

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Corporate Governance Group **Date:** Wednesday, 7 June 2006

Place: P. Haywood's Office, Civic Offices, Epping **Time:** 9.00 - 10.35 am

Members Present: P Haywood, J Scott, J Akerman, C O'Boyle and R Palmer

Other Councillors: (none)

Apologies: (none)

Officers Present: I Willett (Head of Research and Democratic Services)

45. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (26.04.06)

Agreed.

46. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Electronic Electoral Pilot (Minute 39(b))

I Willett reported that the Council's bid for abortive costs was now with the Department for Constitutional Affairs and totalled something over £9,000. He reported that the Council had been advised that the DCA were happy with the proposal but Treasury approval was required.

(b) Standards Committee - Chairmanship (Minute 40(6))

I Willett updated the Corporate Governance Group on the current position.

(c) Staff Code of Conduct (Minute 41)

The Group noted that the draft of the proposed Code of Conduct for staff had now been published and sent to staff representatives and will be submitted to the next available meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee.

J Scott raised a few drafting changes he would like to make and undertook to discuss these with T Tidey direct.

ACTION

J Scott to discuss with T Tidey.

47. STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

The Corporate Governance Group considered a draft Corporate Statement of Internal Controls for inclusion in the Statutory Statement of Accounts for 2005/6. The Group agreed the draft and also agreed that the signing of the documents should take place after the Finance and Performance Management Committee on

19 June 2006. In view of forthcoming annual leave, it will be necessary for P Haywood to sign the document on 20 June 2006. It was also agreed that the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs D Collins, should sign the document although she had not been Leader in the year in question.

ACTION

J Akerman to submit to Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee on 19 June 2006.

J Akerman to make arrangements for the signing of the document as indicated.

48. RISK MANAGEMENT

R Palmer presented the Corporate Statement of Risks which was due for consideration at the Finance and Performance Management Committee on 17 July 2006.

The Corporate Governance Group considered the draft in detail and requested the following changes:

- (a) Risk 1 - Agreed that reference to market supplements should be made where these were being paid and that an update was required from the Head of Planning and Economic Development to Management Board about the position.
- (b) Risks 3 and 4 - Recast the wording in more positive terms.
- (c) Risk 5 - Make reference to the Leader of the Council, to the Council and to the Joint Chief Executives, not named individuals.
- (d) Risk 6 and 7(a) - Replace references to "alliance" with "coalition" between the two political groups. Agreed that Risk 6 could refer to a new risk of the existing coalition breaking up, bearing in mind the finely balanced numbers of councillors in the coalition and non coalition sides.
- (e) Risk 19 - Amend wording to refer to a trend which was moving towards an improvement in the situation.
- (f) Risk 20 - It was agreed that the performance of external contracts might change the assessment of risk in any particular service and, it was felt important that these should be reflected in a risk register which would adapt quickly to changes in circumstances. The Group agreed that this process of making the risk register a dynamic document would be assisted by regular reports to the Senior Management Team whereby Heads of Service could update the Risk Statement and that each Management Board meeting should have a standing item to deal with this point.

It was also agreed that the word "established" should be substituted for "working well" coupled with reference to business continuity arrangements which had proved effective in relation to the Waste Management Contract.

Under this heading there should also be reference to the possible re-letting of the Waste Management Contract after the current three month period comes to an end.

- (e) Affordable Housing - Reference to be made to clarification of Estates Management Portfolio Holder.

It was also agreed that throughout the Risk Statement, there should be no references to named individuals, either Heads of Service or Portfolio Holders, but simply the relevant Portfolio titles and Heads of Service designations.

ACTION

R Palmer to finalise Risk Register.

49. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(a) Current Investigations

Noted that of the two current investigations being conducted locally, in one case, a report had now been issued which would shortly be reviewed by the Standards Committee to determine what further action should be taken by way of adjudication. In the other case, the report of the Investigating Officer was expected in the near future and this in turn would be referred to the Standards Committee for review.

(b) Other Current Complaints

It was noted that there were two other complaints regarding District Councillors which were currently being reviewed by the Standards Board for England.

(c) Other Potential Complaints

The Corporate Governance Group received a further report on one other case of a potential complaint concerning a District Councillor which had yet to be fully resolved in terms of submission to the Standards Board for England.

(d) Annual Report 2005/6

I Willett reported that a draft annual report of the Standards Committee would shortly be published.

50. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting should be rearranged for 6 September 2006, before the Management Board's meeting on that date.

CHAIRMAN