

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

**WEDNESDAY, 27 JANUARY 2010
(10.30 AM - 12.00 PM)**

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

**Apologies for
Absence:** P Haywood (Chief Executive)

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

97. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 23.12.09

Agreed.

98. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Risk Management Minutes (89, 90, 91)

Noted that a number of risk issues have been discussed at a recent meeting of the Cabinet Committee.

99. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None for this meeting.

100. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Noted.

101. CONDUCTING VERIFICATION VISITS TO GRANT AIDED GROUPS

(C Overend in attendance)

Report and attached guidance agreed subject to the following:

- (a) simplify and shorten text.
- (b) remove elements relating to procurement which may not be wholly relevant at member level.
- (c) reduce the number of separate examples.
- (d) include reference to acceptance of gifts and hospitality pursuant to visit.

ACTION:

C Overend to pursue.

102. ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER - 2008/9

Noted that one paragraph (3.2) had been amended following discussions between the authors and R Palmer.

Report noted.

103. ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2009/10 (DRAFT)

Agreed, subject to an amendment to the third point under Paragraph 3.4 relating to Icelandic Banks where it would be more accurate to refer to UK subsidiaries of Icelandic Banks.

Noted that P Haywood had yet to comment on the document.

Agreed that a report subject to any comments from P Haywood should be submitted to the next Audit and Governance Committee meeting.

ACTION:

R Palmer to pursue.

104. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY)

Draft report on the Council's Prudential Indicators for 2010/11 to 2012/13 and Treasury Management Strategy for 2010/11 agreed.

Noted that the new CIPFA Codes on Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators recommended that various responsibilities relating to these two topics should be within the terms of reference of Audit and Governance Committee and that at the moment these functions were not located there.

Agreed that, subject to the approval of the report, the Constitution and Member Services Standing Scrutiny Panel consider changes to the Constitution to bring this into effect.

ACTION:

(1) R Palmer to submit report to the Audit and Governance Committee.

(2) I Willett to refer report to the Constitution and Member Services SSP.

105. DATA PROTECTION BREACH - TAXI DRIVERS

Letter from the Information Commissioner's Office dated 19 January 2010 noted.

Noted that work was underway between Democratic Services and ICT to answer the various questions posed in the letter by the Information Commissioner about the breach of data protection which occurred and action being taken.

Noted that, although it was likely that the Council would receive adverse publicity for these events and possibly a fine.

ACTION:

R Palmer/I Willett to pursue.

106. MONITORING OFFICER - DRAFT PROTOCOL

Noted that the first draft of the Monitoring Officer Protocol had been submitted to the Constitution and Member Services Standing Scrutiny Panel on 11 January 2010 and had attracted critical comments from a number of members and had been referred back for re-drafting.

CGG received a schedule showing the main changes being requested and that these would now be developed into a further draft.

Agreed that C O'Boyle should give a response to I Willett on her views on these proposals.

Agreed that similar protocols for the Chief Financial Officer and the Head of Paid Service should also be researched so that, if possible, all three Protocols should be submitted at the same time, ensuring that they were integrated and not in conflict.

ACTION:

(1) I Willett to pursue.

(2) C O'Boyle to respond regarding member comments.

107. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(a) Schedule of Complaints Cases

Noted.

Noted that one investigation was still in progress and another was proceeding to adjudication.

Noted that two new complaints were shortly to be referred for investigation.

(b) Nazeing Parish Council – Direction from the Standards Board for England

Noted that the Standards Board had issued a Direction to the Monitoring Officer in regard to various aspects of Nazeing Parish Council's governance arrangements.

Noted that these included a requirement for training in the code, mediation and conflict resolution advice and a review of the Council's Standing Orders and Governance Arrangements.

Noted that the Standards Board for England had requested that the Clerk should be involved in the process and that the Monitoring Officer had until 30 April 2009 to indicate the work being undertaken or due to be undertaken in pursuance of the direction.

Noted that the Standards Board for England had concluded that the interests of Nazeing Parish Council and the local community were not best served by a continuation of complaint investigations.

Agreed that consideration be given to increasing the bid for budget growth for 2010/11 for the Standards Committee budget to cover the cost of the Direction and ongoing complaints case work.

ACTION:

C O'Boyle/I Willett to pursue

R. Palmer/ C. O'boyle to pursue additional budget growth issue..

(c) Mary Marshall, Chairman of the Standards Committee

Noted that Mary Marshall, the current Chairman, had signified that she was intending to step down as Chairman of the Standards Committee from the completion of her current term of office in April next.

Agreed that an item be prepared for the next Council meeting to appoint a Member Panel to interview applicants following the required public advert.

ACTION:

I Willett to pursue.

108. REMUNERATION PANEL - VACANCY

Noted that a further round of advertising had been commenced in relation to the vacancy on the Remuneration Panel.

Agreed that as this item was delegated to the Chief Executive that I. Willett would approach P. Haywood, D Macnab, R Palmer and C O'Boyle would be approached to join I Willett in an Interviewing Panel of 3 persons, subject to availability.

ACTION:

I Willett to pursue.

109. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

24 February 2010 at 9.00 a.m. in the Chief Executive's Office.