

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

**WEDNESDAY, 19 MAY 2010
(9.00 - 10.00 AM)**

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 1.05, First Floor, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex

137. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Noted.

138. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

R Palmer declared an interest in Item 12 (a) (Standards Committee – Complaints, Assessments, Reviews and Adjudications) as he was a complainant in one of the cases.

139. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 21.4.10

Agreed subject to Minute 134 (c) (Standards Committee/Remuneration Panel – Recruitment) be amended by substituting “person” for “period” in the second line of Paragraph 2.

140. MATTERS ARISING

None for this meeting.

141. AUDIT COMMISSION - NATIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT STUDIES

Agreed that, in accordance with the previous request by the Audit and Governance Committee, recent Audit Commission reports be dealt with as indicated below:

(a) “Under Pressure: Tackling the Financial Challenge for Councils of an Ageing Population”

Refer to Local Strategic Partnership.

(b) “The Truth is Out There: Transparency in an Information Age”

No further action – not thought to be relevant to the Audit and Governance Committee.

(c) “Surviving the Crunch: Local Finances in the Recession and Beyond”

Agreed that this report be referred to the Audit and Governance Committee with a suggestion that some of the issues raised in the Audit Commission document should feature in forthcoming financial issues papers for the Council.

ACTION:

- (1) D Macnab to refer report (a) to the LSP.**
- (2) R Palmer to consider report (c) for future financial papers.**

142. ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT - DRAFT

Draft report agreed subject to the following:

- (a) inclusion of further commentary from Deloitte's and discuss with Deloitte's ways of avoiding the delay in the submission of their content in future years.
- (b) Appendix 1 – change the description of levels of assurance in Audit Studies to accord with the classification operated by Deloitte's.
- (c) Appendix 2 – clarify in the text the reference to vacancies.
- (d) include comparison with the previous year in terms of level of performance and achievement of the Audit Programme.

Agreed that the annual report on the effectiveness of the Audit Service be brought to a future Corporate Executive Forum meeting in view of the timescale for submission to the Audit and Governance Committee.

ACTION:

- (1) B Bassington to revise report.**
- (2) B Bassington to refer effectiveness report to early meeting of CEF.**

143. GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Agreed subject to the following amendments:

- (a) Paragraph 3.4 – insert new Portfolio Holder responsible.
- (b) Paragraph 5.3 – amend to "2010/11".

ACTION:

B Bassington to finalise report.

144. INTERNAL AUDIT - QUARTERLY REPORT (JANUARY - MARCH 2010)

Draft Monitoring report agreed.

Noted that a high volume of enquiries and discussions within Audit related to interpretation and operation of Contract Standing Orders.

Agreed that a training need for established staff could still be identified from the number of queries being received and that it was important to address this and also to deal with training for new members of staff.

Agreed that consideration be given to publishing a Guidance Note in the Members' Bulletin so as to ensure that members fully understood the procedures involved.

ACTION:

B Bassington to pursue.

145. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER - UPDATE

Noted that at the last Risk Management Group there had been general approval for the Corporate Risk Register as submitted to this meeting.

Noted that the section relating to executive priorities was now being revised in order to accord with the recent decisions of the Cabinet.

Agreed that in terms of including a new risk in relation to the Olympics in 2012, that the Risk Number 31 (Rating B3) in relation to London 2012 Olympic disruption be incorporated in the Schedule.

Agreed that in relation to Land Charges income and the effect of proposed legal advice concerning charging for environmental information, the existing Risk Number 4 (Category A2) be deemed to cover that issue.

Noted that work was currently being undertaken to link the Risk Register with individual Service Plans.

Agreed that the Schedule should now be submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee for consideration.

ACTION:

R Palmer to revise Schedule and submit to Audit and Governance Committee.

146. PKF ACCOUNTANTS - ANNUAL AUDIT FEE 2010/11

Audit fee submission dated 27 April 2010 approved for submission to the Audit and Governance Committee.

ACTION:

R Palmer to pursue.

147. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(a) Complaints, Assessments, Reviews and Adjudications

Noted.

(b) Nazeing Parish Council – Direction

Noted that an Action Plan pursuant to the direction had now been submitted to Standards for England who had replied by expressing satisfaction with progress to date.

Noted that a meeting will be convened shortly with two external trainers to discuss the delivery of the Action Plan and the various measures required under the direction.

ACTION:

C O'Boyle/I Willett to pursue.

(c) Standards Committee/Remuneration Panels – Recruitment of Independent Members

Noted that, following recent interviews for three candidates in respect of the Standards Committee, two individuals were now being recommended to the Annual Council meeting for appointment.

Noted that interviews in respect of the Remuneration Panels would be held later on the same day.

(d) Code of Conduct/Planning Protocol Training

Noted that a Saturday session was being planned this year for 12 June 2010 as an experiment in securing a higher attendance, particularly for new members.

148. DATE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

23 June 2010 at 9.00 a.m. in the Chief Executive's Office.