



**MEETING OF THE  
FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Date: Tuesday 11 February 2025

Time: 7.00pm

Location: Chigwell Council Parish Offices, Hainault Road, Chigwell, IG7 6QZ

Members present:

Cllr Celina Jefcoate

Cllr Faiza Rizvi

Cllr Tosin Amuludun#

Cllr Elliot Costa

Cllr Jamie Braha

# for part of the meeting

Members of the Public and Councillors were asked to **NOTE** that in accordance with Standing Orders 3 (i) and the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, photographing, recording, broadcasting, transmitting or otherwise reporting the proceeding of a meeting may take place.

Councillors were asked to **NOTE** that in the exercise of their functions, they must take note of the following: equal opportunities; crime and disorder; human rights; health and safety and biodiversity

**1. FG144/24 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

**2. FG145/24 - ANY OTHER ABSENCE**

None

**3. FG146/24 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**4. FG147/24 - MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held 14 January 2025 were **APPROVED**

**5. FG148/24 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**7.16pm** - Cllr Amuludun joined the meeting

## **6. FG149/24 - FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS AND BANK RECONCILIATIONS**

The proposed payments for February were **APPROVED**

The proposed card payments for January were **APPROVED**

Cllr Braha **REVIEWED** and **SIGNED** the bank reconciliation to 31 January

The delegated approval of the report detailing salary, superannuation and tax payments for February 2024 was **NOTED** - Councillors noted the overtime and queried the working hours. It was **AGREED** the F&G committee would ask the new HR provider to review the overtime procedure.

**Action:** Chair of Personnel to speak to staff regarding hours and overtime protocol for approval.  
HR provider to receive brief from F&G detailing matters requiring consideration

## **7. FG150/24 - FINANCE/ACTING PROPER OFFICER'S REPORT**

The RFO reported as. Follows:

Nest pension set up for new employees

**Action:** OL to advise MHR of relevant employee and pension details, Nest to contact employee with relevant details

Bank closure - Barclays - deadline in end of March to close Barclays account. Two paid in cheques from 23/24 still not credited. Bank visit did not achieve this. Complaint resulted in compensation which was deemed not satisfactory.

**Action:** OL to write to bank, countersigned by two signatories, confirming account closure. OL/Admin to draft formal complaint to ombudsman re: loss of cheques by Barclays

Bank closure - HSBC - request for closure pending

Cambridge Bank - request to transfer to higher interest account made

**Action:** OL to following up

Existing gas contract for VH expires April 2025. Account to be moved to current supplier of all other premises

**Action:** OL to report new unit price for gas to F&G (March)

H&S provider - RFO recommendation was **AGREED** that Worknest are retained for H&S only (Option 2) subject to confirmation of what services are provided:

**Action:** OL/TS to ask Worknest for personalised work plan detailing annual services provided to CPC. H&S officer (TS) to review and draft CPC work and compliance plan to go alongside Worknest services, including annual schedule of documentation and compliance checks for F&G (March)

Staff contracts - new employee contract to be provided and signed and copies of all signed contracts scanned and stored digitally

**Action:** New HR provider to be briefed by F&G re: governance requirement for contract provision, data handling and compliance

The matter of outstanding monies due to the Council was raised

**Action:** the RFO to agree proposed payment plan with one creditor and Cllr Costa to assist in drafting Letter before Action to second creditor

The risk of possible unauthorised access to Council premises by a third party was highlighted by the RFO. It was **AGREED** to improve surveillance and security of premises.

**Action:** RFO/Admin to ask Chubb to advise on status of door regarding permanent lock.

## **8. FG151/24 - CEMETERY CAPACITY, FORECAST REVENUE AND CLOSED BURIAL GROUND**

To receive a written report from the Registrar regarding capacity for burials and cremations, forecast revenue for 24/25, 25/26 and 26/27 based on current trends and capacity including viability of creating additional rose beds for memorials

The committee received a report detailing historic numbers of burials and interments.

The RFO highlighted that CPC Cemetery Regulations (2015) notes cremated remains plots are purchase for 10 years and may be extended in units of five years on payment of a fee as detailed in the CPC Cemetery Fees document. The Grant of Rights for the Garden of Remembrance shall extend for seven years and at the expiry of that period, the grant may be renewed for the appropriate fee (see Cemetery Fees document). F&G **NOTED** that there is no record of the appropriate renewal fees being assessed or renewal notices issued. A **HIGH RISK** to the Council that funds due to it may not have been received was identified. It was **AGREED** the Registrar would be required to prioritise the assessment and collection of historic renewals with immediate effect.

