**) in the past year and no changes to the Financial Regulations (**Attachment C**). The Town Clerk has made amendments to the model Standing Orders to capture the legislative changes (amendments highlighted).

RECOMMENDATION 1: The revised Standing Orders should be **RECOMMENDED** for **ADOPTION** by Council.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Financial Regulations (with no amendments) should be **RECOMMENDED** for **ADOPTION** by Council.

Committee should **CONSIDER** whether the emergency expenditure regulation 4.5 (a), which was put in place when the boilers at Epping Hall needed urgent replacement, should remain in place and make the appropriate **RECOMMENDATIONS** to Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The revised Standing Orders should be **RECOMMENDED** for **ADOPTION** by Council;
- (ii) The Financial Regulations (with no amendments) should be **RECOMMENDED** for **ADOPTION** by Council;
- (iii) Financial Regulation 4.5 (a) regarding emergency expenditure should remain in the Financial Regulations and should be **RECOMMENDED** for **ADOPTION** by Council.

535 **INTERNAL RISK REGISTER**

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

The Internal Risk Register has been reviewed by the Town Clerk and an addition made as elections are forthcoming.

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.

536 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

Committee is requested to **NOTE** the first visit of the internal auditor was on the 20th and 21st November 2018. The second visit of the internal auditor will be on 20th February 2019, with a final visit later in the year.

The internal audit report (first interim) was **NOTED** at the Ordinary Council meeting on 11th December 2018 (Minute #398 of 2018/19). Three recommendations were made, which have been adopted. The internal audit report (second/final) for the 2018/19 financial year will be reported to Council later in the year once the second audit and report has been completed.

Committee **NOTED** the above information.

537 EXTERNAL AUDITS

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 8th March 2016 (Minute #475 of 2016/17), 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.

538 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 14th November 2017, Council **RESOLVED** to record individual items equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register (Minute #537 (vi) of 2016/17).

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 2018/19 which are reflected in the Asset Register 2019, as per **Attachment F**.

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 2019, as per **Attachment F**, 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.

539 **DATA PROTECTION/PRIVACY STATEMENT**

Committee discussed the Data Protection Policy and Epping Town Council's Privacy Statement.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Data Protection Policy (CGAC Attachment ??) should be **APPROVED** as a Policy of Epping Town Council;
- (ii) Epping Town Council's Privacy Statement, (CGAC Attachment ??) should be **APPROVED** as a Policy of Epping Town Council.

540 **PUBLICATION SCHEME**

Committee discussed Epping Town Council's Publication Scheme.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Publication Scheme (CGAC Attachment ??) should be **APPROVED** as the Publication Scheme for Epping Town Council, subject to the photocopying charges amendments from 5p to 10p.

541 **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Committee discussed Epping Town Council's Complaints Procedure.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Complaints Procedure should be **APPROVED** as the Complaints Procedure for Epping Town Council with no amendments.

542 **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**

Committee discussed Epping Town Council's Health & Safety Policy.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Health & Safety Policy should be **APPROVED** as the Health & Safety Policy, with minor revisions, for Epping Town Council, with the amendment that staff sign to accept they had received the Policy, rather than understood.

543 **EQUALITY POLICY**

Committee discussed Epping Town Council's Equality Policy.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Equality Policy should be **APPROVED** as the Equality Policy for Epping Town Council with no amendments.

544 **MEDIA POLICY**

Committee discussed Epping Town Council's Media Policy.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Media Policy should be **APPROVED** as the Media Policy for Epping Town Council with a reinforcement that all media enquiries should come to the Town Clerk in the first instance (in preparation for a new Council).

545 **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Committee discussed Epping Town Council's Social Media Policy.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Social Media Policy should be **APPROVED** as the Social Media Policy for Epping Town Council with a reinforcement that all media enquiries should come to the Town Clerk in the first instance (in preparation for a new Council).

546 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

Committee discussed Epping Town Council's Community Engagement Policy. The Town Clerk explained that this had been able to be augmented, with improved community engagement, while Council's Funding Research Officer had been in Council's employment, as community engagement is a key part of funding.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Community Engagement Policy should be **APPROVED** as the Community Engagement Policy for Epping Town Council, with the amendments made.

547 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.

548 INSURANCE POLICIES (CONTRACTS) & RECONCILIATION

Council awarded a three-year contract to Zurich Municipal from 1st April 2015 (Minute #369 of 2014/15). Council awarded a three-year contract to WPS Brokers (RSA Insurance Group PLC and ERS Motor Insurance) on 1st April 2018 (Minute #520 of 2017/18). Council were given an extra three months cover with this policy (review 1st July of each year). This enables the insurance providers to divert some of their business from the traditional 1st April review dates, but also gave Council three months 'free cover'. Council review the policy annually to ensure it is adequate for Council's needs and covers assets, but the provider and policy remain the same for those three years, apart from operational changes and amendments. The reviews will now take place just prior to July rather than April, so the figures are not ready at the current time.

Insurance Premium Tax is currently 12% (this could change during the coming months as it is set by Government). The insurance premium for 2018/19 was £9,035.77, plus £500 for inspections.

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.

The Town Clerk will provide an insurance reconciliation and annual review figures at the June Council meeting, in preparation for the 1st July review date.

Please note: the total approved budget for insurance 2019/20 is £9,860.

Committee **NOTED** this information.

549 DATA PROTECTION (GDPR OFFICER)

Epping Town Council appointed a Data Protection (GDPR) Officer for May 2018 (Minute #514 of 2017/18 refers). This was the Local Government Public Advisory Service (LGPAS) and was to be reviewed after one year.

The Town Clerk is pleased to report that to date, Epping Town Council, have not been the subject of any known data breaches. Council's Data Protection (GDPR) Officers have dealt with a number of data breaches elsewhere and they can be complex and time consuming, as well as very problematic.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Epping Town Council should employ the same external Data Protection Officer (cost £250-£300) for the coming year (May 2019-20).

550 **STAFF TERMS & CONDITIONS/PAYSCALES**

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 staff pay scales were listed as per **Attachment P**.

Staff received a salary review in April 2018 for 2018/19 and 2019/20. These arrived after the budget setting process for 2018/19 but in time for the 2019/20 budgets, so more accurate calculations were possible for 2019/20. 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 is to remove any scales points that would be below minimum wage).

In 2019, the salary review equates to approximately 2% for staff on scale points 18-49, 3-4% for those from SCP14-17 and up to 6% for staff on scale points 6-14. This is to continue to close larger earning gaps between different pay scales. These are larger increases than were originally anticipated.

Committee **NOTED** this information.

551 **STAFFING MATTERS**

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

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

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) This be **NOTED** with no further action at the current time;
- (ii) The Town Clerk would take the Funding Research Officer and Casual Caretaker Jack Silley Pavilion (temporary roles) to full Council for consideration in March 2019.

552 **TOWN CLERK APPRAISAL**

The Town Clerk was formally appointed Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer on 1st February 2016 (Minute #392 of 2016/17).

The Town Clerk's Review and Development is now due and will be undertaken in February/March.

The Review and Development process for the Town Clerk will be completed by the Chairman of Council (Cllr Nigel Avey: 2018-19) and the Chairman of the Task & Finish Personnel Committee (Cllr Mrs B Scruton).

Committee **NOTED** this information.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **9.22 pm**.

(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