

## 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 Thursday, 16 September 2004.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs B E Boddington, P J Downes, Mrs K P Gregory, A Hansard, and I R Muir.

Messrs D H Bristow, D L Hall and D MacPherson.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J A P Eddy and J Taylor and Messrs D Pattison and G Watkins.

### 12. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Mr D H Bristow be elected Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

**Mr D H Bristow in the Chair.**

### 13. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1st July 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 14. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Members received and noted a report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding those decisions taken by the Council at their meeting held on 21st July 2004 which had implications for the Standards Committee.

Following the establishment of the new Corporate Governance Panel, the Committee noted amendments to its terms of reference and, in particular, the omission of those duties which did not relate to the Member's Code of Conduct. In addition, the Monitoring Officer reported that the District Council's Independent Remuneration Panel would meet on 4th November 2004 to consider a number of issues relating to members allowances including the payment of a separate co-optees allowance to an Independent Member who becomes Chairman of the Standards Committee.

### 15. MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT: STANDARDS BOARD NOTIFICATIONS

*(Councillor P J Downes declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item by virtue of his involvement in one of the cases referred to in the Standards Board notifications and left the meeting*

*for the duration of the discussion thereon.)*

By reference to a report by the 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 decided not to take any further action in relation to allegations made against one District Councillor and five Councillors serving on St Ives Town Council.

Referring to Section 112 of the Local Government Act 2003 and the new entitlement for complainants and other interested parties to contest a decision made by the Standards Board for England, the Monitoring Officer reported that the complainant in the case of the District Councillor had appealed against the decision taken by the Ethical Standards Officer of the Standards Board and that the case was currently under review.

Notwithstanding the outcome, the Committee were pleased to note that the case appeared to have been dealt with promptly which had suggested an improvement in the processes for the investigation of complaints by the Standards Board for England.

**16. APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS - COUNCILLORS ACTING AS TRUSTEES**

Further to Minute No. 13 of their meeting held on 10th September 2003, the Committee considered a report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding responses received to representations made to the Charity Commission, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Local Government Association in respect of the circumstances which might arise for those Members of local councils required to act as trustees of community facilities.

It was reported that details of the responses received had suggested that the Committee had raised an issue which potentially could have implications for local councils nationally and which would be pursued separately by the Charity Commission and Local Government Association. As the Charity Commission had offered to assist local councils in Huntingdonshire to establish new trustee arrangements to manage conflicts of interest should they arise, it was

RESOLVED

that the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer be requested to advise Town and Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire of the guidance available to them from the Charity Commission and the offer by the Commission to review the constitutions of any local charitable trusts in their parishes.

**17. TRAINING AND ADVICE**

A report by the Head of Administration was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) describing the training activity to be organised by the Monitoring Officer during September, 2004.

Having indicated their availability to attend the various training events planned, the Chairman and Members reported on their attendance at the Standards Committees Conference held in Birmingham on 13th and 14th September 2004. Having acknowledged press reports indicating that the Local Determination Regulations could come into effect shortly, the Committee

**RESOLVED**

that arrangements made to fulfil the Committee's obligations in terms of training and advice on issues relating to the local framework and Code of Conduct be noted.

Chairman