

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

**WEDNESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2008
(9.00 - 11.30 AM)**

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

**Apologies for
Absence:**

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

56. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 3.9.08

Agreed.

57. MATTERS ARISING

(a) District and Parish Remuneration Panels – Vacancy (Minute 45)

Noted that interviews will be held on 25 September 2008.

ACTION:

I Willett to report back.

(b) Statutory Statement of Accounts (Minute 52)

Noted that the Council's External Auditors had determined that the Statutory Statement of Accounts for 2007/8 was not subject to material errors but to non-trivial errors which best practice suggested should be reported to the full Council.

Noted that the revised Statutory Statement of Accounts would be submitted to the Council meeting on 25 September 2008.

(c) Westlaw Software – Statutory Research Facility

Noted that the matter had been discussed with the Portfolio Holder concerned and the views of CGG conveyed.

(d) Corporate Risk Register – Update (Minute 51)

Agreed that the Risk Register be reviewed at the next meeting of CGG and the request of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee for an additional risk relating to the shortage of Assistant Directors in Planning and Economy be included in the revised register.

ACTION:

R Palmer to report back.

(e) Waste Management Inspection Report (Minute 53)

Noted that the Council had yet to be formally advised of the receipt of a report on the inspection on the Waste Management Service.

Agreed that the report and a covering item dealing with a response and action plan be submitted to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee at their next meetings.

Agreed that P Haywood would discuss with J Gilbert.

ACTION:

P Haywood to pursue.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None for this meeting.

59. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Noted.

60. NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 187 (TACKLING FUEL POVERTY)

Agreed that the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report be adopted.

Agreed that a minimum sample survey be conducted using only benefits records.

Agreed that relevant Service Directors be required to maintain backup Audit papers on the survey carried out.

ACTION:

S Tautz to pursue.

Service Directors to note.

61. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (15.9.08)

Corporate Executive Forum considered a number of issues which had arisen at the last meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee.

(a) Annual Governance Report (Internal Auditing Standard 260) – Monitoring of Action Plan

Agreed that the various items to be included on the Action Plan be considered at future meetings of CGG.

ACTION:

J Akerman to pursue.

(b) Gifts and Hospitality – Future Monitoring Arrangement

Agreed that, arising from the recent internal Audit studies on gifts and hospitality and remarks made at the Audit and Governance Committee the following steps be taken:

- (a) all registrations of gifts and hospitality be included in bound books rather than loose-leaf sheets and that the books be page numbered sequentially;
- (b) agreed that there should be only one book per service area and that the books should be on the basis of the existing proforma which was being operated;
- (c) that these changes in the completion of gifts and hospitality register be drawn to the attention of the next meeting of the Management Board in order to emphasise the need to avoid any further difficulties of the kind experienced recently.

ACTION:

Service Directors to note.

S Hill to refer to Management Board at its next meeting.

P Maginnis to prepare new registers for each directorate.

(c) Internal Audit Studies – Limited Assurance

Noted that P Haywood would be attending the next meeting of the Committee to discuss concerns with Limited Assurance reports.

62. USE OF CORPORATE LOGO

Noted that the Council's logo appeared to be in use by external organisations in the District but without a corporate policy and a means by which use of the logo can be agreed.

Noted that the Waste Management and Leisure Management Contracts have clear requirements for the use of the logo.

Noted that, in respect of grant aid, it was a condition of funds being made available that the District Council should be acknowledged in publicity material involving the use of the logo.

Agreed that in future the use of the EFDC logo should only be used if the Council or another organisation is contractually committed to its use and that there should be no exceptions to this policy.

Agreed that the EFDC design guide should be revised to take account of this stipulation.

ACTION:

Service Directors to note.

T Carne to pursue.

63. PUBLICATION OF PROSECUTION RESULTS

Noted that a member of the public had complained about publication of personal details of a successful prosecution by the Council.

Noted that a request had been made that the information should not be personalised in this way.

Agreed that there should be no change in the current policy of publishing names of those subject to successful prosecutions by the Council for the following reasons:

- (a) the need for transparency and to demonstrate to the public that prosecutions were genuine and achieve results; and
- (b) to act as a deterrent factor.

Agreed that this complaint showed the need for a publicly available policy in this regard.

Agreed that a policy be prepared and published on the Council's website in the section relating to the National Fraud Initiative.

Agreed that the preparation of a policy be referred to the Website Board for consideration and also the question of how long prosecutions should remain on the website in future.

ACTION:

Service Directors to note.

D Macnab to refer to the Website Board.

64. CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAUX - GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Noted that the Citizens' Advice Bureau in the District was currently amalgamating three branches into one and reducing Council representation to one councillor.

Agreed that once a formal approach was received from the Citizens' Advice Bureau for this revised representation the matter should be discussed with the Portfolio Holder as there were reservations about this reduction in representation bearing in mind the significant funding provided by the Council to the organisation.

ACTION:

I Willett to monitor.

65. WORKING GROUP ON FINANCIAL REGULATIONS - CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS AND DELEGATED AUTHORITIES (MEETING ON 2.9.08)

Agreed that the minutes of the Working Party held on 2 September 2008 be agreed subject to the following amendments to minute 13 (Contract Standing Orders – Provisions for Appointment of Consultants):

- (a) amendment to minute 13(a) to include reference to covering establishment posts as part of the definition; and
- (b) amendment to paragraph (b) to add reference to covering an established post and inclusion in the definition of temporary members of staff of a time limit for recruitment.

Agreed that further research be carried out on the appropriate cut-off point for temporary appointments in relation to the acquisition of employment rights.

ACTION:

I Willett to revise report to members regarding the changes to Contract Standing Orders.

C O'Boyle to research a cut-off point for temporary staffing.

66. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(a) Update on Current Investigation

Noted.

(b) Standards Committee – Additional Parish Council Representative

Noted that the additional Parish/Town Council representative on the Standards Committee had still to be notified;

(c) Reviews Sub-Committee

Noted that a meeting of the Reviews Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee had been convened to hear an appeal by a complainant about a previous decision not to investigate.

67. DRIVER VEHICLE LICENSING CENTRE - COMPLAINT

Noted that the DVLC had formally complained to the Council about irregularities in the use of vehicle registration data.

Agreed that a report be made to P Haywood as a result of discussions with the staff concerned and that if necessary Internal Audit be brought in to investigate the matter in greater detail.

ACTION:

P Haywood to pursue.

J Akerman to note.

68. DATE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Next meeting 22 October 2008 at 9.00 a.m. in the Chief Executive's office.

69. ANY OTHER BUSINESS