

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Standards Committee Wednesday, 4 June 2008 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Mr B. Badrock (Chairman), Mr T. Luxton and Councillors Balmer, Parker, Redhead and Wharton

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Wainwright

Absence declared on Council business: ~None

Officers present: M. Simpson and M. Reaney

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE

		<i>Action</i>
STC1	MINUTES	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2008, having been printed and circulated, were signed as a correct record.</p>	
STC2	ACTION LIST	
	<p>The Committee considered the action list in detail and noted / agreed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Action 1 – Joint training was scheduled for 18th June 2008, further details would be distributed week commencing 9th June;• Action 3 – Completed;• Action 6 – No further funding was available and training had to be provided from sources within;• Action 7 – work around the website was ongoing. It was suggested that free advertising could also be sought through the Council's own publications such as Inside Halton and In touch;• Action 15 – this idea was still being investigated; and• Action 17 – a letter would be sent to the Chief Executive of the Standards Board for England to	

request that prioritisation be given to Chairs of all Standards Committees in relation to the Annual Assemblies.

STC3 STANDARDS COMMITTEE - DEVELOPMENTS

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy that provided information regarding recent developments in the law and sought the establishment of an Assessment Sub-Committee and Review Sub-Committee.

The report set out the need to establish a procedure for appointment of a new Independent Member and Parish Member to the Standards Committee and sought to give consideration to mutual arrangements with other nearby authorities with regard to Independent Members.

The Committee agreed to have a pool of Members from Standards Committee that could be called upon should the need arise, to sit on an assessment sub-committee or a review sub-committee. The Membership would consist of three Standards Committee Members chaired by an independent member for both sub-committees. It was agreed that the monitoring officer would consult with the Chair regarding the membership of the two sub-committees. It was reported that the decision made at either of the two sub-committees would be brought back to the Standards Committee at the next meeting after the event, provided the timescales allowed for this.

Members considered the concept of establishing mutual arrangements with nearby authorities should the need arise. It was advised that a sentence would be added to the constitution to reflect this.

The Committee discussed the criteria as set out in the guidance document detailed in the report and agreed to adopt the criteria.

In addition Members considered remuneration for independent members and it was noted that these members could claim for travel and subsistence. The Committee was advised that there were still two vacancies on the Standards Committee and the fact that travel and subsistence could be claimed back may attract more interest. It was further reported that advertisements had been placed and at present one person had applied for an application form.

It was reported that the appointment of vice chair

would benefit the Committee in relation to the two new sub-committees. It was felt that the chair must be independent, therefore the Committee agreed to appoint Mr Tony Luxton as Vice Chair for the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED: That

1. the report be noted;
2. an Assessment Sub-Committee be established comprising of three Standards Committee Members chaired by an independent person;
3. a Review Sub-Committee be established comprising of three Standards Committee Members and chaired by an independent person;
4. the Committee approve the establishment of mutual arrangements with nearby authorities with regard to Independent Members when necessary;
5. the Constitution be amended to reflect the fact that the Code of Conduct Complaints are now to be made to the Standards Committee rather than the Standards Board for England;
6. Council be asked to approve these recommendations and that any consequential Constitutional changes are made;
7. the assessment criteria set out in the guidance document "Local Assessment of Complaints" be adopted; and
8. Mr Tony Luxton be appointed as Vice Chair for the Standards Committee.

Meeting ended at 4.04 p.m.