

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL – PROTOCOL REGULATING THE DUTIES OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Head of Paid Service is a statutory appointment pursuant to Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. This Protocol provides some general information on how those statutory requirements will be discharged in Epping Forest District Council.

2. The current responsibilities of the Head of Paid Service role rest with the Chief Executive, who should discharge these statutory responsibilities in a positive way and in a manner that enhances the overall reputation of the Council.

3. A summary list of the statutory responsibilities appears in the table annexed to this document. In general terms, the Head of Paid Service's ability to discharge the following duties and responsibilities will depend, to a large extent, on elected members and officers:
 - (a) addressing the staffing needs of the authority;
 - (b) meeting the staffing needs of the Council;
 - (c) the appointment and proper management of the staff.

B WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

4. Having excellent working relations with members and officers will assist in the discharge of the statutory responsibilities of the Head of Paid Service. Equally, a

speedy flow of relevant information and access to debate (particularly at the early stages of any decision-making by the Council) will assist in fulfilling those responsibilities. Members and officers should, therefore, work with the Head of Paid Service to discharge the Council's statutory and discretionary responsibilities.

5. The following arrangements and understandings between the Head of Paid Service, Members and Directors are designed to ensure the effective discharge of the Council's business and functions. The Head of Paid Service will:
 - (a) be alerted by Members and officers to any issue(s) that may become of concern to the Council, including the manner in which the discharge by the Council of its different functions is co-ordinated, the number and grades of staff required for the discharge of its functions, the organisation of the Council's staff and the appointment and proper management of the Council's staff;
 - (b) have advance notice (including receiving agendas, minutes, reports and related papers) of all relevant meetings of the Council at which a decision may be made (including a failure to take a decision where one should have been taken) at or before the Council, Executive, Committee meetings and Sub-Committee meetings (or equivalent arrangements);
 - (c) have the right to attend any meeting of the Council (including the right to be heard and report to the Executive) before any decision is taken (including a failure to take a decision where one should have been taken) at or before the Council, Executive, Committee meetings and Sub-Committee meetings (or equivalent arrangements);

- (d) in carrying out any investigation(s) and exercising any duties have unqualified access to any information held by the Council and to any Officer who can assist in the discharge of the functions;
- (e) ensure that other statutory officers (Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer) are kept up-to date with relevant information regarding the manner in which the Council discharges its various functions, the corporate approach of the Council, the staffing needs of the Council, the organisation of the staff and the appointment and proper management of the staff;
- (f) meet regularly with the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer to consider and recommend action in connection with Corporate Governance issues and other matters of concern described in (e) above;
- (g) report to the Council, from time to time, on the corporate approach of the Council and any necessary or desirable changes following consultation, in particular, with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer;
- (h) in accordance with the statutory requirements, make a report to the Council, as necessary, on the staff, accommodation and resources required to discharge his statutory functions;
- (i) develop a relationship based on respect and trust with the Leader, Deputy Leader and the Chairmen of the Standards, Regulatory, and Scrutiny Committees with a view to ensuring the effective and efficient discharge of Council business;
- (j) develop effective working liaison and relationship with the External Auditor;

(k) in consultation, as necessary, with the Chairman of the Council, the Executive and the External Auditor, defer the making of a formal report under Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 where another investigative body is involved;

(l) have access to an appropriate budget (whether corporate or serviced based) to address any matter concerning the Head of Paid Service's functions.

6. To ensure the effective and efficient discharge of the arrangements set out in paragraph 5 above, Members and Officers will report any breaches of statutory duty or Council policies or procedures and other legal or constitutional concerns to the Head of Paid Service, as soon as practicable.

7. The Head of Paid Service is also available for Members and Officers to consult on any issues of the corporate approach of the Council, staffing needs, appointment and management of staff.

8. To ensure the effective and efficient discharge of this Protocol, the Head of Paid Service will ensure adequate insurance and indemnity arrangements are in place for the same to protect and safeguard the interests of the Council and the proper discharge of the Head of Paid Service role.

9. The Head of Paid Service will record details of any advice given.

Conflicts of Interest

- 10. In the event that the Head of Paid Service acknowledges that a conflict of interest exists on a matter which requires action he or she will not be involved in the consideration of that matter and will make arrangements for the action to be taken by one of the other statutory or another Director.**

Review of Protocol

- 11. This protocol shall be reviewed every two years or more frequently if necessary.**