

# COUNCIL



**10 MAY 2012 - 4.00PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor M J Humphrey, Chairman; Councillors G G R Booth, M G Bucknor, Mrs V M Bucknor, T R Butcher, J R Chambers, J F Clark, D W Connor, M Cornwell, M F J Cotterell, Mrs C R Cox, M J Curtis, Mrs J French, P Hatton, D Hodgson, P Jolley, B M Keane, S J E King, K G Mayor, Mrs K F Mayor, A K Melton, A Miscandlon, P Murphy, Mrs F S Newell, D C Oliver, C C Owen, D R Patrick, T E W Quince, R E Scrimshaw, C J Seaton, R Skoulding, D Stebbing, W Sutton, P A Tunley, B Wegg and F H Yeulett.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors M I Archer, J R Farmer, S Garratt and K G Peachey.

**1/12            TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE PERIOD TO THE NEXT ANNUAL MEETING AND TO RESOLVE THAT AN ALLOWANCE OF £3,700 PLUS TRAVELLING EXPENSES BE PAID TO THE PERSON ELECTED**

It was proposed by Councillor Melton and seconded by Councillor Seaton and **resolved that Councillor Humphrey be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year and that he be paid an allowance of £3,700 plus travelling expenses.**

Councillor Melton stated that it gave him great pleasure in proposing Councillor Humphrey as Chairman again as he has committed himself to Fenland and represented the Council in a first class manner.

The Chairman made his declaration of acceptance of office and addressed the Council. Councillor Humphrey thanked members for the confidence and support that they had shown him by re-electing him for another year, and acknowledged the support received from Councillor Mayor in his capacity as Vice-Chairman. He thanked his wife, Marie, for her help and support during his period in office, and expressed his gratitude to officers for their support, especially his Secretary, Sharon Smith, for her continued help and guidance, with himself and successive Chairmen always finding her commitment to the role invaluable. Councillor Humphrey stated that he would continue to represent the authority to the best of his ability.

**2/12            TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE PERIOD TO THE NEXT ANNUAL MEETING AND TO RESOLVE THAT AN ALLOWANCE OF £900 PLUS TRAVELLING EXPENSES BE PAID TO THE PERSON ELECTED**

It was proposed by Councillor Melton and seconded by Councillor Clark and **resolved that Councillor Mayor be elected Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year and that he be paid an allowance of £900 plus travelling expenses.**

The Vice-Chairman made his declaration of acceptance of office and addressed the Council. Councillor Mayor stated that he had enjoyed his year as Vice-Chairman and is looking forward to the next twelve months. He thanked his wife, Kay, for her support and the Chairman's Secretary, Sharon Smith, who has been invaluable to him.

**3/12            TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 1 MARCH 2012**

**Resolved that the minutes of the Council meeting on 1 March 2012 be confirmed and signed.**

Councillor Mrs Bucknor referred to minute 50/11 and stated that she is still waiting to receive an update on information, that is in the public domain, on the derelict shops in Wisbech despite two requests.

**4/12 TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE.**

**Armed Forces Day**

The Chairman reminded members that it is the Armed Forces Day event and Veterans badge presentation on Friday, 29 June 2012 at St Peters Church, March and all are welcome to attend.

**Civic Reception**

The Chairman advised members that his Civic Reception would take place on Friday, 13 July 2012, with all members receiving an invitation in due course.

**Customer Service Excellence Reaccreditation**

The Chief Executive reported that the Council has recently successfully achieved the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) reaccreditation. He reminded members that CSE is a nationally recognised standard, with any organisation being required to show that the customer is at the heart of its service provision. CSE was first achieved by the Council in 2009, and Fenland is one of a handful of local authorities to achieve this award.

The Chief Executive thanked that CSE Team, led by Geoff Kent, who worked hard to see that the process was well managed and provided an insight into the work that the Council undertakes. He stated that CSE is a robust external assessment and the Council achieved a glowing report from the CSE Assessor, which shows that despite the challenges the Council faces it has the needs of local people at the heart of everything it does.

The Chairman presented the CSE award to Councillor Melton as Leader and Councillor Clark as Portfolio Holder for Quality Organisation. The Chairman stated the award is well deserved and gave congratulations and well done to all staff in achieving this award.

