



**Standards Committee**

**Wednesday, 3 June 2009 at 3.00 p.m.  
Committee Room 1, Runcorn Town Hall**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R', positioned above a faint rectangular stamp.

**Chief Executive**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

**Mr Bill Badrock (Chairman)**

**Parish Councillor Ronald Crawford**

**Parish Councillor Canon David Felix**

**Mr Robert Garner**

**Mr Tony Luxton**

**Councillor Philip Balmer**

**Conservative**

**Councillor Stan Parker**

**Labour**

**Councillor Linda Redhead**

**Liberal Democrat**

**Councillor Kevan Wainwright**

**Labour**

**Councillor Mike Wharton**

**Labour**

*Please contact Caroline Halpin on 0151 471 7394 or e-mail [caroline.halpin@halton.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.halpin@halton.gov.uk) for further information.*

*The next meeting of the Committee is on Wednesday, 9 September 2009*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH  
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Part I**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1. MINUTES</b>	
<b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS</b>	
<p>Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached and, with personal and prejudicial interests (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members), to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.</p>	
<b>3. MEMBERS INTERESTS</b>	<b>1 - 3</b>
<b>4. STANDARDS BOARD INFORMATION ROUNDUP</b>	<b>4 - 5</b>
<b>5. ANNUAL REPORT</b>	<b>6 - 9</b>
<b>6. WORK PROGRAMME</b>	<b>10 - 11</b>

***In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.***

**REPORT TO:** Standards Committee

**DATE:** 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2009

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy

**SUBJECT:** Declaration of Interests by Members

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To report on the local application of the systems for declaration of interests by Members in order to maintain the values of good governance and ethical behaviour.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Committee notes the Report.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Integrity in local government is essential to command the confidence of the community and of all organisations with which the Council comes into contact. It is relevant also in relation to financing, competing for limited national and regional resources and recruitment.

3.2 This is not the place to go into a full account of the types of personal interest but essentially there are two categories:

3.3 **Personal Interests** You have a personal interest if the issue being discussed in the meeting affects the well-being or finances of you, your family or your close associates more than most other people who live in the area affected by the issue. Personal interests are also things that relate to an interest you must register.

3.4 **Personal and prejudicial Interests** are personal interests that affect you, your family, or your close associates in the following ways: \_ their finances, or regulatory functions such as licensing or planning which affect them \_ and which a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of the facts would believe likely to harm or impair your ability to judge the public interest If you have a personal interest you must normally declare it in the meeting.

#### **Halton Best Practice**

3.5 Halton has a healthy and challenging culture of declaration of interests that is consistent with the legal requirements and with best practice. Although the prime responsibility rests with the individual Member. The practical expression of this culture takes various forms:-

1. the declaration of interests by Members at start of meetings, both formal and informal
  2. Availability of guidance from Monitoring Officer and his staff
  3. the completion of the Register of Interests
  4. the annual sending out of a questionnaire which forms an opportunity for reflection and self-review
  5. Guidance and Training
  6. Engaged involvement by the Council's Standards Committee
- 3.6 The Report of Members Interests is held by the Committee Services Manager. Members are sent fresh forms to complete each May, and also receive a form should a new interest be declared at any meetings. There is a link on each Councillor's paper on the Council's website indicating that information on interest is publicly available on request from Committee Services.
- 3.7 A register of gifts and hospitality is also maintained by Committee Services. Members are required to register any gifts or hospitality worth £25 or over received in connection with official duties as a member, and the giver of the gift of hospitality. This must be done within 28 day of receipt. There will automatically be a personal interest in a matter under consideration at a Meeting if it is likely to affect the giver of the gift or hospitality that is reported. If that is the case, the existence and nature of the gift or hospitality must be declared as well as name of the giver and how the business relates to that person. The Member must then consider whether the interest is also a prejudicial interest.

Once 3 years have passed since registration of the gift or hospitality, the obligation to declare it at Meetings ceases.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

There are none

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None

#### **6.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES**

None

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

Failure to comply with regulation and declaration requirements would amount to a breach of the Code of Conduct and have serious risks in performance terms.

**8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

None

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
<b>NIL</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Mark Reaney</b>

**REPORT TO:** Standards Committee

**DATE:** 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2009

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy

**SUBJECT:** Standards Board Information Roundup

**WARDS:** N/A

### **1.0 PUROPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To bring Members of the Committee up to date with the latest news from the Standards Board

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the report be noted

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Since the last meeting of the Committee, the Standards Board has released Bulletins 42 and 43, which are attached as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively and can be accessed via the following link:  
<http://www.standardsboard.gov.uk/Publications/TheBulletin/>.

