

MINUTES of the ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING held in the Conference Room, Epping Hall on Tuesday 11th February 2025 at 8pm.

PRESENT:

Cllr C McCredie	(Town Mayor & Chair)
Cllr Janet Whitehouse	(Deputy Town Mayor)
Cllr C Burgess	Cllr L Burrows Cllr J Duffell
Cllr H Pegrum	Cllr G Scruton Cllr H Whitbread
Cllr Jon Whitehouse	Cllr M Wright

OFFICER: Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk)

IN ATTENDANCE: 1 member of the press was present.

380 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr N Avey and Cllr R Sharif. Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr Jon Whitehouse, Cllr Janet Whitehouse, Cllr L Burrows, and Cllr H Whitbread.

381 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

382 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

383 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions or comments.

384 CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 14th January 2025 be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council, subject to the following amendments:

Cllr Janet Whitehouse advised that the information regarding Bell Common she reported on was from Tanith Cook, Head of Conservation, Epping Forest (City of London) (Appendix 1).

Cllr Jon Whitehouse (entered prior to minute 350 (not 353), so gave his report under minute number 350.

385 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

It was **RESOLVED** that the signed Minutes of the following Committee meetings be signed by the Mayor as a true record and adopted by the Council.

Planning & General Purposes Committee	14 th January 2025	(Attachment B)
Planning & General Purposes Committee	28 th January 2025	(Attachment C)
Market Committee	4 th December 2024	(Attachment D)

(Please note: the market committee minutes for this meeting are not in the usual date order, as the minutes were completed after the usual relevant Council agenda).

386 COMMUNICATIONS TO NOTE/REQUIRING DECISION

(i) Blue plaque request: Church's Butchers

Council considered the blue plaque request for Church's Butchers, as per **Attachment E**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s145;
- (ii) A 'blue' plaque would be provided for Church's Butchers;
- (iii) The Town Clerk would look at suitable colour options.

(ii) Epping Neighbourhood Plan

Council considered the information regarding Epping's Neighbourhood Plan, as per **Attachment E1**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Localism Act 2011.

(iii) The Epping Society: Open Parking letter

Council considered the open parking letter from the Epping Society, as per **Attachment E2**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s111; Highway Act 1980;
- (ii) The Town Clerk would ask for a meeting with the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) to discuss the parking situation in Epping;
- (iii) This would be attended by Cllr C McCredie and Cllr H Pegrum.

(iv) Essex County Council: Air Quality Strategy consultation

Council considered Essex County Council's Air Quality Strategy consultation.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s111;
- (ii) The Town Clerk would respond to the strategy in accordance with Epping Town Council's Climate & Environmental Awareness Policy aims and objectives (supporting climate and environmental issues);
- (iii) The Clerk would request assistance from Cllr Janet Whitehouse if needed.

(v) Lithium battery consultation

Council considered the lithium battery consultation, as per **Attachment E3**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s111;
- (ii) The Town Clerk would reply to the consultation on Epping Town Council's behalf, in support of the proposals.

387 TOWN MAYOR & DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S DUTIES

Cllr Janet Whitehouse entered here.

The duties undertaken by the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor since the Ordinary Council meeting on 14th January 2025 were **NOTED**, subject to the following amendments:

Town Mayor:	Civic Reception meeting, rather than EFDC planning meeting	21/01/25
	Epping/Eppingen meeting (delete)	05/02/25
	Stonards Hill land pipes meeting	11/02/25
Deputy Mayor:	Safer Epping meeting	10/02/25
	Devolution briefing EFDC	11/02/25

388 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

Reports from members were received on meetings or visits since the Ordinary Council meeting on 14th January 2025:

Cllr C Burgess	Martin Patience funeral	22 nd January 2025
	Ace Activities lunch	29 th January 2025
Cllr H Pegrum	Stonards Hill land pipes meeting	11 th February 2025
Cllr J Duffell	Royal British Legion meeting	1 st February 2025
Cllr G Scruton	Martin Patience funeral	22 nd January 2025
	Epping & Theydon Garnon Charities meeting	4 th February 2025
	Stonards Hill land pipes meeting	11 th February 2025

389 REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK AND COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS

Cllr H Whitbread and Cllr L Burrows entered here.

Cllr Jon Whitehouse explained there was a Public Rights of Way Officer at Epping Forest District Council.

Cllr Janet Whitehouse, Cllr John Duffell and Cllr Christine Burgess will look at the archive material at Epping Hall.

Members **NOTED** the report of the Town Clerk.

390 REPORTS FROM EPPING FOREST DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr Jon Whitehouse entered here.

Epping Forest District Council

Cllr Janet Whitehouse:

Place/Scrutiny. Empty homes back into use, council tax to use rooms.

3rd wheely bin – blue lid not sacks. Very soon. Expense at outset.

Cllr Holly Whitbread:

EFDC budget – savings, financial pressures, economic review and finance.

£1.4 million saving.

2.99% Council Tax rise. Scrutiny — EFDC full council budget presented Thurs 13 Feb 25

Essex County Council

Cllr Holly Whitbread:

ECC budget. Local Government reform.

Budget there. Highways, adult social care, John Spence Deputy

Lots of question marks. Simplifies local government.

Unknown number of unitary authorities. Maybe £1.5 m savings/positives.

Mayor – investment for infrastructure. 18 CEOs now 5 or 6

A lot of question marks, going to move quickly.

Full briefings, town and parish councils for more information

Financial benefits. Essex helped shame more unitarisation. Boundaries broken up.

Recent Labour government. Early in the process, more shaping.

Improved communications between Councils eg EFDC and ECC

Eg sheltered housing. (London boroughs, Councils together.

391 FINANCIAL REPORT TO 31ST JANUARY 2025

Council considered the summary financial report for January 2025, presented by Council's Key Member for Finance, Cllr G Scruton.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and **APPROVED**;
- (ii) No further action was required at the current time.

392 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Council's Key Member for Finance, Cllr G Scruton presented the payment schedules for January 2025 totalling £58,612.84. (Barclays: £72.47, The Co-operative £58,160.29 & The Co-operative online £380.08).

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- (ii) The list of payments for January 2025 were **APPROVED** as presented in the schedule.

393 QUALIS DEVELOPMENT NAMES

Council considered the motion tabled by Cllr John Duffell regarding the Qualis development names.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Town Clerk would write to Qualis and request that the names of Gardenia Court and Verdant Place be changed to Old School Court and Homestead Place respectively, to reflect the historic connections to the town.

394 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2025 DATE AND FORMAT

(i) Date

Council considered the date of the Annual Town Meeting 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s9;
- (ii) The Annual Town Meeting would be held on Thursday 1st May 2025 (as there were no Essex County Council elections);
- (iii) If the Hall was needed for elections for any other reason, it would be held on Thursday 17th April 2025.

(ii) Format

Council considered the format of the Annual Town Meeting 2025, as per **Attachment J**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s9;
- (ii) Welcome from the Town Mayor, with updates from the Chairman of Planning and Key Member for Finance;
- (iii) Input from EFDC and ECC councillors;
- (iv) Possible speech on devolution;
- (v) 3 questions for round the table discussions:
 1. Christmas Lights, 2. hat community facilities would people like to see,
 3. How can we attract new shops and businesses.

395 EPPING EMERGENCY PLAN

Council considered the information regarding Epping's Emergency Plan and volunteers.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act, s111;
- (ii) The Town Clerk would advertise for possible volunteers through local community organisations and ask community volunteers already known to Council (retired GPs/firemen, etc);

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- (iii) A list of contacts and a draft plan would be created for Council to consider.

396 EXCLUSION OF THE 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.

397 TOWNSPERSON OF THE YEAR 2024

Council considered the nominations for Townsperson of the Year 2024, as per **Attachment K**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s111;
- (ii) The Townsperson of the Year 2024 was chosen and this would be awarded at the Mayor's Civic Reception in April 2025.

398 YOUNG TOWNSPERSON OF THE YEAR 2024

Council considered the nominations for Young Townsperson of the Year 2024, as per **Attachment L**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, s111;
- (ii) The Young Townsperson of the Year 2024 was chosen and this would be awarded at the Mayor's Civic Reception in April 2025.

CLOSURE

The Town Mayor, Cllr C McCredie, closed the meeting at **9.27pm**.

Signature of Chairman

Date

MINUTES of the **PLANNING AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING** held at Epping Hall,
St. Johns Road, Epping on **Tuesday, 11th February 2025 at 7.15pm.**

PRESENT: Cllr M Wright (Vice Chairman)
Cllr C Burgess
Cllr C McCredie (Mayor - *ex officio*)
Cllr G Scruton

IN ATTENDANCE: One member of the press was present.

OFFICERS: Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk)
Jo-Ann Lewis (Planning, Market & Events Officer)

371 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R Sharif and Cllr N Avey (Chairman)
In the absence of the Chairman, the meeting was chaired by the Vice Chairman
Cllr M Wright.

372 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 7 Planning Applications (Non-Pecuniary)

Cllr R Sharif requested an entry to be made in the minutes, to make it clear, that as a member of both the Town and District Councils, she will reconsider all matters at District level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations at the District tier. Therefore, she cannot be bound in any way by any view expressed in the parish tier or by the decisions of this Committee.

373 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

374 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Committee **RESOLVED** that:

the minutes of the meeting of the Planning & General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday, 28th January 2025 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

375 PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

There were no public questions or comments.

376 NOTICES AND INFORMATION

There were no notices or information.

377 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

EPF/0008/25.	29, Allnutts Road, Epping, CM16 7BE. Mr C Hannaford.	Proposed ground and first floor rear and side extensions.
Committee have NO OBJECTION to this application		
EPF/0093/25.	33, Church Hill, Epping, CM16 4RA. M Lewis & S Elhabbal.	Retrospective application for single storey rear extension, replacement fenestration, and internal alterations.
Committee have NO OBJECTION to this application provided the work is carried out under the supervision of the conservation officer at EFDC. Committee would like to mention that the original railings outside of this dwelling are believed to be Cottis railings, therefore it would a shame to lose the historical connection to the Town if these have been permanently removed. Committee would request that this is followed up by the conservation officer and there is no loss of historic fabric.		
EPF/0097/25.	33, Church Hill, Epping, CM16 4RA. M Lewis & S Elhabbal.	Grade II listed building application for retrospective application for single storey rear extension, replacement fenestration, and internal alterations.
Committee have NO OBJECTION to this application provided the work is carried out under the supervision of the conservation officer at EFDC. Committee would like to mention that the original railings outside of this dwelling are believed to be Cottis railings, therefore it would a shame to lose the historical connection to the Town if these have been permanently removed. Committee would request that this is followed up by the conservation officer and there is no loss of historic fabric.		
EPF/0138/25.	36, Coopersale Street, Epping, CM16 7QJ. Mr & Mrs Drabwell.	Proposed part garage conversion into games room.
Committee have NO OBJECTION to this application.		
EPF/0165/25.	311, High Street, Epping, CM16 4DA. Barbara Gibula.	Grade II Listed building consent for installation of 1x non-illuminated fascia sign and minor internal alterations.
Committee have NO OBJECTION to this application provided the work is carried out under the supervision of the conservation officer at EFDC. Committee noted that the sign does not seem to reflect the town's conservation area setting and would request that the lettering should be appropriate for the listed building and setting.		
EPF/0183/25.	311, High Street, Epping, CM16 4DA. Barbara Gibula.	Installation of 1 x non illuminated fascia sign coloured black (text) and white (background).
Committee have NO OBJECTION to this application provided the work is carried out under the supervision of the conservation officer at EFDC. Committee noted that the sign does not seem to reflect the town's conservation area setting and would request that the lettering should be appropriate for the listed building and setting.		

378 OTHERS

These are provided for information only, EFDC do not normally accept comments on these applications.

EPF/0211/25.	60, Shaftesbury Road, Epping, CM16 5BJ. Mrs Graham.	Prior approval for a 5.70m deep single storey extension to be used as kitchen/living area, height to eaves 2.63m and maximum height 3.0m.
Committee have NO OBJECTION to this application.		

379 PLANNING DECISIONS

Committee **NOTED** there were no planning decisions received from EFDC for this period.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **7.38pm**.

Signature of Chairman

Date

MINUTES of the **MARKET COMMITTEE MEETING** held in the Conference Room, Epping Hall, St Johns Road, Epping on **Thursday 20th February 2025 at 3pm.**

PRESENT: Cllr M Wright (Chairman)
Cllr C Burgess
Cllr H Pegrum
Cllr C McCredie (Town Mayor)

OFFICER: Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk)
Jo-Ann Lewis (Planning, Market & Events Officer)

399 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr N Avey.

400 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

401 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

402 PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

There were no public questions or comments.

403 EXCLUSION OF THE 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.

404 MARKET POSITION

Committee considered the market position, as per **Attachment A**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Relevant behaviour would be monitored over a limited time period.
- (ii) The Town Clerk would send a letter detailing behavioural concerns, time frames and the potential outcome.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **3.42pm**.

Signature of Chairman

Date

NB: Cllr H Pegrum was not named on the agenda, and Cllr M Wright's name was duplicated.

NB: The matters on this agenda have a statutory basis under the following legislation:

1. Royal Charter (1253)
2. Food Act 1984 Part III (s50 & 52)

MINUTES of the **PLANNING AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING** held at Epping Hall,
St. Johns Road, Epping on **Tuesday, 25th February 2025 at 7.15pm.**

PRESENT: Cllr N Avey (Chairman)
Cllr M Wright (Vice Chairman)
Cllr C McCredie (Mayor - *ex officio*)
Cllr G Scruton

OFFICERS: Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk)
Jo-Ann Lewis (Planning, Market & Events Officer)

405 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R Sharif and Cllr C Burgess.

406 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 7 Planning Applications (Non-Pecuniary)

Cllr R Sharif requested an entry to be made in the minutes, to make it clear, that as a member of both the Town and District Councils, she will reconsider all matters at District level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations at the District tier. Therefore, she cannot be bound in any way by any view expressed in the parish tier or by the decisions of this Committee.

407 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

408 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Committee **RESOLVED** that:

the minutes of the meeting of the Planning & General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday, 11th February 2025 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

409 PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

There were no public questions or comments.

410 NOTICES AND INFORMATION

There were no notices or information.

411 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

EPF/0186/25	156, High Street, Epping, CM16 4AQ. Honey & Mustard Ltd.	New shopfront.
Committee have NO OBJECTION to this application.		
EPF/0187/25	156, High Street, Epping, CM16 4AQ Honey & Mustard Ltd.	Advertisement consent for illuminated fascia and hanging signs.
Committee would refer this application to the conservation officer at EFDC to check if this illuminated sign is permitted and meets the requirements of the conservation area.		
EPF/0217/25	279-281, High Street, Epping, CM16 4BT. Natwest Group.	Replacement of external ATM and new tablet signage.
Committee have NO OBJECTION to this application.		
EPF/0220/25	279-281, High Street, Epping, CM16 4BT. Natwest Group.	New tablet signage.
Committee have NO OBJECTION to this application.		
	29, Lincolns Field, Epping, CM16 5DZ. Ms Moore.	Proposed single storey rear extension and minor internal alterations.
Committee have NO OBJECTION to this application.		
EPF/0196/25	7, Tidys Lane, Epping, CM16 6SP. Mr & Mrs Pyke.	Conversion of garage into habitable room and change to pitched roof.
Committee have NO OBJECTION to this application.		

412 OTHERS

EPF/0200/25	23C, Ivy Chimney, CM16 4EL. Essex Land and Build Developments LTD.	Certificate of lawful development for proposed outbuilding and pool.
Committee have NO OBJECTION to this application.		
EPF/0280/25	19, Shaftesbury Road, Epping, CM16 5BH. Mr B Moloney.	Prior approval for a 6.00m deep single storey rear extension. Height to eaves 3.00m, maximum height 3.25m.
Committee have questioned given the size of this extension why this is not a full planning application.		

413 PLANNING DECISIONS

Committee **NOTED** the decisions as received from Epping Forest District Council since the date of the previous agenda and up until the date of this agenda.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **7.36pm**.

Signature of Chairman

Date

MINUTES of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Held in the Conference Room, Epping Hall on **Tuesday 25th February 2025 at 8pm.**

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr C McCredie (Town Mayor)

OFFICER: Beverley Rumsey (Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer)

414 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

415 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received from members.

416 DISPENSATIONS

There were no dispensations.

417 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions or comments.

418 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee meeting held on 22nd October 2024 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

419 STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations of the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee (CGAC) (from their meeting on 22nd October 2024) (Minutes #239–261 of 24/25) were adopted by Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 12th November 2024 (Minute #285 of 2024/25):

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The revised Statement on Internal Control should be **APPROVED** ~~(Attachment J);~~
- (ii) The revised Risk Management Statement should be **APPROVED** ~~(Attachment J);~~
- (iii) The revised Employee Handbook should be **APPROVED** ~~(Attachment J);~~
- (iv) The new Financial Regulations 2024 should be **APPROVED** as per ~~(Attachment J);~~
- (v) The corrected Cemetery Regulations should be **APPROVED** as per ~~(Attachment J);~~
- (vi) The stall allocation policy should be **APPROVED** as per ~~(Attachment J);~~
- (vii) The Investment Strategy should be **APPROVED** as per ~~(Attachment J);~~
- (viii) Investing with CCLA should not be pursued at the current time, but may be revisited in the future if funds allow ~~(Attachment J);~~
- (ix) The Safeguarding Policy with no amendments should be **APPROVED** as the Safeguarding Policy for Epping Town Council ~~(Attachment J);~~

- (x) The Volunteering Policy with no amendments should be APPROVED as the Volunteering Policy for Epping Town Council (~~Attachment J~~);

Committee **NOTED** the above information.

420 **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 2025 & October 2025**

(Dealt with under agenda items 10 & 11)

Internal Audit Programme: **October 2025**

Statement on Internal Control: **October 2025**

Insurance Inventory: February 2025 **(Dealt with under agenda item 22)**

Asset Register: February 2025 **(Dealt with under agenda item 12)**

Internal Risk Register: February 2025 **(Dealt with under agenda item 9)**

Staffing Terms and Conditions: **February 2025 & October 2025 (Dealt with under items 24-26)**

Standing Orders & Financial Regulations: February 2025 **(Dealt with under agenda item 8)**

Employee Handbook: **October 2025**

Risk Management Statement: **October 2025**

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 and **CONSIDERED** whether Council's policies need to be reviewed as frequently.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Town Clerk would take advice from the auditor on the ideal regularity of policy reviews and would make an appropriate **RECOMMENDATION** to Council based on the answer, which ensured that the suite of policies was **NOTED** regularly and reviewed as legislation required.

421 **STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

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

There had been no changes to the model Standing Orders (Attachment B) since the last review. The Town Clerk had therefore made no changes to this document (**Attachment B**).

There had been no recommended changes to the model Financial Regulations since the last review. The Town Clerk had therefore made no changes to this document (**Attachment C**).

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.

422 **INTERNAL RISK REGISTER**

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

The Town Clerk has reviewed the Internal Risk Register and made some amendments.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Internal Risk Register with amendments should be RECOMMENDED for ADOPTION by Council. **Please note:** the amendments would be reordered and reworded for clarity;
- (ii) A coloured traffic light system should be introduced;
- (iii) Devolution should be included.

423 **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS**

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

Committee **NOTED** that the second visit of the internal auditor for the 2024/25 financial year was on 27th February 2025.

The internal audit report (second interim) would be brought to Council once received.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

424 EXTERNAL AUDITS

Statutory Basis: Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 27th September 2022 (Minute #182 of 2022/23), 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 2022-2027.

The external auditor for 2022-2027 for Essex will remain as PKF Littlejohn LLP.

Committee **NOTED** this information.

425 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.

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 12th March 2024, Council RESOLVED to record individual items equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register (Minute #467 (v) of 2023/24).

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 has been one major acquisition and disposal during 2024/25 which is reflected in the Asset Register 2025, as per **Attachment E**.

Committee considered the following RECOMMENDATIONS and make appropriate **RECOMMENDATIONS** to Council.

- (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 2025, 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.

