

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

**WEDNESDAY, 31 JANUARY 2007  
(9.40 AM - 1.05 PM)**

**Present:** J Scott (Joint Chief Executive) (Chairman) P Haywood (Joint Chief Executive), J Akerman (Chief Internal Auditor), C O'Boyle (Head of Legal, Administration and Estates), R Palmer (Head of Finance) and I Willett (Head of Research and Democratic Services)

**Apologies for  
Absence:**

**Place:** P Haywood's Office, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

---

**83. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING - 20.12.06**

Agreed subject to deletion of the "£" in the third paragraph.

**84. MATTERS ARISING**

None for report.

**85. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None for this meeting.

**86. AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Noted that proposals for the Audit and Governance Committee had now been considered twice each by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee and the Constitutional Affairs Standing Scrutiny Panel and had now been cleared for submission to the Council at its February 2007 meeting.

Noted that further work was required on the constitutional arrangements for the Committee in order to clarify some outstanding issues.

Agreed that a supplementary report from the Corporate Governance Group be submitted to the Council meeting to clarify those constitutional points as follows:

- (a) membership of the Committee: five members (three Councillors plus two co-optees);
- (b) chairmanship/vice-chairmanship – unless the proposed constitution is clear on these aspects;
- (c) audit reports – to be submitted to the Audit Committee with executive summaries to the appropriate Portfolio Holder;
- (d) Audit Plan – new committee to consult the Cabinet Committee and not the Overview and Scrutiny Panel;

- (e) Audit practice – technical aspects of audit practice to be the responsibility of the new Audit and Governance Committee;
- (f) Statutory Statement of Accounts – to be submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee;
- (g) final draft of management letter (possibly including the external Audit Plan) to be submitted to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee but the final version to be submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee at the same time as the Cabinet Committee;
- (h) Audit Commission reports – to be referred to the Audit and Governance Committee;
- (i) relationship with the Standards Committee – amend 1.9(b) of the Constitution of the Audit and Governance Committee for any concerns raised by them to be referred to the Standards Committee;
- (j) Risk – statutory statement to the Cabinet Committee with management issues arising from risk being referred to the Audit Governance Committee;
- (k) Value for Money/Use of Resources Studies – clarify possible conflict with the Overview and Scrutiny Standing Panel by limiting Corporate Governance Committee to audit aspects and not operational matters with an overview of the proper use of Council resources and value for money and service delivery;
- (l) Anti-Fraud Initiative – Audit and Governance Committee to receive annual report (amend paragraph 1.9 of Constitution);
- (m) Exclusion of Overview and Scrutiny members – clarify CIPFA advice and local decision regarding the OS Finance and Performance Management Standing Panel;
- (n) amend Section 1.13 to refer to “advisory” status for pro-rata purposes;
- (o) amend Paragraph 1.17 of covering report to make it clear that the operation of the OS Finance Panel may be affected by the advent of the Audit and Governance Committee and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should review this aspect for its 2007/8 work plan.

Agreed that the following points should be agreed on the operation of the Audit and Governance Committee:

- (a) specific reports to be submitted to appropriate Portfolio Holder when received from the Audit Commission;
- (b) references in the Constitution of the Audit and Governance Committee to “independent” members be amended throughout to “co-opted”;
- (c) external Audit Plan – check whether this is now part of the annual management letter or separately in which case amend the Constitution;

- (d) clarify the pro-rata tabulation in the report covering two options, seven or five members.

Agreed that, in relation to the person specification for the co-opted members of the Audit and Governance Committee:

- (a) the amendments at the meeting be agreed;
- (b) the list of requirements set out for those individuals be reduced as currently they could be a disincentive.

#### **87. CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS ETC. WORKING PARTY**

Noted that the draft contract standing orders and changes to schedule of delegation of officers would be submitted to the Constitutional Affairs Standing Scrutiny Panel on 6 February 2007 and it was planned that this should also be reviewed at the Cabinet meeting on 19 February prior to adoption by the Council on 20 February 2007.

Noted that work on the review of financial regulations was still underway and it was likely that these would be submitted to the Council at its April 2007 meeting for adoption.

#### **88. STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

##### **(a) Adjudication of Complaint**

Noted that a hearing had been held on 18 January 2007 and that the finding of a breach of the Code of Conduct had been confirmed and a request made to the member concerned to apologise to the complainant for inappropriate comments made at a District Development Control Committee.

##### **(b) Independent Member Vacancy – Recruitment**

Noted that work on compiling an information pack, person specification and interview arrangements was currently in progress.

Noted that it was likely that interviews would be held in March 2007 with C O'Boyle and I Willett giving support to the member panel.

#### **89. DATE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Next meeting: 21 February 2007 at 9 am (before Management Board) in P Haywood's office.