

A meeting of the **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON** on **WEDNESDAY, 18 MAY 2005** at the conclusion of the meeting of the Elections Panel and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

APOLOGIES

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

To elect a Chairman of the Panel.

2. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Panel held on 23rd and 30th March 2005.

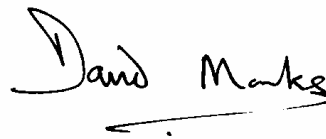
3. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to personal and/or prejudicial interests and the nature of those interests in relation to any Agenda item. Please see Notes 1 and 2 below.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Panel.

Dated this 10th day of May 2005

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Monk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chief Executive

Notes

1. *A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District –*
 - (a) *the well-being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, a partner, relatives or close friends;*
 - (b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*
 - (c) *any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £5,000; or*

(d) *the Councillor's registerable financial and other interests.*

2. *A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard the Member's personal interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.*

Please contact Ms Christine Deller, Democratic Services Manager, Tel No. 01480 388007/e-mail: Christine.Deller@huntsdc.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Panel.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website – www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk (under Councils and Democracy).

If you would like a translation of Agenda/Minutes/Reports or would like a large text version or an audio version please contact the Democratic Services Manager and we will try to accommodate your needs.

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit and to make their way to the base of the flagpole in the car park at the front of Pathfinder House.

Agenda Item 2

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL held THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARYS STREET, HUNTINGDON on Wednesday, 23rd March 2005

PRESENT: Councillors I C Bates, P J Downes,
T V Rogers, L M Simpson, C J Stephens,
I P Taylor and R G Tuplin

18. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 8th December 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19. STATE OF THE DISTRICT DEBATE

(Councillor Holley was in attendance at the invitation of the Chairman for the consideration of this Item)

Pursuant to Minute No 11, the Panel gave consideration to a report by the Director of Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the outcomes of consultation with Members and investigations into potential alternative arrangements for the State of the District Debate.

After considering the issues involved, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Council's Constitution be amended to refer to an Annual State of the District Address by the Leader, a response by Leader(s) of the Opposition and a single oral contribution by other Members of the Council; and
- (b) that suitable wording be submitted to the next meeting for consideration as part of the Panel's deliberations on the review of the Council's Constitution.

20. RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

With the aid of a report by the Director of Commerce and Technology (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel considered a proposed risk management model, associated risk categories and action notes. Having noted the recommendations contained in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment report relating to risk 'appetite', it was

RESOLVED

that the basis for assessing risk, the risk level categories and associated action notes and the allocation of levels to the risk grid as set out in Annex 1, Annex 2 and paragraph 2.5 to the report now submitted be adopted.

21. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE - INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2005-06

The Panel received a report by the Director of Commerce and Technology (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was appended the Internal Audit and Assurance Plan 2005/06. Having noted the methodology by which the number of days allocated to an audit was determined, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

22. COMPLAINTS

The Panel received a report by the Director of Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) containing an analysis of internal complaints and a summary of complaints determined by the local government Ombudsman. Having being informed of the procedure for handling complaints internally, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

23. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

A report by the Head of Policy (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) containing details of the process designed to ensure the Council addressed those matters contained in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan, which fell within the remit of the Panel, was received and noted. Members also were informed of the areas on which the Council was likely to be assessed during the next Assessment. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

24. SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PANEL

Members noted that a special meeting of the Panel would be held at 6pm on the 30th March 2005.

Chairman

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL held at the council chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon on Wednesday, 30th March 2005.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates - Chairman
Councillors P J Downes, T V Rogers,
L M Simpson, C J Stephens and R G Tuplin

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor I P Taylor.

25. REVIEW OF COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

By reference to a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel undertook the annual review of the Constitution. The Panel were reminded of the procedure for the review in which the Cabinet and all Panels had been offered the opportunity to comment collectively on those aspects of the constitution which affected their terms of reference. Members had also been invited also to submit comments individually and Chief Officers and Heads of Service similarly had been requested to highlight issues which had arisen based on practical experience of the operation of the Constitution.

The Panel discussed the frequency with which the Constitution was reviewed. Having undertaken a review each year since its introduction in 2000 and given that changes could be made at anytime, Members agreed that in future the Constitution should be reviewed comprehensively at biennial intervals. Otherwise and having considered the issues raised in the report, the Panel agreed to:

RECOMMEND

- (a) that with regard to Article 15, Paragraph 3 (a), the following words be added after "Monitoring Officer" - "Proposals for changes may be considered at any time, but a comprehensive review will be undertaken in alternate years, beginning with the municipal year 2007/08."
- (b) that the following words be added after paragraph (i) of Section 4 of Article 12:
 - "(j) Deputy Monitoring Officer - in the absence or at the direction of the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer, the Head of Legal and Estates shall act as Deputy Monitoring Officer."
- (c) that the following words be added after paragraph (e)

of Section 5 of Article 12:

“(f) Deputy Chief Finance Officer – in the absence of the Director of Commerce and Technology and Chief Finance Officer, the Head of Financial Services shall act as Deputy Chief Finance Officer.”

- (d) that Paragraph 12 of the Council Procedure Rules (Standing Orders) be deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following text -

“12 ANNUAL STATE OF THE DISTRICT ADDRESS

12.1 PROCEDURE

The Chairman will invite the Leader to address the Council at it's autumn meeting on the State of the District.

12.2 RESPONSE

The Chairman will invite the Leader (s) of the opposition to respond to the address.

12.3 DISCUSSION

The ensuing discussion in which a Member may speak once and to which only paragraphs 11.4, 11.12 and 11.13 of the Rules of Debate will apply, will be chaired by the Chairman.”

- (e) that oral questions be retained on the Agenda for meetings of the Council at which the item on the Annual State of the District Address is tabled;
- (f) that any changes to the Constitution with regard to Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules be deferred pending the outcome of the Panel's review of existing arrangements;
- (g) that suggestions with regard to the introduction of:
- ◆ a facility to enable the Chairman of an Overview and Scrutiny Panel to invite individuals in the public gallery to speak at meetings;
 - ◆ arrangements for the appointment of substitute members; and
 - ◆ a public forum at full Council meetings

– be not supported.

- (h) that, subject to a variation to the limits on budget transfers to £50,000 for revenue budgets and £100,000 for capital budgets and the clarification of procedures to require project appraisals for new

schemes proposed in the Medium Term Plan, and for changes to approved schemes of a non-technical nature, the amended Code of Financial Management as appended to the report now submitted be approved.

- (i) that the revised Code of Procurement as appended to the report now submitted be adopted.
- (j) that the provisions contained in the Employees' Code of Conduct relating to sponsorship be retained but that further recommendations with regard to possible amendment of the Code be deferred; and

It was also –

RESOLVED

that the position with regard to the desirability of Members serving on the Development Control and Licensing and Protection Panels and/or the Licensing Committee receiving appropriate training in those roles be commended albeit that it cannot be imposed as a mandatory requirement.

26. HOUSING BENEFIT COMPLAINT - AWARD OF COMPENSATION

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Revenue Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on a complaint against the Council by a member of the public with regard to the assessment of applications for housing benefit and the terms of a compensatory payment approved as a consequence thereof.

Chairman

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