

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held in Meeting Room 1, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 6 December 2007.

PRESENT: Mr D L Hall - Chairman
Councillors R S Farrer and G S E Thorpe.
Messrs P B Boothman and G Watkins.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors P J Downes, I R Muir and T D Sanderson and from Messrs M Lynch and D MacPherson.

27. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23rd October 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

28. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

29. USE OF RESOURCES JUDGEMENTS 2006/07

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) in response to a requirement highlighted by the Audit Commission in their Use of Resources Judgement 2005/06 for "an assessment of the Standards of Ethical Conduct across the organisation".

To comply with the requirement identified in KLOE 4.3 (Key Line of Enquiry), Members noted the outcome of the annual survey of Code of Conduct complaints by type, locality and outcome and the training activity which had been undertaken or had been planned for the future. Having regard to the details of the seven cases which had been reported in 2007, the Committee commented on the usefulness of the presentation and asked whether a similar analysis could be undertaken with effect from the introduction of the ethical standards regime in 2001. Similarly, the Committee requested the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer to consider, initiating a register to record Code of Conduct enquiries received from Clerks and Councillors and the paragraph of the Code to which the enquiry had related. Other than these comments and as there did not appear to be any commonalities in the cases considered by the Board which required to be addressed specifically, it was

RESOLVED

that the content of the report be noted.

30. CODE OF CONDUCT - STANDARDS BOARD NOTIFICATION

The Committee received and noted a report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the decision of the Standards Board for England not to take any further action in relation to allegations made against Councillors serving on Catworth and Earith Parish Councils.

31. TRAINING - UPDATE

A report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising the response received from District Councillors and town and parish Councillors to the training sessions held on the Code of Conduct since the introduction of the new Model Code in May. Overall, Members expressed satisfaction with the response of town and parish Councils but it was suggested that the Monitoring Officer might consider the possibility of offering a session on the Code in the north of the District early in the New Year. Similarly, it was suggested that a further session could be arranged to which the twelve District Councillors who had not yet received training might be invited. Having requested that details of the session for Godmanchester Town Council be circulated to Members, the Committee

RESOLVED

that the response to the training activity undertaken by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer on the new Code of Conduct be noted.

32. CODE OF CONDUCT - FACT SHEETS

Members received and noted the content of two fact sheets produced by the Standards Board for England on the sections of the Code of Conduct relating to bullying, lobby groups and declarations of interests (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book).

33. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next ordinary meeting of the Committee would be held at 4pm on Thursday 6th March 2008.

Chairman