

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Standards Committee Wednesday, 10 February 2016 The Board Room, Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors P. Lloyd Jones (Chairman), M. Bradshaw, Cole, J. Lowe, McDermott, Parker, Tony Luxton (Co-optee), Canon David Felix (Parish Council Co-optee), Professor David Norman (Independent Person) and Mr Roy Radley (Independent Person)

Apologies for Absence: Anita Morris (Co-optee) and Stephen Cluff (Parish Council Co-optee)

Absence declared on Council business: Councillor Kevan Wainwright

Officers present: M. Reaney, A. Scott and L. Driscoll

Also in attendance: One member of the public

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE

		<i>Action</i>
STC1	MINUTES	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2015 having been circulated, were signed as a correct record.	
STC2	STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT	
	<p>The Committee considered a report of the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer, which summarised the work of the Committee in the last Municipal Year.</p> <p>At the meeting in February 2015, Members had considered the Annual Report, which had noted the major changes to the Standards regime and the implementation of the Localism Act. There had been an update on issues that had arisen in other parts of the country, which had provided an insight into the nature of matters raised and how they were dealt with elsewhere.</p> <p>In addition, Members also received an update on matters within Halton, although no further investigations had been required into any of the three complaints that had been</p>	

received.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and referred to Council for information.

Operational
Director, Legal and
Democratic
Services
/Monitoring Officer

STC3 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

The Committee considered a report of the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer, on the Council's Whistleblowing Policy, in so far as it related to the work of the Standards Committee.

Lisa Driscoll, Policy Officer, addressed the Committee to advise on the current version of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy (the Policy). It was noted that, as part of the annual review of the Council's Constitution, the Policy was kept under review as regards best practice, the outcome of legal cases and model practice demonstrated by other local authorities or public bodies.

Ms Driscoll dealt with Members' questions before being thanked for her attendance.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

STC4 STANDARDS UPDATE

The Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer provided the Committee with an update on issues which had arisen in other parts of the country, which provided an insight into the kind of issues faced and the manner in which they had proceeded.

Details on recent cases were given from the following locations:-

- Wiltshire;
- Surrey;
- Wells (Somerset);
- Wigan;
- Shropshire; and
- St Helens.

A verbal update was given on local issues and on the anticipated revision of the Members' Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer advised that, since his secondment at Cheshire West and Chester Council had ended in June

2015, he had been working with the Liverpool City Region on a review of a Merseyside-wide Members' Code of Conduct and would keep Members of the Committee informed of progress in this regard.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Meeting ended at 2.48 p.m.