426 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Epping Town Council's complaints procedure was APPROVED on 12th March 2024 (Minute #467 (vi) of 2023/24) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk is pleased to report that Epping Town Council receive very few formal complaints and the office team try to deal with any issues efficiently, so they do not become a complaint. The Town Clerk has made no amendments.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Complaints Procedure, as per **Attachment F**, with no amendments, would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council.

427 HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Epping Town Council's Health & Safety Policy was APPROVED on 12th March 2024 (Minute #467 (viii) of 2023/24) and is now due for review. Committee considered the Health & Safety Policy, with no amendments, as per **Attachment G**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

428 MEDIA POLICY

Epping Town Council's Media Policy was APPROVED on 7th March 2023 (Minute #449 (ix) of 2022/23) and is now due for review., with no amendments, as per **Attachment H**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

429 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Epping Town Council's Social Media Policy was APPROVED on 7th March 2023 (Minute #449 (x) of 2022/23) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk has made one amendment, as per **Attachment I**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Social Media Policy with amendments, as per **Attachment I**, would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council;
- (ii) The amendments would be reworded slightly for clarity.

430 PUBLICATION SCHEME

Epping Town Council's Publication Scheme was APPROVED on 7th March 2023 (Minute #449 (xiii) of 2022/23) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk has made no amendments, as per **Attachment J**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

431 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Epping Town Council's Community Engagement Policy was APPROVED on 7th March 2023 (Minute #449 (xi) of 2022/23) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk has made some minor amendments, as per **Attachment K**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Community Engagement Policy with amendments, as per **Attachment K**, would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council, with revisions to the amendments for clarity;
- (ii) Committee would RECOMMEND to Council that they should CONSIDER whether to resume printing and distributing Talk About Epping magazine to all residences and businesses in Epping Parish, as they had done until the 2022/23 financial year.

432 DATA PROTECTION POLICY

Epping Town Council's Data Protection Policy was APPROVED on 7th March 2023 (Minute #449 (xii) of 2022/23) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk has made no amendments, as per **Attachment L**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Data Protection Policy, as per **Attachment L**, would be RECOMMENDED for APPROVAL by Council.

433 COMPLIANCE FAILURE POLICY

Epping Town Council's Compliance Failure Policy was APPROVED on 10th March 2020 (Minute #496 (vi) of 2020/21) and is now due for review. The Town Clerk has made no amendments, as per **Attachment M**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

434 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.

435 INSURANCE POLICIES (CONTRACTS) & RECONCILIATION

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s111; Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members & officers) order 2004

Committee considered the forthcoming insurance information and renewal details for July 2025. The Town Clerk will prepare the necessary documentation in advance of the renewal.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and Key Member for Finance and one other member (**to be decided**), should undertake the insurance renewal process, in advance of the July meeting and this should be **RECOMMENDED** for Council for **APPROVAL**.

Please note: the insurance quotations generally arrive quite close to the renewal date (1st July each year) giving insufficient time for it to be included on a Council agenda in advance of the renewal, which has to take place on that date for continuity of cover.

436 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, following the guidance and criteria, as per **Attachment N** and this would be the **RECOMMENDATION** to Council.

437 STAFF PAY SCALES

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 staff pay scales are listed as per **Attachment O**.

The pay scales which came into effect on 1st April 2024, were received in November 2024 and was backdated. It is very common for pay awards to arrive in November of the relevant financial year and when they are received after 1st April, salaries are backdated accordingly. The Town Clerk/RFO has built an increase of approximately 4% into the 2025/26 budget.

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 2025 is 24.8% (1st April 2023-1st April 2026). This was raised from 23.3%. 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: 4% from the employee, 1% tax relief) (from 6th April 2019) onwards). We have not received any alternative NEST rates for 2025 at the time of writing.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

438 **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.

439 **STAFF TERMS**

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s111

Committee **CONSIDERED** the staff terms information as per **Attachment Q**.

Please note: the Town Clerk left the meeting for discussions on this item.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Revised staff terms would be **RECOMMENDED** for **APPROVAL** by Council;
- (ii) Cllr G Scruton would prepare the necessary terms for consideration by Council.

440 **TOWN CLERK APPRAISAL**

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Committee **NOTED** the Town Clerk's appraisal which would be undertaken in February 2025, by the Chairman of Council 2024-25, Cllr C McCredie.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **9.38pm**.

(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

ATTACHMENT F



EPPING TOWN COUNCIL EMERGENCY PLAN

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

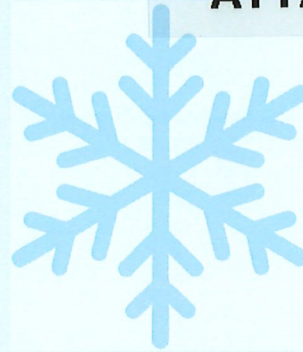
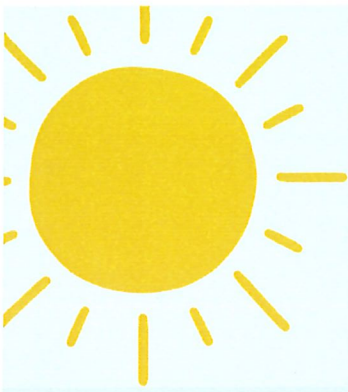
Epping Town Council are looking for volunteers to help in the case of a local emergency.

We are looking for 'general' volunteers. Whether this is making cups of tea and handing out biscuits, or directing people to a safe place, the help is greatly appreciated.

There is also a need for retired doctors, nurses or anyone who has first aid training. If you fit these criteria, please contact us for more information.

The aim of the plan is to have contact details of those who have the skills to help those who need medical attention or may be vulnerable.

If you are interested in becoming a contactable volunteer for the emergency plan, please contact us by emailing: info@eppingtowncouncil.gov.uk or call: 01992 579444



Epping Weather Station

Epping Town Council operates a Weather Station from the Council Depot at Stonard's Hill.

The station sends live information to the Met Office, and measures the temperature, rainfall and wind speed among other factors.

There is also a weather website, that needs updating monthly with a 'weather of the month' style report.

We are looking for a group of school children to manage the reporting side of the Weather Station.

This would be a great project for the children, combining multiple areas of the Curriculum into one.

If you are interested in getting involved with the Weather Station, please contact Epping Town Council on either 01992 579444, or email; info@eppingtowncouncil.gov.uk

TOWN MAYOR'S DUTIES

12th February to 10th March 2025

17 th February 2025	Devolution webinar EALC
17 th February 2025	Community Safety Partnership meeting
26 th February 2025	Town Clerk's appraisal
27 th February 2025	London Green Belt zoom meeting on devolution
1 st March 2025	Uniquely Me talent show
2 nd March 2025	Civic Service, Chelmsford Cathedral with Mayor's Cadet
10 th March 2025	Ivy Chimneys Action Day

DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S DUTIES/ENGAGEMENTS

12th February to 10th March 2025

3 rd March 2025	Discussion with Police on public engagement duties in the market
10 th March 2025	Epping Forest Dementia Friendly Communities
10 th March 2025	Epping Society AGM

REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK**1 CEMETERY SOFTWARE**

Council's Cemetery & Administration Officer will be working on digitalising Council's cemetery documentation to make it easier to search, work with and store securely. This may require the purchase of some appropriate software which we are in the process of researching. Council's precious cemetery books are statutory historic records. The digitalised paperwork will be the supporting documentation that must be collected and kept as part of the cemetery process and procedures. The Town Clerk will liaise with the Key Member for the Cemetery and Finance, should it prove necessary.

2 BLUE PLAQUE CHURCH'S BUTCHERS

The office team are currently working on the wording for the Church's Butcher's plaque with the Butcher's shop. Once agreed, this will be circulated to members by email for agreement before it is ordered.

3 NODDY

At the time of writing there has been no interest in shops hosting Noddy in the High Street. The host requests have needed to be limited given the need to secure Noddy under cover, with power, in a safe location. The office team are pursuing this and other ideas and will bring any progress on this back to Council in due course.

4 SKATE PARK VANDALISM

Unfortunately, there has been some damage/vandalism to the skate park in the form of track marks and oily deposits. This has likely been caused by local quad bikes who should not be using the facility for this purpose. The Town Supervisor will instruct cleaning where appropriate but will leave other marks to wear as he deems appropriate.

5 VE DAY 2025: THURSDAY 8TH MAY 2025

Early discussions regarding VE Day 2025 have begun with Epping Fire Station and Cllr J Duffell. The office team will be working on the preparation for this event over the next two months.

6 STONARDS HILL RECREATION GROUND PIPES

Discussions are well underway regarding the pipes under Stonards Hill recreation ground supporting the NHS Trust/St Margaret's Hospital. The full position will be shared with Council once details have been formally agreed. Cllr H Pegrum,

Cllr C McCredie and Cllr G Scruton have been working on the details with the Town Clerk in accordance with Council's resolution (Minute #327 (ii) of 2024/25).

05/03/2025

Epping Town Council

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12:16

Summary Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 05/03/2025

Month No: 11

Committee Report to 28th February 2025

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
Full Council						
Income	918,083	816,195	(101,888)			112.5%
Expenditure	869,431	815,132	(54,299)	0	(54,299)	106.7%
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>48,652</u>	<u>1,063</u>	<u>(47,589)</u>			
plus Transfer from EMR	0	0	0			
less Transfer to EMR	0	0	0			
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>48,652</u>	<u>1,063</u>	<u>(47,589)</u>			

Earmarked Reserves

Income	0	0	0			0.0%
Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>			

Grand Totals:- Income	918,083	816,195	(101,888)			112.5%
Expenditure	869,431	815,132	(54,299)	0	(54,299)	106.7%
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>48,652</u>	<u>1,063</u>	<u>(47,589)</u>			
plus Transfer from EMR	0	0	0			
less Transfer to EMR	0	0	0			
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>48,652</u>	<u>1,063</u>	<u>(47,589)</u>			

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
100 Service & Committee Support							
1076 Precept	621,795	621,795	0			100.0%	
1090 Interest Received	2,065	1,800	(265)			114.7%	
1900 Other Receipts	75	800	725			9.4%	
Service & Committee Support :- Income	623,935	624,395	460			99.9%	0
4000 Salaries	184,764	203,800	19,036		19,036	90.7%	
4010 Insurance	11,648	10,400	(1,248)		(1,248)	112.0%	
4020 Equipment	1,034	800	(234)		(234)	129.2%	
4025 Consumables	615	700	85		85	87.8%	
4030 Postage	792	700	(92)		(92)	113.2%	
4035 Printing & Photocopying	1,552	1,600	48		48	97.0%	
4040 Professional Fees	5,760	7,000	1,240		1,240	82.3%	
4045 Subscriptions & Licences	8,774	6,500	(2,274)		(2,274)	135.0%	
4050 Telephone & IT Services	10,896	8,000	(2,896)		(2,896)	136.2%	
4060 Training - Staff	915	1,500	585		585	61.0%	
4065 Training - Members	0	600	600		600	0.0%	
4070 Travel & Subsistence - Staff	504	600	96		96	84.0%	
4075 Travel & Subsistence - Members	76	700	624		624	10.9%	
4080 Mayor's Allowance	419	1,000	581		581	41.9%	
4090 Bank Charges	94	105	12		12	89.0%	
4095 Miscellaneous Expenditure	934	1,000	66		66	93.4%	
4100 Bad Debt & Write Offs	0	100	100		100	0.0%	
Service & Committee Support :- Indirect Expenditure	228,777	245,105	16,329	0	16,329	93.3%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	395,158	379,290	(15,868)				
110 Neighbourhood Planning							
4155 N Planning Circulation	(1,000)	0	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4370 N Planning Guidance	(233)	1,000	1,233		1,233	(23.3%)	
Neighbourhood Planning :- Indirect Expenditure	(1,233)	1,000	2,233	0	2,233	(123.3%)	0
Net Expenditure	1,233	(1,000)	(2,233)				
120 Grants							
4045 Subscriptions & Licences	5	0	(5)		(5)	0.0%	
4140 Grants - S137	125	150	25		25	83.3%	
4145 Grants - Other Powers	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
Grants :- Indirect Expenditure	130	650	520	0	520	19.9%	0
Net Expenditure	(130)	(650)	(520)				

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
140 Events & Publications							
1200 Town Show Income	6,474	4,000	(2,474)			161.9%	
1210 Christmas Market Income	4,775	4,000	(775)			119.4%	
1220 Christmas Lights Donations	2,000	0	(2,000)			0.0%	
1230 Christmas Tree Donations	400	0	(400)			0.0%	
Events & Publications :- Income	13,649	8,000	(5,649)			170.6%	0
4165 Epping in Bloom	1,000	1,000	0		0	100.0%	
4170 Town Show Expenditure	4,855	3,500	(1,355)		(1,355)	138.7%	
4175 Christmas Market Expenditure	1,828	3,000	1,172		1,172	60.9%	
4180 Christmas Lights Expenditure	18,465	7,500	(10,965)		(10,965)	246.2%	
4185 Christmas Tree Expenditure	1,914	2,500	586		586	76.6%	
4195 Mayor's Civic Reception	546	2,000	1,454		1,454	27.3%	
4205 Talk About Epping	1,230	1,000	(230)		(230)	123.0%	
4220 Other Council Events	2,667	2,000	(667)		(667)	133.4%	
4225 Other Council Publications	990	1,320	330		330	75.0%	
Events & Publications :- Indirect Expenditure	33,496	23,820	(9,676)	0	(9,676)	140.6%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(19,846)	(15,820)	4,026				
160 Epping Hall							
1300 Lettings Rents & Licences	39,601	48,000	8,399			82.5%	
Epping Hall :- Income	39,601	48,000	8,399			82.5%	0
4010 Insurance	7,921	8,800	879		879	90.0%	
4020 Equipment	1,095	1,000	(95)		(95)	109.5%	
4025 Consumables	1,004	1,400	396		396	71.7%	
4085 PWLB Loan Repayments	77,840	77,840	(0)		(0)	100.0%	
4250 Business Rates	10,978	12,000	1,022		1,022	91.5%	
4255 Utilities	14,258	15,000	742		742	95.1%	
4260 Repairs & Maintenance	14,534	14,000	(534)		(534)	103.8%	
Epping Hall :- Indirect Expenditure	127,631	130,040	2,409	0	2,409	98.1%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(88,029)	(82,040)	5,989				
180 Jack Silley Pavilion							
1300 Lettings Rents & Licences	28,667	30,000	1,334			95.6%	
Jack Silley Pavilion :- Income	28,667	30,000	1,334			95.6%	0
4010 Insurance	1,700	1,700	0		0	100.0%	
4020 Equipment	0	800	800		800	0.0%	
4025 Consumables	385	400	15		15	96.3%	

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4250 Business Rates	4,840	4,800	(40)		(40)	100.8%	
4255 Utilities	7,788	12,500	4,712		4,712	62.3%	
4260 Repairs & Maintenance	4,918	6,000	1,082		1,082	82.0%	
Jack Silley Pavilion :- Indirect Expenditure	19,631	26,200	6,569	0	6,569	74.9%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	9,036	3,800	(5,236)				
200 Epping Market							
1300 Lettings Rents & Licences	30,504	36,000	5,496			84.7%	
1310 Market casuals	8,900	7,500	(1,400)			118.7%	
Epping Market :- Income	39,405	43,500	4,095			90.6%	0
4007 Advertising & promotion	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4010 Insurance	740	740	0		0	100.0%	
4020 Equipment	361	1,000	639		639	36.1%	
4025 Consumables	68	0	(68)		(68)	0.0%	
4085 PWLB Loan Repayments	6,159	6,156	(3)		(3)	100.0%	
4095 Miscellaneous Expenditure	62	0	(62)		(62)	0.0%	
4250 Business Rates	4,990	5,500	510		510	90.7%	
4260 Repairs & Maintenance	350	1,000	650		650	35.0%	
4300 Market Contractor	21,538	23,500	1,962		1,962	91.7%	
4305 Skip Hire	95	0	(95)		(95)	0.0%	
Epping Market :- Indirect Expenditure	34,363	38,396	4,033	0	4,033	89.5%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	5,042	5,104	62				
220 Epping Cemetery							
1500 Burials & Memorials	35,289	36,000	711			98.0%	
Epping Cemetery :- Income	35,289	36,000	711			98.0%	0
4010 Insurance	940	940	0		0	100.0%	
4015 Cemetery Benches	809	0	(809)		(809)	0.0%	
4020 Equipment	489	500	11		11	97.8%	
4095 Miscellaneous Expenditure	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4250 Business Rates	2,132	2,000	(132)		(132)	106.6%	
4260 Repairs & Maintenance	14,869	2,000	(12,869)		(12,869)	743.5%	
Epping Cemetery :- Indirect Expenditure	19,240	5,940	(13,300)	0	(13,300)	323.9%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	16,049	30,060	14,011				

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
240 Parks & Building Maintenance							
1300 Lettings Rents & Licences	6,049	5,800	(249)			104.3%	
1320 Tennis Court income	2,359	1,500	(859)			157.2%	
1600 Town Greens	1,536	2,200	664			69.8%	
1900 Other Receipts	6,350	0	(6,350)			0.0%	
Parks & Building Maintenance :- Income	16,293	9,500	(6,793)			171.5%	0
4000 Salaries	211,388	281,000	69,612		69,612	75.2%	
4010 Insurance	3,324	3,150	(174)		(174)	105.5%	
4020 Equipment	5,574	6,000	426		426	92.9%	
4025 Consumables	982	700	(282)		(282)	140.3%	
4095 Miscellaneous Expenditure	708	0	(708)		(708)	0.0%	
4255 Utilities	2,650	6,000	3,350		3,350	44.2%	
4260 Repairs & Maintenance	13,964	20,000	6,036		6,036	69.8%	
4265 Public Toilet Cleaning	1,100	1,000	(100)		(100)	110.0%	
4270 Tree management	0	2,500	2,500		2,500	0.0%	
4275 Tennis Courts	686	1,000	314		314	68.6%	
4310 Vehicles	2,201	2,000	(201)		(201)	110.0%	
4360 Fuel	3,089	4,500	1,411		1,411	68.7%	
Parks & Building Maintenance :- Indirect Expenditure	245,666	327,850	82,184	0	82,184	74.9%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(229,373)	(318,350)	(88,977)				
260 Public Convenience							
1055 Utility Recharges	(7,856)	0	7,856			0.0%	
Public Convenience :- Income	(7,856)	0	7,856				0
4020 Equipment	7	80	73		73	8.4%	
4025 Consumables	160	700	540		540	22.9%	
4255 Utilities	11,202	3,000	(8,202)		(8,202)	373.4%	
4260 Repairs & Maintenance	0	1,200	1,200		1,200	0.0%	
4265 Public Toilet Cleaning	2,434	5,000	2,566		2,566	48.7%	
Public Convenience :- Indirect Expenditure	13,802	9,980	(3,822)	0	(3,822)	138.3%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(21,658)	(9,980)	11,678				
280 Allotments							
1300 Lettings Rents & Licences	4,272	4,300	28			99.3%	
Allotments :- Income	4,272	4,300	28			99.3%	0
4010 Insurance	300	300	0		0	100.0%	

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4020 Equipment	39	300	261		261	13.0%	
4255 Utilities	106	400	294		294	26.4%	
4260 Repairs & Maintenance	32	500	468		468	6.4%	
Allotments :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>476</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,024</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,024</u>	<u>31.8%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>3,795</u>	<u>2,800</u>	<u>(995)</u>				
300 Street Furniture							
4020 Equipment	3,600	1,000	(2,600)		(2,600)	360.0%	
4095 Miscellaneous Expenditure	0	750	750		750	0.0%	
4260 Repairs & Maintenance	1,852	800	(1,052)		(1,052)	231.6%	
Street Furniture :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>5,452</u>	<u>2,550</u>	<u>(2,902)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(2,902)</u>	<u>213.8%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Expenditure	<u>(5,452)</u>	<u>(2,550)</u>	<u>2,902</u>				
320 War Memorial							
4260 Repairs & Maintenance	0	100	100		100	0.0%	
War Memorial :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>				
340 Council as Landlord							
1300 Lettings Rents & Licences	6,612	6,000	(612)			110.2%	
1900 Other Receipts	3,217	6,500	3,283			49.5%	
Council as Landlord :- Income	<u>9,829</u>	<u>12,500</u>	<u>2,671</u>			<u>78.6%</u>	<u>0</u>
4260 Repairs & Maintenance	627	1,500	873		873	41.8%	
Council as Landlord :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>627</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>873</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>873</u>	<u>41.8%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>9,203</u>	<u>11,000</u>	<u>1,798</u>				
360 Council as Tenant							
4400 Letting Rents & Licence Costs	0	501	501		501	0.0%	
Council as Tenant :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>501</u>	<u>501</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>501</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>(501)</u>	<u>(501)</u>				
800 Stonards Refurbishment S106							
1250 Stonards refurbishment	115,000	0	(115,000)			0.0%	
Stonards Refurbishment S106 :- Income	<u>115,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(115,000)</u>				<u>0</u>

