

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, 8 March 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor T D Sanderson – Vice Chairman in the Chair

Councillors J D Ablewhite,
Mrs B E Boddington, P J Downes, R S Farrer,
D L Hall, D MacPherson, I R Muir,
T D Sanderson, G S E Thorpe and G Watkins

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Mr D H Bristow

38. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 7th December 2006 and 17th January 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

39. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None were declared.

40. CONSULTATION ON AMENDMENTS TO THE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS

Further to Minute No. 27 of their meeting held on 9th March 2006, the Committee considered a report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) inviting Members to comment by 9th March 2007 on the content of a consultation paper published by the Department of Communities and Local Government regarding a proposed new Model Code of Conduct.

The Committee noted that the Government had invited comments by way of eight questions contained in Annex B to the consultation

paper. Having considered a suggested response to each question drafted by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer, the Committee

RESOLVED

that the content of the suggested responses to the consultation paper "Amendments to the Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members" be approved and conveyed to the Department of Communities and Local Government on behalf of the District Council.

41. CODE OF CONDUCT - STANDARDS BOARD NOTIFICATIONS

The Committee 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 the decision of the Standards Board for England not to take any further action in relation to allegations made against Councillors serving on Huntingdon Town and Houghton and Wyton Parish Councils.

42. CASE ALERT NOS. 2 AND 3

Further to Minute No. 8 of the meeting held on 24th July 2006, the Committee received and noted details of cases reviewed by the Standards Board for England in Case Alert Nos 2 and 3 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

Particular attention was drawn to the judgement made in Case Alert No 3 which suggested that a more restrictive view should be taken of that part of the Code of Conduct relating to the actions of a Member in

his/her private life. It was noted that the outcome of this case had been reflected in the proposed new Model Code of Conduct.

43. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

A report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the expiry of the current term of office of the Independent Members of the Committee and the need to consider arrangements to commence the process to appoint three Independent Members for a new four-year term of office to take effect from 16th May 2007.

Having been reminded of the qualifying criteria and mindful of the short period during which candidates would have to be short-listed, interviewed and appointed, the Committee

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer be authorised to commence the process for the appointment of Independent persons to serve on the Standards Committee with effect from commencement of the municipal year 2007/08; and
- (b) that the Council be recommended to appoint a Members' Panel comprising Councillors Mrs B E Boddington, T D Sanderson and G S E Thorpe and Mr G Watkins (or their representatives) to short-list, interview and recommend candidates for appointment as Independent Members of the Standards Committee

for the Municipal Year commencing 16th May 2007.

44. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next ordinary meeting of the Committee would be held at 4pm on Thursday 5th July 2007.

Chairman