- (a) Members' attention is drawn to the Standards Committee (Further Provisions) Regulations 2009 which are presently being prepared and which will allow the Standards Board to suspend the initial assessment functions of an Authority in appropriate circumstances, and will also enable Councils to establish joint standards committees. They also amend the powers of standards committees to grant dispensation to Members who would otherwise be unable to take part in Authority business because of a prejudicial interest. At the time of writing, these regulations were still expected to come into force in May 2009.
- (b) In Bulletin 43, the Standards Board indicate that further guidance has been produced on the question of "other action" in the context of local assessments. At the time of producing the bulletin, the Standards

Board intended to publish the guidance on their Website in May and would notify Monitoring Officers when it was available. An update will be provided at the Meeting. The Bulletin also provides an update on the application of the Code of Conduct to private capacity. As things stand, the Code still does not cover Members at any time in their private capacity. The Standards Board understands that the Government's intention is that amendments will become effective when the new Code becomes operative. Members will be advised of progress in due course.

## **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

## **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** – None

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** – None

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – None

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – None

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – None

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 No key issues have been identified which require control measures

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None

## **9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

9.1 There are no documents under the meaning of the Act

**REPORT TO:** Standards Committee  
**DATE:** 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2009  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy  
**SUBJECT:** Standards Committee Annual Report  
**WARDS:** N/A

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To summarise the work of the Committee in the last municipal year and to recommend Members to invite Council to note the report.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted and referred to Council for information**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Standards Committee is made up of ten members, comprising three independent members, two Parish Councillors, and five members of Halton Borough Council. During the Municipal Year, the Membership was Mr. Bill Badrock (Chairman), Mr. Tony Luxton, Vice Chairman, Mr. Robert Garner, Parish Councillor Ronald Crawford, Parish Councillor Canon David Felix, Councillor Phillip Balmer, Councillor Stan Parker, Councillor Linda Redhead, Councillor Kevin Wainwright, and Councillor Mike Wharton.

The Committee met on five occasions throughout the Municipal Year.

3,2 The role of the Standards Committee is to:-

- Help Councillors and Co-opted members to observe the Members Code of Conduct
- Promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors, Co-opted members and Church and Parent Governor representatives



- Advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members Code of Conduct Monitor the operation of the Members Code of Conduct
- Provide training to Councillors and Co-opted members on matters relating to the Members Code of Conduct
- Deal with complaints against Councillors and Parish Councillors
- Deal with matters concerning politically restricted posts
- Deal with dispensations relating to Declarations of Interests.

3.3 The Municipal Year was a time of considerable change in the operation of the Committee. New legislative requirements necessitated the appointment of two additional Members, and Mr. Garner and Reverend Canon Felix were welcomed on to the Committee. Arrangements for local assessment of complaints came into force in May 2008, and the Standards Committee established a Assessment Sub Committee and Review Sub Committee to deal with the new position. The Committee also approved the establishment of mutual arrangements with nearby Authorities with regard to independent members when necessary. Members considered carefully the guidance issued by the Standards Board for England about the operation of the new arrangements.

3.2 Joint training sessions with Warrington Borough Council were carried out during the year in order to equip members as fully as possible for dealing with local assessment.

The Standards Committee section of the Council's Web Site was developed, and publicity given to the work of the Committee by way of an article in Inside Halton Magazine.

The Committee considered and provided comments on the DCLG Consultation Document relating to Member and Officer Code of Conduct, and also considered and approved the Local Code of Corporate Governance prior to it being referred to the Council for adoption.

Members received regular reports throughout the year providing updates on developments at the Standards Board for England, including copies of all bulletins produced during the year.

The Chair and the Monitoring Officer reported on matters of relevance following their attendance at the Standards Board annual conference in Birmingham in October.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** – None

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** – None

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – None

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – None

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – None

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 No key issues have been identified which require control measures

#### **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act

**REPORT TO:** Standards Committee  
**DATE:** 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2009  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy  
**SUBJECT:** Standards Committee Action List  
**WARDS:** N/A

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To seek Items for a work programme for the next Municipal Year

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That consideration be given to a work programme for their Municipal Year 2009/2010

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Members will recall from the last meeting that the Action List was pruned down and supplied for comment. All of the actions on the list had been completed.

3.2 Members were asked to give consideration to further items to be adopted as a work programme for the next Municipal Year.

3.3 It is suggested that training and development be retained as an ongoing action, particularly as the local assessment regime becomes more established.

3.4 It is also suggested that Members keep under review the Standards Committee (Further Provisions) Regulations 2009 which were expected to come into force in May 2009. Members will no doubt wish to consider and comment on the implications in due course.

3.5 Members may also wish to consider trends emerging from the quarterly and annual returns provided to the Standards Board by Councils across the country.

3.6 It is also suggested that Members may wish to consider the guidance on other action relating to local assessment when it is published, and to keep up to date on the application of the Code of Conduct to private capacity.

3.7 Members' views on the suggestions and indeed any further suggestions of their own would be most welcome.

**4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

**5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None

**6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** – None

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9.1 None under the meaning of the Act