12:17 Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 05/03/2025

Month No: 11 Cost Centre Report to 28th February 2025

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4395 Stonards refurbishment	141,375	0	(141,375)		(141,375)	0.0%	
Stonards Refurbishment S106 :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>141,375</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(141,375)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(141,375)</u>		<u>0</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(26,375)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>26,375</u>				
Grand Totals:- Income	918,083	816,195	(101,888)			112.5%	
Expenditure	869,431	815,132	(54,299)	0	(54,299)	106.7%	
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>48,652</u>	<u>1,063</u>	<u>(47,589)</u>				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>48,652</u>	<u>1,063</u>	<u>(47,589)</u>				

Date: 05/03/2025

Epping Town Council

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Time: 12:16

Co-operative Bank current

List of Payments made between 01/02/2025 and 28/02/2025

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
10/02/2025	Yu Energy Retail Limited	DD01	1,173.20		Electric Jan 25
10/02/2025	Nest Pension	BACS	1.00		Pension adjustment
11/02/2025	EPC Mechanical	BAC1102/01	357.00		Xmas lights not working callou
11/02/2025	G B Sport & Leisure UK Ltd	BAC1102/02	148.51		Playground gate parts
11/02/2025	HMS Heating	BAC1102/03	96.00		Call out faulty radiators JSP
11/02/2025	NPower Commercial Gas	BAC1102/04	22.78		Electric Jan 2025
11/02/2025	RAD Group	BAC1102/05	586.56		Feb IT support
11/02/2025	Sheridan Lifts Ltd	BAC1102/06	336.00		EH Lift annual maint renewal
11/02/2025	SMB Canopies	BAC1102/07	396.00		2 replacement canopies
11/02/2025	Stratton Contractors Ltd	BAC1102/08	390.00		Toilet clean Jan 24
11/02/2025	Mr D R Whitbread	BAC1102/09	88.00		Clean EH windows+bus stops
11/02/2025	CSA	BAC1102/10	599.62		Deductions for Jan 25
11/02/2025	Essex Pension Fund	BAC1102/11	3,380.95		Pension conts Jan 25
11/02/2025	HMRC	BAC1102/12	7,423.20		NI+PAYE conts Jan 25
11/02/2025	Nest Pension	BAC1102/13	286.66		Pensions conts Jan 25
11/02/2025	Abbey Drains Ltd	BAC1102/14	4,752.00		Emergency drainage works
11/02/2025	British Gas Services Ltd	DD02	402.22		Gas 29.11-28.1.25
14/02/2025	UK Fire Consultants Limited	BAC1402/01	540.00		Depot fire risk assessment
14/02/2025	Epping Forest District Council	DD03	554.55		Refuse 1/4 to 31/3/25
14/02/2025	Salary transfer	BACS	23,454.68		Salary payments
14/02/2025	D W Erections	DD04	1,958.00		Purchase Ledger Payment
17/02/2025	Corona Energy	DD05	1,727.96		Electric Jan 2025
18/02/2025	Peninsula	BACS	519.37		HR & H+S supp ongoing
21/02/2025	EDF Energy	DD07	21.67		JSP electric 2.1.25-31.1.25
25/02/2025	Essex Association of Local Cou	BAC2502/01	216.00		Public rights way training BR
25/02/2025	Inkpen Downie Architecture & D	BAC2502/02	300.00		Planning app dawning EH
25/02/2025	Kent County Council	BAC2502/03	923.82		Gas 31.12-31.1.25
25/02/2025	Mobile Account Solutions (Hold	BAC2502/04	431.10		Phones Jan 25
25/02/2025	MSPC Ltd	BAC2502/05	307.00		TAE Spring supply+print
25/02/2025	Wood & Family	BAC2502/06	452.15		Supply+fit lights & blades
25/02/2025	Epping Forest District Council	BAC2502/07	50.00		Damage deposit refunded
25/02/2025	Petty Cash	Transfer	250.00		Petty cash withdrawal
26/02/2025	PHS Group	DD09	407.60		JSP driers, dispensers etc
27/02/2025	Elite Consultants	XBAC2811X	-50.00		Duplicate payment refunded
27/02/2025	Macala Costello	X302077X	-100.00		Chq not presented - cancelled
Total Payments			52,403.60		

Date: 05/03/2025



Epping Town Council

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Time: 12:15

Barclays No 1 Account

List of Payments made between 01/02/2025 and 28/02/2025

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
03/02/2025	Barclays Bank plc	DEBIT	8.50		Commission charge 13Dec/12Jan
13/02/2025	Co-operative Bank current	Transfer	30,000.00		Transfer 
13/02/2025	Barclays Business Saver	REVERSE	30,000.00		Reverse 13/2/25 
21/02/2025	EE	DD08	63.22		Mobile/data plan Feb 25
Total Payments			<u>60,071.72</u>		

List of Payments made between 01/02/2025 and 28/02/2025

<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Authorized Ref</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
10/02/2025	Zoom UK	463	15.59		Inv 292302623
11/02/2025	Engraving Studio	464	26.90		Brass plaque for chess board
13/02/2025	Amazon UK	465	16.28		Toilet paper holder
13/02/2025	Amazon UK	466	9.63		Sticky notes
20/02/2025	Tesco	467	66.40		Water/beer/wine
24/02/2025	HP Instant Ink	468	5.49		Ink subscription
26/02/2025	Amazon UK	469	49.32		Eye wash pods, eye wash
Total Payments			<u>189.61</u>		

ATTACHMENT K

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE REVISED DOCUMENTS

RISK REGISTER - EPPING TOWN COUNCIL - MARCH 2025

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Key to risks: **High (H)** **Medium (M)** **Low (L)**

	Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Severity	Control Measure	Review frequency	Alternative Review trigger	Responsible Person/s
1.	Lack of forward planning and financial/ budgetary controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of direction and prioritisation Needs of those in partner organisations not addressed Poor financial control Loss of respect and reputation 	M	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business/action plan in operation In year budget reviews Feedback from Partners Monthly reconciliation for all accounts 	Annually Quarterly As required Monthly	Unexpected expense	Clerk/RFO & All Members
2.	Council lacks relevant skills and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council fails to achieve its purpose Decision making bypasses Council Poor value for precept money Council ignores advice of Clerk 	L	H	Whilst difficult with democratic election process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to select carefully Ongoing training for Councillors Close review of attendance Ongoing training for Clerk 	Annually & ongoing Every meeting Ongoing	Poor decisions through lack of knowledge	Chairman of Council
3.	Council becomes dominated by one or two or cliques form (Illegitimate Party dominance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflicts of interest Pursuit of personal agendas Decisions made outside Council Loss of interest by excluded members 	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear Standing Orders regarding conduct of meetings and Conflict of Interests Clerk monitors Chairman monitors Select carefully 	Annually (or through CGAC when legislation changes) Ongoing monitoring		Chairman/Clerk

Risk Register - Epping Town Council

Reviewed: Feb 2024 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee). Approved: March 2024 (Council). Review date: Feb 2025 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee).

4.	Councillors benefiting from being on Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affect reputation • Conflicts of Interest 	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear Standing Orders • Open system of payment • Robust Internal Audit 	Annually All meetings		Chairman Clerk Internal Auditor
5.	Poor reporting to Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor quality decision making • Council becomes ill informed • Clerk fails to keep Council informed 	M	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely and accurate financial reporting • Clear instructions to staff • Regular project reports • Clerk's ongoing training • Clerk to ensure good reporting to Council • Clerk appraisal 	Quarterly Ongoing Each meeting Ongoing	Reminder from District and County Project Problem	Clerk/Chairman
6.	Loss of key staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure in budgetary controls • Correspondence backlog • Lack of knowledge/loss of experience 	M	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession Planning • Clear office procedures • Clear budgetary procedures • Monitor remuneration packages • Up to date job descriptions • Good handover arrangements • Ongoing communication and sharing of information 	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	Loss of staff member	Chairman/Clerk /All staff

Risk Register - Epping Town Council

Reviewed: Feb 2024 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee). Approved: March 2024 (Council). Review date: Feb 2025 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee).

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff development and training 	Ongoing		
7.	Inadequacy of Precept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services not provided Lack of confidence in Council Strong budgeting process 	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular in year budget reviews Detailed budget setting process and monitoring of funds Regular highlighting of any potential forthcoming high costs/necessary expenditure 	Every Council Meeting Annually & ongoing Ongoing as required	Unexpected event i.e. flooding	Clerk & All Members
8.	Failure to respond to electors wish to right of inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of confidence Loss of reputation 	L	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear Standing Orders and Operating Protocols Adherence to Audit Regulations 	Annually Annually		Clerk
9.	Failure to register Members interests, gifts, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member could make inappropriate gains Could affect reputations 	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear code of conduct Clear procedure monitoring interests Clerk monitors 	Annually		Individual Member Clerk
10.	Failure to meet the requirements for LCAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status Reputation 	M	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor requirements for LCAS High standards 	As required		Clerk
11.	Poor document control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information not passed on in a timely manner Deadlines missed Lack of achievement 	M	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear Standing Orders Clear Job Descriptions Clear Office Procedures Good communication Ongoing policy 	Annually Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing		Clerk/All staff

Risk Register - Epping Town Council

Reviewed: Feb 2024 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee). Approved: March 2024 (Council). Review date: Feb 2025 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee).

					document review timetable			
12.	Lack of maintenance of Council owned property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost of repair • Injury to 3rd party leading to claims • Damage to property 	M	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stock condition survey • Regular routine maintenance • Insurance cover • Interim insurance updates if necessary 	Ongoing As required Annually Ongoing	Unexpected Natural Disaster Acquisitions /disposals	Clerk
13.	Damage or loss to Council owned property by 3 rd party or act of God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost of repair 	H	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance cover • Good Fire Alarm • Good Burglar Alarm • Regular Maintenance Inspection 	Annually Ongoing		Clerk
14.	Damage to 3 rd party property or individual due to service or amenity provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claim against Council 	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance • Regular checks of facilities • Risk Assessments 	As required Ongoing Annually	Annually As reported	Clerk
15.	Loss of cash through fraud or dishonesty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in available funds • Loss of reputation 	L	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear financial procedures • Adequate insurance cover • Verify & attach copy order to invoice • Fidelity guarantee cover (insurance) 	Annually Annually One offs Annually	On a Loss	All Members Clerk Internal Auditor
16.	Problems due to borrowing or lending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure of 3rd party to repay loan • Inability of Council to 	L	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in annual budget • Clear Standing Orders 	Quarterly reviews Annually		Clerk/Members

Risk Register - Epping Town Council

Reviewed: Feb 2024 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee). Approved: March 2024 (Council). Review date: Feb 2025 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repay a loan Poor investments 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office Procedures Review investments regularly Strong Financial Key Member 	Ongoing Annually	Economic climate	
17.	Failure to use grants for purpose for which they were intended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of funds for project for which grant was intended Investigation into the use of funds 	L	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear minutes Ensure funds properly ring fenced Clear financial procedures Review of funds 	Ongoing Ongoing Annually		Clerk
18.	Ensure Council complies with law, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Safety Equal Opportunities Data Protection Human Rights Disability and Discrimination Employment Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fines and Penalties from regulation bodies Employee action for negligence of grievance Risk of reputation 	M	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive Standing Orders and Procedures Clear Job Descriptions Comprehensive Risk Assessments Ongoing training as legislation changes Professional membership such as EALC/NALC 	Annually Ongoing Annually Ongoing		Clerk/Members
19.	Risk of acting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Loss – 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure powers are 	All		Clerk/Members

Risk Register - Epping Town Council

Reviewed: Feb 2024 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee). Approved: March 2024 (Council). Review date: Feb 2025 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee).

	without proper powers. (Ultra vires)	Criminal Charges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of respect and reputation • Loss of confidence • Claim against Council • Lack of knowledge 	M	H	researched and stated in Agenda reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing training for Clerks and councillors • Qualified Clerk 	meetings		
20.	Risk of increasing regulatory burden preventing performance of work benefiting the parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased complaints from Precept payers • Staff stress and retention problems • Poor relationship between Officers and Members 	M	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Members are advised of regulatory demands and the effect of these demands on workload • Ensure the Members respond to consultations on regulatory issues • Pressure on employees/workload is monitored by the Clerk 	As required Monthly meetings & Ongoing Ongoing & annually		Clerk
21.	Failure to identify Risks facing the Council & to put measures in place to mitigate such risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council encounters serious challenges for which no pre-planning has been undertaken 	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk to review risk register & make appropriate recommendations • Senior member of staff monitoring as a back up 	Annually	Serious challenge	Clerk & All Members
22.	Dramatic fall in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme difficulty in 	H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Budget 	Monthly		Clerk, Finance

Risk Register - Epping Town Council

Reviewed: Feb 2024 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee). Approved: March 2024 (Council). Review date: Feb 2025 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee).

	investment and trading income	<p>achieving budget targets for that financial year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placing of deposits with one source (Council not protected by the FSCS guarantee of £75,000) 			<p>monitoring – Clerk and Members must be aware of the risks and consequence of poor financial performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant fall in income must be balanced with spending cuts or a drawdown of reserves (whichever is appropriate see 23 below). Spread investments across banks/building societies 	Annually/as required		Key Member and Council
23.	Inadequate Reserve funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year end cash flow difficulties and/or failure to meet unforeseen expenditure (may result in need for unplanned and expensive borrowing) Unable to deliver service and functions 	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Year end General Reserve level at between 3 to 6 months of the anticipated total expenditure. Maintain adequate levels of specific reserves for known recurrent spending priorities. Understanding of the function of funds and their importance 	<p>Budget setting process and review in relation to ad hoc spending requests</p> <p>Ongoing training for Clerk/Cllrs</p>		Clerk, Finance Key Member and Council
24.	Significant loss of computer facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of administrative capacity 	M	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain electronic backups both onsite and offsite 	Ongoing	Cyber attack or threat of	Clerk

Risk Register - Epping Town Council

Reviewed: Feb 2024 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee). Approved: March 2024 (Council). Review date: Feb 2025 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee).

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain separate off site backup of accountancy data. • Maintain battery backup to server (until server not used) • Maintain contract with computer maintenance (good IT support) • Monitor IT support and update as appropriate 		cyber attack or breakdown	
25.	Loss of business continuity and income due to movement of premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of income/uncertainty/difficulty in maintaining services and functions 	M	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong details and safeguards in contract • Strong lawyer • No movement of premises without alternative premises • Negotiations with community partners for to form back up plans • (Unforeseen loss of income/business continuity managed through insurance) • Adequate support required to facilitate a large-scale move 	<p>Through any applicable contract negotiation and forward planning</p> <p>Long enough timescales to prepare and plan</p>	Problem with development	Clerk Chairman All members
26	Loss of continuity through a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of knowledge and experience • Risk of poor decisions 	M	M/H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong/clear procedures in place which are followed 	Election time	Poor decisions	Clerk All members

Risk Register - Epping Town Council

Reviewed: Feb 2024 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee). Approved: March 2024 (Council). Review date: Feb 2025 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee).

	change of Council due to elections				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified Town Clerk • Members to share knowledge amongst themselves to assist newer councillors • Strong auditing checks 	Ongoing		
27	Loss of interest in Council's affairs by councillors and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor decision making • Poorer quality of work 	M	L/M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued engagement of councillors • Continual involvement of staff in projects and training • Sharing of information • Interesting projects • Staff monitoring and development 	Ongoing	Poor decisions Poor work Feeling of apathy	Clerk/Chairman / All members/ All staff
28	Poor member behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affect on the whole Council including Council's reputation 	M	L/M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminder of the importance of team working • Regular reminders of proper practice/process • External reporting of poor behaviour 	Ongoing	Poor behaviour	All members Clerk
29	Unexpected health emergency/ situation (such as Covid 19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to work in the normal manner • Remote working which may lead to gaps in service/provision 	M/H	L/M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of remote working methods if needed • Team covering different functions so sharing of tasks 	Health emergency • Requirement for home working	Long term absence Building failure eg fire/flood	Clerk/All staff/Council

Risk Register - Epping Town Council

Reviewed: Feb 2024 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee). Approved: March 2024 (Council). Review date: Feb 2025 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee).

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong, diverse team who are multi-skilled in basic daily operations Regular team meetings to ensure engagement Regular contact to ensure continuity 			
30	Failure to fill all Council seats at an election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less input and potential diversity of opinion Less combined knowledge/experience 	M	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing members training Qualified Clerk Process for advertising vacant Council seats 	4 yearly after elections If required	Elections Vacant member seat	Clerk/Council
31	Failure to understand the implications of making financial cuts/not listening to advice and recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not upgrading cyber security or continuing professional advice and support memberships to save money (EALC, NALC, SLCC, ICCM, NAMBA) Cyber security and legal updates/knowledge becomes out of date exposing/increasing risk 	M	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing members training Qualified Clerk Listening to advice of Clerk and others Allocating sufficient budget to cover adequate support and memberships 	Memberships renewals Ongoing	Awareness of out of date software or advice	Clerk
32	Devolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devolved services and functions but no funding Overstretched resources leading to cuts Lack of knowledge Risk of failure 	M	L/M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing discussions and training for members and staff 	Ongoing	Additional information or requests	All members Clerk

Risk Register - Epping Town Council

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Risk Register - Epping Town Council

Reviewed: Feb 2024 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee). Approved: March 2024 (Council). Review date: Feb 2025 (Corporate Governance Advisory Committee).

EPHING TOWN COUNCIL ASSET REGISTER**31st March 2025**

The form of this asset register was adopted following receipt of advice from Peter Lacey of NALC/SLCC and a discussion with Jo Taylor of the Audit Commission (29th March 2010). It was reviewed by council in October 2012 (Minutes #201 & #222 of 2012/13 refer).

This Asset Register has four main purposes.

- a. It forms a basis for completion of box 9 in the 'Annual Return.'
- b. It forms a basis for decisions on risk and insurance issues.
- c. It provides information on the condition and need for replacement of machinery items.
- d. It provides assurance of the continued existence of Council's property

Annual Return – Fixed Assets

Items of machinery and equipment which have a useful life of more than one year and with a value greater than £1,000 are defined as 'Fixed Assets.' These are itemised below and their value reported in box 9 of Council's 'Annual Return.' Council does not depreciate or adjust fixed asset values and they are not calculated as part of a balance sheet. For fixed assets Council must approve the valuation methodology which must be applied consistently year on year. The preferred value will be the original acquisition cost. Alternative acceptable valuations are the replacement cost at a particular date or an insurance cost at a particular date. A fourth method of valuation for land or buildings which only have community value will be a nominal value of £1 (but please note the war memorial is listed at its original cost in 1922 of £650. The fixed asset value for any individual item will not usually be altered from year to year. Therefore, a change in the total value for fixed assets (in box 9 of the Annual Return) indicates the acquisition of new and/or the disposal of old assets of significance.

It will be necessary to review the threshold value for fixed assets (currently £1,000) annually to ensure the value continues to include the types of items currently listed as fixed assets. Such a review will require the revaluation of both the current and previous years' asset registers to give a consistent basis for comparison.