**Action:** Chair of Personnel to advise the Registrar of the following after the next staff meeting:- The Registrar is tasked to immediately to issue notices of renewal for cremated remains 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 plus GoR renewals for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 as a matter of urgency. So achieve this, the Registrar should update Scribe and all relevant records accordingly for these periods. The Registrar to report details of response to notices of renewal (no. of renewals/ revenue received) and proposed process to manage non renewal and non responses and any appropriate timescale in writing ahead of F&G (March). The Registrar to then issue notice of renewal for previous periods and is tasked with updating Scribe and all relevant records accordingly. The Registrar to advise when Exclusive Rights of Burial (graves) did/will fall due and is tasked with updating Scribe and all relevant records accordingly.

The matter of risk to the Council and best value for money was raised and deferred to discussion in the closed session as it was considered not in the public interest for the matter to be discussed in open forum.

To receive a report from Cllr Braha regarding the exact area proposed for closure, any outstanding burials, any capacity for future cremations and general condition of the burial ground at St Mary's

Cllr Braha reported that the area available was not clear but that EFDC had confirmed they would take over the responsibility for the closed burial ground with no liability to CPC. The committee **AGREED** this to be the best course of action

**Action:** to notify St Mary's there was no objection to this

## 9. FG152/24 - BUDGET 2025/26

The 2025/26 budget with no changes made was approved by Full Council on January 18th (minute item 174/24) and the agreement of the precept request of £325,416 (an increase of 4% on 2024/25) was **NOTED**

## 10. FG153/24 - VICTORY HALL

The committee heard an update from Cllr Braha regarding progress. A further quotation from another supplier for the replacement kitchen was required; Cllr Braha advised the reasons for this would be discussed under item 17 (Financial Incident Report). The matter of the hub usages by volunteers was discussed and it was **AGREED** the days and times of current usage should be formally agreed by Full Council. It was **NOTED** that, while CPC offers support to the Community

Hub in the form of grants and access to premises, it is operated by Limes Farm Community Group and other volunteers. These volunteers do not carry out work at the Community Hub on behalf of CPC. Any proposed Community Hub usage expansion should be considered, formally agreed and documented.

**Action:** A third supplier to be sought. Existing days and times of current usage to be reviewed ahead of being formally agreed by Full Council. Admin to provide list of existing days and times of use to F&G (March).

#### 11. FG154/24 - POLICY REVIEW

The Climate Change, Communications and Volunteer policies were approved

**Action:** to be adopted as draft and to be presented to Full Council for formal adoption

#### 12. FG155/24 - SALE OF BUSES

Cllr Costa advised on the considered value of the buses and is was **AGREED** he would communicate with both EFCT and Essex County Council (via Cllr Lee Scott) with regard to the sale of the buses by 31 March 2025.

**Action:** Cllr Costa to contact Cllr Scott and EFCT regarding agreed price

#### 13. FG156/24 - MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD OR FOR DISCUSSION WITH NO DECISION

Committee to receive written progress report from Registrar regarding renewals position

Committee to receive written report of H&S advisor regarding internal and external tasks, identifying gaps/duplication and setting out compliance process

Management of identified risk due to proposed staffing changes to be reviewed

Disposal of buses to be actioned by 31 March

Existing use of community hub and criteria to be considered

Risk Register to be reviewed

#### 14. FG157/24 - DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 11 March 2025 at 7.00pm

#### 15. FG158/24 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

Members **CONSIDER** and **AGREED** the following motion proposed by the Chair:

“That the public and the press be excluded from the meeting, the Council believing that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be discussed.”

#### 16. FG159/24 - GOVERNANCE MATTER

Councillors received an update regarding governance, risk and process and **AGREED** further matters to be submitted for review to external provider. The committee **AGREED** appropriate steps in necessary to mitigate risk to the Council if necessary

**Action:** Relevant documentation submitted to third party service provider Risk and alternative option(s) to be considered and costed in order best value can be demonstrated and risk to council

adequately mitigated by proposals (for F&G March). F&G to propose a special motion to reconsider the previous resolutions if necessary.

## 17. FG160/24 - FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE INCIDENT LOG 🖐️

The following incidents were raised and it was **AGREED** incident reports should be added to the Incident Log and investigated as appropriate with mitigation suggested

The matter of data security

**Action:** OL to implement committee resolution with Haypex

The matter of sharing of council documents with a third party

**Action:** Incident report to be completed. OL to submit incident report to third party for consideration

The matter of communication from a supplier

**Action:** OL to ensure incident report is completed by staff member. Supplier contract suspended pending review of incident report. CJ to notify EFDC as per policy. Staff action commended and recorded as appropriate