

A meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** will be held in **ROOM CVSO1A, CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2011** at **4:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

APOLOGIES

Contact

1. **MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 4)

**CDeller
388007**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2011.

2. **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 items – please see Notes 1 and 2 below.

3. **REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

(a) **Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee**

The Sub-Committee has met on 21st October and 3rd November 2011.

At the first meeting –

- the Sub-Committee re-visited an earlier case involving a former Member of Upwood and The Raveleys Parish Council which it had referred for investigation. In the light of new information, the Sub-Committee agreed not to take any further action to pursue the investigation but asked that the allegation be referred to, as appropriate, in the event that any further complaint is submitted under the current code of conduct.
- the Sub-Committee decided to take no further action in a case which had been self referred by a Member of the Standards Committee. The Sub-Committee considered that the action taken by the Member was that of a reasonable person in the circumstances which had been presented.

On 3rd November –

- the Sub-Committee considered a complaint involving a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council. The Sub-Committee referred the complaint to the Monitoring Officer for

other action. The Monitoring Officer subsequently secured an apology from the Councillor concerned and an undertaking from him to pursue local issues on behalf of the complainant without further delay.

Three further complaints will be considered by the Sub-Committee on 29th November and the outcome in each case will be reported by the relevant Chairman.

(b) Review Sub-Committee

The Review Sub-Committee met on 14th November 2011 to consider a decision previously made by the Referrals Sub-Committee about the conduct of a Member of St. Ives Town Council. The Review Sub-Committee decided to uphold the original decision not to take any action on the complaint.

(c) Standards (Consideration and Hearing) Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee has not met since September.

4. LOCALISM ACT AND NEW STANDARDS REGIME

**C Meadowcroft
388021**

- (a) Paper presented by the Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Pages 5 - 12)
- (b) Press Release issued by the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS) dated 27th October 2011 (Pages 13 - 14)
- (c) Preliminary Draft Code of Conduct - example published by ACSeS (Pages 15 - 20)

5. TRAINING UPDATE

**C Deller
388007**

Since the last meeting, the Monitoring Officer has presented training on the Code of Conduct to Members of Yaxley and Farcet Parish Councils at a session held on 15th November 2011.

Thirteen Members were in attendance including one Councillor from Bretton Parish Council (Peterborough).

6. RECENT CASES OF INTEREST (Pages 21 - 24)

**C Meadowcroft
388007**

In a recent Upper Tribunal Case of MC v Standards Committee of LB Richmond, comments were made by Judge Ward about the meaning of the phrase "acting as a representative of your authority" in paragraph 2 (1) (b) of the Code of Conduct.

As these comments could have serious implications for the interpretation of Members' activity on blogs, twitter and other internet sites, 'Standards for England' have revised their quick guide to blogging. The changes made to the guide are relatively minor but reflect the comments made by the Judge that 'official capacity' should make reference to the conduct of the Member that amounts to acting etc. as a representative of the Authority.

Copy of the revised guide to blogging and details of the original determination are enclosed.

7. **SURVEY OF PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONDUCT IN PUBLIC LIFE 2010** (Pages 25 - 28)

**C Meadowcroft
388021**

The findings of a national survey of public attitudes towards the standards of conduct of public office holders in the UK have recently been published. Although not directly related to standards of conduct in local government, the perceptions of the public to standards in public life generally may be of interest to the Committee. A copy of the Executive Summary is enclosed.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of the Committee will be held at 4pm on Thursday 1st March 2012 in the Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St. Mary's Street, Huntingdon.

Dated this 23 day of November 2011



Head of Paid Service

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, their family or any person with whom they had a close association;*
 - (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 £25,000; 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 C 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 Committee.

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

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.