Insurance Decisions

From the above it follows that not all assets are classed as 'Fixed Assets.' The guidance indicates that only items with a relatively high value which will be useful for more than one financial year are entered to the 'Fixed Asset' box 9 on the Annual Return. Council has many smaller items which individually have a replacement value less than £1,000 (small tools, furniture, benches etc.). These items are listed in inventories and the total for any given inventory may far exceed £1,000. The total value of inventories may alter quite rapidly as new items are entered or removed. It is still necessary to ensure these items are secured to the council and to assess the risks of loss so that suitable insurance may be maintained if necessary. For these reasons the inventories are updated and reviewed annually. As a guide to these insurance decisions, an attempt will be made to maintain a replacement value for inventory items as well as for relevant fixed asset items. It will be necessary for Council to review the insurance valuation each year to ensure insurance levels remain relevant to the inventoried items. This should be undertaken at the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee meeting each February. This should be done annually, even if Council enters into a three-year insurance policy. Premiums are likely to increase annually even during a three-year arrangement, as Insurance Premium Tax changes and Council's assets may change.

Not all items are insured for damage or loss since the nature of risks is not the same for all items. Larger items of play equipment are very robust and comprise a number of smaller components. Damage to other items may be assessed as unlikely to occur or of insignificance cost if it does. Historically, Council has generally not insured play equipment, seats, bins or signs. These are now insured. Playground surfaces are, however, not insured, as they are very difficult to remove and have little use or value once removed to record as an asset. Some items are insured on all risks. These include laptops, audio visual equipment, the Mayor's Chain and tools. Vehicles are all insured on a fully comprehensive basis.

Replacement Decisions

Decisions to replace machinery and tools may be affected by the residual value/life of the existing equipment and the cost of replacement.

FIXED ASSETS

At 31st March 2025 the following assets were held:

Buildings	£3,986,681
Play Equipment and Street Furniture	£ 316,710
Road Legal Vehicles and Equipment	£ 83,381
Plant Machinery and Non-Road Registered Vehicles	£ 53,913
Civic Regalia	£ 18,035
Office Equipment	£ 9,233
Land (page)	£ 7
Total of Fixed Assets for Annual Return as at 31st March 2025:	£4,467,960

Total of Fixed Assets as at 31st March 2024: £4,464,960

Variance 31st March 2024 - 31st March 2025: £3000

Explanation of Variance:

Total of Fixed Assets added during the year (includes corrections) £10750

Total of Fixed Asset removed during the year (includes corrections) £7750

Sum Variance £3000

Deed No.	Description	Size	Tenure	Acquisition Date	Buildings	(1)Uses	(2)Covenants etc	Value
L001	Land at Lindsey St Community Association	17,250 sq.ft	Freehold	14/3/2008	Lindsey Street Community Association premises (not ETC)	Freehold acquired from EFDC 2008 Lease renewal with Community Assoc commenced June 2008 (See Note A below)	Covenants: Community use Utility easement	£1
L002	Stonards Hill Recreation Ground, Stonards Hill	15.109 A	Freehold	?/3/1947	Scout hut (not ETC) Band hut (not ETC) Jack Silley Pavilion Garage Workshops House no 7	Ground leased to 4 th Epping Scouts Ground leased to EF Band Tied rental to Groundsman (See Note B below)	Covenants: Community centre Recreation ground Games and community Utility easements Handgate licences 6a Palmers Hill Vehicle (Currently not operative with current owner) s.106 obligation planting footpath	£1
L003	Lovelock's Field, Swaines Green	1.78 Ha	Freehold	15/8/2005	None	(See Note C below)	Covenants: Open Meadow with public access. Various access licences in operation. Listed elsewhere in this document FI.	£1
L004	Meadow Road Allotments, Meadow Road	17.05A	Freehold	29/9/1980	None	Allotments (part) 13.42 A Leased for agriculture to N Pegrum (See Note D Below)	Utility easement handgates	£1
L007	Lower Bury Lane Allotments, Off Tower Road	0.75 Ha	Freehold	9/1/1957	None	Allotments	Pedestrian access only	£1
L008	Epping Cemetery, Bury Lane	6.328 A	Freehold	17/8/1910	Chapel			£1
L012	Ivy Chimney's Recreation Ground	0.56 Ha	Possessory title lodged	N/A	None	Adverse Possession claimed 2007	Utility easement footpath	£1

			27/4/2007. Absolute title granted Aug 2019.			Title Absolute granted after 27/4/2019. (Land Registration Act 2002 s.62.4) Granted August 2019.		
	Total							£7

APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF VEHICLES

FA 1 Road legal vehicles and equipment **£83,381**

Description	Year of Purchase	Purchase Cost	Estimated Replacement Cost	Estimated Current Value	Estimated Residual Life (years)	Registration Number	Inventory No	Estimated replacement date
Ford Tractor 2120	1996	18,400	28000	3500	1 (Repaired 2016 Life expectancy increased from 1 yr to 5)	P559 OAR	41	Max 2022
Ford Transit Connect	2010	5,560	10,000	500	0	YE56 KEJ	65	2019 (2020)
Comment: Next for replacement. 2021. Already exceeded life expectancy.								
Toyota Hi-lux Invincible 4X4 D-4D (s/hand 2014)	2017	16,499	17,000	15,000	6	YF64 CZP	XX	2027
*Tractor Iseki TK532 (market use)	2010	7,500	25000	3500	2	T915 JUJ	64	2023
Comment: Tractor had full service in 2018/19 financial year, new tyres and extras. This has extended life expectancy. Already exceeded life expectancy.								
Ransomes Jacobson Highways 3 Mower	2016	21,950	29000	20000	3	EX63 VDV	XX	2024
Ford Transit Courier	2021	13,472	13,742	13,742	8	WX69 LXB	XX	2030
Total for Annual Return		83,381						

FA 2 Plant Machinery and Non Road Registered Vehicles **Annual Return Value** **£53,913**
(Stonards Hill)

Equipment	Year of Purchase	Purchase Cost £	Estimate of Replacement Cost £	Estimate of Current Value £	Estimate of residual life	Inventory No
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Bateson Trailer	1994	1995	3500	400	2	38
Four Way Bucket	1996	3600	6000	2000	2	41
Charterhouse Vertidrain s/h	2001	5700	19000	1500	2	46
Teleshore – Grave shoring large	2014	1737	2000	1737	5	
Teleshore – Grave shoring small	2014	2000	2000	2000	5	
5.7KVA Generator	2002	1500	3300	800	4	48
Rabbit brushcutter	2008	4500	5000	3000	7	61
Komatsu Mini Digger (S/Hand)	2006	8500	19000	8000	4	57
Kuhn Comete Spreader	2006	1562	2000	500	2	58
Indispension 2 ton trailer	2007	1550	2000	1500	6	59
Stihl multi unit/saw/trimmer ext.	2014	1000	1000	1000	5	
Billy Goat leaf blower	2015	1090	1090	1000	5	
Rotavator	2016	1000	1000	1000	5	
Thwaites 300	2017	3000	3000	3000		
Brendon Mobile Power Washer	2017-18	2200	2200	2200		
Iseki Rotary mower*	2020	7750	7750	7750		
Textron Jacobson mower	2024	10750	17500	10750		
Bunded fuel tank 2500 ltr Ston Hill	2022	2229	2672	2672		
Total for Annual Return		53913				

Nb. Items with a very low residual life may still be retained if they are useful but have deteriorated to a condition where they are potentially subject to extensive maintenance costs

*Trade in. Received £7000 as a trade in figure. Asset register price was 7750.

FA 3 Office Etc. Equipment – Epping Hall (Annual Return Value)

£9,233

Description	Insurance Category	Date of purchase	Purchase Cost £	Replacement Cost £	Condition
Cooker Falcon	A	2000	1583		Good
Asber Tech Enviro 500mm Dishwasher 30A & DP	A	2020	1150		Excellent
4 drawer Fire Proof Cabinet	A	2007	1858		Good
Fujitsu fileserver	C	2015	1350		Good
Hand held radio mic system	D	2016	1051		Good
Tie clip radio mic system	D	2016	1051		Good
Macbook Air Laptop (Town Clerk)		2021	1190		Excellent
Total For Annual Return			9233		

(The above items are included in the contents insurance for Epping Hall)

FA 4 Play Equipment Etc. (Annual Return Value)**£316,710**

Location	Description *includes wetpour	Purchase Cost £	Estimate of Replacement Cost £ (Equipment only – Wetpour and installation will approximately double cost) (All fixed items have an installation cost)
Lower Swaines (2022)	The Wizard's Hideaway house	12840	12840
	Tipi Carousel with top brace	2750	2750
	Swing frame unit	3750	3750
	Fairytale seesaw	3990	3990
	Multiplay unit	20450	20450
	Swing frame unit	3310	3310
	Mini Spacenet	11510	11510
	Cableway	7190	7190
	Cableway start station	2620	2620
	Twin ring sky carousel	2550	2550
	Bloqx 2 cube	6570	6570
	Five way swing	5030	5030
	Multigoal 8m wide	5210	5210
	Speed gyro	2845	2845
Parklands Coopersale (2018)	Small pod swing	2020	2020
	Combination swings metal	1440	1440
	Diabolo Multiplay unit	5025	5025
	Junior metal horizontal bars	1245	1245
Stonards Hill (play area)	Double junior swing	3500	3750 1535
	Double infants swing	3500	3750 1535
	Sutcliffe toddler zone unit DZW267) (2008)	13036	14000
	Sutcliffe spring seesaw TNB030)	2148	2300
	Sutcliffe nest swing SNS080)	2266	2500
	Flywheel roundabout 2022	5660	5660
	Plastic play logs 2022	10920	10920
Stonards Hill	Sutcliffe Winer Diner Picnic bench	1000	1000
	Outdoor table tennis table	1478	1478
	Outdoor gym	10500	15000
St. Hill (skateboard park)	Whiteskate concrete skate park (2007)	32248	32000
Stonards Hill tennis court	Tennis court floodlights (1992)	6386	14000
Ivy Chimneys	Multiplay*)	13500	17600
	Double junior swing 1) (1993)	3500	3750 1535
	Double Junior Swing 2)	3500	3750 1535
	Double infant swing)	3500	3750 1535
	Timber trail (2003)*	4572	4600 2933
	Mantis zipwire 2015	3569	3569
	Spinmee roundabout 2015	4105	4105
	Maliton 2015	9610	9610
	Basket swing and seat 2015	2510	2510

Frampton Road	Flat & cradle swing (2017)	1627	1627
	Multiplay Kiboko (2017)	9573	17600
	Football wall/basketball (2003)	1760	3156
	Basket swing (2017)	1900	1900
	DDA roundabout (2017)	5000	5000
	Adult exercise cycle (2017)	1654	1654
	Adult exercise skier (2017)	2494	2494
	Wooden train set (2017)	1069	1069
Town Greens Palmers Hill	Wooden Town Sign (2011)	1650	2000
High Road (Beech Close)	Wooden Town Sign (2014)	1800	1800
o/s Church, High St	Bus Shelter (2008)	7300	8000
Opposite Church, High St	Bus shelter (2008)	7300	8000
Palmers Hill, East side	Bus shelter (2012) Gifted by ECC	7300	8000
Palmers Hill West side	Bus shelter (2012) Gifted by ECC	7300	8000
The Plain, o/s St Marg H	Bus shelter (2012) Gifted by ECC	7300	8000
The Plain near Coop'sale	Bus shelter (2012) Gifted by ECC	7300	8000
Tesco, High Street	Notice Board 2015	1010	1010
Market Store, opposite M&S	Notice Board 2015	1010	1010
Station Road	Notice Board 2015	1010	1010
Total for Annual Return		316710	

FA 5 Community Buildings

£3,986,681

Deed No.	Description	Tenure	Acquisiti on Date	Uses	Value	Valuation basis
	Market Garage, R/O High Street, Epping	Freehold	2012	Storage for Market equipment	100,000	Insurance 2012
	7 Stonards Hill, Stonards Hill Recreation Ground (L002)	Freehold	N/A	Tied accommodation for Head Groundsman	117,044	Insurance 2009
	Garage, Stonards Hill Recreation Ground (L002)	Freehold	N/A	Groundsman's tool and equipment store	35,210	
	Shed, Stonards Hill Recreation Ground (L002)	Freehold	N/A	Groundsman's tool and equipment store	65,609	Insurance 2009
	Jack Silley Pavilion, Stonards Hill Rec. Grnd. (L002)	Freehold	N/A	Meeting and function rooms, changing rooms for Rec Ground	979,440	Insurance 2009
	Cemetery Chapel, Epping Cemetery, Bury Lane (L008)	Freehold	N/A	Cemetery chapel	175,983	Insurance 2009
L006	Epping Hall, St John's Road, Epping	Freehold	24/2/2000	Meeting and function rooms, Epping Town Council Offices	1,216,900	Insurance 2009
	War Memorial	Permissive (on Epping	1922	War Memorial	650	Actual cost

		Forest Land)			(1922)
Total for Annual Return					3,986,681

***Please note:** a rebuild cost assessment was undertaken in 2019 and the details are included below for information.
No value change for Annual Return.

FA 6

Other

Civic Regalia (Mayor's Chain etc.) 2009 insurance valuation

£18,035

TOTAL VALUE OF ITEMS IN THIS ASSET REGISTER (FOR ENTRY TO THE ANNUAL RETURN) £4,467,960

Notes and Inventory Items Nil Value for Annual Return

The following items are noted below as a record of items which have an individual purchase value lower than £1,000 but have a considerable value on aggregate. The inventories are checked and amended on an annual basis.

Inventory No.	Location	Replacement value	Custodian	Check date
1	Garage, shed and yard Stonards Hill	60,217 (incl 30,000 Christmas lights)	Head Groundsman	2019 then 2024
2	Jack Silley Pavilion	14,086	Head Groundsman	2019 then 2024
3	Cemetery Chapel	11,833	Head Groundsman	2019 then 2024
4	Market	17,002	Market Supervisor Head Groundsman	2019 then 2024
5	Epping Hall	59,339	Caretaker Town Clerk	2019 then 2024
6	Minor Play Equipment, Seats and Bins	57,947	Head Groundsman	2019 then 2024
Total Value		220,424		

***Please note:** these costs include project management and demolition so a whole rebuild cost

Rebuild cost 2019	Excl VAT	Incl VAT
1. Epping Hall	3,343,351	3,812,021
2. 7 Stonards Hill	175,500	210,600
3. Jack Silley Pavilion	1,740,960	2,089,152
4. Garage & Shed at Stonards Hill rec	146,543	175,851
5. Cemetery Chapel	315,900	379,080
6. Market store	109,440	131,328
7. Public toilets (Qualis)	209,041	250,849
Total rebuild cost	5,831,694	6,798,032

Rebuild cost 2024	Excl VAT	
1. Epping Hall	3,074,000	
2. 7 Stonards Hill	300,000	
3. Jack Silley Pavilion	1,777,000	
4. Garage & Shed at Stonards Hill rec	202,000	
5. Cemetery Chapel	1,027,000	
6. Market store	126,000	
Total rebuild cost	6,506,000	

ATTACHMENT F

EPPING TOWN COUNCIL

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

At Epping Town Council, we endeavour to deliver high levels of service at all times. But sometimes things go wrong. If you do have a complaint, we will do our best to resolve it for you using the procedures and guidance below.

To avoid placing less serious matters before Council, the Town Clerk must determine which complaints are minor in nature and which are serious. The Town Clerk is also responsible for trying to resolve all matters if this can be achieved. The following procedure is based on the principle that complaints will be placed before Council only after the Clerk has attempted to resolve the matter or in circumstances where the matter is clearly, in the opinion of the Clerk, a matter which relates to serious policy issues. It is also a principle of this procedure that complaints regarding the Clerk's behaviour or actions will not be handled by the Clerk but will be dealt with by Council.

1. This Policy sets out procedures for dealing with any complaints about Epping Town Council's administration, policies and procedures. A complaint may be submitted to the Town Clerk either in writing or by sending an email. In exceptional circumstances (disability, language difficulties or similar circumstances) council officers will assist complainants to make a written statement.
2. At Epping Town Council complaints are dealt with by the Town Clerk who will investigate and inform the complainant of the outcome. Complaints which the Town Clerk cannot resolve are put before full Council.
3. For all written complaints a holding reply will be sent from the Town Clerk, within five working days of receipt, unless the complaint can be dealt with in full. The complainant should be informed as soon as a decision has been made and the nature of any action to be taken has been decided. If the matter cannot be decided within twenty working days of the initial complaint received, written advice regarding the method of dealing with the matter should be given to the complainant.
4. Some complaints may return to the Town Clerk if the complainant is not satisfied with the response. The Clerk will discuss any such complaints with the Chairman of Council and will report back to Council once the Clerk is satisfied they have dealt the complaint as fully as possible and fulfilled Council's procedural and statutory obligations in relation to the complaint.
5. Where the Town Clerk receives a complaint about a Council employee, the Town Clerk will investigate and the employee will be given an opportunity to comment. The Clerk will inform the complainant of the outcome. If however the complaint is, in the view of the Clerk, of a more serious nature, the matter will be put before a dedicated meeting of Corporate Governance Advisory

Committee meeting, which will report back to Council at its next Ordinary meeting. Under the advice of the Clerk, Council will determine the substance, justification and action to be taken in response to the complainant, and additionally whether or not disciplinary action should be further considered.

6. Where the Town Clerk or Town Mayor receives a written complaint about the Town Clerk's behaviour or actions (but not relating to a decision made in accord with, or consequent upon, council's stated policy) the complaint will be considered at a dedicated meeting of the Corporate Governance meeting, which will report back to Council at its next ordinary meeting. The Town Clerk shall be given an opportunity to comment to council on the matter. For complaints against the Clerk, Council will determine the substance, justification and action to be taken in response to the complaint, and additionally whether or not a disciplinary action should be considered. Prior to a discussion of disciplinary implications, Council will consider its need to have the assistance of a qualified advisor such as a representative of the Essex Association of Local Councils.

7. The Town Clerk shall report to the next meeting of the Council (after the matter has reached a conclusion) any serious written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.

8. If a complaint is put before Council, Epping Town Council shall consider whether the circumstances attending any complaint warrant the matter being discussed in the absence of the press and public but any decision on a complaint shall be announced at the Council meeting in public and so recorded in minutes. The complainant should be informed as soon as a decision has been made and the nature of any action to be taken has been decided. If the matter cannot be resolved at the first meeting of Council where it is discussed, written advice regarding the method of dealing with the matter should be given to the complainant.

9. Epping Town Council shall defer dealing with any written complaint only if it is of the opinion that issues of law or practice arise on which advice is necessary. The complaint shall be dealt with at the next meeting after the advice has been received.

10. Complaints against Councillors should be sent to the Monitoring Officer at Epping Forest District Council **only**. **If the complaint is of a serious nature, further external advice may be sought.**

EPPING TOWN COUNCIL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Epping Town Council utilises social media (Facebook and Twitter) to communicate with residents to keep them up to date with news, events and important announcements. The Council also retweets information from other organisations, which it reasonably considers may be of interest to residents. Epping Town Council only uses content and images believed to be from reputable source, which do not infringe copyright, and permissions are sought from the owner of the material before posting on social media. The Town Council has a legal duty to meet regulations of Data Protection legislation.

All social media posts will be dealt with by the Town Clerk, or under the instruction of the Town Clerk, from Council's computer/s.

Any comments made on social media should not represent or purport to represent the Town Council on the internet.

Members

Epping Town Council appreciates that social media is an important tool routinely used by members for reporting issues and news to residents in their respective wards. However, care should be exercised when reporting matters which have arisen during the course of Council meetings.

In particular, members should take care not to incorrectly report factual issues raised at meetings or misrepresent views expressed by other members. Members should also avoid any postings which may be considered vexatious, inappropriate or place the Council or another member in a bad light. This also applies to retweets and likes.

Members are reminded that postings on social media are governed by the Code of Conduct. Failure by members to comply with Council's Social Media policy will be treated very seriously.

Any questions regarding social media should be referred to the Town Clerk.

Social media is not continuously monitored. For any urgent enquiries, please contact Epping Town Council directly by telephone.

**EPPING TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

Epping Town Council are very active in positive community engagement and are committed to reaching a wide audience, from all ages and backgrounds.

