

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held in the Chief Executive's Meeting Room, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 17 January 2007.

PRESENT: Mr D H Bristow – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite and I R Muir and  
Messrs D L Hall and D MacPherson.

### **35. PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL ISSUES**

The Chairman introduced Members of the Committee and stated the purpose of the proceedings.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

No declarations of interest were received.

The Committee noted that although Mr Willcock had resigned as a Parish Councillor, he had been invited to attend the meeting. Having been advised that Mr Willcock had returned his papers for the hearing and indicated his intention not to co-operate further with the investigation, it was agreed that the meeting should proceed in his absence.

The Committee agreed that there was no reason to exclude the public from the meeting.

### **36. LOCAL AUTHORITIES (CODE OF CONDUCT) (LOCAL DETERMINATION) REGULATIONS 2003**

The Committee noted the procedure for the hearing of cases under the Local Authorities (Code of Conduct) (Local Determination) Regulations 2003.

### **37. LITTLE PAXTON PARISH COUNCIL - ALLEGED BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT**

#### **Former Parish Councillor J Willcock**

(In attendance were Mrs S Dean, complainant, Mrs J Gellatly, Clerk to Little Paxton Parish Council and Ms C Deller, Investigating Officer).

The Chairman invited the Investigating Officer to present her report. In so doing, the Investigating Officer explained that given the detailed correspondence and agreed interview notes which formed part of her report she did not intend to call any witnesses. In the light of Mr Willcock's resignation the Investigating Officer added that the first of her recommendations may no longer be considered appropriate.

Members than asked the Investigating Officer a number of questions in relation to her findings.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs S Dean addressed the Committee on the reasons for her complaint and was then asked a number of questions by Members. The Committee then questioned Mrs J Gellatly, Clerk to Little Paxton Parish Council and invited her to explain her role on the Parish Council and to comment on her practice for the recording of interests declared by Members of the Parish Council.

In determining that they had sufficient information on which to make a finding, the Committee withdrew into private session.

At the conclusion of their deliberations, the Chairman announced that the Committee was satisfied that former Parish Councillor J Willcock had failed to disclose a personal interest by virtue of his property ownership at meetings of Little Paxton Parish Council held on 4th May, 2nd June and 7th July 2005 contrary to paragraphs 7(i) and 8 of Little Paxton Parish Council's Code of Conduct. The Committee ordered that former Councillor J Willcock be censured.

Details of the decision are attached at Appendix A hereto.

The Committee considered whether any further recommendations should be made arising from their preceding deliberations and following discussion and whilst there was no suggestion that the Parish Council had acted inappropriately, it was

#### RESOLVED

that Little Paxton Parish Council be offered the opportunity to receive further training from the Monitoring Officer on the Code of Conduct and ethical standards to seek to avoid further problems of the nature which had arisen as part of the complaint.

Chairman