



Local Government for Langton Green, Speldhurst, Ashurst and Old Groombridge

**Minutes of a Governance Working Group Meeting held on
Wednesday 30th March 2022 at 7.30pm**

Conducted online via Teams

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Mrs Lyle (Chairman), Barrington-Johnson, Ellery and Pate.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs K Neve – Clerk and Mr C May – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

1. To enquire if anyone present intends to record the meeting

No-one present intended to record the meeting.

2. To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Rowe (prior commitment).

3. Disclosure of Interests

Both the Clerk and RFO declared an interest in items 12a and 12b and withdrew from the meeting during the discussion of these items.

4. Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

5. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on **22nd February 2022** be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Public Open Session

There were no members of the public present.

7. Review of Action Points

The updated Action Points Table had been shared with councillors. The newly updated list of action points, incorporating the additional actions from this meeting, are shown at the end of these minutes.

8. Review of Working Groups

The following change in membership was noted:

Cllr Norton to be included on Amenities, Highways and Planning and taken off Environment.

Cllr Pate to be included on Environment.

Cllr Turner to be temporarily taken off Planning which leaves a vacancy on Planning.

9. Review of Internal Audit

- a) **Check on financial records:** This item was to be renamed “Governance Check”. The Clerk reported that the check had been made on 28th March by Cllr Pate.
- b) **Internal Auditor (IA):** There was nothing new to report since the last meeting. The next audit would be taking place on 20th April.
 - **Risk Assessments** – The Clerk and Cllr Pate were working together to update the existing Risk Assessment document for consideration at a future Governance WG meeting.
- c) **Annual Audit (PKF Littlejohn LLP):** There was no current action to report. The deadline for submission of the approved AGAR was 1st July 2022.

10. Risk Management – insurable risk

- a) **Policy check:** There was nothing new to report.
- b) **Fixed Asset Register:** The Clerk and the Chairman were working together to allocate the fixed assets to each committee and asking them to undertake a review of the assets which fall within their remit for insurance purposes and would report back further.
- c) **Photographic record of assets:** The Clerk confirmed that the photographic record of assets was up to date.

11. Quality Assurance Check

- **Compliance with CCTV Guidance** – The Chairman reported that she was working through the guidelines to ensure compliance. There was no significant risk as the recordings from the CCTV were not used for data processing. A further report would be brought back to a future meeting.

12. Risk Management – working with others

- a) **Staff members:**
 - **Staff Objectives** – The Clerk presented the objectives, which had been agreed with the two Assistant Clerks and Groundsman, for councillors’ information.
 - **Staff Salaries** – The Clerk and RFO withdrew from the meeting during the discussion on this item. After a full and lengthy debate and considering the current salaries, the NALC pay scale equivalents, the current national wage and wage inflation expectations, councillors recommended, subject to Full Council approval, a pay award of 4% from 1st April 2022 for all staff and an additional £1 per hour for CB to bring her salary more in line with the other Assistant Clerk (KH), whilst still maintaining the difference between experience and CiLCA qualification. Post meeting, it became apparent that there was a difference in understanding regarding CB's pay award, which will be put to Full Council for determination. Councillors further recommended that the overall pay award be kept under review and if necessary, any changes required would be backdated to 1st April 2022.
 - **Review of Office Layout** – The Clerk presented options for new office furniture to accommodate a proper workstation for the Assistant Clerk (CB). It was recommended that, subject to Full Council approval, three new interconnecting desks at a cost of £215 each be purchased plus new office chairs to fit into the current office space and to comply with health and safety.
 - **New laptop for Assistant Clerk (CB)** – The Clerk presented options for laptops following the advice of Cllr Curry. It was agreed that, subject to Full Council approval, the Dell Business laptop with 16” screen at a cost of £634 would provide the best overall package based on the type of work that it was required to be undertaken. In addition, it was recommended that a separate monitor and keyboard be purchased together with any necessary docking station.
 - **Review of Office Hours** – It was agreed that the current office hours should continue.
- b) **Pensions:** The Clerk and RFO withdrew from the meeting during the discussion on this item. After a full and lengthy debate, councillors recommended that, subject to Full Council approval,

the employer pension contribution remain at its current rate of 5% for this year and an increase to 7% be budgeted for next year, subject to Full Council approval.