- Council invite our local school children to sing at events and design the Mayor's Christmas card. Council ask schools, nursery schools, local colleges and those with disabilities to work with them on specific projects and invite them to send in pictures and opinions.

AIM: To involve the community and deliver what they need.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Liaison with teachers. Invitations. Group leaders.

- Epping Town Council produce a quarterly magazine which is available to read online. In each issue, everyone is invited to submit their views and ideas. Ideas are also invited through the website and Twitter.
- Residents are invited to make comments to Council and these are put on the Council agenda if requested and appropriate.

AIM: To provide a platform for residents to share information

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Advertisement in each edition and on website inviting contributions. Meetings are publicly advertised and comments invited.

- The Annual Town Meeting is well advertised in the town on noticeboards, the website and Twitter, where people are invited to get involved and speak.

AIM: To enable residents to express their concerns to councillors and officers.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Widely advertised, additional invitations sent out with the Annual Report.

- Epping Town Council invites the views of local teenagers and has on several occasions contacted local youth community centres and actively seek their opinions.

We have also visited the local sheltered accommodation residences, as these residents find it more difficult to get out and be involved.

AIM: To reach all groups in the community.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Invitations to youth centres/community clubs/senior citizens' residences/groups.

- In July 2014, Epping Town Council was designated as a Neighbourhood Planning area and one of the key elements is community engagement and reaching as many people and as diverse groups as possible, so we have been really proactive and creative in engaging people. Through this channel, the community collectively, have a real chance to influence planning policy. Council have worked with local residents for 11 years on crafting their Neighbourhood Plan, so it is written by them, in accordance with Localism principles.

AIM: To reach everyone in the community and give them the opportunity to help shape Epping's future.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Drop in sessions, Surveys, Questionnaires, Website and Twitter, Focus groups, Workshops, Coffee mornings, Posters in shops, pharmacies, doctors' surgeries, dentists, vets, restaurants, pubs and the local hospital; holding engagement sessions in the library, market, local park, High Street cafes, local community centres and sheltered housing; distributing information at Epping Station with details of their website and email address, to remind commuters to join in; going into the local youth community centre, schools and playgroups and inviting them to do projects, drawings and homework exercises, so their ideas form evidence to feed into the Neighbourhood Plan.

Epping Town Council actively involve everyone in the community, ensuring equality and reaching out to traditionally harder to reach groups. Our material is designed to be as engaging, accessible and helpful as possible.

- Epping Town Council have five playgrounds and before refurbishment of our playgrounds, we consult with our playground users, including neighbouring residents, children and schools. We have requested ideas and illustrations to enable us to deliver what our residents and children really want. Council

helped establish a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), facilitating partnership working with parents, to enable us to collectively obtain targeted funding for our playgrounds, so we can deliver more and better equipment. Funding applications have been worked on together. This ensured the community were fully involved in creating their facilities. Council have worked with local skate park users to design new skate park facilities, to ensure those with expert knowledge inform what is delivered and have provided the community with the skate park they wanted.

AIM: To provide excellent playgrounds, which deliver what our users want.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Close partnership working with parents, schools and residents. Developing a CIO to enable our community to drive the projects, with our support, to an excellent outcome. Listening to the views of our user groups and making them central to our projects.

- Epping Town Council consult with our residents to determine whether they would enjoy outdoor exercise equipment and other sporting facilities, such as improved tennis courts, at selected locations and respond to those requests.

AIM: To provide our residents with facilities of use.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Surveys, posters, requests for information in our Town Magazine.

- Epping Town Council have responded to requests from our market traders to support our Monday Charter Market. This involves consultation with traders and our community; working on ideas to improve the market in terms of events and attractions and methods of support for the future.

AIM: To support our current market traders, attract new traders, offer events and attractions and provide the market with a sustainable, long-term future.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Trader discussions, meetings, surveys, market research, requests for community input, ideas from other successful markets.

In 2023, a new market website was approved to support the market.

ATTACHMENT K

- The Town Council play a pivotal role in directing residents to the correct place for their queries and liaising with community partners and other local authorities and organisations to keep that knowledge current.

AIM: To support residents and assist them with their issues and queries.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Fostering good relations with our community partners and other local authorities and organisations and residents. Engaging with other Councils, the Police and community partners to be able to share and provide information. This was particularly evident during the coronavirus Covid 19 health pandemic, when Epping Town Council offered their services as a key point of contact and signpost for residents.

- Epping Town Council founded and led the Safer Epping Group and really augmented the connection with crime and safety partners in the community.

Aim: To work with community stakeholders and relevant partners to help reduce crime and antisocial behaviour in Epping and help people feel safer.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Regular meetings with partners and the Police to share information, data and make proactive plans to improve safety in the Town and Parish.

- When we provide new services such as different Christmas lights, we ask residents for their views.

Aim: To deliver services residents want.

METHOD OF ACHIEVEMENT: Talk About Epping magazine, press releases, website, surveys.

- We continue to look at ways to improve our community engagement and will develop community surveys, if appropriate, to seek additional views.

Approved: March 2023

Date to be reviewed: Feb 2025
Epping Town Council 2025

POLICY AND GOVERNANCE: March 2025

Revised programme of policy/document reviews (draft)

POLICY	FREQUENCY OF REVIEW	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW (unless legislation requires sooner)
3 Year Action Plan	1 year	April 2025
Asset Register	1 year	February 2026
Balance of Trade Policy (Market)	2 years *Would be every 4	February 2026 February 2028
Biodiversity Statement	4 years (coincide with elections) *Would be	January 2024 October 2027
Climate and Environmental Awareness Policy	2 years *Would be every 4	February 2026 February 2028
Code of Conduct	1 year	May 2025
Community Engagement Policy	2 years *Would be every 4	February 2025 February 2028
Complaints Procedure	1 year *Would be every 4	February 2025 February 2028
Compliance Failure Policy	2 years *Would be every 4	February 2025 February 2028
Crime and Disorder Policy	4 years (coincide with elections) *Would be	January 2024 October 2027
Data Protection Policy	2 years *Would be every 4	February 2025 February 2028
Equality Policy	2 years *Would be every 4	February 2024 February 2028
Financial Regulations	1 year	March 2026
Freedom of Information Policy	2 years *Would be every 4	May 2025 October 2027
Grant Awarding Policy	2 years *Would be every 4	February 2026 February 2028
Health and Safety Policy	1 year	February 2026
Inventories	1 year	January 2025
Investment Strategy	2 years *Would be every 4	October 2026 October 2027
Market Policy	4 years, or part thereof (coincide with elections)	October 2027
Media Policy	2 years *Would be every 4	February 2025 February 2028
Optimum Resources statement	4 years (coincide with elections)	January 2024 October 2027
Procurement Policy	2 years *Would be every 4	February 2026 February 2028
Publication Scheme	2 years *Would be every 4	February 2025 February 2028
Recruitment Policy	2 years *Would be every 4	February 2026 February 2028
Resource Management statement	4 years (coincide with elections)	January 2024 October 2027

Risk Register	1 year	February 2026
Safeguarding Policy	2 years *Would be every 4	October 2026 October 2028
Social Media Policy	2 years *Would be every 4	February 2025 February 2028
Standing Orders	1 year	February 2026
Training and Development Statement	2 years *Would be every 4	February 2026 February 2028
Tree Management Policy	2 years *Would be every 4	October 2026 October 2028
Volunteering Policy	2 years *Would be	October 2026 October 2028
Whistleblowing Policy	2 years *Would be	January 2026 February 2028
Policy and Governance Document Review (this document)	1 year	May 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yellow = Annual Council meeting (May) • Some every 4 years (October Corporate Governance & February Corporate Governance in Civic Year 1). Split over the 2 dates to distribute the workload • Some highlighted as needs reviewing yearly as currently 		

Epping Town Council

Internal Audit 2024-25 (2nd Interim Report)

3rd March 2025

Stephen Christopher

for Auditing Solutions Ltd

Background and Scope

Town and parish councils are required by statute to make arrangements for an independent internal audit examination of their accounting records and system of internal control, and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (the AGAR). Auditing Solutions Ltd has been appointed to undertake this function on behalf of Epping Town Council for the 2024-25 financial year.

This report sets out the results of our second interim audit for the year, which was undertaken on 27th February 2025. It updates the report issued on 2nd December 2024, following our first interim audit visit. Once again, we wish to thank the Town Clerk and her colleagues for their assistance in enabling us to complete our audit work.

Internal Audit Approach

In carrying out the audit for the year to date, we have had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or mis-representation in the AGAR. We have employed a combination of selective sampling techniques (where appropriate) and 100% detailed checks in a number of key areas, in order to gain sufficient assurance that the Council's financial and regulatory systems and controls are appropriate and are fit for the purposes intended.

Our audit programme is designed to provide assurance that the Council's financial systems remain robust and operate in a manner which ensures effective probity of transactions and affords a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the Council's AGAR, which requires independent assurance over a number of internal control objectives.

Overall Conclusion

On the basis of the programme of audit work we have undertaken for the year to date, we have concluded that the Council continues to maintain an adequate and effective system of internal control. The records held in support of the accounting transactions are of a high standard and provide an effective audit trail, with clear cross-referencing of all relevant documentation.

In the detailed report below, we explain the objectives of each area of our audit, summarising the work undertaken and our findings. We are pleased to report that there were no matters arising that required a formal recommendation. We ask that Members consider the content of this report.

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Detailed Report

Accounting records & Banking arrangements

Our objective is to confirm that the accounting records are accurate and up to date, with no anomalous entries in the cashbooks or financial ledgers, and that appropriate banking arrangements are in place.

The Council continues to maintain its accounting records using the Rialtas ‘Omega’ software, which is generally acknowledged as one of the market leaders for this tier of local government. Rialtas staff provide assistance to the Council with the year-end closure of the accounts.

The Council maintains current accounts with Barclays Bank and the Co-operative Bank. The latter is now used for the majority of the day-to-day transactions, with the Barclays account mainly used for direct debit payments. An on-line account with the Co-operative Bank is also held, which is controlled by the Town Clerk, and is used for internet payments. In addition, the Council holds an instant access “Business Premium” account with Barclays and a “95-day Saver” account with the Nationwide Building Society. In October 2024, when reviewing the Investment Strategy, the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee (CGAC) decided that no changes to the banking arrangements are required for the time being.

In the course of our interim audits, we confirmed the following:

- The opening trial balance on Omega for 2024-25 agreed to the closing balances in the 2023-24 AGAR.
- The financial ledgers remained “in balance” as at 31st January 2025 (the latest completed month’s accounts at the time of our second interim audit visit).
- The accounting code structure is appropriate for the Council’s budget reporting and control requirements.
- For three sample months (June and October 2024, plus January 2025), the detailed accounting entries in the Omega cash books for the two current accounts and the online account reconciled fully to the supporting bank statements.
- From review of the bank reconciliations up to the latest available statement dates for all of the accounts, there were no long-standing un-cleared items or anomalous entries.
- Bank reconciliations continue to be reviewed on a regular basis by a nominated Councillor.
- Back-ups of the Council’s IT systems are made to the Cloud by the IT support providers, RAD Group, who were appointed at the Council meeting on 14th May 2024. The Town Clerk’s computer is also backed up daily on a USB.
- The External Auditors completed their work on the Council’s 2023-24 AGAR and issued their audit certificate on 15th August 2024, with no matters arising. The outcome of the audit was reported to the Council on 10th September 2024, with the details published on the website in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising to date that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Corporate Governance

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has robust corporate governance arrangements in place and that, as far as we may reasonably be expected to ascertain (as we do not attend Council or Committee meetings), all meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been, or are being, considered for implementation.

During the course of our interim audits, we confirmed the following:

- Our review of the agendas and minutes of the meetings of the Council and its committees held during the year to date did not identify any issues that we consider might have an adverse effect, through litigation or other causes, on the Council's future financial stability;
- The Standing Orders and Financial Regulations continue to be kept under regular review. Both documents were formally re-approved at the Council meeting on 12th March 2024. New Financial Regulations were subsequently adopted by the Council at its meeting on 12th November 2024, following the publication of revised national guidance from NALC and consideration by the CGAC. Both documents were considered again by the CGAC at its meeting in February 2025, when it was recommended to the Council that no further changes were required.
- A wide range of other policies and procedures are in place and these are also reviewed on a regular basis by the CGAC, before formal adoption by the Council. We note that, following a recommendation from the CGAC, the Council has engaged the services of a specialist firm, for a period of two years, to assist with the development of key policies and procedures.
- During the summer of 2024, the Council provided the proper opportunity for the exercise of public rights in relation to the 2023-24 accounts, in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising to date that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Expenditure and VAT

Our objective in this area is to ensure that:

- Council resources are released in accordance with approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;

- Any discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- An official ordering process is in place and operated for appropriate purchases, acknowledging that a range of goods and services are provided under contractual requirements (e.g., electricity supply) or legislation (e.g., non-domestic rates);
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed, and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the VAT control account for periodic recovery.

We have continued with our review of the procedures in place in this area, selecting a sample of payments for examination to check that they were made in accordance with the approved working practices and complied with the above criteria. Our testing sample for the year to date covered all individual payments in excess of £2,500, together with a more random sample of every 35th cashbook expenditure transaction irrespective of value. The value of payments examined totalled £366,280, equating to approximately 65% of total non-pay expenditure to the date of the latest accounts back-up (mid-February 2025). The overall sample value is significantly higher than in previous years, as it includes payments of nearly £180,000 made to the contractor who carried out the skate park refurbishment.

We have confirmed that VAT Returns continue to be submitted quarterly in electronic format, as required by extant legislation, with the detail being reconciled to the Omega financial ledger. At the time of our second interim audit, the first three quarterly returns for 2024-25 had been submitted.

As part of our testing of expenditure, we also check, on a sample basis, to confirm that appropriate national requirements and the Council's own Financial Regulations/Standing Orders are followed when entering into contracts that require to be formally tendered. At our first interim visit, we reviewed documentation relating to the award of the contract for the Epping Hall Reconfiguration Project. We confirmed that the national regulatory requirements had been followed, with the tender opportunity advertised on the Government's Contracts Finder website. We also confirmed that, following a tender evaluation process, the award of the contract was formally approved at the Council meeting on 8th October 2024 and the decision minuted.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising to date that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Assessment and Management of Risk

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potentially significant areas of risk of either a financial or health & safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

In the course of our audit work to date, we have confirmed the following:

- The Council's 'risk management statement' (overall risk management policy) was reviewed by the CGAC in October 2024 and approved at the Council meeting on 12th November 2024.
- The detailed 'internal risk register' was reviewed by the CGAC on 25th February 2025, with a recommendation for approval by the Council at its meeting in March 2025. This timescale will ensure that the Council satisfies the regulatory requirement to assess its significant risks and review the arrangements to manage them within the financial year (AGAR Section 1, Assertion C).
- The main insurance cover continues to be provided by Zurich, with the current policy running until 30th June 2025. This policy includes Public Liability cover of £15 million, Employers Liability of £10 million and Fidelity guarantee of £1 million. The level of cover is in line with other similar sized local authorities and would appear to be adequate to meet the current needs of the Council. Separate insurance policies are in place for vehicles and cyber risk.
- As part of the Council's wider health and safety arrangements, a regular programme of reviews of the five playgrounds and the play equipment is undertaken. This includes weekly inspections by the Council's own staff, supplemented by annual external inspections carried out by the Play Inspection Company to assess compliance with national regulatory standards, principally British Standard EN 1176. The last external inspections were completed towards the end of March 2024, with a summary of the key issues arising and action taken reported to the Council on 11th June 2024. The next annual inspections are due to take place during March 2025 and we will consider the findings at our final audit.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising to date that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Budget Setting, Budgetary Control and Reserves

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has robust processes for identifying and approving future budgetary requirements and the level of Precept to be drawn down from Epping Forest District Council, and that effective budget monitoring and reporting arrangements are in place. We also consider whether the Council is retaining appropriate funds in earmarked and general reserves, both to finance its ongoing spending plans and to cover any unplanned expenditure that might arise.

From our review of the minutes and discussions with officers, we confirmed that, in line with the sound approach adopted in previous years, budget monitoring reports produced by the Town Clerk continue to be considered at each Council meeting, with the position for the year to 31st January 2025 taken to the meeting on 11th February 2025.

Initial consideration of the 2025-26 budget was given at the Council meeting in December 2024 and included an assessment of general and earmarked reserve requirements. The budget and Precept requirements were formally approved at the Council meeting on 14th January 2025, where the decision was made to request a Precept of £645,791, compared to £621,795 in 2024-25. After taking into account changes to the tax base, this equates to an increase of £2.37 per annum per annum for a Band D property.

We will review the 2024-25 revenue outturn, including the overall reserves position, at our final audit visit for the year.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising to date that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Income

Our objective is to assess whether the Council has appropriate procedures in place to ensure that all income due is identified, invoiced (where appropriate), recovered and banked in a timely manner. In addition to the Precept and any specific grants that it obtains, the Council receives income from a number of sources; principally, the cemetery, hire of the Jack Silley Pavilion and the Epping Hall, the weekly traders' markets, allotments and events.

During our interim audits, we confirmed the following:

- Fees and charges: The Council continues to review its fees and charges on an annual basis and these are published on the website. The fees and charges for the 2025-26 financial year were approved as part of the budget setting process, at the meeting on 14th January 2025:
- Cemetery: We reviewed the burial records and associated documentation for the first half-year, confirming that all required documentation had been obtained and that the invoices subsequently raised were correct and were paid promptly.
- Hall hire: We tested the income relating to the hire of the Jack Silley Pavilion and Epping Hall by reference to the Rialtas bookings diary for a sample week (week commencing 17th June 2024), confirming that the bookings records reconciled to the sales invoices raised and that the correct hire fees had been charged and subsequently collected.
- Allotments: We reviewed the records maintained in relation to the Council's allotment sites at Meadow Road and Lower Bury Lane, to confirm that these are up to date. The current allotment year commenced on 1st April 2024. For a sample of allotment holders, we confirmed that there were up-to-date signed allotment agreements on file, that the current year's rents had been charged in line with the fees advertised on the website and that payment had been received. We noted that in a few instances the rents remained outstanding, but confirmed that these are being actively followed-up. We will check the position again at the year end.
- Market traders: We reviewed the records relating to one sample market day (14th October 2024), confirming that all regular hirers who are licence holders had been invoiced for the month and that other regular and casual hirers in attendance on that day had been charged the correct fee. We also confirmed, for a sample of the licence holders, that licences are held on file. There were no matters arising.
- Receipt of income: As noted earlier in this report, we have checked and agreed a sample of three months' cashbook receipts to the relevant bank statements; and
- Outstanding debts: From a review of the Omega accounts, we confirmed that as at 31st January 2025. the overall level of outstanding debtors remains low. Effective control

arrangements are in place, with appropriate action being taken in relation to the follow-up of outstanding payments.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising to date that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Salaries and Wages

In examining the Council's payroll function, our objective is to confirm that extant employment legislation is being adhered to, that the requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) are satisfied regarding the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, and that pension scheme requirements are met.

The Council uses the SAGE system to process payroll. Payments are made directly through the Council's bank account via direct debit. To meet our audit objective, we have undertaken the following:

- For one employee who started in the year, we confirmed that an appropriate contract of employment is in place and has been signed by both parties.
- We agreed the gross amounts paid to all individuals in November 2024, by reference to the Council's approved pay points on the NJC annual schedule of rates payable*.
- We checked to ensure that tax and National Insurance deductions have been made applying the appropriate tax code and NI Table, also ensuring that appropriate amounts are paid over to HMRC each month.
- We confirmed that, where relevant, employee and employer contributions to the pension schemes have been determined and paid over to either the Essex Pension Fund, or NEST, as appropriate.
- We verified the net payments due to staff from their copy payslips to the bank transfers for the same sample month.

* The national Local Government Services pay agreement for 2024-25, applicable from 1st April 2024, was agreed in October 2024. The revised pay scales were applied when making the November salary payments, which also included the back-pay due from 1st April 2024. We confirmed the accuracy of the calculation of the back-pay and that it had been included correctly with the November salary payments.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising to date that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Petty Cash

As part of our internal audit review and the reporting requirements in the AGAR, we are required to assess the effectiveness of controls over any petty cash accounts in use, ensuring that payments are appropriately supported, that transactions are only made for items connected with the Council's functions and that any recoverable VAT is correctly identified.

