

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 5 June 2008.

PRESENT: Councillors J D Ablewhite, I R Muir, T D Sanderson and G S E Thorpe.

Messrs P Boothman, D L Hall and G Watkins.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs B E Boddington and P J Downes and from Messrs M Lynch and D MacPherson.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

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

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6th March 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor J D Ablewhite declared a personal interest in Minute No. 7 by virtue of his membership of St Ives Town Council.

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 ADDITIONAL TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

The Committee noted that the Council had agreed to invite the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils to nominate an additional representative of Town and Parish Councils to serve on the Standards Committee until May 2011.

6. LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS - REQUIREMENTS OF THE NEW REGIME

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 arrangements necessary to respond effectively to the

coming into force, on 8th May, of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008.

Members were reminded that the Regulations provided for the initial assessment of allegations of Member misconduct to be transferred from the Standards Board for England to local authority Standards Committees which would have to decide whether each allegation appeared to disclose a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members and whether it merited investigation.

Having accepted that the establishment and membership of two new sub committees to assess and review allegations was closely defined and that the Committee would, in future, be required to report periodically to the Standards Board for England on their performance of the functions transferred to them under the new Regulations, the Committee

RESOLVED

- (a) that a Referrals (Assessment) Sub Committee be established comprising one Independent Member, one Town and Parish Councillor and one District Councillor and that Mr P Boothman be elected lead Independent Member and Chairman of the Sub Committee;
- (b) that a Review Sub Committee be established comprising one Independent Member, one Town and Parish Councillor and one District Councillor and that Mr M Lynch be elected lead Independent Member and Chairman of the Sub Committee;
- (c) that the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer and in his absence, the Head of Legal and Estates and Deputy Monitoring Officer be authorised to establish dates for monthly meetings of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub Committee for a six month period until December 2008 to allow for an assessment of the workload which is likely to arise from the new Regulations;
- (d) that the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer and in his absence, the Head of Legal and Estates and Deputy Monitoring Officer be authorised, after consultation with the relevant Chairman to convene meetings of the Referrals (Assessment) and Review Sub Committees as necessary;
- (e) that the Referrals (Assessment) and Review Sub Committees hold their meetings in private unless the relevant Sub Committee determine otherwise in the case under consideration;
- (f) that the proposed terms of reference for each Sub Committee as appended to the report now submitted be approved;
- (g) that the Council be recommended to appoint an additional Independent Member to serve on the Standards Committee for the remainder of the current four year term to May 2011;
- (h) that, subject to the replacement of the post title of "Executive Director of Central Services" with that of "Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer",

the resolution made at the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 17th December 2003 be reaffirmed; and

- (i) that the Corporate Governance Panel be requested to endorse the consequential variations to the District Council's Constitution arising from the implementation of the Regulations.

7. APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION

(See Minute No. 3 for Members' interests).

Further to Minute No. 11 of the meeting of the Committee held on 1st July 2004 and having noted the expiry of the current dispensations, 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 resubmission of an application from the Clerk to St Ives Town Council to enable Councillors to speak and vote at meetings of the Council or at any of its Committees or meetings on matters relating to the Norris Library and Museum.

Having been reminded that the sixteen Members of St Ives Town Council act as Trustees for the Norris Library and Museum Charity and having been satisfied that approval was required to prevent the business of the Town Council being impeded, the Committee

RESOLVED

that dispensation to speak and to vote be granted to sixteen Members of St Ives Town Council for the period ending 30th April 2012.

8. COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION: APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

Having regard to the impending retirement of the Director of Central Services, the Committee noted that the Council, at its meeting held on 14th May, 2008, designated the Head of Legal and Estates, Mr C Meadowcroft, to act as Interim Monitoring Officer pending a new appointment to the Directors post.

9. DELIVERING THE GOODS: LOCAL STANDARDS IN ACTION

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 13th and 14th October 2008, the Committee

RESOLVED

that Messrs P Boothman and D L Hall, Independent Members and Mr G Watkins, Town and Parish Council representative be authorised to attend the Annual Assembly of Standards Committee Conference to be held at the International Conference Centre, Birmingham on 13th and 14th October 2008.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next ordinary meeting of the Committee would be held at 4pm on Thursday 3rd July 2008.

11. VOTE OF THANKS TO DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL SERVICES AND MONITORING OFFICER

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman expressed his gratitude to Mr P Watkins, Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer who was retiring from the Council's service on 27th June 2008 for the professional and helpful advice he had given to him as Chairman and to the Committee over the years and extended his best wishes to Mr Watkins for a happy and healthy retirement.

Chairman