- c) **Security:** As agreed at the last meeting, the Clerk had sought further quotations for the upgrade of the current CCTV system, covering the carpark and pavilion (maintained by Sunstone) and the replacement of the non-functioning office CCTV which is on a different system and not under a maintenance contract, to be incorporated into the Sunstone system. The two companies approached both declined to submit a quotation as they were not registered to purchase IDIS CCTV which would be required to achieve the work. There were no other local IDIS providers. Sunstone have since reduced their quotation as SPC are long standing customers and because further information had come to light regarding access to carry out the work. Councillors agreed to recommend to Full Council, the approval of the new quotation of £3,751.30.
- d) **Payroll Provider:** The Clerk reported that the payroll transfer to M:Power was complete.

13. Risk Management – self-management

- a) **IT:** As agreed at the last meeting, the RFO had sought further information from Rialtas about their cloud service for the bookkeeping system. Currently, there was only one access account and a further account was required so that both the Clerk and the RFO were able to have access and to work from home as well as in the office. The cost was £19 per user per month. It was agreed to recommend that for the first year, there would be two named accounts which would then be reviewed. Cllr Ellery requested, in addition, a read only account as Chairman of the Finance Committee.
- b) **Policies** – It was agreed to recommend to Full Council that the following policies be approved with the changes as indicated:
- **CCTV** – To include the new CCTV camera at the Pavilion
 - **Freedom of Information**
 - **Complaints**
 - **Budget Virement**
 - **Lone Worker**
 - **Documents, Records and Correspondence and Document Retention List**
 - **Recording of Meetings** – This is a newly created policy

14. Items for information

There were no items for information.

The meeting closed at 9.27pm.

Chairman

Governance Action Points

Action No.	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
2/21	Establish a set of relevant Risk Assessments	Chairman, Clerk and Committee Chairmen. Training undertaken. Previous RA in Folder.	30/11	Clerk and Cllr Pate to work on this for consideration at a future meeting.
3/21	Contact the insurance company for their advice on the review of the value of the fixed asset register for insurance purposes	Clerk - Email sent to insurers. Reply in Folder. Work in Progress.	30/11	In progress
11/21	Arrange Electrical Inspection Certificate for Pavilion (paid for out of Pavilion budget/RRIM)	RFO	30/11	Carry Over
1/22	Update Standing Orders – Full Council and the Terms of Reference for approval by Full Council: Governance, Internal Audit, Air Traffic	Clerk	22/2	In progress
5/22	Contact builders who worked on the Pavilion to find out how much it would cost to rebuild	Clerk	22/2	Carry Over
11/22	Update Committee Membership	Clerk	30/3	
12/22	Next Governance Check	Cllr Barrington-Johnson	30/3	
13/22	Report on Compliance with CCTV Guidance	Cllr Lyle/Clerk	30/3	
14/22	Subject to FC approval, notify Payroll of Staff Pay Award and new pension contribution	RFO	30/3	
15/22	Subject to FC approval, organise the purchase of the new office desks, chairs, laptop, monitor, keyboard	RFO/Clerk	30/3	
16/22	Subject to FC approval, accept the quotation from Sunstone Systems for the upgrade of the CCTV system and to take over the office CCTV system	Clerk	30/3	
17/22	Subject to FC approval, engage the services of Rialtas cloud for the bookkeeping system (two named accounts plus a read only account)	RFO	30/3	
18/22	Subject to FC approval, update the following policies on the council's website: CCTV; Freedom of Information; Complaints; Budget Virement; Lone Worker; Documents, Records and	Clerk	30/3	

	Correspondence and Document Retention List and Recording of Meetings			
2/22	Financial Reconciliation Check	Cllr Barrington-Johnson	22/2	Complete
3/22	Add photographs of two new laptops to the Fixed Asset Register	Clerk	22/2	Complete
6/22	Set up rota of Cllrs to carry out Quality Assurance Check (Governance Check)	Clerk To be decided at each Governance Meeting	22/2	Complete
5/22	Prepare a report on staff salaries and pensions for consideration at the next Governance WG meeting	Clerk/RFO	22/2	Complete
6/22	Investigate cost of new office equipment and lap top and present proposals for consideration at next Governance WG meeting	Clerk/RFO	22/2	Complete
7/22	Seek comparison quotation for the replacement CCTV system	Clerk	22/2	Complete
8/22	Report back on the Rialtas Webinar re Cloud system and submit proposals	RFO	22/2	Complete
9/22	Finance Committee to review the Grant Awarding Guidelines then bring back to Governance	Clerk/RFO	22/2	Complete
10/22	Arrange next meeting towards the end of March	Clerk	22/2	Complete