

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2011

DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday, 19 January 2011. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Holly Adams.

1. 2010/11 APPOINTMENTS TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE PANELS

The Standards Committee **AGREED** to appoint Alan Brett to the Standards Committee Hearing Panel for the remainder of the 2010/11 municipal year.

2. FUTURE OF STANDARDS

The Standards Committee **AGREED** to make representations to the Government on the Localism Bill proposals for abolition of the standards regime, noting specifically that:

- the Standards Committee welcomes the broad principles to remove the overly-bureaucratic regime for responding to complaints; however, it has serious concerns that there will be too great a dichotomy between the few sanctions remaining to a Standards Committee and criminal prosecution as the only means of dealing with complaints of misconduct. The Standards Committee believes that the legislation should include a middle ground to reassure the public that allegations were taken seriously and addressed proportionately without placing an undue burden on police resources;
- the Standards Committee feels that the possibility of facing criminal charges for failing to register an interest correctly will discourage candidates from standing for election. The legislation must set out clearly the definitions of interests and the rules for their registration, considering the seriousness of the charges which could result from a failure to follow the proper process; and
- the Standards Committee unanimously supports the retention of a Code of Conduct at South Cambridgeshire District Council and is in favour of the Local Government Association (LGA) / Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS) plan to draft a model Code of Conduct which could be adapted to suit local circumstances, as this will maintain a broad consistency of ethical standards expectations across the country and minimise confusion for local representatives and the public.

The Standards Committee further **AGREED** to establish a working party on the Future of Standards at its next meeting, once further detail on the Localism Bill had been received.

3. CROXTON PARISH COUNCIL: APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS

The Standards Committee **AGREED** to grant a dispensation until May 2014, the duration of the current Parish Council, to Croxton Parish Councillor Nathan Alec Spencer with the reminder that he is still to declare an interest in any matters concerning High Street by stating "I declare an interest as a resident of High Street, for which I have been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee".

4. CROYDON PARISH COUNCIL: APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS

The Standards Committee **AGREED** to grant dispensations until May 2012, the duration of the current Parish Council, to Croydon Parish Councillors Colin Friend, Tim Hancock, Michelle Hunter, Paul Martin, Susan Slator, Frank Sole and Garth Wheeler with the reminder that they:

- (a) must declare an interest in all specific planning matters in which they have a declarable interest;
- (b) must declare the nature of that interest;
- (c) must declare that they have received a dispensation for that interest; the dispensation to be effective only in situations where 50% or more of the Parish Council would otherwise be unable to participate.

5. STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2011/12 MEETING SCHEDULE

The Standards Committee **AGREED** to meet on the following dates and times for 2010-11, in keeping with the Standards Committee's usual practice of quarterly meetings on the second or third Wednesday of the month, where these meetings do not conflict with other Council meetings:

- Wednesday 8 June 2011 at 10 am (first available date after Annual General Meeting of Council)
- Wednesday 14 September 2011 at 10 am
- Wednesday 14 December 2011 at 10 am
- Wednesday 14 March 2012 at 10 am

The Standards Committee **NOTED** that extraordinary meetings may be scheduled if required.