



EPPING TOWN COUNCIL

EPPING HALL, ST JOHNS RD, EPPING, ESSEX CM16 5JU

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TO ALL MEMBERS of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CGAC)

Cllr B Scruton	(Chairman & Deputy Mayor)
Cllr G Scruton	(Finance Key Member)
Cllr N Avey	(Administration Key Member)
Beverley Rumsey	(Town Clerk) (Non-voting member)

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE** to be held in the Conference Room, Epping Hall, on **Tuesday, 26th October 2021 at 7.30pm** for the purpose of transacting the business as set out in the agenda below.

Beverley Rumsey
Town Clerk
20th October 2021

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies and reasons for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests, along with the nature of those interests, in relation to any item on this agenda.

3 DISPENSATIONS

To receive requests for dispensations from members concerning any item of business on this agenda.

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTION TIME

The Chairman will invite public comments and responses in relation to items on this agenda. *Individuals will be permitted a maximum of three minutes each (total time for this session is limited to ten minutes).*

5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES (Attachment A)

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2021.

6 STATUS OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Governance Advisory Committee met on 23rd February 2021 (Minutes #413-440 of 2020/21 refer) and made the following RECOMMENDATIONS, which were APPROVED at the Ordinary Council meeting on 11th March 2021 (Minute #471 of 2020/21).

- (i) Epping Town Council's Standing Orders should be APPROVED, with the amendments highlighted (~~Attachment L1~~);
- (ii) Epping Town Council's Financial Regulations should be APPROVED, with no amendments;
- (iii) The revised Internal Risk Register should be APPROVED by Council (~~Attachment L2~~);
- (iv) The Asset Register 2021, as per ~~Attachment L3~~, should be APPROVED as a correct record of Council's assets at this time;
- (v) Council should continue to record assets as individual items with a value equal to or greater than £1000 in the Asset Register;
- (vi) The current Complaints Procedure (~~Attachment L4~~) should be RECOMMENDED as a policy of Council;
- (vii) The revised Publication Scheme (~~Attachment L5~~) should be RECOMMENDED as a policy of Council;
- (viii) The revised Health & Safety Policy (~~Attachment L6~~) should be RECOMMENDED as a policy of Council;
- (ix) The revised Equality Policy (~~Attachment L7~~) should be RECOMMENDED as a policy of Council;
- (x) The current Media Policy should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xi) The current Social Media Policy should be RE-APPROVED as a policy of Council;
- (xii) The revised Community Engagement Policy (~~Attachment L8~~) should be RECOMMENDED as a policy of Council;
- (xiii) The revised Data Protection (GDPR) Policy (~~Attachment L9~~) should be RECOMMENDED as a policy of Council;
- (xiv) The situation regarding a Data Protection Officer should be monitored and someone engaged at point of need;
- (xv) The combined role of Cemetery, Market & Administration Officer be APPROVED as a full-time role, at SCP 14-17.

- (xvi) The Town Clerk should receive London Weighting from 1st April 2021 and be backdated the omitted London weighting not received to date.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The statutory basis for this item be **NOTED** as the Local Government Act 1972, sch 12, para 42; Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014, Local Government Act 1972, s111, Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members & Officers) order 2004, Local Government Act 1972, s112, Local Government Act 1972, s101 ;

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

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

7 **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT REVIEW**

Council **APPROVED** a review of policy and governance documents at the Ordinary Council meeting on 8th March 2016 (Minute #478 of 2015/16).

The list of policies for annual review and the dates for review are as follows:

Internal and External Audits: **October 2021** & February 2022

(Dealt with under agenda items 8 & 10)

Internal Audit Programme: **October 2021 (Dealt with under agenda item 9)**

Statement on Internal Control: **October 2021 (Dealt with under agenda item 11)**

Risk Management Statement: **October 2021 (Dealt with under agenda item 11)**

Insurance Inventory: February 2022

Asset Register: February 2022

Internal Risk Register: February 2022

Staffing Terms and Conditions: **October 2021** & February 2022

(Dealt with under agenda item 15)

Standing Orders: February 2022

Financial Regulations: February 2022

Employee Handbook: **October 2021 (Dealt with under agenda item 12)**

Please note these are the current recommended review dates, but legislation may amend the dates if an earlier review is required.

Changing regulations and audit comments may add further items to this list.

The CGAC review process leads to recommendations to Council for amendments to documents to be made.

