

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the SPECIAL MEETING of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 14 June 2007.

PRESENT: Councillors J D Ablewhite,
Mrs B E Boddington, R S Farrer, I R Muir,
T D Sanderson and Messrs P Boothman, D L
Hall, D MacPherson and G Watkins.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors P J Downes and G S E Thorpe and Mr M Lynch.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Mr D L Hall be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Mr D H Bristow, the Retiring Chairman, attended the meeting to explain to the Committee, the reasons for his decision to stand down as Chairman, thanked Members and Officers for their support and friendship during his term of office and wished Mr Hall, newly elected Chairman, well in his new post. The Committee further

RESOLVED

- (a) that the appreciation of Members for Mr Bristow's hard work and dedication, whilst Chairman of the Committee be placed on record and best wishes conveyed to him for the future; and
- (b) that the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer be requested to convey these sentiments formally to Mr Bristow on behalf of the Committee.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8th March 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Councillor T D Sanderson be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

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

The Committee noted the appointment by Council of Messrs P Boothman, D L Hall and M Lynch as Independent Members for a four-year term commencing 16th May 2007 and the nomination by the Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils of Messrs G Watkins and D MacPherson, representing Town and Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire, to serve on the Committee until May 2011.

6. THE NEW CODE OF CONDUCT

Further to Minute No. 40 of their meeting held on 8th March 2007, 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 the publication of the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 which came into force on 3rd May 2007.

The Committee were advised that the new Order specified the conduct now expected of Members and co-opted Members of the Council and that the new Code of Conduct was contained in the Schedule to the Order. The Deputy Monitoring Officer described the changes to the Code and confirmed that should a case arise which involved a breach in the period prior to the adoption of the new Model Code, that case would be investigated under the terms of the 2001 Order.

Having regard to the process for adoption and having acknowledged the duty now placed on the Monitoring Officer to organise training sessions for District, Town and Parish Councils, the Committee indicated their preference for individual visits to Parish Councils or area based training rather than general sessions at Pathfinder House. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that, the Council be recommended to adopt with immediate effect, in place of the existing code, the new Model Code of Conduct contained in the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 as set out in Appendix A to the report now submitted; and
- (b) that the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer be authorised to compile a programme for the training of District, Town and Parish Councillors on the requirements of the new Code.

7. LETTER FROM STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND

In responding positively to the contents of a letter received from the Chairman of the Standards Board for England (a copy of which is

appended in the Minute Book) seeking the support of the Council in implementing the new Code of Conduct, the Committee expressed some disquiet at the ability of the Council to commit sufficient resources to provide adequate support for undertaking the new responsibilities involved in the handling of alleged breaches locally.

8. DOWN TO DETAIL: 6TH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

Having been acquainted by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer with details of the Annual Assembly of Standards Committees Conference to be held at the International Conference Centre, Birmingham on 15th and 16th October 2007 (a copy of the relevant report is appended in the Minute Book), the Committee

RESOLVED

that Messrs D L Hall and P Boothman, Independent Members be authorised to attend the Annual Assembly of Standards Committee to be held at the International Conference Centre, Birmingham on 15th and 16th October 2007.

9. 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