**5/12 MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

Councillor Melton referred to the list of meeting dates on the agenda, with the meeting in November being for the State of District Debate. He feels that the State of District Debate is no longer relevant, out of date and that it should no longer appear as an item on an agenda for a Council meeting, making the point that members can instigate a debate at any time. He has asked officers to see if the Constitution can be updated in this regard.

**Resolved that:**

1. **the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2013 be held on Thursday 9 May;**
2. **the ordinary meetings of the Council in 2012/13 be held as follows:**
  - **Thursday 26 July 2012;**
  - **Thursday 13 September 2012;**
  - **Thursday 1 November 2012;**
  - **Thursday 13 December 2012;**
  - **Thursday 21 February 2013.**

## **6/12      LEADER'S STATEMENT**

The Leader thanked the Chief Executive for his support and good working relationship, Councillor Seaton as his deputy for his loyalty and support over the last year, with him taking over the reins whilst he was on holiday, and the Cabinet, giving special mention to Councillor Clark and Councillor Mrs French as two newcomers to Cabinet. He stated that despite the national scene, Fenland has a lot to commend and he is proud to outline that the Council:

- has delivered a balanced budget and did not increase Council Tax
- managed last year's budget and did not raid the reserves
- managed a 30% contraction in Government grants
- continued to invest in capital projects without decimating capital reserves
- slimmed down further the management structure
- continued to deliver first class front-line services
- continued to deliver an innovative and award winning waste and recycling scheme
- is developing an innovative Core Strategy
- co-hosted a 2020 vision strategy day for Wisbech
- commenced transfer of certain services to local communities, including Wisbech Market Place and discussions are at an advanced stage to transfer surplus toilets to Wisbech and March
- made a statement of intent regarding the A605 Whittlesey bypass
- became active partners in the Local Enterprise Partnership
- became active partners in the Broadband roll-out programme
- has an active and well managed scrutiny arrangement
- has re-designed its Tourism Strategy
- opened Phase 3 of the South Fens Business Park
- through the provision of funding assistance, work has started on the College of West Anglia, Thomas Clarkson block, Chatteris MUGA pitches and the gym at the Cromwell Community College, together with a £1 million re-vamp of the Manor Leisure Centre
- embarked on an anti-litter campaign
- transferred to a new Chief Executive with minimum fuss and disruption, and thanked Paul Medd for the successful transition.

Councillor Melton stated that all of this has been achieved with team effort and support, from members and dedicated and committed staff, with an excellent Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team. He is grateful for the support of the whole Council, acknowledging that some tough and unpopular decisions have had to be made, but feels that the Council is winning through.

Councillor Melton stated that he is not complacent, there is still much to do and some more tough decisions to take, informing members of some of the work being undertaken:

- plans are well advanced for Wisbech Port and Town Centre, with a number of innovative ideas and suggestions for debate and the Council will continue to work closely with its partners at the County Council in formulating the 2020 vision;
- the draft Core Strategy is currently being reviewed in conjunction with the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework;
- Delamore, with whom the Council is working with to provide training opportunities for young people, has announced that they are to take on 6 apprentices in 2012 increasing to 12 in 2013. As this is a Fenland initiative, everyone should be extremely proud;
- the hated Standards regime is to go and he has instructed officers to adhere to the minimum

approach. He hopes that petty complaints, which have cost a fortune will dry up, the threat of automatic suspensions will be lifted and pre-determination rules will be relaxed, however, there will be tougher penalties for criminal offences. He has asked Councillor Yeulett to chair the new Conduct Committee that is to be formed and he has accepted;

