

MINUTES of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEEHeld at Epping Hall, St. John's Road, Epping on **Tuesday 27th October 2020 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)

250 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

251 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

252 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

253 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions or comments.

254 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee held on 25th February 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

255 STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations of the CGAC (from their meeting on 25th February 2020) were adopted by Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 10th March 2020 (Minute #496 of 2019/20):

- (i) Epping Town Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations should be APPROVED, with no amendments;
- (ii) The revised Internal Risk Register should be APPROVED by Council (~~Attachment J~~);
- (iii) The Asset Register 2020, as per ~~Attachment K~~, should be APPROVED as a correct record of Council's assets at this time;
- (iv) Council should continue to record assets as individual items with a value equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register;
- (v) The revised Data Protection (GDPR) Policy (~~Attachment L~~) should be RECOMMENDED as a policy of Council;

- (vi) The Compliance Failure Policy (~~Attachment M~~) should be APPROVED as a Policy of Council;
- (vii) Epping Town Council's Complaints Procedure should be APPROVED as the Complaints Procedure for Epping Town Council (~~Attachment N~~);
- (viii) Epping Town Council's updated Health & Safety Policy should be APPROVED as the Health & Safety Policy for Epping Town Council (~~Attachment O~~); (Current Health & Safety Policy: ~~Attachment O1~~);
- (ix) Epping Town Council's Grant Awarding Policy should be APPROVED as the Grant Awarding Policy for Epping Town Council, with no amendments other than submission dates;
- (x) Epping Town Council's Procurement Policy should be APPROVED as the Procurement Policy for Epping Town Council, with no amendments;
- (xi) Epping Town Council's Recruitment Policy should be APPROVED as the Recruitment Policy for Epping Town Council, with minor amendments to safeguard Council;
- (xii) Epping Town Council's Training & Development Statement should be APPROVED as the Training & Development Statement for Epping Town Council, with no amendments;
- (xiii) Epping Town Council should continue to monitor the situation regarding a Data Protection Officer and the Town Clerk recommend an independent person to undertake this role should it be necessary;
- (xiv) The Town Clerk should reiterate best practice regarding Data Protection and GDPR to councillors and staff;
- (xv) A basket should be provided at Council meetings for councillors to leave any paperwork they wish for shredding, and particularly for sensitive information;
- (xvi) The investment funds considered by the Committee should not be pursued for Epping Town Council at the current time;
- (xvii) The Santander Business Bond should be closed on its expiry and the balance transferred to the Nationwide 95 Day Business Saver account (adding to the existing money deposited in that Saver).

*Please note: Attachments with a line through refer to the Attachment number that was issued at that particular meeting (eg ~~Attachment J~~)

Committee **NOTED** the above information.

256 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: **October 2020** & February 2021

(Dealt with under agenda items 8 & 10)

Internal Audit Programme: **October 2020 (Dealt with under agenda item 9)**

Statement on Internal Control: **October 2020 (Dealt with under agenda item 11)**

Risk Management Statement: **October 2020 (Dealt with under agenda item 11)**

Insurance Inventory: February 2021

Asset Register: February 2021

Internal Risk Register: February 2021

Staffing Terms and Conditions: **October 2020** & February 2021

(Dealt with under agenda item 16)

Standing Orders: February 2021

Financial Regulations: February 2021

Employee Handbook: **October 2020 (Dealt with under agenda item 12)**

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.

257 INTERNAL AUDIT

Statutory Basis: The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Committee **NOTED** that the first remote work of the internal auditor for the 2020/21 financial year would be on 15th October 2020.

The internal audit report (first interim) would be brought to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 12th November 2020.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

258 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAMME

Statutory Basis: The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Members **NOTED** that the internal auditing programme was reviewed at the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee meeting on 27th 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 10th November 2015 (Minutes #249 and #267 of 2015/16 refer)).

As that five years has now passed, the Town Clerk has requested an additional programme of works covering 2020-2025 (this is the same programme structure as 2015-2020). Work has already begun on the internal auditing work for the 2020-21 financial year. Consideration should be given to the auditor and auditing programme. The current auditing company periodically changes the particular auditor that covers Epping Town Council's work.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Council should continue to use the same auditing company for the 2020-2025 financial years;
- (ii) A change of auditing personnel should be requested from 2022-2025 to maintain independence.

259 EXTERNAL AUDIT

Statutory Basis: The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Members **NOTED** the externally audited Annual Return for 2019/20. This report had previously been considered by Full Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 10th September 2020. (Minute #202 of 2020/21).

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

260 REVIEW OF STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL AND RISK MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Statutory Basis: The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Committee **CONSIDERED** the revised statement on internal control and revised risk management statement.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Both revised statements should be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council.

261 EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **CONSIDERED** the employee handbook with one revision, as per **Attachment F**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The employee handbook with one revision should be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council.

262 HALF-YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY POSITION

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s111

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 15th October 2020, Council approved the draft budgets as **working drafts** (first estimates) (Minute #242 of 2020/21) 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 2021. **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 8th October 2020) was 45.2% of the agreed budget. Council's income to that date was 82% of the agreed total budget.

The early projected out-turn figure shows a deficit of £15,465 against a surplus budget of £3,094. This is due to the current health situation (Covid 19 coronavirus), which has resulted in vastly reduced income for both Epping Hall and the Jack Silley Pavilion. It also reflects the 23rd March to 1st June 2020 closure of the Monday market. This is subject to much change (particularly this year during the current health situation) and the income/expenditure will continue to be monitored each month at full Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

263 WEBSITE DESIGN AND ACCESSIBILITY

Statutory Basis: The Local Government Act 1972, s142 & the Local Government Act 1972, s111

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 13th August 2020 (Minute #169 of 2020/21), Council discussed the new website accessibility legislation coming into force in September 2020. Council **RESOLVED** to pursue a complete redesign of Epping Town Council's website by an external company, plus ongoing professional support and maintenance and the Town Clerk is in the process of pursuing this.

A formal website tender document and further details/suggestions was provided as per **Attachment G** and **Appendix 1**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The tender document and appendix should be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council as per **Attachment G** and **Appendix 1**.

264 **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.

265 **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 H**.

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. Salary increases were 2.7% across all scale points. In the 2021/22 budget first draft estimates, the Town Clerk has budgeted for similar increases. It is very unlikely the salary figures for 2021-22 will be received before the budget has been set in January 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

266 **STAFFING MATTERS**

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

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

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

The Chairman closed the meeting at **5.31pm**.

(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