

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held in the Cabinet Room, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 31 January 2008.

PRESENT: Mr D L Hall – Chairman.

Councillors Mrs B E Boddington, P J Downes, R S Farrer, I R Muir, T D Sanderson and G S E Thorpe.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor J D Ablewhite, P B Boothman, M Lynch, D MacPherson and G Watkins.

34. MINUTES

Subject to the inclusion of Councillor Mrs B E Boddington's apology for absence, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6th December 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

36. CONSULTATION ON ORDERS AND REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE CONDUCT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS IN ENGLAND

Members considered a report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) requesting the views of the Committee in response to a consultation paper published by the Department of Communities and Local Government entitled "Orders and Regulations Relating to the Conduct of Local Authority Members in England".

The Committee were advised that, principally, the consultation had focused on local authority standards committees becoming responsible for assessing allegations of misconduct against Councillors and had made suggestions as to how the regime could operate via appropriate regulations and orders under the Local Government Act 2000, as amended.

Referring to the proposed responses to the sixteen questions posed by the consultation paper, the Committee welcomed the suggestion that, in one off circumstances, it might be appropriate to establish joint arrangements with other authorities within the County boundaries but accepted that this should not be formalised given the additional resources that might be required to lend support to neighbouring authorities on an ongoing basis.

In terms of the response to question 16 and given the indication that there was to be a separate consultation on further amendments to the Code of Conduct, the Committee were strongly of the view that the proposed implementation date for the revised conduct regime should be 1st September and not 1st April 2008 to enable local authorities sufficient time to make the arrangements necessary to implement the changes proposed by the Government.

Subject to the aforementioned comment, the Committee

RESOLVED

that the responses drafted on behalf of the District Council, by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer, to the consultation paper "Orders and Regulations Relating to the Conduct of Local Authority Members in England" be approved for submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

37. NEXT MEETING

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

Chairman