- superfast Broadband continues to be rolled out, with Chatteris already connected, and the whole of the district to be connected by 2015;
- the Council is committed to enforcement, with the vast majority of its customers and stakeholders being law abiding paying their Council Tax and Business Rates on time, with collection rates being well into the high 90%. He feels that the vast majority of customers and stakeholders also comply with conditions and regulations, laid down by national legislation and Council policies, however, where obligations are not carried out or paid, the Council will act and that includes collection and prosecution as to not do this defrauds and deprives every other citizen in Fenland who does pay up or complies;
- the boundary working groups and focus groups are currently working up proposals, asking members to ensure that they take the opportunity to contribute as the next elections in 2015 will be fought on the new boundaries;
- he has recently attended two schemes at Wisbech General Cemetery and Whittlesey Memorial Gardens that although cost very little have maximum effect, with these two schemes between them costing no more than £5,000 to top up with matched funding. He asked members that if they are aware of any smallish projects that need just a little help with match funding to let him know, with him today authorising a donation to the Interpretation Board in Tilley Field;
- in 2013, the collection and retention of Business Rates will be localised, with the incentive to ensure that local authorities such as Fenland encourage economic and business growth, and the theory being that Fenland, as a district, retaining 80% of the income with 20% sent to the County Council. The proposals allow for the Council to use projected funding, to borrow funds, which can be used to fund infrastructure projects, which will allow further economic growth. He advised that because of the nature of Fenland and the danger of top slicing, Cambridgeshire authorities are exploring a pooling arrangement, remembering that infrastructure does not recognise district boundaries;
- the Government is proposing to localise the Council Tax benefits, which is currently administered by the Benefits Agency. Facts members should be aware of:
  - in Fenland £7.9 million is paid out annually
  - there are 9,439 cases (22% of households)
  - 5,085 (54%) are pensioners
  - 4,398 (46%) are working age;
- a scheme has to be implemented by April 2013, separate to Housing Benefit, and there will be a cut of 10% in the money allocated to the Council by Central Government. He stated that pensioners and vulnerable groups will be protected. The Council has to design a scheme ready for implementation for April 2013, therefore, a scheme has to be approved by January 2013 as the Council will be subjected to penalties.

Councillor Melton expressed the view that there is much activity going on behind the scenes and as these project and initiatives evolve and progress he will continue to keep members informed. He stated that the next few months are not going to be easy, but he believes that the Council has the capacity, the leadership and political will to see it through.

## C5

Under Procedure Rule 8.4, the Leader of the Main Opposition Group put questions to the Leader of the Council as follows:

- Councillor Booth referred to his question at the last meeting regarding the establishment of a working party to take forward the Localism Act and asked if there was any update? Councillor Melton advised that Council Tax and benefits are allied to the Localism Act and he will be creating a new portfolio holder for Localism, who will be charged with setting up any working groups required. He acknowledged that there will be much work to do in this area as the Government is setting expectations, which need to be delivered.

## 8/12

### **TO ASK QUESTIONS OF CABINET MEMBERS WITH PORTFOLIO HOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULES 8.1 AND 8.2**

Under Procedure Rule 8.2, members put questions to Portfolio Holders as follows:

- Councillor Mrs Bucknor raised concern about the lack of transport from Wisbech to Addenbrookes Hospital, providing an example of an elderly disabled resident whose husband was taken into emergency at Addenbrookes and the minimum cost to visit him is £23 each per day for her and her son, and this causes difficulties for those who have low funds. She asked if there was any way of measuring where visitors come from, working in association with the County Council and Addenbrookes and possibly asking students to undertake the work, to provide information on the feasibility of providing a transport service from Wisbech and its villages to Addenbrookes? Councillor Owen advised that the issue is that the people are not patients but visitors and there is nothing to cover their needs whereas if they were patients they could use the hospital car service. He stated that there are some details of patients that travel to Addenbrookes, with approximately 1,000 journeys from the PE13 postcode to Addenbrookes, which is about 10% of patient transport journeys to this hospital. He does not have a solution, but a solution can be investigated, however, he is bereft of ideas without putting on a private taxi service as people visit at different times of the day and he feels there is no viable alternative less than £23 per day. Councillor Mrs Bucknor reiterated that she was asking if the Council could do some form of study to see if there is an evidenced need for transport services, it could be completed by students and could be a simple form identifying how visitors arrived at the hospital and where they come from. She feels that there is a need for a transport service, but this is just a gut feeling, and she would like to see officers working with the County Council on a solution. Councillor Owen advised that it can be investigated to see what is available and the arrangements that can be made. Councillor Butcher made the point that a County Council Scrutiny meeting is looking at transport and this issue can be raised at this meeting. Councillor Owen stated that he is on this committee and is able to see what arises from it;
- Councillor King referred to a question he had raised at a previous meeting about houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) and asked where the Council is in relation to identifying unauthorised HMOs? Councillor Owen advised that a meeting was recently convened with all key agencies to highlight the work the Council and partners do with regard to HMOs. It evidenced that there exists an excellent multi agency approach to addressing issues where concerns arise and the impact of this work is significant. In the last year Fenland undertook 200 HMO proactive investigations based on risk analysis, which led to 166 interventions and a 24% reduction in anti-social behaviour reports. If the Council cannot get the landlord's support, it will use its powers and 13 HMOs have been closed in the past 3 years either through the Housing Act powers or via Fire Service Fire Safety Orders, however, closure is a last resort as it impacts on homelessness, rough sleeping and the prominence of empty properties. Councillor Owen stated that despite this positive work, it was agreed at the meeting that there was an opportunity to use a web based data sharing product to share

