

MINUTES of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEEHeld at Epping Hall, St. John's Road, Epping on **Tuesday 2nd November 2021 at 5.30pm.**

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

OFFICER: Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk)

249 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

250 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

251 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

252 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions or comments.

253 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee held on 23rd February 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

254 STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations of the CGAC (from their meeting on 23rd February 2021) were adopted by Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 11th March 2021 (Minute #471 of 2020/21):

- (i) Epping Town Council's Standing Orders should be APPROVED, with the amendments highlighted (~~Attachment L1~~);
- (ii) Epping Town Council's Financial Regulations should be APPROVED, with no amendments;
- (iii) The revised Internal Risk Register should be APPROVED by Council (~~Attachment L2~~);
- (iv) The Asset Register 2021, as per ~~Attachment L3~~, should be APPROVED as a correct record of Council's assets at this time;
- (v) Council should continue to record assets as individual items with a value equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register;

- (vi) The current Complaints Procedure (~~Attachment L4~~); should be RECOMMENDED as a policy of Council
- (vii) The revised Publication Scheme (~~Attachment L5~~); should be RECOMMENDED as a policy of Council;
- (viii) The revised Health & Safety Policy (~~Attachment L6~~); should be RECOMMENDED as a policy for Council;
- (ix) The revised Equality Policy (~~Attachment L7~~); should be RECOMMENDED as a policy of Council;
- (x) The current Media Policy should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xi) The current Social Media Policy should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xii) The revised Community Engagement Policy (~~Attachment L8~~); should be RECOMMENDED as a policy of Council;
- (xiii) The revised Data Protection (GDPR) Policy (~~Attachment L9~~); should be RECOMMENDED as a policy of Council;
- (xiv) The situation regarding a Data Protection Officer should be monitored and someone engaged at point of need;
- (xv) The combined role of Cemetery, Market & Administration Officer be APPROVED as a full-time role, at SCP14-17.
- (xvi) The Town Clerk should receive London Weighting from 1st April 2021 and be backdated the omitted London weighting not received to date.

It was RESOLVED that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, sch12, para 42; Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014, Local Government Act 1972, s111, Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members & Officers) order 2004, Local Government Act 1972, s112, Local Government Act 1972, s101;

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

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

255 **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 2021 & February 2022**
(Dealt with under agenda items 8 & 10)

Internal Audit Programme: **October 2021 (Dealt with under agenda item 9)**
Statement on Internal Control: **October 2021 (Dealt with under agenda item 11)**
Risk Management Statement: **October 2021 (Dealt with under agenda item 11)**
Insurance Inventory: February 2022
Asset Register: February 2022
Internal Risk Register: February 2022
Staffing Terms and Conditions: **October 2021 & February 2022 (Dealt with under agenda item 15)**
Standing Orders: February 2022
Financial Regulations: February 2022
Employee Handbook: **October 2021 (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.

256 **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 was in October 2021.

The internal audit report (first interim) would be brought to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 9th November 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

257 **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)).

In 2020, the Town Clerk requested an additional programme of works covering 2020-2025 (this is the same programme structure as 2015-2020). This was

APPROVED at the Ordinary Council meeting on 12th November 2020 (Minute #299 of 2020/21), as per **Attachment B**. Council requested that Auditing Solutions Ltd change the particular auditor that covers Epping Town Council's work, half-way through this five-year programme (2022-23).

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

258 **EXTERNAL AUDIT**

Statutory Basis: The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Members **NOTED** the externally audited Annual Return for 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).

259 **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.

260 **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **CONSIDERED** the employee handbook with the amendments highlighted, as per **Attachment F**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The employee handbook with the amendments highlighted should be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council.

261 **HALF-YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY POSITION**

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s111

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 12th October 2021, the Town Clerk and

Responsible Financial Officer advised that the draft budget, first estimates, would be considered at the Ordinary Council meeting in November rather than October, (Minute #231 of 2021/22) as the key tax base figure omission made it too much of an estimate. November also shows another month of financial activity which should make forecasting more accurate. The tax base figure will not arrive in time for the November meeting (from Epping Forest District Council), so second more accurate figures would also be provided at the December Council meeting as usual. The final budget will continue to be set at the Ordinary Council meeting in January 2022, in line with legislation.

The Town Clerk presented a summary of Epping Town Council's financial activity for the first half of the financial year (1st April 2021-30th September 2021) to full Council at the meeting on 12th October 2021. This showed Council's half-year expenditure (on 30th September 2021) was 46.8% of the agreed budget. Council's income to that date was 49% of the agreed budget.

The early projected out-turn figure shows an early indicative deficit of £11,940 against a surplus budget of £208. Hall income is slightly lower than expected, due to a slower than anticipated return to normal hall booking patterns, especially at Epping Hall. These are now showing signs of a faster recovery and the out-turn figure is likely to be quite different, due to the volume of variables and time of year.

The Town Clerk advised members that the first budget estimates would be brought to full Council in December 2021, rather than in November 2021, once the crucial tax base figure had been received.

Committee **NOTED** this information.

262 **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.

263 **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 G**, including a **RECOMMENDATION** regarding a casual caretaker salary point.

Staff received no salary review in April 2021. Increases of approximately 2.7% had been factored into the 2021/22 income and expenditure budget. Some of this has been offset by additional information provided, as per **Attachment G1**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) No further action other than that detailed in **Minute 264** (below) was required.

264 STAFFING MATTERS

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

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

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The **RECOMMENDATION** regarding the casual caretaker staff salary, (detailed in **Attachments G and H**) should be **APPROVED**.
- (ii) The **RECOMMENDATION** regarding changes to the Market arrangements/staff/contracts discussed at the meeting under **Attachment H**, would be brought to full Council (9th November 2021) under **Agenda item 18 (Attachments M & M1)** and should be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **6.32pm**.

(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