

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 14 May 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor P A Swales – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, M G Baker, I C Bates, J T Bell, Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell, E R Butler, K J Churchill, Mrs K E Cooper, S J Criswell, J W Davies, D B Dew, Mrs J A Dew, P J Downes, J J Dutton, J E Garner, A N Gilbert, P M D Godfrey, P Godley, J A Gray, A Hansard, D Harty, C R Hyams, Mrs P A Jordan, Ms S Kemp, L W McGuire, P G Mitchell, M F Newman, R Powell, D J Priestman, Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers, J M Sadler, T D Sanderson, M F Shellens, L M Simpson, Ms M J Thomas, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin, P K Ursell, J S Watt and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors K M Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, W T Clough, R W J Eaton, R S Farrer, I R Muir, C J Stephens and P R Ward.

### 1. PRAYER

The Venerable H McCurdy, Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech opened the meeting with Prayer.

### 2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### (a) Bereavements

The Chairman announced, with regret, the deaths recently of Dr S Banerjee, husband of Councillor Mrs M Banerjee and former Councillor J C Whitehead who had served as a District Councillor for the Gransden Ward for two years. Members observed a minute's silence in memory of both.

#### (b) Council Membership

The Chairman congratulated those Members of the Council who had been returned for a further term of office at the District Council elections held on 1st May 2008 and extended a warm welcome to the following newly elected Members –

W T Clough	-	Buckden;
Mrs J A Dew	-	St Ives (West);

P Godley - Godmanchester;  
M F Shellens - Huntingdon (East); and  
Mrs M J Thomas - St Neots (Eaton Socon).

A tribute was also paid to former Member, Mr D A Giles, who had stood unsuccessfully for re-election.

### **3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

It was proposed by Councillor P A Swales, seconded by Councillor D B Dew and

RESOLVED

that Councillor J W Davies be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor Davies made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked those Members who had proposed and seconded his candidacy. Councillor Davies expressed his pleasure in becoming Chairman of Huntingdonshire District Council and paid tribute to those outstanding characters who he had succeeded in the post naming former Councillors Eddy, Dodson and Rignall in particular.

**Councillor J W Davies in the Chair.**

### **4. VOTE OF THANKS TO RETIRING CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman referred to the exemplary manner in which Councillor P A Swales had performed his duties as Chairman of the District Council and the high regard in which he was held by other civic leaders. Having expressed also his appreciation for Councillor Swales' dedication and service in the post, the Chairman announced his pleasure in presenting to him a Past Chairman's Badge. Those sentiments were endorsed by Councillor J E Garner and by Councillor P J Downes who expressed his appreciation for the manner in which business had been conducted in the Chamber equitably and efficiently during Councillor Swales' term of office.

In response and having expressed the honour he had felt in serving the District Council and the opportunities which had been afforded to him, Councillor Swales thanked his wife, Pam, for her support during his Chairmanship and concluded by sending a message to Members and Officers, to be proud of Huntingdonshire as an excellent place to live.

RESOLVED

that the Council's appreciation to Councillor P A Swales be placed on record as Chairman during the last two years.

### **5. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16th April 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**6. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

None were received.

**7. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

It was proposed by Councillor T D Sanderson, seconded by Councillor K J Churchill and

RESOLVED

that Councillor J J Dutton be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor Dutton made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and expressed his appreciation to Members for the honour which they had conferred upon him.

**8. LOCAL ELECTIONS: 1ST MAY 2008**

The report of the Returning Officer with regard to the District and Parish Council elections held on 1st May 2008 was received and noted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

The Returning Officer extended his appreciation to candidates and their agents for their co-operation and courtesy during the elections with particular tribute being paid to the Elections Team for their patience and constructive approach in advance of the election day. Members placed on record their appreciation to the Returning Officer, the Elections Team and to those who had been engaged in election duties over the period.