knowledge on HMOs to improve intelligence gathering and joined up action planning amongst partners, which has been done and has highlighted 27 high risk properties where co-ordinated work is underway. Three addresses are in Wisbech, which were alleged to be causing significant nuisance and anti-social behaviour, and through Council and partner engagement with the owner and agent, the residents have left two of the three properties and the other property is being closely monitored. He stated that HMO partnership work is a priority within the Fenland-wide cohesion action plan, which links closely in to the Community Safety Partnership. Councillor King stated that he is encouraged by this update, being aware of the tool that Councillor Owen referred to, which he feels is a useful investment. He feels it is important to remember that unauthorised HMOs have a knock on effect as the occupiers live in cramped conditions, if they want to relax they have to go outside, sometimes drinking which causes problems. He thinks it would be a good idea if a press release was put in the paper as many people are not aware of the good work undertaken by the Council;

- Councillor Mrs Bucknor made the point regarding tourist information that she was told that Tesco would be supplying tourist boards and asked when the first brick will be laid for the new Tesco? Councillor Seaton advised that he cannot give a start date as market conditions are affecting this. Councillor Curtis advised that at Planning Committee Tesco said there is a delay as it is waiting to get a number of occupiers on its current site;
- Councillor King referred to rubble being dumped in Orange Grove, which he has been informed by constituents is being undertaken by the owner of the former Butchers shop, and asked if there is any progress on action to get the rubble cleared up as it is an eyesore? Councillor Mrs French advised that officers have visited the premises, with the site in question being a private building site adjacent to the Five Bells Public House car park, containing building materials and rubble and is fenced off with security fencing. She stated that officers will work with the landowners to encourage them to tidy the site for the benefit of the local community. Councillor King stated that this was a previous dumping site, it was raised with the Planning Enforcement Officer and it was tidied for a year, but the security fence is only partially erected, the site is in a mess and he would be grateful if officers could act as enforceably as possible. Councillor Mrs French stated that she will pass the issue onto Councillor Murphy as Portfolio Holder for the Environment;
- Councillor King asked for an update on the possibility of a strategic growth plan for training and employment? Councillor Seaton advised that this work forms part of a very proactive Economy portfolio and over the last period, April 2011 to March 2012, the Council has:
  - engaged with 28 substantial employers/investors with regards to job creation and investment in Fenland, in addition to many smaller businesses
  - brought forward exciting plans for a horticultural skills centre, similar to the very successful Metalcraft facility in Chatteris
  - recently opened the new extensions to the Enterprise Park at the South Fens Business Centre
  - confirmed its investment in skills and training with the COWA facility in Wisbech
  - attended five major trade fairs to promote Fenland to new investors
  - launched the Fenland Enterprise in Education programme
  - commenced a refresh of the Economic Development Strategy to align with the Core Strategy
  - assisted, with partners, in companies providing 435 jobs in Fenland
  - proactively developed links with organisations, which can support and help the district raise its profile to wider audiences both nationally and internationally, such as UK Trade and Investments, Local Enterprise Partnership, Jobcentre Plus, etc.

Councillor Seaton thanked the Economic Development Team for the excellent work it has undertaken. Councillor King stated it was excellent news and should be publicised as Fenland is "bucking" the trend. He thinks aligning the Economic Development Strategy to the Core Strategy is important for Fenland's future.

## **9/12            MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

Members considered the committees and panels to be established for the municipal year and the allocation of seats and positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman to political groups.

Councillor Melton advised that he has only two changes to committees to make at present; Councillor Farmer's removal from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and replacement with Councillor Sutton, and Councillor Farmer's removal from Fenland's Tourism Board and replacement with Councillor Hodgson. He stated that he reserves the right to make further changes during the committee cycle.

