

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

**WEDNESDAY, 10 JUNE 2009
(9.00 - 10.55 AM)**

Present: P Haywood (Chief Executive), D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), J Akerman (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

11. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING -13.5.09

Agreed.

12. MATTERS ARISING

None for this meeting.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None for this meeting.

14. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Noted.

15. RECRUITMENT - REPORT TO THE AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

(P Maginnis in attendance)

Draft report agreed subject to the following comments:

- (a) paragraph 9 – add comparison with the Epping Forest District salary level and the arrangements in place to cover for the vacant position;
- (b) include new section relating to “risk management” and implications of staff vacancies in both the text and in the recommendations;
- (c) make reference to long term succession planning being made difficult by vacant posts in references to risk management;
- (d) make reference to the unfavourable state of the labour market which could be protecting the Council from the full effect of vacancies;
- (e) amend “recommendations” in the recommendation (2) to read “observations”.

Agreed that in relation to the Council's policy of achieving budget savings over the next three years, a further discussion be facilitated at CEF/Management Board with directors, making particular reference to the staff vacancy question.

ACTION:

- (1) P Maginnis to revise report.
- (2) I Willett to refer to Management Board.

16. ELECTION - FLY POSTING COMPLAINTS

Noted that as a result of flyposting on highway signs in parts of the District immediately before election day, a number of complaints had been received from political parties seeking prosecutions by the Authority or steps to recover the costs from those responsible.

Noted that the powers available to the District Council in this regard required two days' notice to be given before items were removed and costs recharged.

Noted that Essex County Council Highways had also removed election material from various locations in the District but had decided not to pursue any question about recovery of costs in so doing.

Agreed that in the forthcoming review report on 2009 elections, the Returning Officer include reference to the complaints which have been received, details of the legal requirements and a general warning to political parties that this kind of flyposting was considered unacceptable.

Noted that more than one party had been found to have affixed posters in the manner being complained of.

ACTION:

Returning Officer to pursue.

17. NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE - UPDATE

Draft report agreed subject to further amendments on where investigation on matches should be focused following an initial review.

Agreed that this report be submitted to the September 2009 meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee as part of the quarter 1 monitoring report.

ACTION:

J Akerman/B Bassington to pursue.

18. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Review schedule of current cases noted.

Noted that there were three live cases at present as follows:

(a) Current cases

- (i) EFDC 5/2008 – delayed due to sickness absence in Democratic Services;
- (ii) EFDC 3/2009 – referred for investigation following review by Deputy Monitoring Officer;
- (iii) EFDC 5/2009 – following review case referred for external investigation, combined with EFDC 1/2009/A

ACTION:

C O’Boyle/I Willett/S Hill to pursue.

(b) Standards Committee Budget 2009/10

Noted that in respect of current investigations which were being conducted externally, the Standards Committee budget was fully committed for the remainder of the year and that therefore a report would be prepared by the Monitoring Officer to seek additional funding.

ACTION:

C O’Boyle/I Willett to pursue.

(c) Staffing Cover

Noted that with the absence of G Lunnun from Democratic Services a review was in progress regarding support for the complaints arrangements.

ACTION:

C O’Boyle/I Willett to pursue.

19. MEETINGS OF CABINET MEMBERS, COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND LOCAL MPS

CGG reviewed current arrangements.

20. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT - OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY

Noted that with the absence of G Lunnun from work at the present time, it was necessary that a new officer fulfil the role previously assumed by I Willett (FOI Officer) in adjudicating on appeals about the supply of information.

Agreed that on a temporary basis, the Chief Executive act on appeals against FOI determinations with I Willett conducting the actual collation of information.

ACTION:

I Willett to pursue.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8 July 2009 at 9 am in the Chief Executive's Office.