**9. ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

It was proposed by Councillor J A Gray, seconded by Councillor C R Hyams and

RESOLVED

that Councillor I C Bates be elected Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Cabinet for the ensuing Municipal Year.

**10. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

It was proposed by Councillor I C Bates, seconded by Councillor D B Dew and

RESOLVED

that Councillor L M Simpson be appointed Deputy Leader of the Council and Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet for the ensuing Municipal Year.

**11. APPOINTMENT OF THE CABINET**

RESOLVED

that, in addition to the Leader and Deputy Leader, Councillors P L E Bucknell, K J Churchill, D B Dew, A Hansard, C R Hyams, Mrs D C Reynolds and T V Rogers be appointed as Members of the Cabinet for the ensuing year.

**12. REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON DISTRICT COUNCIL PANELS, ETC.**

A report was submitted by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) relating to the principles of proportionality to be applied to the appointment of Panels in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Part II of the Local Government Act 2000.

Having noted an amendment in paragraph 3.2 of the report to reflect that the percentage of Conservative Members on the Council should be "73.08" and not "73.07", it was

RESOLVED

that the allocation of seats on Panels to political groups and non-aligned Members be determined as set out in the report now submitted.

**13. COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION: SCHEME OF DELEGATION AND MONITORING OFFICER: INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS**

By way of a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Council were invited to consider interim arrangements relating to the Council's Scheme of Delegation and the designation of a Monitoring Officer following the impending retirement of the Director of Central Services.

The Council noted that interim arrangements were required to facilitate the discharge of responsibilities delegated to the Director of Central Services pending a decision on and appointment of a successor and to designate an Officer to act as Monitoring Officer on behalf of the Council.

Having discussed the most convenient means of addressing both matters, it was

RESOLVED

that, with effect from 27th June 2008 and pending a decision on and the recruitment of a new Director, the Chief Executive be authorised to undertake the executive and other powers delegated to the Director of Central Services by virtue of the Scheme of Delegation and otherwise and the Head of Legal and Estates be designated as Interim Monitoring Officer.

**14. STANDARDS COMMITTEE: ADDITIONAL PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE**

The Council considered a report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute

Book) regarding the implications of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 on the current arrangements for town and parish council representation on the Standards Committee.

Members noted that under the new Regulations, the Standards Committee would be required to establish a Referrals Sub-Committee with responsibility for the initial assessment of allegations and a Review Sub-Committee which would have responsibility for considering any requests from the complainant to review a decision of the Referrals Sub-Committee. The proposed Sub-Committees required at least one Parish Member where the allegation related to a Parish Councillor and membership of the Referrals Sub-Committee for a particular matter could not overlap with that of the Review Sub-Committee when the latter considered the same matter.

Although appreciating the difficulty in anticipating the scale of the workload arising from the new Regulations, the Council acknowledged that the authority had to have in place adequate arrangements to manage the new functions effectively and, therefore, to ease the burden which might be placed on the existing town and parish council representatives. It was therefore

#### RESOLVED

- (a) that, with effect from 14th May 2008, the membership of the Standards Committee be increased to allow for the appointment of one additional town or parish councillor to represent town and parish councils in the District and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils be invited to nominate the additional Member; and
- (b) that the following changes be made to the Council's Constitution with effect from 14th May 2008 –
  - ◆ in Article 9 – Standards Committee (page 27), the third bullet point in paragraph 2, membership be amended to read - three Town and Parish Councillors, representing Town and Parish Councils in the District; and
  - ◆ in Table 2 – Responsibility for Council Functions (page 63), column 2 of the entry for the Standards Committee be amended to read - three voting Members appointed by the Town and Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire.

## **15. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the effect of the terms of the Members' Allowances Scheme which provided for an annual adjustment in Members' allowances to reflect any increase in inflation using as an automatic index mechanism the Retail Price Index published by the Office of National Statistics.