Committee is requested to **NOTE** the above information.

8 INTERNAL AUDIT

Statutory Basis: The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Committee are requested to **NOTE** that the first work of the internal auditor will be on 13th October 2021. As this worked successfully in 2020, this work will be conducted remotely again.

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

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

9 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAMME (Attachment B)

Statutory Basis: The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Members are requested to **NOTE** that the internal auditing programme was reviewed at the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee meeting on 27th October 2015 and Auditing Solutions Ltd were appointed as Council's internal auditors for a further period of five years from 2015-2020, based on the scope and detail provided. (Approved at the Ordinary Council meeting on 10th November 2015 (Minutes #249 and #267 of 2015/16 refer)).

In 2020, the Town Clerk requested an additional programme of works covering 2020-2025 (this is the same programme structure as 2015-2020). This was APPROVED at the Ordinary Council meeting on 12th November 2020 (Minute #299 of 2020/21), as per **Attachment B**. Council requested that Auditing Solutions Ltd change the particular auditor that covers Epping Town Council's work, halfway through this five-year programme (2022-23).

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

10 EXTERNAL AUDIT (Attachment C)

Statutory Basis: The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Members are requested to **NOTE** the externally audited Annual Return for 2020/21. The AGAR has previously been NOTED by Full Council at the Ordinary Council meeting on 14th September 2021. (Minute #185 of 2021/22).

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

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

11 **REVIEW OF STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL & RISK MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**
(Attachments D & E)

Statutory Basis: The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

Council is required to maintain a Statement of Internal Control (**Attachment D**) and a Risk Management Statement (**Attachment E**) and ensure that each is reviewed annually. The Town Clerk has made additions to both documents.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** these statements and additions and make appropriate **RECOMMENDATIONS** to Council.

12 **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK** **(Attachment F)**

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

The Employee Handbook was reviewed at the Corporate Governance Advisory Committee meeting on 27th October 2020 and one amendment was recommended. This was **APPROVED** at the Ordinary Council meeting on 12th November 2020 (Minute #299 of 2020/21).

The Town Clerk has reviewed the Employee Handbook and makes some minor amendments. The broad content is currently adequate for the staffing situation and structure at Epping Town Council.

RECOMMENDATION: The Employee Handbook should be **APPROVED** with the amendments highlighted at the current time.

Committee is requested to **CONSIDER** this RECOMMENDATION and **DECIDE** what to do.

13 **HALF-YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY POSITION**

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s111

At the Ordinary Council meeting on 12th October 2021, the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer advised that the draft budget, first estimates, would be considered at the Ordinary Council meeting in November rather than October, (Minute #231 of 2021/22) as the key tax base figure omission made it too much of an estimate. November also shows another month of financial activity which should make forecasting more accurate. The tax base figure may not arrive in time for the November meeting (from Epping Forest District Council), so second more accurate figures would also be provided at the December Council meeting as usual. The final budget will continue to be set at the Ordinary Council meeting in January 2022, in line with legislation.

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

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

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

14 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To resolve 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.

15 **STAFF TERMS & CONDITIONS/PAYSCALES** (Attachment G)

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

Epping Town Council staff are governed by the terms of conditions set by the NJC (National Joint Council) (set by NALC and SLCC). The current spine points are included as per **Attachment G**.

Staff received no salary review in April 2021. In the 2021/22 budget, the Town Clerk budgeted for salary increases of approximately 2.7% (to mirror the previous year, so increases were built into the budget). It is very unlikely the salary figures for 2022-23 will be received before the budget has been set in January 2022. The Town Clerk would expect there to be salary increases in 2022/23, because of the general public sector salary freeze in 2021/22.

The Town Clerk has provided an additional document regarding the staff salary cost centres, as per **Attachment G1**, which is reflected in the salary expenditure for 2021/22.

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

16 **STAFFING MATTERS** (Attachment H)

Statutory Basis: Local Government Act 1972, s112

An overall staffing update is provided as per **Attachment H**. The Town Clerk makes one **RECOMMENDATION** as per **Attachment H**.

Committee is requested to **NOTE** this information, **APPROVE** the **RECOMMENDATION** and **DECIDE** if any further action is required at the current time.

(NB: The matters on this agenda have a statutory basis under the Local Government Act 1972 in sections 101 and 111, as well as those already stated.)