

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE GROUP MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2009
(9.00 - 10.30 AM)**

Present: P Haywood (Chief Executive), D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), B Bassington (Chief Internal Auditor), C O'Boyle (Director of Corporate Support Services), R Palmer (Director of Finance and ICT) and I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive)

**Apologies for
Absence:**

Place: Room 1.29, 323 Building, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

73. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 28.10.09

Agreed.

74. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Performance Assessment (Minute 65(c))

Noted that the date for release of the assessment had been changed.

(b) Council Tax/NNDR Arrears – Members of the Council (Minute 65(b))

Noted that some issues relating to Councillors in arrears were still being pursued.

75. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None for this meeting.

76. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Noted.

77. COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT - 2009/10 ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Agreed that the draft report to the Audit and Governance Committee on the Council's Comprehensive Area Assessment (Organisational Assessment) for 2009/10 be approved.

Action:

S Tautz to pursue.

78. CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS - ANNUAL REVIEW 2009/10

Agreed that the draft changes to contract standing orders recommended by the Working Group on Standing Orders etc be approved subject to the following comments:

(a) further check on post designations: Director of Corporate Support Services, Chief Financial Officer and Assistant to the Chief Executive;

(b) update EU tendering thresholds in Contract Standing Order C33 after 31 January 2010.

Action:

I Willett to pursue.

79. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS - ANNUAL REVIEW 2009/10

Noted that draft amendments to financial regulations suggested by the Working Group on Standing Orders had been approved by the Constitution and Member Services Standing Scrutiny Panel.

Noted that a query had been raised subsequently regarding exception reports on contract overspends being submitted only to the Portfolio Holder concerned if the award of the contract had been a Portfolio Holder decision initially.

Agreed that the present contract standing order requirement for such reports to be submitted to the full Cabinet be maintained.

Noted that there had been discussion in the Procurement Steering Group regarding the need to increase the petty cash limit in view of the high cost of administering official orders for low value items via the Marketplace system.

Agreed that the proposal of R Palmer to increase the limit to £50 from £25 be supported.

Agreed that subject to any necessary amendment to Financial Regulations in regard to petty cash, the proposals being submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2009 be supported.

Action:

I Willett to pursue.

80. CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS - COMPLIANCE

(J Gilbert in attendance)

Noted that breaches of Contract Standing Orders C1(10), C4(2) and C5 had been identified in relation to orders for refuse sacks.

Noted that action had now been taken for supply of these sacks as outlined in the report to be tendered in accordance with contract standing orders for the future.

Noted that relevant officers responsible for the breaches of contract standing orders would be required to undertake additional refresher training on the importance of and

compliance with contract standing orders and the use of the Essex Marketplace for budget monitoring purposes.

Agreed that this matter be referred to the Standing Orders Working Group in respect of a new duty for Directors to ensure that quality issues are monitored for the duration of contracts so as to avoid any possible challenge to the quality standards being adopted if these do not accord with the contractual requirement.

Action:

J Gilbert to pursue.

I Willett to raise at Standing Orders Working Group.

81. ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL - GOVERNANCE LIAISON

Noted that an approach had been received from Essex County Council for an officer liaison contact on overview and scrutiny issues raised by County Committees.

Agreed that D Macnab or I Willett should perform this role.

Action:

D Macnab/I Willett to pursue.

82. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(a) Assessments, Reviews, Investigations and Adjudications

Schedule noted.

(b) Nazeing Parish Council – Governance Issues

Report noted.

(c) Standards Committee – Operational Budgets

Noted that the resources available for the Standards Committee in the current year were now fully committed and that growth was likely to be required in next year's budget.

Agreed that a further look be taken at the involvement of the Council in the Essex Monitoring Officer Group and that clarification be sought about how many cases are dealt with by reciprocal arrangements between members of that group.

Action:

I Willett/C O'Boyle to pursue.

83. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - LIMITED ASSURANCE AUDITS

Agreed that a further reminder be issued to Directors that they should be attending the next Audit and Governance Committee should they be listed as having a limited assurance audit in their service areas.

Action:

Directors to note.

84. DATE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

23 December 2009 at 9 am in the Chief Executive's office.

Agreed that dates for 2010 be agreed as follows:

27 January 2010

24 February 2010

24 March 2010

21 April 2010

19 May 2010,

16 June 2010

All to be held at 9 am in the Chief Executive's office.