



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

**Minutes of a Governance Working Group Meeting held on
Wednesday 27th April 2022 at 7.30pm**

Conducted online via Teams

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

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

The Clerk requested to record the meeting for the purposes of writing the minutes and the Working Group agreed. The recording would be deleted once the minutes of this meeting have been approved and signed by the Chairman.

2. To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence

There were none.

3. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

4. Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

5. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on **30th March 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

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Council had previously assigned some committees as working groups to enable electronic meetings to continue. At the December Full Council meeting it had been agreed that these WGs should continue for another 6 months with a review at the annual meeting in May as recommended by the Governance WG.

A lengthy discussion took place and councillors agreed that WGs should revert to committees and meet in person with the exception of the Environment WG, which would be reviewed in 6 months' time to decide whether that would also move to a committee set up. Cllr Barrington-Johnson volunteered to join the Amenities Committee on a temporary basis to replace Cllr Turner who was not able to attend in person meetings.

RESOLVED – to recommend to Full Council that all working groups revert to committee status, with the exception of the Environment Working Group which would be reviewed in 6 months' time.

9. Review of Internal Audit

- a) **Governance Check:** The Clerk reported that the governance check had been completed by the Internal Auditor when he had carried out his bi-annual audit on 20th April. The next check would be carried out by Cllr Barrington-Johnson.
- b) **Internal Auditor (IA):** The IA had attended the office on 20th April and had carried out his bi-annual audit which included checking the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). He had completed page 3 and signed the AGAR. The RFO reported that the Internal Auditor was retiring, and he would be looking to recommend the appointment of a new Internal Auditor in due course.
- c) **Annual Audit (PKF Littlejohn LLP):** Councillors checked the Annual Governance Statement (page 4 of the AGAR) and were satisfied that effective controls were in place. They then further checked the figures on page 5 and **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that the AGAR be signed at the May Full Council meeting.

10. Risk Management – insurable risk

- a) **Policy check:** There was nothing new to report.
- b) **Fixed Asset Register – distribution of valuation tasks.** The Clerk reported that the list of assets would be allocated to each of the committees to re-evaluate the assets they were responsible for. The Clerk and Cllr Barrington-Johnson would re-evaluate the assets which fell under the responsibility of Governance.
- c) **Photographic record of assets:** The Clerk confirmed that the photographic record of assets was up to date.

11. Quality Assurance Check

- a) **Compliance with CCTV guidance:** The Chairman reported that she was continuing to work through the guidelines to ensure compliance and would circulate these to councillors after seeking clarification from the Clerk on the current CCTV set up. There may be amendments required to the CCTV and Retention of Documents Policy as a result.
- b) **Statement of Internal Control:** The Clerk presented the Statement of Internal Control (SIC) for approval. This was a document recommended by the IA and was to be updated annually as part of the year-end documents for his review **RESOLVED** that the SIC be recommended for adoption by Full Council.

- c) **Risk Assessments:** The Clerk reported that Cllr Pate had reviewed the previous Risk Assessments document which was incomplete and presented the updated document to councillors. Cllr Pate explained how the document operated showing the hazard, the existing internal controls, the risk score, further mitigation required and when and who was responsible. He confirmed that there were no high red risk alerts and reminded councillors that this is a “live” document that is always under review and subject to change. There were two further amendments made regarding play equipment and financial loss. **RESOLVED** that Full Council be recommended to adopt the Risk Assessments as amended.

12. Risk Management – working with others

- a) **Staff members:** There was nothing new to report.
- b) **Pensions:** There was nothing new to report.
- c) **Security – CCTV:** The Clerk presented the new contract for final approval, which the working group were happy with.

13. Risk Management – self-management

- a) **Committees – to review:** It was agreed to review the committees after the May Full Council meeting once the new Chairman and Vice-Chairman had been elected. However, Cllr Soyke would replace Cllr Turner on the Planning Committee on a temporary basis and Cllr Pate would join the Environment Working Group, filling the vacancy left by the resignation of Cllr Myles.
- b) **To review the Employee Code of Conduct:** The Clerk presented the Employee Code of Conduct for its annual review. No changes were recommended. **RESOLVED** – That Full Council be recommended to approve the Employee Code of Conduct.

14. Items for information

Cllr Pate raised the issue of management of meetings and asked Chairmen of working groups to make sure they announce anyone joining online meetings other than the members of the committee. He reiterated the need to discuss only items on the agenda.

The meeting closed at 8.53pm

Chairman

Governance Action Points

Action No.	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
11/21	Arrange Electrical Inspection Certificate for Pavilion (paid for out of Pavilion budget/RRIM)	RFO	30/11	Carry Over until end of Summer
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	Will be done after May FC
12/22	Next Governance Check	Cllr Barrington-Johnson	30/3	11 May Internal Audit did last one
13/22	Report on Compliance with CCTV Guidance	Cllr Lyle/Clerk	30/3	In progress
15/22	Subject to FC approval, organise the purchase of the new office desks, chairs, laptop, monitor, keyboard	RFO/Clerk	30/3	In progress
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	In Progress
19/22	Delete the recording of the meeting once the minutes have been approved and signed by the Chairman	Clerk	27/4	
20/22	Governance Checks to be carried out as follows: May - Cllr Barrington-Johnson June - Cllr Ellery July - Cllr Mrs Lyle August - Cllr Rowe September - New Chairman	Clerk to send reminders	27/4	
21/22	Look to engage the services of a new Internal Auditor	RFO	27/4	
22/22	Allocate fixed asset list to each relevant committee	Clerk	27/4	
23/22	Value the value of assets which falls under Governance	Clerk/Cllr Barrington-Johnson	27/4	
24/22	Display Statement of Internal control on website, subject to FC approval	Clerk	27/4	
25/22	Update the Risk Assessment document with the amendments made at the meeting for FC approval	Clerk/Cllr Pate	27/4	
26/22	Subject to FC approval, update the Employee Code of Conduct on the council's website	Clerk	27/4	