**Resolved that the schedule of appointments and political allocation be adopted.**

## **10/12            NEW STANDARDS ARRANGEMENTS**

Members considered the new framework in relation to member standards under the Localism Act 2011, which ensures the continuation of good governance and member conduct, but represents a lighter touch approach in overall terms. Members were informed that:

- the Localism Act places a number of statutory obligations on the Council:
  - adoption of its own Code of Conduct, which complies with the seven principles of public life
  - a framework for receiving, investigating and determining complaints that members have breached the Code of Conduct
  - being responsible for considering complaints against Parish Council members
  - appointing at least one Independent Person to advise the Council in relation to its Code of Conduct
  - including new provisions about pecuniary interests, which will carry criminal penalties for failure to comply, although the information regarding what constitutes a 'disclosable pecuniary interest' is to be defined in regulations not yet released
  - maintenance of a public register of member interests which is published on the Council website; this will include the interests of a member's spouse or partner;
  
- a new committee, the Conduct Committee, will be formed to assess complaints and determine the outcome of any investigation consisting of five members of the Council, with the scope to appoint two non-voting Town or Parish representatives;
  
- adoption of this new framework will ensure that the Council is ready to implement the new arrangements from 1 July, subject to any further guidance from Government on transitional provisions.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Booth welcomed the new regime and asked if full engagement will be undertaken with Parish/Town Councils as part of the process, thinking that the same regime should be used across all of Fenland? He welcomes that the Leader is willing for an opposition member to be included in the composition of the Conduct Committee and thinks it should be enshrined in the rules as it will be a public document and the public should be aware if the vision is to be promoted. Councillor Melton advised that he has appointed Councillor Yeulett as Chairman Designate to take the process forward and he will be free to appoint members to the committee, but he believes that there should be an opposition member on it for transparency. Councillor Yeulett stated that he welcomes any contributions and comments on taking this process forward;
- Councillor Melton proposed a supplementary recommendation that the Chairman of the Conduct Committee be granted a Special Responsibility Allowance in line with the Members' Allowances Scheme, which would be an identical amount as the current Chairman of the Standards Committee receives and takes into account the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel last year;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she has obviously not had time to consider the supplementary recommendation and would be unwilling to allocate any additional money to allowances, especially as this committee will not meet often. Councillor Melton reiterated that the allowance would be the same as currently received by the Chairman of Standards Committee, which presently has had little to do. He stated that more money is not being asked for, it is already in the budget and in the Members' Allowances arrangement;
- Councillor Booth asked what monetary figure is being discussed? Councillor Melton advised that it is approximately £1,500. Councillor Booth stated that he would be happy to support this amount.

**Resolved that:**

1. **the draft conduct procedures and Local Code of Conduct for members be endorsed;**
2. **the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with Group Leaders, be authorised to revise the draft conduct procedures and Local Code of Conduct for Members in light of regulations to be published bringing forward the provisions of the Localism Act 2011; provided that such final versions are reported to the next meeting of the Full Council after adoption;**
3. **the Monitoring Officer be authorised to form a Conduct Committee and commence a process for the recruitment of one or more 'Independent Persons' as outlined in the report, with any required Constitutional amendments and approval of appointments to be brought before Council in July, or as necessary;**
4. **that the Chairman of the Conduct Committee be granted a Special Responsibility Allowance in line with the Members' Scheme of Allowances. This will be paid at the same level as the current Chairman of the Standards Committee and will be effective from the date that the new arrangements are brought into force under the Localism Act 2011, with this allowance taking into account the recommendations put forward by the Independent Remuneration Panel last year;**
5. **the Monitoring Officer be asked to take all necessary steps to establish an updated Register of Members' Interests in line with the new regulations, and to ensure that councillors are made aware of any changes to registration and declarations of interest;**
6. **that training and awareness sessions be held for Members (including Town and Parish Members) regarding the new arrangements.**



Under Procedure Rule 10, Councillor Mrs Bucknor introduced her motion and:

