

A meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** will be held in **ROOM CVSO 1B, CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST. MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2013** at **4:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

A G E N D A

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 27th June 2013.

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary or other interests in relation to any Agenda Item. See Notes below.

3. DCLG GUIDANCE - OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY ON PERSONAL INTERESTS - IMPACT ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT (Pages 7 - 30)

Report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services enclosed.

4. ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH STANDARDS ALLEGATIONS UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS (Pages 31 - 42)

Report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services enclosed.

5. UPDATE ON CODE OF CONDUCT AND REGISTER OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (Pages 43 - 50)

To consider the up-to-date position on the adoption of a Code of Conduct by Town and Parish Councils and the receipt and publication of registration of interest(s) forms on behalf of District and Town and Parish Councillors.

Report by the Head of Legal & Democratic Services enclosed.

6. UPDATE ON CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

Since publication of the Committee's Bulletin in September, the Monitoring Officer has, after consultation with the Independent Persons, resolved four complaints (Nos 75, 80, 81 and 82) involving Members from Huntingdonshire District and St Neots Town Councils. Three of the four complaints concerned alleged conduct around the County Council elections in May 2012. It was decided that no further action was appropriate in each case. One case (No 83) is still outstanding pending the receipt of further information. Formal

Decision Notices in each case can be found on the District Council's website at the following link – [Reviews of Complaints by Independent Person](#).

7. TRAINING UPDATE

Local Training

Since the last meeting in June and largely in response to the notice placed in the Parish Alert reminding Clerks of the opportunity that existed for Parish Councils to receive “free” Code of Conduct training, the Monitoring Officer has conducted four sessions over the Autumn at Needingworth, Hilton, Old Weston and Woodhurst. Preliminary arrangements also have been made for a session at Perry Parish Council in January. In total, the sessions have attracted 45 participants and have, in addition to the parishes in which the training was located, involved Councillors or Clerks from Alconbury, Bluntisham, Earith, Hemingford Grey and Pidley Cum Fenton. It is also the intention to publicise the Perry date to neighbouring parishes to generate further interest. All sessions have been well received and been followed by the receipt of appreciative emails from the respective Parish Clerks. The Deputy Independent Person attended the session at Hilton.

The Monitoring Officer continues to provide informal advice to town and parish Councillors and clerks on request.

Joint Training

A training session on the Code of Conduct, pre determination and bias was held in conjunction with South Cambridgeshire District Council at South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne on 3rd October 2013. The training was led by Peter Keith Lucas from Bevan Brittan Solicitors. Five Members of the Committee and both Independent Persons were able to attend the very informative session.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on Thursday 6th March 2014 at 4pm in the Civic Suite, Pathfinder House.

Dated this 27day of November 2013



Head of Paid Service

Notes

1. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- (1) *Members are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and unless you have obtained dispensation, cannot discuss or vote on the matter at the meeting and must also leave the room whilst the matter is being debated or voted on.*

(2) A Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest if it -

(a) relates to you, or

(b) is an interest of -

(i) your spouse or civil partner; or

(ii) a person with whom you are living as husband and wife; or

(iii) a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners

and you are aware that the other person has the interest.

(3) Disclosable pecuniary interests includes -

(a) any employment or profession carried out for profit or gain;

(b) any financial benefit received by the Member in respect of expenses incurred carrying out his or her duties as a Member (except from the Council);

(c) any current contracts with the Council;

(d) any beneficial interest in land/property within the Council's area;

(e) any licence for a month or longer to occupy land in the Council's area;

(f) any tenancy where the Council is landlord and the Member (or person in (2)(b) above) has a beneficial interest; or

(g) a beneficial interest (above the specified level) in the shares of any body which has a place of business or land in the Council's area.

Other Interests

(4) If a Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest then you are required to declare that interest, but may remain to discuss and vote.

(5) A Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest where -

(a) a decision in relation to the business being considered might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing of you or a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the council tax payers, rate payers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the authority's administrative area, or

(b) it relates to or is likely to affect any of the descriptions referred to above, but in respect of a member of your family (other than specified in (2)(b) above) or a person with whom you have a close association

and that interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest.

2. Filming, Photography and Recording at Council Meetings

The District Council supports the principles of openness and transparency in its decision making and permits filming, recording and the taking of photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. It also welcomes the use of social networking and micro-blogging websites (such as Twitter and Facebook) to communicate with people about what is happening at meetings. Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Council and available via the following link - [filming, photography and recording at council meetings.pdf](#) or on request from the Democratic Services Team. The Council understands that some members of the public attending its meetings may not wish to be filmed. The Chairman of the meeting will facilitate this preference by ensuring that any such request not to be recorded is respected.

Please contact Ms C Deller, Democratic Services Manager, Tel No 01480 388007/e-mail: Christine.Deller@huntingdonshire.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/Panel.

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.