At our first interim audit, we confirmed that the petty cash was being reconciled on a regular basis. We checked and agreed the cash balance held to the petty cash ledger and confirmed that there was appropriate supporting documentation for all petty cash payments made since the date of the last reconciliation (which was at the start of November).

Conclusion

There are no matters arising to date that require a formal comment or recommendation. At our final audit, we will confirm that the year-end petty cash balance has been included correctly in the AGAR.

Asset Register

Councils are required to maintain an Asset & Investment Register and to report the overall value of fixed assets and long-term investments held in the AGAR (Section 2, Box 9). Whilst the “Practitioners’ Guide” does not specify a particular basis of accounting for fixed assets, it stresses that the approach taken from year to year should be consistent and that the value of individual assets held should not normally change from one year to another - with the only changes being the inclusion of new assets purchased or removal of assets disposed of. In most cases, assets are recorded at their purchase cost, or at a suitable proxy where that value is not known. However, assets gifted at nil cost or other assets held with no intrinsic value (often referred to as community assets) are normally included at a nominal £1.

Each year, the Council undertakes a review of its asset register just prior to the year-end, to confirm that all changes have been identified. The updated register for 2024-25 is being reported to the Council meeting in March 2025.

Conclusion

We have not undertaken any audit work in relation to the Asset Register at this stage. We will review the revised asset register at our final audit visit, to confirm that the total value of assets owned by the Council is reported correctly in the AGAR.

Investments and Loans

Our objective is to confirm that an appropriate investment strategy is in place, that any funds not required for immediate use, whether temporarily or on a longer-term basis, are invested in line with that strategy and that interest earned is brought to account correctly and appropriately in the accounting records. We also confirm that any loan repayments due to, or payable by, the Council are transacted in accordance with the relevant loan agreements.

We have confirmed that:

- At present, the Council does not have any long-term investments (i.e., investments of over 1 year). As noted earlier in the report, the majority of the Council’s funds are held in instant access accounts, with about a quarter held in a Nationwide 95-day Saver account.

- As required by the ‘Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments’, the Council has an Investment Strategy and Policy in place. This was reviewed by the CGAC in October 2024 and approved by the Council on 12th November 2024.
- At the start of the financial year, the Council had five outstanding loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). We have confirmed that the half-yearly payments of principal and interest due in the year (made in May and November 2024) agreed to the third party “demand” notices from the UK Debt Management Office. By the year end, two of the loans (both relating to Epping Hall) were fully repaid.

Conclusion

- *There are no matters arising to date that require a formal comment or recommendation. At our final audit visit, we will confirm that there is correct disclosure of the PWLB loans in the AGAR.*

ATTACHMENT M

EPHING TOWN COUNCIL GRANTS

As we now have a grant budget again (2025/26 financial year), which we haven't had for some time, a new booking specific grant could be explored.

We receive many enquiries for new hall bookings, including a variety of children's classes and drama/music sessions. Unfortunately, many bookings either don't end up going ahead or finish after a couple of weeks as it isn't viable for the hirer with low uptake. New bookings can take some time to build up numbers (word of mouth, further time for advertising to reach more people).

Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) offer funding to exercise specific bookings through Active Essex (see below). This can then help cover start-up costs and room hire, as well as being able to offer free taster sessions. Several of our exercise bookings have received these grants and have successfully built their classes enough that they have been able to continue with them. Without this funding, they would have folded and we would have lost bookings and income.

A grant open for all new bookings to cover initial hall hire could help individuals and organisations become regular and ongoing hirers.

EFDC grant:

<https://www.activeessex.org/about-us/active-networks/active-epping-forest/>

Please note: Council's Grants Budget is £2000 for 2025/26. This includes Remembrance funding/grants which usually total approximately £650.

Rebecca Wright, Finance & Bookings Officer, Epping Town Council

ATTACHMENT N

Epping Christmas Market 2025

The day/date and time of this year's Christmas Market is to be decided. It was originally on the first Friday of December (12 noon to 8pm) for several years and then changed more recently to the first Saturday of December (10am to 4pm).

There are for and against points for both.

Friday day to evening

- Less people attending (only in the evening) as children at school/people at work
- There was more of a budget (£7k) in past to include lighting and PA/entertainment host.
- Less likely to get free parking in the multistorey car park from Qualis Commercial on a weekday.
- Lighting cost (£3.5k approx. from quotes received previously) is for the hiring of the equipment, installation and dismantle of the lighting so it would be a regular cost.

Saturday daytime

- More people are about to attend as it is a weekend day on a more continuous flow.
- More cost effective as lighting not needed with £4.5k budget.
- More likely to get free parking in the multistorey car park from Qualis Commercial on the weekends in December

Saturday day to evening

- The other alternative is running the event on the same hours as the previous Friday 12 noon to 7pm or 8pm
- More time to set up for stallholders as not start until 12 noon.
- Lighting cost (£3.5k approx. from quotes received previously) is for the hiring of the equipment, installation and dismantle of the lighting so it would be a regular cost.

The budget that the Town Council agreed for 2025 is £4.5k which won't cover lighting costs.

Residents' Views

In 2023 Everything Epping Forest sent out a press release and did a Poll on Facebook on behalf of Epping Town Council to seek residents' views on whether the Christmas Market should be on a Friday or Saturday or daytime through to evening.

The Facebook poll had 563 votes with 348 in favour of Saturday afternoon, going into evening. The other residents who emailed the Town Council directly were mostly also preferred Saturday afternoon going into the evening.

If the Town Council agrees to a Saturday afternoon into evening again, then there would be the extra cost of providing lighting, power source and installation/dismantling costs for the stalls.

Last year, we opted to ask stallholders to bring their own lighting. The success of this will depend on the traders. If traders do not do this, It will be expensive for Council to finance. Some traders queried this.

This option would be cheaper to getting an electrician to supply own equipment, installation and dismantle costs (extra cost for generators) which was discussed at a previous Full Town Council meeting in March 2022. The cost for Council to install lighting would be expensive.

Operational issues:

Our market contractor finds Saturday more difficult for stall construction due to other commitments

Later set up will mean barriers to ensure no parking in bays (cost in time and hiring/buying)

To be agreed:

Date:

To continue to hold the Christmas Market on the Saturday, 6th December 2025 (first Saturday in December) or revert to Friday 5th December (first Friday of December). Please note: this weekend coincides with St John's Church Tree Festival.

Timing:

Hold a daytime event (10am to 4pm) or run into evening 12 noon until either 7pm or 8pm.

04.03.2025



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Open consultation

Greater Essex devolution consultation

Published 17 February 2025

Applies to England

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Establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Essex, Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea

Topic of this consultation:

This consultation seeks views on a proposal to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority for the local government areas of Essex County Council, Thurrock Council and Southend-on-Sea City Council (referred to as Greater Essex in this consultation).

In December 2024, the government published the English Devolution White Paper (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>). This sets out plans to move power out of Westminster and back to local communities, ensuring that every part of England is covered by devolution. The local council leaders from Essex County Council, Thurrock Council and Southend-on-Sea City Council have since written to government expressing their interest in taking forward devolution within their area through the establishment of a Mayoral Combined County Authority, with the first election for a Mayor taking place in May 2026. Before taking a decision on whether to proceed with the making of the necessary legislation, the government is seeking views from interested parties, including those who live and work in the area.

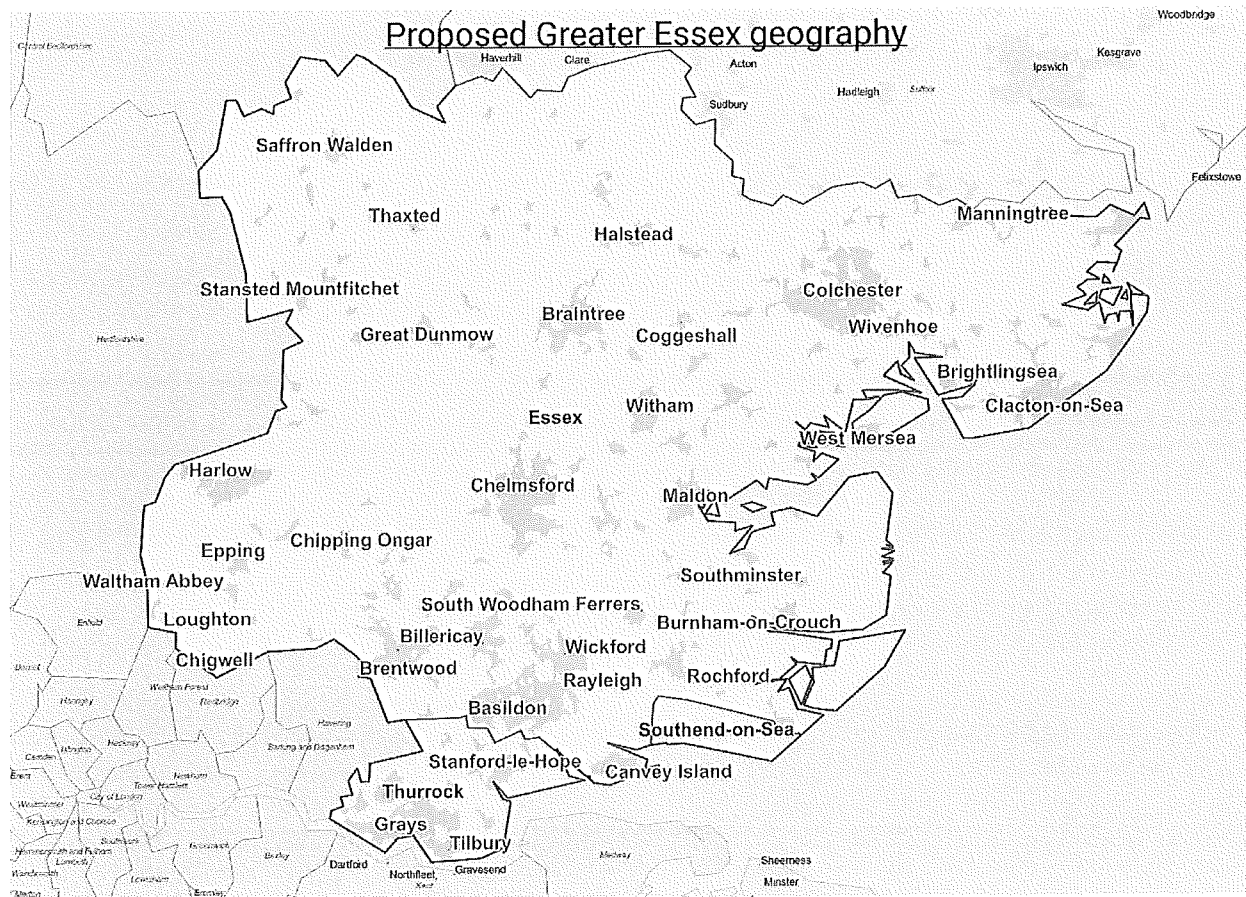
Scope of this consultation:

This consultation seeks views, particularly from interested parties, including those who live and work across Greater Essex on the effect of establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority in the area. It includes questions on the proposed geography and how the Combined County Authority will make decisions, together with questions on the effects of working across this geography through a Mayoral Combined County Authority.

In some parts of the country, there may be proposals for reorganisation of existing councils. This is a separate process and is not covered by this consultation. Further information on this is set out in this document.

Geographical scope:

These proposals only have direct effect within the geographical area covered by the local councils listed above.



Basic information

Body/bodies responsible for the consultation:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Duration:

This consultation will last until 13 April 2025 at 23:59.

How to respond:

We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to share your opinions on the proposal for the establishment of a Mayoral Combined County Authority across this area.

The easiest way for you to respond and engage in the consultation is by completing the [online form \(https://consult.communities.gov.uk/lggc/greater-essex-devolution-consultation\)](https://consult.communities.gov.uk/lggc/greater-essex-devolution-consultation). Once you are on the website, you will be guided through the specific questions on which we are seeking views.

If you are unable to provide your views through the online form, you can alternatively email or post your response to the questions. Details on how to do this are set out in Annex B. Please follow the format of the questions as set out in Annex B. For email and postal responses, please make clear which area consultation you are responding to (there are a number of live consultations on English devolution). This consultation is about a proposal to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority for the local government areas of Essex County Council, Thurrock Council and Southend-on-Sea City Council.

1. Background

1.1 Devolution context

Through devolution, areas and their local leaders receive more powers, functions and funding to take decisions about local priorities. Currently, over 34 million people – around 61% of the population of England – are covered by a devolution arrangement. However, England remains one of the most centralised countries in the developed world, meaning decisions are too often taken by central government rather than by local leaders.

In December 2024, the government published the [English Devolution White Paper \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper), which set out a new Devolution Framework for English devolution which will move power out of Westminster and into the hands of those who know their area best. The White Paper sets out how further devolution to local areas within England can help deliver economic growth and more joined-up delivery of public services, and increase trust in politics.

Devolution can achieve this through enabling more decisions to be taken at a more local level, thereby making it easier to tailor decisions to local needs and priorities; enabling more coordinated action in a place; giving communities a greater say in decisions that affect them; and driving innovation in policy and delivery.

The government's ultimate ambition on devolution is universal coverage across England, with a strong preference for every area to have a Mayor, so that every part of the country can unlock the benefits and opportunities that devolution brings.

1.2 Introduction to Combined County Authorities and Mayors

Combined County Authorities are organisations made up of a group of councils who come together over larger areas that people recognise and work in. They allow councils to work together in a structured way and take decisions over a wider area footprint, with powers and responsibilities being held by that Combined County Authority. Combined County Authorities do not replace the councils in your area – and services such as social care, libraries and education that are provided by the council continue to be provided by the council.

A Combined County Authority can be led by a directly elected Mayor. This is then known as a Mayoral Combined County Authority. The government is supportive of places having Mayors because they have a mandate to take big decisions affecting more people, they have convening power to tackle shared problems, and they are accountable to the local electorate for the decisions they take. Mayors in other parts of the country have become vital local leaders, delivering on the promise of change in their area to drive growth, more joined-up delivery, and earning trust.

1.3 The Devolution Priority Programme

Many parts of the country (such as Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, the East Midlands, York and North Yorkshire, and the West of England) now have Mayoral Combined Authorities or Mayoral Combined County Authorities. London also has a directly elected Mayor and the Greater London Authority. These institutions have received funding, powers and functions in areas like skills, transport, and housing. However, many parts of the country do not yet have devolution arrangements like this.

In the English Devolution White Paper, the government set out the ambition of delivering devolution to more parts of England, aiming to establish new Combined Authorities or Combined County Authorities that would have Mayors elected in May 2026.

To achieve this, the government has established the Devolution Priority Programme, to provide a fast-track to creating Mayoral Combined Authorities or Mayoral Combined County Authorities for areas ready to come together over sensible geographies which meet the criteria set out in the White Paper. These places will receive the full backing of government to deliver to these ambitious timescales.

In July 2024, the government invited areas currently without devolution arrangements to put forward proposals for how they would like to take on devolution in their area. Following the publication of the White Paper, these areas had the opportunity to seek to join the Devolution Priority Programme. The government received positive responses from a number of different places, and local council leaders of Essex County Council, Thurrock Council and Southend-on-Sea City Council applied to join the Devolution Priority Programme to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority over the geography of those local councils.

Following an assessment of geography and readiness, the government announced that Greater Essex will be part of the Devolution Priority Programme, along with the five other areas listed below:

- Cumbria (Cumberland Council, Westmorland and Furness Council);
- Cheshire and Warrington (Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Warrington Borough Council);
- Hampshire and the Solent (Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Isle of Wight Council, Southampton City Council);
- Norfolk and Suffolk (Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council); and
- Sussex and Brighton (East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council).

1.4 Implementing devolution in Greater Essex

There is a statutory process that has to be followed to establish a Combined County Authority. This includes a public consultation to seek local views and inform a final decision by government.

The government is minded to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Greater Essex. It will take a decision on whether to proceed with the necessary implementing legislation after considering responses to

this consultation and whether a series of statutory tests have been met. In particular, Ministers will need to decide:

- Whether they consider that the establishment of a Combined County Authority in the area is likely to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of some or all of the people who live or work in the area;
- Whether establishing a Combined County Authority in the area is appropriate, having regard to the need to:
 - secure effective and convenient local government; and,
 - reflect the identities and interests of local communities.

Ministers will also consider all factors in the round when taking the decision on whether to proceed with the necessary implementing legislation, including an equalities impact assessment and an environmental principles policy statement.

If a decision is taken to proceed, and providing councils consent, the next stage is for ministers to make secondary legislation establishing the Combined County Authority and providing for the election of a Mayor. This legislation will also confer some transport and economic regeneration functions onto the Combined County Authority. This will allow the Combined County Authority to begin work on delivering local priorities from day one.

The Mayor for the area would then also represent the area on the Council of Nations and Regions, which includes the Prime Minister, the First Minister of Scotland, the First Minister of Wales, the First and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, and the Mayors of Combined Authorities and Combined County Authorities of England. The Mayor would also represent the area on the Mayoral Council (which includes the Deputy Prime Minister and the Mayors of Combined Authorities and Combined County Authorities of England) to enable the area's voice to be heard at a national level.

If the decision is taken not to proceed, then the Mayoral Combined County Authority would not be established to the timelines of the Devolution Priority Programme. This would mean that the area would not receive the full suite of powers, funding and functions as set out in Section 3 of this consultation, and the area would not be represented on the Council of Nations and Regions. The government will continue to work with local councils on the best devolution approach for their area.

The government will introduce an English Devolution Bill to Parliament in due course. The intention of that Bill is to automatically confer all the powers and functions in the Devolution Framework to the Mayoral Combined County Authority once it is established. Section 3 of this consultation outlines what these functions would be and explains the Devolution Framework.

If the Bill does not receive Royal Assent and its provisions do not come into force, the government intends to bring forward secondary legislation to confer the functions in the Devolution Framework to the Mayoral Combined County Authority.

2. Proposed Institution, Governance and Decision Making Arrangements

2.1 Name and geographic area

It is proposed that a Mayoral Combined County Authority is established over the local council areas of Essex County Council, Southend on Sea City Council and Thurrock Council. The government's proposal is that the Combined County Authority would be formally known as the Greater Essex Combined County Authority.

2.2 Membership

Constituent councils

The councils of Essex County Council, Southend on Sea City Council and Thurrock Council would be the constituent councils of the proposed Combined County Authority.

Essex County Council would appoint three representatives to be constituent members whilst Southend on Sea City and Thurrock Councils would each appoint two representatives to be constituent members. This means that there would be seven constituent council members in total. Constituent councils would each be able to appoint the same number of substitute members as they appoint constituent members to act in the absence of their constituent members.

The Mayor

The Combined County Authority would have a Mayor, directly elected by local government electors (which are those eligible to vote in local council elections who are on the electoral register) across the three constituent council areas. The first mayoral election would take place on 7 May 2026. Mayors are typically elected on 4-year terms.

The Mayor would be a constituent member of the Combined County

Authority, and exercise the mayoral functions outlined in the Devolution Framework on behalf of the Combined County Authority.

The Mayor would be required to appoint a deputy Mayor from among the constituent members to act in their absence or if the office of the Mayor is vacant.

The Mayor would be permitted to appoint a maximum of one political advisor

Non-constituent and associate members

Greater Essex Combined County Authority's constituent members would be able to appoint a maximum of seven non-constituent and associate members to support the delivery of their work programme. Non-constituent members are representatives of an organisation; for example, a district council, local NHS trust, the Police and Crime Commissioner, or a local registered provider. Associate members are named individuals who can provide particular experience or expertise – for example, on active travel, or local businesses.

2.3 Role of district councils

Much of England has two tiers of local government – upper-tier county councils and lower-tier district councils – with responsibility for local services split between the two.

While all the councils in an area are constituent members of a Combined Authority, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 introduced Combined County Authorities consisting of upper tier local councils only.