- gave congratulations on the CSE reaccreditation, which she is not surprised was achieved;
- feels that it is refreshing to see the improvements that have come about in the way officers serve the communities when compared to how it was in the 1990s, but does not feel that there appears to be a significant change in standards required by councillors;
- made the point that when anyone starts a new job, they are given a Job Description so it is clear what they are expected to do;
- stated that in her ward, and she suspects in most, many residents do not know what their councillors can do for them and with the new Localism agenda, she feels there will be a greater requirement for transparency in the role of local councillors as it will place a greater burden on councillors, particularly in deprived wards, as residents become aware that they have a greater voice in what happens in their communities and she believes councillors should prepare for this;
- referred to the new Standards arrangements, which details how councillors should behave on committees and the repercussions, but does not cover what is expected of councillors in serving their communities or even what commitments they agree to make as councillors to their residents apart from any information contained in their canvassing material, asking if it could not be aligned with Fenland's Standards Framework;
- made the point as an independent, as it currently stands, once elected she could have decided to do nothing for four years, and for all councillors there is very little a political party can do if a councillor decides to do nothing, with residents having to put up with it for four years. She does not believe this is acceptable;
- she is not sure if what she is suggesting exists in other councils, with, if this motion is supported, Fenland becoming the first;
- she is not proposing a document that is so vague that it is meaningless, but one that can be worked up over the next three years and be included as part of the package given to a candidate with election papers. If a candidate is elected, when councillors come to the Council to sign in, they can also sign up to this minimum standard and residents can understand what service they can expect of their elected councillor;
- if there are legal difficulties with this motion, can the candidates be asked if they are happy to sign up to it when they register.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor proposed that

"With regard to the new Localism agenda and the opportunities it gives our Council to really bring greater transparency, I would like the Council to consider extending this to the role of councillors and what their roles should be in serving their communities. As with Job Descriptions in the market place, I would propose that we have a minimum standard that Councillors sign up to."

The motion was seconded by Councillor Bucknor.

Members made comments as follows:

- Councillor Curtis expressed the view that this is not localism, but centralisation. He feels it creates unnecessary bureaucracy and councillors find their own ways of working with and supporting the community. He feels that if residents do not know what councillors can do for them, the councillor should get out there and tell them;
- Councillor Yeulett stated that he does not support the motion for all the reasons Councillor Curtis has outlined;

- Councillor Booth disagreed, he made the point that it is a framework and not bureaucracy, setting out how councillors engage with the electorate, promote their work and make residents aware of what can be offered to them. He feels that, in principle, he is happy to accept the motion as it is a good opportunity to promote councillors, but it would probably need to be a voluntary code that candidates are asked to abide by;
- Councillor King asked who is going to monitor job descriptions? He feels that the electorate already monitor councillors in a less bureaucratic manner and pledges are issued to the electorate to say what they will hope to achieve in the next four years. He stated that as Conservatives, there is an agreement that they have to sign in relation to what is expected of them and their party, which is binding. He would be happy to provide Councillor Mrs Bucknor with the relevant clauses, which could serve as a starting base for her pledges to constituents, but he expressed the opinion that this should be undertaken on a local basis and through political parties;
- Councillor Mrs French asked who would write these job descriptions and then monitor and control them? She further asked if a councillor undertakes more than one job description would that councillor get paid more? She stated that she cannot support this motion, there are safeguards in place in the political group, and by standing for election every four years;
- Councillor Connor expressed the view that this is extra bureaucracy, extra red tape and the very thing the Council needs to get away from;
- Councillor Mrs Newell made the point that she has been a councillor since 1979, she has 40 telephone calls every day plus e-mails and letters, and does not know how she can improve on this record;
- Councillor Miscandlon expressed the opinion that he would not have stood as a councillor if there had been a job description. He has asked questions and obtained details on how to operate as a councillor since he was elected;
- Councillor Melton expressed concern on how it would be monitored, feeling that the electorate judge if a councillor is value for money and working for them. He stated that he walks on his ward every day and this was demonstrated by his victory at the last election, with the electorate having the final say. He stated that the Conservatives have to sign a pledge if they want to be a member of the party and can be deselected;
- Councillor Booth felt that it is not envisaged that it would be monitored by the Council, but be something to promote to the electorate so they know what a councillor is able to do. He made the point that there is the same principle in his party in that they have to sign up to a minimum standard;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor expressed the view that if the Conservatives decided to implement something in their own party they must have seen a need for it. She believes the electorate should know what to expect from their councillors and without a standard to work to, a councillor could be actually required to not do anything.

**Resolved that the motion not be supported.**