

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

**WEDNESDAY, 5 AUGUST 2009  
(9.00 - 9.50 AM)**

**Present:** P Haywood (Chief Executive), J Akerman (former Chief Internal Auditor), C O'Boyle (Director of Corporate Support Services), R Palmer (Director of Finance and ICT), G Lunnun (Assistant Director (Democratic Services)) and B Bassington (Chief Internal Auditor)

**Apologies for Absence:** D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive) and I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive)

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

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**35. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 8.7.09**

Agreed.

**36. MATTERS ARISING**

**(a) Audit and Governance Committee (24.9.09) (Minute 26)**

Noted that there were two or three limited assurances in the quarterly report.

**ACTION:**

**B Bassington to check that officers from appropriate Directorates will be in attendance at the meeting to answer members' questions.**

**(b) Grange Farm Trust (Minute 28)**

Noted letters sent to Whiskers and the Adjudicator to HM Land Registry by Foskett Marr Gadsby and Head making it clear that they acted for the Managing Trustees of the Grange Farm Centre Trust Charity for which the Council were the Custodian Trustees.

Noted that C O'Boyle would be writing to the Charity Commission shortly enclosing copies of the anonymous representations regarding the Trust and seeking advice on Trustee briefing.

**ACTION:**

**C O'Boyle to pursue.**

**(c) Council Tax/NNDR Arrears – Members of the Council (Minute 31)**

Noted that there were now two members of the Council in substantial arrears with Council Tax payments and National Non-Domestic Rates.

Noted that letters had been sent to the members concerned advising them that until the debts were cleared they were prohibited from taking part in any discussion

relating to Council Tax and Budgets in respect of any authority to which they had been elected. R Palmer drew attention to the difficulty in monitoring Parish/Town Council Members and indicated that it might be necessary to seek the assistance of the Clerks of those authorities to undertake such monitoring.

Noted that one of the members concerned had attended the Council meeting on 28 July 2009 and had not declared an interest in relation to the items concerning supplementary estimates.

**ACTION:**

**(1) I Willett to check whether the members were in receipt of his letter at the time of the last Council meeting and, if necessary, to remind the member present at that meeting of the requirement to declare interests;**

**(2) R Palmer and I Willett to discuss the monitoring of parish/town councillors.**

**(d) Internal Audit – Partnership Working with External Provider (Minute 32)**

Noted that following consultation with the Leader and the Deputy Leader a report would be submitted to the Cabinet APG in September.

**ACTION:**

**J Akerman/B Bassington to pursue.**

**(e) Access by Councillors to the Offices (Minute 33)**

Noted that following further discussions with the Leader it had been agreed that she would speak to the member concerned and that there was no need for a letter to all members of the Council.

**37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None for this meeting.

**38. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Noted.

**39. GRANGE FARM TRUST - UPDATE**

As reported above under the item above concerning matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

**40. SITA STUDY TOUR - 24/25.9.2009**

(J Gilbert in attendance)

Considered an invitation from SITA UK to attend a Study Tour in France for its Local Authority and Private Sector clients to see and learn about the progress being made in Europe on recycling and waste disposal.

Agreed that the invitation be declined.

**ACTION:**

**J Gilbert to notify SITA.**

**41. AUDIT COMMISSION - NATIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT STUDIES**

Considered a draft report for the Audit and Governance Committee.

Report agreed for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee on 24 September 2009 subject to inclusion in Paragraph 1.5 of "Working Best Together: Managing Local Strategic Partnerships (April 2009)".

**ACTION:**

**S Tautz to revise report.**

**42. STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**(a) Local Assessment Criteria**

Consideration was given to a revised website/public pack guide on how the Standards Committee would deal with a complaint made against a Councillor. Noted that the revised document included new assessment criteria requested by the Standards Committee which would be submitted for separate approval at the next meeting of the Committee.

Revised Guidance approved.

Noted that in future District Councillors subject to a complaint would be advised of the role of Councillor M Cohen as an advocate.

**ACTION:**

**S Hill to publish new guidance.**

**(b) Case Summary**

Noted a schedule of assessments, reviews and adjudications.

Noted that at present costs were being maintained within the approved budget.

**ACTION:**

**C O'Boyle/I Willett to monitor budget and report further if necessary.**

**43. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**(a) Gifts and Hospitality**

J Akerman reported on the audit to be included in the second quarter report to the Audit and Governance Committee. He drew attention to different approaches which had been taken to breaches of the agreed procedure.

Agreed that in the case where no action had been taken at present a letter be sent to the employee concerned drawing attention to the current requirements.

**ACTION:**

**C O'Boyle to send letter to employee and to copy to the appropriate Assistant Director.**

**(b) J Akerman**

P Haywood advised that this would be the last meeting of CGG to be attended by J Akerman.

On behalf of the Group P Haywood thanked J Akerman for his help, assistance and guidance from the inception of the Group and wished him success for the future.

J Akerman acknowledged the thanks.

**44. DATE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Next meeting 2 September 2009 at 9.00 a.m. in the Chief Executive's Office.