District councils cannot be full constituent members of a Combined County Authority but can participate as non-constituent members and serve on committees (see section 2.5 on non-constituent members' role in decision making).

2.4 Combined County Authority powers, functions and funding

The Combined County Authority and its Mayor would have some functions conferred onto them as part of the secondary legislation establishing the Combined County Authority as an institution. These functions would enable

them to begin work on delivering local priorities from day one and are expected to include economic development and transport.

The English Devolution White Paper

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>) sets out the government's ambitions for devolution. This includes the powers, functions and funding available to Combined County Authorities – a summary table is included at Annex A.

The collection of powers, functions and funding is known as the Devolution Framework. The powers, functions and funding of a Combined County Authority vary depending on its governance and maturity. The government's intention would be for the Greater Essex Combined County Authority to have the powers, functions and funding set out at the mayoral level of the framework. These functions would give the Combined County Authority and the Mayor greater local control over areas such as transport, adult education and skills, and housing to enable improvements in local connectivity, educational outcomes, economic development, driving economic growth and improved social wellbeing.

The government intends to implement the Devolution Framework via the English Devolution Bill; the functions within it would then automatically be conferred onto any existing Combined County Authority if the Bill receives Royal Assent, and the provisions come into force.

2.5 Decision making at the Combined County Authority

The Combined County Authority's constituent members (the Mayor and seven constituent council members) would be the decision makers within the Combined County Authority. Constituent members would automatically have voting rights. Non-constituent members can be given voting rights at the discretion of the Combined County Authority; associate members cannot be given voting rights.

All members would have a single vote. The default voting arrangement for Combined County Authority decisions to be approved would be a simple majority in favour, including the Mayor (i.e. 5 out of 8).

No decisions can be made at a Combined County Authority meeting unless the Mayor (or deputy Mayor) and at least five constituent council members are present.

2.6 Oversight

To ensure effective scrutiny of decision making and audit of how resources are used, the Combined County Authority would have at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and one Audit Committee, in line with the requirements of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Further improvements to accountability and oversight are in development and are included in Section 5 of the English Devolution White Paper ahead of legislation being laid.

2.7 Remuneration

Greater Essex Combined County Authority would approve a scheme for the allowances for constituent members, following consideration of a report from an Independent Remuneration Panel. The Mayor can be paid an allowance as agreed by the constituent council members, also following consideration of a report from an Independent Remuneration Panel.

2.8 Local government reorganisation and its impacts (only for two tier areas)

Councils in your area have been invited to develop proposals for new unitary local government. This would replace the existing two tier system, where services are split between a county and district council, and bring these services together in unitary local government, creating opportunities for service transformation which can support improvements in delivery. The aim is to build empowered, simplified, resilient and sustainable local government for your area that will increase value for money for council taxpayers and enable more funding to be spent on local public services.

This process (known as “local government reorganisation”) is a separate process to the one in this consultation. On 5 February 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution invited all councils in your area to develop unitary proposals. All councils in your area have been invited to undertake wide engagement before submitting robust and evidenced unitary proposals to government by 26 September. The established assessment and decision making process will then be followed to determine which, if any, of the proposals submitted are to be implemented.

Further information is being made available at [Local government reorganisation: Policy and programme updates - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-government-reorganisation-policy-and-programme-updates) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-government-reorganisation-policy-and-programme-updates>)

This local government reorganisation process does not affect the potential establishment of this Combined County Authority or the Mayoral election in May 2026. In due course, if a proposal is implemented, any new unitary councils will become the constituent members of the Combined County Authority and, legally, it will become a Combined Authority. This change does not affect the functions/powers or funding available to the area. The governance and decision making arrangements within the Combined Authority will then be updated to reflect any changes needed.

Legislation has also been made to postpone local council elections from May 2025 to May 2026 in: Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council; Essex County Council and Thurrock Council; Hampshire County Council and the Isle of Wight Council; East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council. This will allow these councils to deliver both devolution and local government reorganisation to the most ambitious timeline, working toward the first election for the Mayors of the Combined County Authorities in May 2026.

3. What powers would be available

The [English Devolution White Paper](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>) sets out the powers, functions and funding for all Combined County Authorities such as the one proposed in this consultation. This is known as the Devolution Framework. The framework is the floor, not the ceiling, of the government's ambitions, which means it will be reviewed regularly to consider whether it can be deepened, with more powers being given to local areas that have a Combined County Authority with a Mayor.

The framework has three tiers – Foundation, Mayoral, and Established Mayoral. If the Mayoral Combined County Authority in this consultation was created, it would be set up at the 'Mayoral' tier. The institution could then progress in the future to the 'Established Mayoral' tier, subject to meeting certain eligibility criteria (see section 2.2.4 of the White Paper). This means that, at the Established Mayoral tier, it would be eligible to receive more powers and funding from central government.

The framework is to be implemented through the English Devolution Bill, subject to its passage through Parliament and receiving Royal Assent. A

table summarising the devolution framework is provided in Annex A, and a more detailed summary of what powers, functions and funding the Combined County Authority would receive under that Bill is set out below. For full detail of the powers, functions and funding that the Combined County Authority would receive based on being in the Mayoral tier, please refer to Chapter 3 of the English Devolution White Paper.

3.1 Funding

The below sets out the types of funding available to Mayoral Combined County Authorities.

The Mayoral Combined County Authority would receive devolved funding from central government, including those relating to the following policies:

- Housing and regeneration.
- Local growth.
- Adult skills (except apprenticeships).
- Local transport.

This gives the Mayoral Combined County Authority control over how funding is spent, including to tailor how it is spent to meet local needs in the area. As with all government programmes, the precise programmes that will be devolved (and the amount of funding) will be determined through the Spending Review in June (which is central government's process for setting budgets, which determines which government programmes exist and their funding amount).

However, Mayoral Combined Authorities that were in existence in the Spending Review period 2021-2024 received funding from central government, such as:

- Funding to support housing on brownfield sites in the area.
- Funding for local growth in the area.
- Devolved funding for skills, such as the Adult Skills Fund, which is used to fund education and training for adults aged 19 and above.
- Devolved funding for local transport, such as funding to support maintaining and improving the highways network and funding to support bus services and keep fares down.

In addition, the Mayoral Combined County Authority would receive a 30-year 'Investment Fund' from central government. The amount of this fund would be confirmed at the government's Spending Review in June 2025. However, the parameters of it are:

- It is a flexible fund for local leaders to drive economic growth. The priorities for it are set locally through the Mayoral Combined County Authority – not by central government.
- It is long term, covering a period of 30 years. The intention of this is to give certainty when local leaders (through the Mayoral Combined County Authority) make decisions on investments.
- It is a mix of revenue spending (which can be spent on ‘day-to-day’ policies like adult skills) and capital spending (which is money spent on investment in policies like housing).

The Mayoral Combined County Authority would also receive capacity funding from central government to help set up the new organisation.

The Mayoral Combined County Authority would have the ability to introduce a mayoral precept on council tax should they choose to do so. This allows the authority to raise money to fund local priorities.

3.2 Transport and local infrastructure

The government believes that high quality transport infrastructure and services support growth and opportunity, and that bringing decisions about transport closer to people is key to improving the transport networks everyone relies on. The Combined County Authority would become the Local Transport Authority for its area, which means it is responsible for public transport services, like buses, instead of local authorities.

Buses and active travel

In many parts of England, bus services have been deregulated since the Transport Act 1985. This means services are run by private bus operators who set the routes, fares, and timetables.

As a Local Transport Authority, the Mayoral Combined County Authority would be empowered (but not required) to change this approach across the whole area in order to improve local bus services. They could decide to pursue:

- An Enhanced Partnership, under which Local Transport Authorities (like the Mayoral Combined County Authority) have more powers to work with bus operators to set a vision for bus services across the whole area and a plan to help achieve these improvements.
- A franchised system, under which the Mayoral Combined County Authority awards contracts for buses in their area (or in specific routes), and these contracts can be used to determine things like routes,

timetables, fares and branding. This is the model used in London and introduced recently in Greater Manchester.

- Publicly owned bus companies, which could work alongside either an Enhanced Partnership or a franchised bus system.

The powers for this are set out in the government's Bus Services Bill and more information on the powers available to Local Transport Authorities (such as the Mayoral Combined County Authority) is set out in the [overview of the Bus Services Bill](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80769a40f0b62302693a81/the-bus-services-bill-an-overview.pdf)

(<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80769a40f0b62302693a81/the-bus-services-bill-an-overview.pdf>).

The Combined County Authority would play an important role in decarbonising transport and reducing the environmental and health impacts of transport. The government would expect the Combined County Authority to develop plans to decarbonise and reduce air pollution from their local bus fleet, including how and when emissions reductions will be delivered.

Active travel (such as walking, wheeling, and cycling) delivers a range of benefits for people and communities. Active Travel England (which is a central government organisation sponsored by the Department for Transport) would support the Combined County Authority to increase capability and address skill gaps to ensure a consistent approach to safety and accessibility for all users, with a right to request capability assessments for their constituent authorities.

Rail

The government is seeking to put passengers and local communities back at the heart of railways and to protect their interests. The proposed Mayoral Combined County Authority would play an important role in this:

- The Mayor would have a statutory role (meaning a role set out in law) in governing, managing, planning, and developing the rail network. The intention is that the Mayor can use this role to embed the voice of their community in decisions on the rail network. Government will consult on this role ahead of the legislation required.
- If they meet transparent criteria, the Mayor would also be given the option for greater control over local rail stations. Rail stations are generally currently controlled either by central government, through a body known as Network Rail, or by train operating companies. Mayors will be given the option of greater control so they can capitalise on the opportunities in and around rail stations for local people, for economic growth, accessibility, and intermodal connectivity. For example, this might include regenerating the area around the rail station, working to join up different forms of transport, or building homes.
- Engagement with the Department for Transport on its national rail planning processes. This has been trialled with Greater Manchester and

West Midlands Combined Authorities already, and is intended to allow local ambitions to be better reflected in national policy.

- The government would work in close collaboration with the Mayoral Combined County Authority to deliver shared ambitions on ticketing. London has shown how ticketing systems that are integrated across different forms of transport can help to get more people onto public transport. The Department for Transport (through an organisation known as Great British Railways) is committed to working in partnership with Mayoral Combined County Authorities to deliver these sorts of ambitions, building on existing 'pay-as-you-go rail pilots' (which are trials that allow passengers to tap in and out of stations using a contactless card or device).

Roads

The Mayoral Combined County Authority would play a key coordination role in the local road network. It would work with National Highways on the strategic road network (which covers motorways and some A roads), and its constituent councils on local roads. Responsibility for local roads would remain with the councils, and not with the Mayoral Combined County Authority.

This includes:

- The Mayoral Combined County Authority would set up and coordinate a 'Key Route Network' (KRN) on behalf of the Mayor. A KRN is a collection of locally important roads – the aim of setting it up is to allow for major roads to be managed in a strategic way, to improve traffic flow, reduce congestion, introduce bus priority, or cycle infrastructure across an area. Mayors would also hold a 'power of direction' over this network to support delivery of their agreed Local Transport Plan. This means they can require a constituent council to use their road powers in a way that is consistent with the KRN.
- As the Local Transport Authority, the Mayoral Combined County Authority would be empowered to regulate on-street micromobility schemes (like hire bikes), so local areas can shape these schemes around their needs, connect people to public transport, and tackle the problem of badly-parked cycles and e-cycles.
- Subject to a separate consultation, it is proposed that the government will devolve approval of local Lane Rental schemes to Mayoral Combined County Authorities. This would enable constituent councils to charge the companies undertaking roadworks on busy roads at busy times with the aim of minimising disruption by seeking the Mayoral Combined County Authority's approval, rather than the Department for Transport.
- National Highways are committed to formalising and strengthening its relationship with Mayoral Combined County Authorities, which will ensure a more cohesive approach to the management and development of England's strategic road network alongside local roads.

3.3 Skills and employment support

The Mayoral Combined County Authority would receive:

- Devolved adult skills funding and functions from the Department for Education. Adult skills funding is intended to support adults aged over 19 to participate in education and training.
- Devolution of future 'supported employment' funding from the Department for Work and Pensions – which is funding to help disabled people, people with health conditions, and those with more complex barriers to work to find a suitable job and sustain work. It can also be used to help those in work but at risk of falling out of the labour market to retain their job.

These funds would support the Mayoral Combined County Authority to do things like tailor the training and support for adults in the area to the types of jobs available locally, and to local priorities. The government has also committed to giving Mayoral Combined County Authorities a substantive role in co-designing any future national employment support programmes that is additional to the core work done by Jobcentre Plus. The Mayoral Combined County Authority would also be asked to produce a local Get Britain Working Plan for its area, which would be focused on reducing economic inactivity and driving integration between national and local health, work, and skills provision in the area.

The Mayoral Combined County Authority would also take on joint ownership of the Local Skills Improvement Plan model with Employer Representative Bodies. These Plans set the strategic direction for skills provision in the area and could help to facilitate opportunities for 16-19-year-olds to undertake apprenticeships, education and training that lead to good quality employment opportunities.

3.4 Housing and strategic planning

The government is committed to delivering 1.5 million new homes in this Parliament, and Mayoral Combined County Authorities are integral to meeting that commitment:

- The Mayoral Combined County Authority would be given control of funding to support regeneration and housing delivery. As set out in section 3.1, the precise funds and amount would be determined through the next Spending Review. However, as context, Mayoral Combined County Authorities that existed in the period 2021 to 2024 received control of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to support the delivery of housing on brownfield sites.

- The Mayoral Combined County Authority would have a strategic place partnership with Homes England (which is a central government organisation sponsored by the Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government) – a formal partnership arrangement which brings together their respective strengths and resources.
- The Mayoral Combined County Authority would also have powers to drive regeneration in their area. For example, they would have powers to establish Mayoral Development Corporations, which are statutory bodies created to help deliver regeneration schemes. Housing and strategic planning powers are set out in Section 3.5 of the English Devolution White Paper.
- The government has recently announced that, in all parts of the country, groups of councils will be required to work together to develop Spatial Development Strategies (SDS). In this area, that work would be led by the Mayoral Combined County Authority, with the Mayor empowered to develop and propose the SDS. Once an SDS is in place, the Mayor would also be given powers, similar to those held by the Mayor of London, to ‘call in’ planning applications of ‘strategic importance’. These powers will enable Mayors to scrutinise the most significant planning proposals in their area to ensure they support the SDS. The Mayor would also receive the ability to charge new developments (such as developments led by private sector housebuilders) in their area. This is known as a ‘Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy’ and the revenue collected is used to help deliver local infrastructure.

3.5 Economic development and regeneration

The Mayoral Combined County Authority would play a crucial role in attracting international investment for the area – supporting business to thrive and grow, and creating vibrant places where people want to live and work.

To help achieve this, the Mayoral Combined County Authority would take lead responsibility for managing and focusing local programmes that provide businesses with support and advice on things like introductions to local supply chains or help with starting a new business (known as ‘business support’ programmes). This involves hosting the local Growth Hub, which is part of a national Business Growth Service but can tailor its services to the needs of the local economy and local businesses. The Mayoral Combined County Authority and the Department for Business and Trade would form a strategic partnership to align national and local policymaking. The partnership would also ensure effective delivery of interventions to boost domestic business growth, boost exports, encourage inward investment and grow the co-operative and mutual economy.

To support the Mayoral Combined County Authority to unlock their area's innovation potential, working in partnership with businesses and universities, there would be stronger direct connections with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which is a central government organisation that directs research and innovation funding, funded through the science budget of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology.

Given the importance of culture, heritage, sport, and tourism to local economies and communities, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (and its Arm's Length Bodies, such as Historic England) would explore a deeper, collaborative partnership with the Mayoral Combined County Authority.

3.6 Environment and climate change

Making Britain a clean energy superpower is one of the government's five defining missions. The decarbonisation journey will support efforts to protect the natural environment and biodiversity. The Mayoral Combined County Authority would be a crucial partner in transitioning Great Britain to a low-cost, clean power energy system by 2030, and in implementing the Warm Homes Plan to save households money on their bills and to reduce the UK's carbon emissions. The Combined County Authority would have a role in co-ordinating the zoning of local heat networks, meaning they would play a role in the delivery of heat decarbonisation.

The Combined County Authority would also have a strategic role on net zero including on Great British Energy's Local Power Plan and Warm Homes Plan. In order to provide local, place-based environmental leadership, the Combined County Authority would play a leadership role in Local Nature Recovery Strategies, through convening partnerships and coordinating action, funding and delivery.

3.7 Health, wellbeing, and public service reform

The government believes that Mayoral Combined County Authorities have a key role to play in improving health and wellbeing alongside wider public service reform. To support the Mayoral Combined County Authority to drive a "health in all policies" approach, it would have a new bespoke duty in relation to health improvement and health inequalities. This duty would ensure that the Mayoral Combined County Authority takes into account the need to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities when exercising their powers and functions, giving them a clear stake in improving local health outcomes.

By working with other local leaders, the institution would also be able to bring together local partners to work together on reforming, and driving improvements in, public services. For example, the government has established an expectation that Mayors will be considered for the role of chair for the NHS Integrated Care Partnership. The government would also work with stakeholders in the Mayoral Combined County Authority's area to identify areas to facilitate the alignment of public service boundaries and closer working when there is a clear rationale for doing so, and where the benefits significantly exceed any costs and risks incurred.

3.8 Public safety

The Mayoral Combined County Authority would have an important role to play in achieving the government's Safer Streets Mission, supporting rehabilitation, and reducing reoffending, and in supporting the safety of their residents and the resilience of their communities. This should complement the role local councils play in this area. To deliver this, the government is committed to increasing the number of Mayors who take on Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) responsibilities. Generally, where devolution geographies align with police force and fire and rescue geographies, Mayors would become responsible for exercising PCC and FRA functions.

3.9 Established Mayoral Status

In time, the Mayoral Combined County Authority could apply for 'Established Mayoral' Status, which is a deeper level of devolution – meaning, for example, more powers and funding from central government. If they achieved this status, they would automatically receive the additional powers available at that level, including an Integrated Settlement, which will give the area even greater funding freedom and flexibility. The conditions the Mayoral Combined County Authority would need to meet to become eligible are set out in Section 2.2.4 of the English Devolution White Paper; and the deeper powers available to them are summarised in the fourth column of the table in Annex A of this consultation document.

4. What this means for Greater Essex

4.1 Overview of Greater Essex

With a population of over 1.8 million^[footnote 1] and a total Gross Value Added (GVA) of over £50 billion,^[footnote 2] Greater Essex is well placed to drive forward innovative and ambitious growth.

The geography of the region is diverse, made up of the urban centres of Colchester, Chelmsford, Southend-on-Sea, Basildon and Harlow; coastal resorts including Clacton-on-Sea and Canvey Island; busy ports in Thurrock and Harwich; and rural areas around Maldon, Braintree and Saffron Walden. Despite this varied landscape, the area already has a strong shared identity with a distinct history going back hundreds of years.

The area benefits from two international airports (London Stansted Airport and London Southend Airport), and connections to two Freeports (Thames Freeport and Freeport East). These are portals to the global economy, key drivers of growth and areas for new investment. National rail services connect much of the region with London and neighbouring counties and some areas are covered by Transport for London services including the Elizabeth Line. The M25 runs through the west of the region with several key roads radiating out and connecting other areas including the M11, A12, A127 and A13. Over 80% of the journeys in Greater Essex start and finish in Greater Essex, which demonstrates the extent to which commuting and other travel patterns are based around this area, as well as the importance of connections to London.^[footnote 3]

The area is at the forefront of housing innovation, with planned Garden Communities such as Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, and the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, creating new homes for residents. Tourism is an important sector, with seaside resorts such as Southend-on-Sea and the Dedham Vale Area of Natural Beauty bringing in millions of visitors a year.

