

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 Wednesday, 25 June 2003.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs B E Boddington, P J Brant, J A P Eddy, J D Fell, A Hansard, C W Looker and J Taylor

IN ATTENDANCE: Messrs D H Bristow, D L Hall, D McPherson and G Watkins

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was received on behalf of Mr D Pattisson.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Councillor P J Brant be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor P J Brant in the Chair.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26th March 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Councillor A Hansard be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

4. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS AND TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

The Committee noted the appointment by Council of Messrs D H Bristow, D L Hall and D Pattisson as Independent Members on the Committee and welcomed to the meeting Messrs D McPherson and G Watkins nominated by the Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils as representatives of town and parish councils in the District.

5. LOCAL AUTHORITIES (CODE OF CONDUCT) (LOCAL DETERMINATION) REGULATIONS 2003

Further to Minute No. 02/6, the Committee received and noted a report by the Democratic Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) describing the content of the Local Authorities (Code of Conduct) (Local Determination) Regulations 2003 which were to come into force on 30th June 2003.

Members were reminded that they had responded to a Government

Consultation Paper relating to the local investigation and determination of misconduct allegations and that the Regulations, published under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2000, reflected the contributions made by the Committee and over 1,000 respondees during the consultation process.

The Committee discussed in general terms Part II of the Regulations relating to the consideration of matters referred to them by the Ethical Standards Officers (ESOs) at the Standards Board for England and the sanctions that could be imposed should the Committee conclude that there had been a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct. It was also noted that guidance was awaited from the Standards Board to assist the Committee in the application of the Regulations in practice and that further regulations were anticipated which would provide a framework for ESOs to refer matters to Monitoring Officers for investigation locally.

6. ALLEGATION OF MISCONDUCT

By reference to a report by the Executive Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Committee noted that the Standards Board for England had agreed not to take any further action in relation to an allegation of misconduct against a St. Ives Town Councillor.

7. APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS

The Committee were apprised, via a report by the Executive Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) of applications received from Great Gransden and Grafham Parish Councils and Huntingdon Town Council for dispensations to allow Members of those Councils to discuss and vote on matters relating to particular circumstances in their parishes.

Having been reminded of the provisions of the Relevant Authorities Standards Committee (Dispensations) Regulations 2002 and being satisfied that approval was required to prevent the transaction of town/parish Council business from being impeded, the Committee

RESOLVED

that dispensations to speak and vote on matters relating to specific community premises in their parishes be granted to Great Gransden and Grafham Parish Councils and Huntingdon Town Council for the period ending 30th April 2007.

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because the business to be transacted relates to the recipient of a service provided by the Council and that persons financial affairs.

9. HOUSING BENEFIT COMPLAINT: AWARD OF COMPENSATION

A report by the Head of Revenue Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the annexe to the Minute Book) regarding the outcome of an investigation following a complaint made under the Council's internal complaints system.

In accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation, the Committee noted the action which had been taken, after consultation with the Chairman, to resolve the matter and to ensure that the circumstances that had led to the original complaint would not reoccur.

Chairman