Mindful of the harmonious working relationship between Members and employees of the Authority, the level of the recent percentage

increase in salary scales for District Council employees and the Council's financial position, it was

RESOLVED

that Members' Allowances for 2008/09 be increased by 3.3% with effect from 14th May 2008.

## 16. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

RESOLVED

- (a) that the following Members be appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for the ensuing Municipal Year –

<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)</b>	<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)</b>	<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Panel (Corporate &amp; Strategic Framework)</b>
J D Ablewhite	K M Baker	M G Baker
Mrs M Banerjee	M G Baker	Mrs M Banerjee
E R Butler	J T Bell	E R Butler
Mrs K E Cooper	P H Dakers	S J Criswell
S J Criswell	J W Davies	J W Davies
Mrs J A Dew	P J Downes	P J Downes
J E Garner	A N Gilbert	J E Garner
P Godley	P M D Godfrey	J A Gray
Mrs P A Jordan	J A Gray	D Harty
P G Mitchell	D Harty	L W McGuire
J M Sadler	Ms S Kemp	P G Mitchell
M F Shellens	L W McGuire	M F Newman
Mrs M J Thomas	M F Newman	M F Shellens
P K Ursell	R G Tuplin	P K Ursell
J S Watt	R J West	R J West

## 17. COMMITTEES AND PANELS

RESOLVED

- (a) that Members be appointed to serve on the Standards and Licensing Committees and Employment, Development Control, Licensing and Protection, Corporate Governance, Elections and Appointments Panels for the ensuing Municipal Year as follows –

### **Standards Committee (7)**

J D Ablewhite, Mrs B E Boddington, P J Downes, R S Farrer, I R Muir, T D Sanderson and G S E Thorpe;

### **Employment Panel (8)**

Mrs B E Boddington, J J Dutton, Mrs P A Jordan, I R Muir, D J Priestman, T D Sanderson and P A Swales

and one Member of the Cabinet in an ex-officio capacity with appropriate portfolio responsibility;

**Development Control Panel (16)**

J D Ablewhite, Mrs M Banerjee, Mrs B E Boddington, E R Butler, W T Clough, J J Dutton, P G Mitchell, C J Stephens, P A Swales, Mrs M J Thomas, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin, P K Ursell, P R Ward and R J West and one Member of the Cabinet in an ex-officio capacity with appropriate portfolio responsibility;

**Licensing and Protection Panel (12)**

K M Baker, J T Bell, J J Dutton, R W J Eaton, R S Farrer, I R Muir, R Powell, J M Sadler, T D Sanderson and J S Watt and one Member of the Cabinet in an ex-officio capacity with appropriate portfolio responsibility;

**Licensing Committee (12)**

K M Baker, J T Bell, J J Dutton, R W J Eaton, R S Farrer, I R Muir, R Powell, J M Sadler, T D Sanderson and J S Watt and one Member of the Cabinet in an ex-officio capacity with appropriate portfolio responsibility;

**Corporate Governance Panel (7)**

M G Baker, P J Downes, P M D Godfrey, J A Gray, T V Rogers, L M Simpson and C J Stephens;

**Appointments Panel (4)**

M G Baker, Mrs B E Boddington, T V Rogers and L M Simpson together with the relevant Executive Councillor in relation to the post to be filled; and

**Elections Panel (7)**

P J Downes, J E Garner, A N Gilbert, D Harty, M F Newman, T D Sanderson and G S E Thorpe.

- (b) that the following Members be nominated from which the Director of Central Services be authorised when necessary to convene a meeting of the Appeals Sub-Group to include up to five Members (excluding Members of the Employment Panel) to determine Appeals under the Council's Disciplinary and Appeals Procedures –

J T Bell, J W Davies, C R Hyams, L W McGuire, P G Mitchell, M F Newman, Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin and J S Watt.

**18. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85**

The Chief Executive reported that there were no absences of

Members from meetings for consideration in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The meeting concluded at 3.10 pm.

Chairman