4.2 Economic and social outlook

The area has strengths in key growth sectors such as advanced manufacturing, green energy, digi-tech and life sciences, as well as logistics, construction and retrofit. Its thriving advanced manufacturing sector, ranging from optical to aerospace production, makes up 9 percent of total jobs in the county (in 2018).^[footnote 4] Greater Essex is part of the UK Innovation Corridor and the Thames Estuary, two important regions for the UK economy. Over 200 large businesses (250+ employees) are based in the area, such as Industrial Chemicals Ltd, Olympus KeyMed, Ipeco and Amazon, alongside heritage brands such as Maldon Salt and Wilkin & Sons Ltd. The region is also home to many new businesses – in 2022, over 1,000 businesses were launched in Southend-on-Sea alone.^[footnote 5]

Greater Essex houses the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult Manufacturing Innovation Centre in Braintree and Harlow Innovation Park. The area is also home to a number of educational institutions, including the University of Essex, Anglia Ruskin University and South Essex College.

In addition, Greater Essex is supporting the UK's drive to a greener economy. Freeport East has significant potential for new investment with a planned Green Energy Hub at Harwich, and the extensive coastline presents opportunities for offshore wind development. There are also significant opportunities for life sciences and agri-tech (with the Essex Plant Innovation Centre at the University of Essex) and digi-tech (such as the Harlow Data Centre, home to Kao Data).

However, whilst Greater Essex has significant opportunities, there are also barriers to unlocking the region's potential. Strains on local transport infrastructure can mean that people find it harder to easily access good jobs, healthcare and skills opportunities. More homes are needed for the growing population (Greater Essex's population increased by an average of 13,400 people per year over the last decade),^[footnote 6] and higher skill levels are needed for growing the region's sectoral clusters (such as aerospace, MedTech and agri-tech).^[footnote 7] There are also significant inequalities across the region that local partners are already working hard to tackle. For example, in 2022, Essex County Council noted a 30% gap in educational attainment between the most and least deprived areas in the county;^[footnote 8] and in Southend-on-Sea, life expectancy in 2019 in the most disadvantaged areas was 10.5 years lower for men and 9.4 years lower for women (compared to the least disadvantaged areas).^[footnote 9]

4.3 Working across Greater Essex

The three upper-tier local councils (Essex County Council, Thurrock Council and Southend-on-Sea City Council) already collaborate on several areas and share a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC).

The Greater Essex Business Board has recently been set up by the three upper-tier local authorities to drive collaborative economic growth across the region, and the councils have collaborated on a shared Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and local Growth Hub provision.

4.4 How devolution could impact Greater Essex

Based on the powers and funding available, as set out in Section 3, a Mayoral Combined County Authority across the proposed geography could

have the following impacts:

- **Transport:** New transport powers, including through the Mayoral Combined County Authority becoming the Local Transport Authority, could make it easier for people to commute and travel around Greater Essex. On buses, the Mayoral Combined County Authority could decide to pursue opportunities across the whole area such as a single 'enhanced partnership' or 'bus franchising'. This could improve public transport provision and enable more people to access a wider pool of job opportunities.

Improvements to local transport infrastructure will support Greater Essex's role as a major gateway between international markets and the UK economy. Given the key strategic roads that go through Greater Essex, a stronger, more formal relationship with National Highways could be particularly beneficial. The Mayoral Combined County Authority could tackle existing transport issues, including improving rail connectivity through strategic engagement with Great British Railways and a statutory role for the Mayor in governing, managing, planning and developing the rail network.

- **Skills:** The skills powers and funding available to the Mayoral Combined County Authority could help tailor training and support for adults in the area to the types of jobs available locally and local priorities. This could help address skills shortages in key sectors such as aerospace, MedTech and agri-tech.
- **Housing:** The funding and powers available to deliver new housing across the Mayoral Combined County Authority geography could help address issues around the need for new housing across the area and improve housing affordability.
- **Economic development:** The Mayoral Combined County Authority would play a key role in attracting greater levels of international investment and supporting more local businesses to grow and thrive through new economic development and regeneration powers. This could be particularly beneficial to major sectors, such as advanced manufacturing and life sciences. It could also be particularly impactful given the importance of Stansted and Southend Airports as well as Thames Freeport and Freeport East. It could also support new businesses in Greater Essex to grow and succeed.
- **Environment and climate change:** A strong role for the Mayoral Combined County Authority, such as playing a leading role in local nature recovery strategies, could help maximise the benefits from Greater Essex's natural environment. As a partner in the government's energy and climate change ambitions, the Mayoral Combined County Authority could also help the UK to meet its clean energy mission, which could build on Greater Essex's existing strengths to drive a greener economy, such as in green energy and offshore wind development opportunities.
- **Health, wellbeing and public service reform:** The Mayoral Combined County Authority could play a key role in improving health and wellbeing, underpinned by a new bespoke duty in relation to health improvement

and health inequalities. This would mean that the Mayoral Combined County Authority would need to have regard to the need to improve health, and reduce health inequalities, in the exercise of its functions. Combined with an expectation that the Mayor would be appointed to one or more of the relevant Integrated Care Partnerships in the area, this could help strengthen the focus and increase the join up of action to address issues around ill health and inequalities across the area, and build on the work local councils are already doing to tackle this.

- **Representation:** The Mayor would take a seat at the Prime Minister's Council of Nations and Regions as well as the Deputy Prime Minister's Mayoral Council, which would give the area a stronger voice with the government. Greater Essex would be one of the first parts of the South East of England to be represented.

5. Consultation questions

Having considered all of the above, please respond to the following questions. For each question, you can provide the following answers:

- Strongly agree.
- Agree.
- Neither agree nor disagree.
- Disagree.
- Strongly disagree.
- Don't know.
- Prefer not to say.

You will also be invited to explain your answers.

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority over the proposed geography will deliver benefits to the area?

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed governance arrangements for the Mayoral Combined County Authority?

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will support the economy of the area?

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve social outcomes in the area?

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through a Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve local government services in the area?

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through a Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve the local natural environment and overall national environment?

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will support the interests and needs of local communities and reflect local identities?

6. Next steps

Following the consultation, the Secretary of State will consider all responses and decide whether to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority. If the Secretary of State decides to proceed, the government will confirm funding (subject to Spending Review) and, provided the constituent councils consent, the necessary secondary legislation will be laid in Parliament. If approved by Parliament, the Combined County Authority would be established in time for the first mayoral election to take place in May 2026.

Annex A – Devolution Framework Summary Table

The government intends to implement the Devolution Framework via the English Devolution Bill; the functions within it would then automatically be conferred onto any existing Combined County Authority if the Bill receives Royal Assent, and the provisions come into force.

Key

(**) refers to functions for which funding will be included in Integrated Settlements for Established Mayoral Strategic Authorities

(^) refers to functions which apply to Combined and Combined County Authorities only

Detail	Foundation	Mayoral	Established
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Funding and investment

Access to a multi-departmental, long-term integrated funding settlement**			X
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Long-term investment fund, with an agreed annual allocation		X	X
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Removal of gateway review from investment fund, after Gateway One complete			X
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Ability to introduce mayoral precepting on council tax^		X	X
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Consolidation of local growth and place funding in a single pot**	X	X	X
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Strategic leadership

A statutory duty to produce Local Growth Plans		X	X
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Membership of the Council of Nations and Regions		X	X
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Membership of the Mayoral Data Council		X	X
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Transport and local infrastructure

Detail	Foundation	Mayoral	Established
Local Transport Authority and public transport functions, including bus franchising and responsibility for an area-wide Local Transport Plan	X	X	X
Simplification and consolidation of local transport funding**	X	X	X
Removal of certain Secretary of State consents, e.g. on lane rental schemes		X	X
Duty to establish a Key Route Network on the most important local roads^		X	X
Mayoral Power of Direction over use of constituent authority powers on the Key Route Network^		X	X
Priority for strategic rail engagement (including mayoral partnerships) with Great British Railways	X	X	X
Statutory role in governing, managing, planning, and developing the rail network		X	X
An option for greater control over local rail stations		X	X
A 'right to request' further rail devolution			X
Priority for support to deliver multi-modal ticketing			X
A clear, strategic role in the decarbonisation of the local bus fleet	X	X	X
Active Travel England support for constituent authority capability^	X	X	X

Detail	Foundation	Mayoral	Established
Formal partnership with National Highways		X	X
Skills and employment support			
Joint ownership of the Local Skills Improvement Plan model, with Employer Representative Bodies	X	X	X
Devolution of the core Adult Skills Fund	X		
Devolution of non-apprenticeship adult skills functions through a consolidated skills funding pot**		X	X
Central convening of youth careers provision including greater flexibility for Careers hubs		X	X
A clear role in relation to 16-19 education and training		X	X
Responsibility for developing local Get Britain Working Plans	X	X	X
Devolution of supported employment funding**	X	X	X
Co-design of future employment support that is additional to core Jobcentre Plus provision		X	X
Delegated delivery or commissioning of employment support that is additional to core Jobcentre Plus provision			X
Alignment of Jobcentre Plus boundaries with Strategic Authorities			X
Housing and strategic planning			
A duty to produce a Spatial Development Strategy	X	X	X

Detail	Foundation	Mayoral	Established
Strategic development management powers (once the Spatial Development Strategy is in place)		X	X
Ability to raise a Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy to fund strategic infrastructure (once the Spatial Development Strategy is in place)		X	X
Ability to make Mayoral Development Orders		X	X
Ability to establish Mayoral Development Corporations		X	X
Homes England compulsory purchase powers (held concurrently)	X	X	X
Devolution of wider grant funding to support regeneration and housing delivery**		X	X
Ability to set the strategic direction of any future programme to support affordable housing provision in their area			X
Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England		X	X
Support to establish a public sector land commission			X
Economic development and regeneration			
Partnership working with Department for Science, Industry and Technology and UK Research and Innovation to explore opportunities for closer long-term collaboration in strengthening local research and innovation capacity	X	X	X

Detail	Foundation	Mayoral	Established
Develop joint innovation action plans with Innovate UK to shape long-term strategies and investments		X	X
Embed UK Research and Innovation lead points of contact for enhanced collaborative working on innovation with Mayoral Strategic Authorities that are committed to work collaboratively on innovation		X	X
Responsibility as the accountable body for the delivery of Growth Hubs	X	X	X
Devolution of Growth Hubs funding**			X
A Strategic Partnership with the Department for Business and Trade focused on domestic growth, exports, investment, and delivery of local growth priorities.		X	X
Partnership working with Department for Culture, Media and Sport Arm's Length Bodies to maximise culture, heritage, and sport spending in place	X	X	X
Environment and climate change			
Devolution of retrofit funding this parliament subject to a successful transition period (see 3.7)**			X
Heat network zoning coordination role	X	X	X
Coordinating local energy planning to support development of regional network energy infrastructure	X	X	X

Detail	Foundation	Mayoral	Established
Green jobs and skills coordination role	X	X	X
A strategic role on net zero in collaboration with government, including on Great British Energy's Local Power Plan and Warm Homes Plan	X	X	X
Responsibility for coordinating delivery and monitoring of Local Nature Recovery Strategies^	X	X	X
Health, wellbeing and public service reform			
A bespoke statutory health improvement and health inequalities duty^	X	X	X
Mayors engaged during the Integrated Care Boards chair appointment process		X	X
Mayors as members of local Integrated Care Partnerships, and consideration for position of chair or co-chair		X	X
A role in convening partners and driving cross-cutting public service reform, including looking at areas such as multiple disadvantage	X	X	X
Public safety			
Mayors accountable for the exercise of Police and Crime Commissioner functions where police force and mayoral boundaries align^		X	X
Mayors accountable for the exercise of Fire and Rescue Authority functions where fire and		X	X

Detail	Foundation	Mayoral	Established
rescue service and mayoral boundaries align			
A clear and defined role in local resilience, working with the Local Resilience Forum to embed resilience into broader policy and delivery^	X	X	X

Annex B – Address details and list of consultation questions

We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to share your opinions on the establishment of a Mayoral Combined County Authority across this area.

- The easiest way for you to respond and engage in the consultation is by completing the [online form \(https://consult.communities.gov.uk/lggc/greater-essex-devolution-consultation\)](https://consult.communities.gov.uk/lggc/greater-essex-devolution-consultation). Once you are on the website, you will be guided through the specific questions on which we are seeking views.
- If you are unable to provide your views through the online form, you can alternatively email or post your response to the questions. For email and postal responses, we would ask that you make clear which area consultation you are responding to (there are a number of live consultations on English devolution).
- You should also make clear whether you disagree or agree with each question to ensure the statistics we collect following the consultation accurately reflect your views. We will categorise responses as 'do not have a view' where written responses are unclear. Please also confirm whether you are replying as an individual or submitting an official response on behalf of an organisation and include:
 - your name
 - your position (if applicable)
 - the name of organisation (if applicable)
 - an address (including post-code)
 - an email address
 - a contact telephone number

Written responses to the consultation questions may be sent by email to: GreaterEssexDevolutionConsultation@communities.gov.uk

Or posted to:

Devolution Priority Programme Consultation
English Devolution and Institutions Team
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
4th Floor
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will not acknowledge receipt of responses.

Consultation questions

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority over the proposed geography will deliver benefits to the area?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Please explain your answer.

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed governance arrangements for the Mayoral Combined County Authority?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Please explain your answer.

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will support the economy of the area?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve social outcomes in the area?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Please explain your answer.

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through a Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve local government services in the area?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Please explain your answer.

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through a Mayoral Combined County Authority will improve the local natural environment and overall national environment?

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Please explain your answer.

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that working across the proposed geography through the Mayoral Combined County Authority will support the interests and needs of local communities and reflect local identities?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

Please explain your answer.

About You

1. Please tell us how you found out about this consultation?

(select one)

- Social media
- Email
- GOV.UK website
- Local council website
- Poster/ leaflet
- Word of mouth
- News outlet (newspaper / TV / online)
- Other

2. What best describes your response?

(Select one)

- I am a member of the public, giving my views as an individual
- I am responding on behalf of, or as a representative of, a business or organisation

For those responding as a member of the public giving views as an individual

3. What is the first part of the postcode where you live? For example, if your postcode is AB1 2CD, you would write AB1

We ask this so that we can identify what Local Authority you live in and understand a bit more about the area where you live. We do not use this information to identify you.

4. What best describes your gender?

(Select one)

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe: (open text box)

5. What is your age group?

(Select one)

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+
- Prefer not to say

6. What is your ethnic group?

(Select one)

- White

- Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
- Asian or Asian British
- Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
- Other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say

7. Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person or to have a long-term, limiting condition?

Please tick one box only

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

8. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual/Straight
- Gay/Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Prefer not to say
- Other – Please write below

Routing for business/organisation

9. What best describes your organisation?

- Business
- County Council
- Unitary council
- District Council
- Town Council
- Parish Council
- Health Body
- Voluntary and community sector or charity
- Academic
- Elected representative
- Prefer not to say
- Other (Please Specify)

10. What is the first part of the postcode where your business or organisation is based? For example, if your postcode is AB1 2CD, you would write AB1.

We ask this so that we can identify what Local Authority your business/organisation is based in and understand a bit more about the area where it is located. We do not use this information to identify your organisation.

Annex C: About this consultation

This consultation document and consultation process adhere to the consultation principles issued by the Cabinet Office.

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent and, where relevant, who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions when they respond.

Information provided in response to this consultation may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and UK data protection legislation). In certain circumstances, this may therefore include personal data when required by law.

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, as a public authority, the department is bound by the information access regimes and may therefore be obliged to disclose all or some of the information you provide. In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the department.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will, at all times, process your personal data in accordance with UK data protection legislation and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties. A full privacy notice is included below in Annex D.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will not acknowledge receipt of individual responses.

Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond.

Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed the consultation principles? If not or you have any other observations about how we can

improve the process please contact us via the [complaints procedure](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-local-government/about/complaints-procedure) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-local-government/about/complaints-procedure>).

Annex D: Personal data

The following is to explain your rights and give you the information you are entitled to under UK data protection legislation.

Note that this section only refers to personal data (your name, contact details and any other information that relates to you or another identified or identifiable individual personally) not the content otherwise of your response to the consultation.

1. The identity of the data controller and contact details of our Data Protection Officer.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is the data controller. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dataprotection@communities.gov.uk or by writing to the following address: Data Protection Officer, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF.

2. Why we are collecting your personal data?

Your personal data is being collected as an essential part of the consultation process, so that we can contact you regarding your response and for statistical purposes. We may also use it to contact you about related matters.

We will collect your IP address if you complete a consultation online. We may use this to ensure that each person only completes a survey once. We will not use this data for any other purpose.

Sensitive types of personal data

Please do not share [special category](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/special-category-data/#scd1) (<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/special-category-data/#scd1>) personal data or criminal offence

data if we have not asked for this unless absolutely necessary for the purposes of your consultation response. By 'special category personal data', we mean information about a living individual's:

- Race.
- Ethnic origin.
- Political opinions.
- Religious or philosophical beliefs.
- Trade union membership.
- Genetics.
- Biometrics.
- Health (including disability-related information).
- Sex life; or,
- sexual orientation.

By 'criminal offence data', we mean information relating to a living individual's criminal convictions or offences or related security measures.

3. Our legal basis for processing your personal data

The collection of your personal data is lawful under article 6(1)(e) of the UK General Data Protection Regulation as it is necessary for the performance by MHCLG of a task in the public interest/in the exercise of official authority vested in the data controller. Section 8(d) of the Data Protection Act 2018 states that this will include processing of personal data that is necessary for the exercise of a function of the Crown, a Minister of the Crown or a government department i.e. in this case a consultation.

Where necessary for the purposes of this consultation, our lawful basis for the processing of any special category personal data or 'criminal offence' data (terms explained under 'Sensitive Types of Data') which you submit in response to this consultation is as follows. The relevant lawful basis for the processing of special category personal data is Article 9(2)(g) UK GDPR ('substantial public interest'), and Schedule 1 paragraph 6 of the Data Protection Act 2018 ('statutory etc and government purposes'). The relevant lawful basis in relation to personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences data is likewise provided by Schedule 1 paragraph 6 of the Data Protection Act 2018.

4. With whom we will be sharing your personal data

MHCLG may appoint a 'data processor', acting on behalf of the Department and under our instruction, to help analyse the responses to this consultation. Where we do, we will ensure that the processing of your personal data remains in strict accordance with the requirements of the data protection legislation.

5. For how long we will keep your personal data, or criteria used to determine the retention period.

Your personal data will be held for two years from the closure of the consultation, unless we identify that its continued retention is unnecessary before that point

6. Your rights, e.g. access, rectification, restriction, objection

The data we are collecting is your personal data, and you have considerable say over what happens to it. You have the right:

- a. to see what data we have about you
- b. to ask us to stop using your data, but keep it on record
- c. to ask to have your data corrected if it is incorrect or incomplete
- d. to object to our use of your personal data in certain circumstances
- e. to lodge a complaint with the independent Information Commissioner (ICO) if you think we are not handling your data fairly or in accordance with the law. You can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/> (<https://ico.org.uk/>), or telephone 0303 123 1113.

Please contact us at the following address if you wish to exercise the rights listed above, except the right to lodge a complaint with the ICO:
dataprotection@communities.gov.uk or Knowledge and Information Access Team, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF.

7. Your personal data will not be sent overseas.

8. Your personal data will not be used for any automated decision making.

9. Your personal data will be stored in a secure government IT system.

We use a third-party system, Citizen Space, to collect consultation responses. In the first instance your personal data will be stored on their secure UK-based server. Your personal data will be transferred to our secure government IT system as soon as possible, and it will be stored there for two years before it is deleted.

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1. Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics
(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/estimatesofthepopulationforenglandandwales>)
 2. Regional gross domestic product: all ITL regions - Office for National Statistics
(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/datasets/regionalgrossdomesticproductallnutslevelregions>)
 3. Based on O2 Motion mobile phone data, anonymised and aggregated by O2 and expanded to represent the UK population. Statistic is for total weekday journeys in 2022-2023.
 4. Essex County Council, 'Essex Sector Development Strategy', 2022
 5. Southend-on-Sea City Council, 'Economic Growth Strategy 2024-2028'
 6. Essex County Council, 'Greater Essex Trends', June 2024
 7. Essex County Council, 'Reaching New Heights: Levelling Up Year Two Impact Report 2023/24'
 8. Essex County Council, 'Levelling Up Essex: An Essex White Paper', 2022
 9. Southend-on-Sea City Council, 'Economic Growth Strategy 2024-2028'



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