

**MINUTES of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**Held at Epping Hall, St. John's Road, Epping on **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 at 8pm.**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr C McCredie	(Town Mayor)
Cllr Janet Whitehouse	(Chairman & Deputy Town Mayor)
Cllr G Scruton	(Key Member Finance)
Cllr N Avey	(Key Member Administration)

Cllr C McCredie chaired this meeting.

**OFFICER:** Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk)

**239 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**240 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

**241 DISPENSATIONS**

There were no dispensations.

**242 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions or comments.

**243 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**244 STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations of the CGAC (from their meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024) were adopted by Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (Minute #467 of 2023/24):

- (i) Epping Town Council's Standing Orders should be APPROVED, with no amendments;
- (ii) Epping Town Council's Financial Regulations should be RE-APPROVED, with one amendment (~~Attachment C~~);
- (iii) The Internal Risk Register should be RE-APPROVED by Council (~~Attachment D~~);
- (iv) The Asset Register 2024 (~~Attachment E~~), 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 Complaints Procedure (~~Attachment F~~); should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council
- (vii) The Recruitment Policy, with minor amendments, (~~Attachment G~~) should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (viii) The Health & Safety Policy with minor amendments (~~Attachment H~~) should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (ix) The Grant Awarding Policy, with a minor amendments, (~~Attachment I~~) should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (x) The Procurement Policy, with minor amendments, (~~Attachment J~~) should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xi) The Training and Development Statement, with no amendments, (~~Attachment K~~) should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xii) The Market Policy, with no amendments (~~Attachment L~~) should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xiii) The Tree Management Policy, with minor amendments (~~Attachment M~~) should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xiv) The Investment Strategy Policy, with amendments, (~~Attachment N~~) should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xv) The Balance of Trade Policy (Market), with minor amendments, (~~Attachment O~~) should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xvi) The Climate & Environmental Awareness Policy, with minor amendments, (~~Attachment P~~) should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xvii) The insurance policies & reconciliation would be brought to Council in advance of the July 2024 meeting;
- (xviii) The situation regarding a Data Protection Officer should be monitored and someone engaged at point of need;
- (xix) Staff matters and terms and conditions should be APPROVED (**please note:** these were reported under agenda item 21 – in an exclusion of press and public item).

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 K~~)

**245 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT REVIEW**

Council **APPROVED** a review of policy and governance documents at the Ordinary Council meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> 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 2024** & February 2025

**(Dealt with under agenda items 8 & 10)**

Internal Audit Programme: **October 2024 (Dealt with under agenda item 9)**

Statement on Internal Control: **October 2024 (Dealt with under agenda item 11)**

Risk Management Statement: **October 2024 (Dealt with under agenda item 11)**

Insurance Inventory: February 2025

Asset Register: February 2025

Internal Risk Register: February 2025

Staffing Terms and Conditions: **October 2024** & February 2025

**(Dealt with under agenda item 16)**

Standing Orders: February 2025

Financial Regulations: ~~February 2025~~ **October 2024 (Dealt with under agenda item 14).**

**Please note:** this would normally be reviewed at the February Corporate Governance meeting, but there have been new Model Financial Regulations issued in May 2024.

Employee Handbook: **October 2024 (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.

**246 INTERNAL AUDIT**

**Statutory Basis:** The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Committee **NOTED** that the first work of the internal auditor for the 2024/25 financial year will be on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

The internal audit report (first interim) would be brought to the Ordinary Council Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024, once received.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

**247 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAMME**

**Statutory Basis:** The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Members **NOTED** the internal auditing programme of works covering 2020-2025 was **APPROVED** at the Ordinary Council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> 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, halfway through this five-year programme (2022-23) and this was done at the end of the 2022/23 financial year. A further programme would need to be considered in 2024/25.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

**248 EXTERNAL AUDIT**

**Statutory Basis:** The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Members **NOTED** the externally audited Annual Return for 2023/24. The AGAR had previously been **NOTED** by Full Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (Minute #188 of 2024/25).

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

**249 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 (**Attachments D & E**).

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Both statements, with additions, should be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council;
- (ii) Members should be made aware of the EALC training calendar and costs involved.

**250 EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

**Statutory Basis:** Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **CONSIDERED** the employee handbook with amendments (**Attachment F1**). The Town Clerk has advised that this document would benefit from an external review.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The employee handbook with amendments should be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council, subject to amendments to the Councillors, Staff and Work section on page 25 (shown).
- (ii) Councillors should be made aware of the Staff and Councillor protocols within the handbook.

#### 251 **HALF-YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY POSITION**

**Statutory Basis:** The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Committee **NOTED** the half-year summary financial position, as per **Attachment G**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

#### 252 **NEW FINANCIAL REGULATIONS: 2024**

**Statutory Basis:** The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Committee considered the new Financial Regulations 2024, as per **Attachment H**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The new Financial Regulations October 2024, as per **Attachment H** should be **RECOMMENDED** as the new Financial Regulations for Epping Town Council with the amendments made.

#### 253 **CEMETERY REGULATIONS**

**Statutory Basis:** Open Spaces Act 1906, s9, 10

Committee **NOTED** the correction to the Cemetery Regulations, as per **Attachment I**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) No further action was required in addition to this.

#### 254 **STALL ALLOCATION POLICY**

**Statutory Basis:** Food Act 1984, s50, 60

Committee considered the Stall Allocation Policy, as per **Attachment J**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The stall allocation policy should be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** as a policy of Epping Town Council.

255 **INVESTMENTS**

**Statutory Basis:** The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

- (i) **Investment Strategy**

Committee considered the Investment Strategy, as per **Attachment K**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Investment Strategy should be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** as a policy of Epping Town Council.

- (ii) **Investing: CCLA (Churches, Charities & Local Authorities)**

Committee considered the CCLA investing information, as per **Attachment L**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Committee would **RECOMMEND** that this would not be pursued at the current time (insufficient surplus funds), but may be revisited in the future if funds allow.

256 **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**Statutory Basis:** Local Government Act 1972, s111

Committee considered the Safeguarding Policy as per **Attachment M**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Safeguarding Policy should be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** as a policy of Epping Town Council.

257 **VOLUNTEERING POLICY**

**Statutory Basis:** Local Government Act 1972, s111

Committee considered the Volunteering Policy as per **Attachment N**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Volunteering Policy should be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** as a policy of Epping Town Council.

**258 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.

**259 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 were included (~~Attachment O~~).

At the time of writing, there had been no staff pay award for 2024/25. This means year on year staff are working for less. The Clerk is expecting a staff pay award for 2024/25 and if this is the case, this will be very late again and backdated. The Clerk/RFO will build 4% into the income and expenditure budget setting process to mirror some previous increases.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

**260 STAFFING MATTERS**

**Statutory Basis:** Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **CONSIDERED** and **NOTED** the staffing update as per **Attachment P**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

**261 HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)/STAFF SUPPORT AND HEALTH & SAFETY SUPPORT**

**Statutory Basis:** Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **CONSIDERED** the Human Resources (HR)/staff support and health & safety support update as per **Attachment Q**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Committee would **RECOMMEND** both Human Resources (HR)/staff support and health & safety support, as per **RECOMMENDATIONS 1 and 2 in Attachment Q**, to Council;
- (ii) This would be financed from Service and Committee Support, (100/4045) Subscriptions and Licences.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **9.12pm**.

**(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**