

MINUTES of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEEHeld in the Conference Room, Epping Hall on **Tuesday 22nd February 2022 at 7.30pm.**

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)

412 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

413 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received from members.

414 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

415 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions or comments.

416 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee meeting held on 2nd November 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

417 STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations of the CGAC (from their meeting on 2nd November 2021) (Minutes #249–264 of 21/22) were adopted by Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 9th November 2021 (Minute #288 of 2021/22):

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The amended Statement on Internal Control should be **APPROVED** as per **Attachment K**;
- (ii) The amended Risk Management Statement should be **APPROVED** as per **Attachment K1**;
- (iii) The revised Employee Handbook should be **APPROVED** as per **Attachment K2**;
- (iv) The small salary amendment detailed in the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee paperwork **Attachment G** (excluded) should be **APPROVED**;
- (v) The revisions to the Market Supervisor and Assistant situation should be **APPROVED** (details as per **Agenda Item 18, Attachments M & M1.**)

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

Committee **NOTED** the above information.

418 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 2022 & October 2022**

(Dealt with under agenda items 10 & 11)

Internal Audit Programme: **October 2022**

Statement on Internal Control: **October 2022**

Insurance Inventory: February 2022 **(Dealt with under agenda item 20)**

Asset Register: February 2022 **(Dealt with under agenda item 12)**

Internal Risk Register: February 2022 **(Dealt with under agenda item 9)**

Staffing Terms and Conditions: **February 2022 & October 2022 (Dealt with under agenda item 22)**

Standing Orders & Financial Regulations: February 2022 **(Dealt with under agenda item 8)**

Employee Handbook: **October 2022**

Risk Management Statement: **October 2022**

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.

419 STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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 and no changes to the Financial Regulations (Attachment C). The Town Clerk has therefore made no amendments to our Standing Orders or Financial Regulations (which are based on the models).

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

420 INTERNAL RISK REGISTER

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

The Town Clerk has reviewed the Internal Risk Register and made no amendments.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Internal Risk Register (with no amendments) should be recommended for ADOPTION by Council.

421 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

Committee **NOTED** that the second work of the internal auditor for the 2021/22 financial year was on 23th February 2022.

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.

422 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.

423 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 11th March 2021, Council **RESOLVED** to record individual items equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register (Minute #471 (v) of 2020/21).

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 2021/22 which were reflected in the Asset Register 2022, 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 2022, 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;
- (ii) Buildings should be revalued every 5 years.

424 **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

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

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The revised Complaints Procedure, as per **Attachment F**, would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council;
- (ii) The Town Clerk would consider how any 'near miss' complaints could be recorded.

425 **RECRUITMENT POLICY**

Committee considered the Recruitment Policy, with minor wording changes, as per **Attachment G**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Recruitment Policy, with minor wording changes, as per **Attachment G**, would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council.

426 **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**

Committee considered the Health & Safety Policy, with no amendments, as per **Attachment H**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Health & Safety Policy, with no amendments, as per **Attachment H**, would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council.

427 GRANT AWARDING POLICY

Committee considered the Grant Awarding Policy, with minor wording changes, as per **Attachment I**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (ii) The Grant Awarding Policy, with minor wording changes, as per **Attachment I**, would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council.

428 PROCUREMENT POLICY

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

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Procurement Policy, with no amendments, as per **Attachment J**, would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council.

429 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT

Committee considered the Training and Development Statement, with minor amendments, as per **Attachment K**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Training and Development Statement, with minor amendments, as per **Attachment K**, would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council.

430 INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Committee considered the Investment Strategy, with no amendments, as per **Attachment L**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Investment Strategy, with no amendments, as per **Attachment L**, would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council.

431 BALANCE OF TRADE POLICY (MARKET)

Committee considered the amended Balance of Trade Policy for the market, as per **Attachment M**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The amended Balance of Trade Policy for the Market, as per **Attachment M**, would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council.

432 CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS POLICY

Committee considered the Climate & Environmental Awareness Policy, as per **Attachment N**, with no amendments.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Climate & Environmental Awareness Policy, with no amendments, as per **Attachment N**, would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council;
- (ii) The Town Clerk should add that funding was being sought to be able to achieve Council's aims.

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 considered the forthcoming insurance renewal in July 2022. 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 O**.

Staff received no salary review in April 2021. The Town Clerk has built an increase of approximately 2% into the 2022-23 budget. The Clerk is now awaiting of any pay award for 2022-2023, which is anticipated.

The Essex Pension Fund (which relates to all relevant staff employed with Epping Town Council prior to 2018) employer pension contribution rate from 1st April 2021 is 23.3%. This was 23.3% in 2020 and is set until 2022. We have not received the Essex Pension Fund rates for 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, 5% from the employee) (from 6th April 2019 onwards). This is the rate for 2021. We have not received any alternative NEST rates for 2022 at the time of writing. 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 P**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

438 TOWN CLERK APPRAISAL

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **NOTED** the Town Clerk's appraisal which was scheduled for Monday 28th February 2022, by the Chairman of Council 2021-22, Cllr M Wright, and the Chairman of Personnel, Cllr B Scruton.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **8.21pm**.

(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