



EAST PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

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AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES: of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 15th July, 2024 at 19:00 at East Preston Infant School, Lashmar Road, East Preston

PRESENT: Councillors Lisa Duff, Elizabeth Linton, Glyn Mathias (Chairman), Rick McElroy, Steve Toney and Steven Wilkinson

ALSO: Clerk to the Council, Simon Cross

ABSENT: Councillor Christine Bowman

The meeting opened at 19:02.

Following the Annual Meeting of the Council on 13th May and the appointment of chairmen to the council's other committees, the membership of the committee was Cllrs Bowman, Duff, McElroy and Wilkinson with one vacancy. As Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council respectively, Cllrs Toney and Linton were entitled to attend and vote at meetings of this committee.

In advance of the meeting, the Clerk had written to all committee members letting them know Cllr Mathias had volunteered to fill the vacancy on the committee. The Clerk also informed committee members Cllr Mathias had also volunteered to chair the committee. No committee members had volunteered to stand as either chairman or vice-chairman.

517/24 COOPTION OF AN ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER FOR THE YEAR 2024/25

Cllr Mathias volunteered to join the committee as there was a vacancy.

The committee AGREED unanimously to accept Cllr Mathias's offer.

518/24 APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2024/25

Cllr Mathias was appointed unopposed.

As a second teller alongside the Clerk, Cllr McElroy confirmed all six councillors present had voted.

519/24 APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2024/25

Cllr McElroy volunteered and was appointed unopposed.

As a second teller alongside the Clerk, Cllr Linton confirmed all six councillors present had voted.

520/24 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

An apology and a reason for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Bowman (ill).

521/24 PERSONAL AND/OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

522/24 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No members of the public were present.

523/24 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The committee's Terms of Reference had been circulated as an appendix to the Supporting Papers.

The committee AGREED unanimously no changes were required at this time.

524/24 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S STANDING ORDERS

The following report was circulated in advance of the meeting:

Standing Orders

Committee is asked to complete the annual review of the council's Standing Orders.

The Standing Orders were last reviewed and adopted by the committee on 11th December 2023, at which point they were changed to bring them into line with the Model Standing Orders published by NALC in April 2022 (Minute 1047/23). They are version 2022.1.

At the time of writing, I am proposing no changes.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

9th July 2024

The current Standing Orders had been recirculated electronically with the Supporting Papers for the meeting.

The committee AGREED unanimously no changes were required at this time.

525/24 INTERNAL AUDIT – YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2024

The following report was circulated in advance of the meeting:

Internal Audit – 2023/24

On behalf of the council, committee is asked to consider the final Internal Audit report for the year ending 31st March, 2024.

Andy Beams of Mulberry & Co. visited on 15th May. His report was electronically circulated to all councillors on 29th May, and noted at the Full Council meeting on 3rd June (Minute 373/24).

Andy's report will be recirculated electronically with the Supporting Papers for this meeting.

The committee AGREED unanimously to defer this item to the committee’s next meeting.

525/24 INTERNAL AUDIT – YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2025

The following report was circulated in advance of the meeting:

Internal Audit – 2024/25

On behalf of the council, committee is asked to select two committee members to meet with the Internal Auditor on 23rd October.

Andy Beams of Mulberry & Co. has booked to visit the council on 23rd October to carry out his interim internal audit for the year-ending 31st March 2025. Clause 5.8 of the committee’s Terms of Reference states, “To carry out spot checks on the council’s financial systems, particularly where these have been recently changed in order to give council early warning of problems which the council’s auditors may consider significant. Committee to nominate two members per year to sit with the Internal Auditor during the interim Internal Audit (usually around October) to carry out such spot checks in conjunction with the Internal Auditor”.

In addition to carrying out a couple of spot checks, this gives a couple of committee members a chance to have a direct conversation with Andy about anything which may be worrying either party. Any councillors who commit to this meeting now, it is understood circumstances may change on either side.

The committee unanimously ACCEPTED the offers of Cllrs Mathias and McElroy to meet with the internal auditor.

526/24 LEASES WORKING PARTY

The following report had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

Leases Working Party

Committee is asked to receive any update from the Leases Working Party.

According to an informal meeting with the General Secretary of East Preston & Kingston Bowls Club, the council is due a letter from the club’s solicitor imminently.

At some point, the working party and/or the committee may wish to start thinking about a fallback position in case no agreement is reached in time for renewal in 2025.

The Clerk had no further updates.

527/24 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL PLAN

The following report had been circulated in advance of the meeting:

Council Plan

On behalf of the council, Cllr Wilkinson has agreed to review the Council Plan adopted in December 2021. As he has mentioned in other meetings, he is hoping to bring

the 2022 Council Plan and the 2012 East Preston Action Plan together into one document. He will give any updates to this meeting. I am fairly sure this is waiting on me.

Simon Cross – **Clerk to the Council**

10th July 2024

Cllr Wilkinson advised the meeting one of the objectives of the Council Plan had moved on considerably with the successful public meeting held to discuss the Roundstone Level Crossing. Cllr Wilkinson said the meeting had shown the council in a good light and interested residents had been able to have their say with major stakeholders. He hoped there would be a more focussed follow-up meeting. The only downside had perhaps been the unacceptable behaviour of a very small number of members of the public.

Cllr Wilkinson confirmed he and the Clerk would sit down and work on the Council Plan before the next committee meeting.

528/24 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11TH MARCH 2024

The draft Minutes had been circulated to all councillors on 18th March, asking for any suggested amendments by 20th March. None were received.

The committee AGREED the Minutes could be signed as a true record of the meeting held on 11th March. Cllr Mathias duly completed this task.

529/24 UPDATES ON MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

There were no updates not covered earlier in the meeting.

530/24 URGENT MATTERS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Nothing was raised.

531/24 MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT MEETING (18TH NOVEMBER)

Nothing was suggested.

The Meeting closed at 19:18.

Chairman: *Cllr Glyn Mathias*

Date: **18th November 2024**

(END)