



Standards Committee

**Wednesday, 11 February 2015 at
2.00 p.m.
The Board Room - Municipal Building,
Widnes**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R'.

Chief Executive

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones (Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Marjorie Bradshaw	Conservative
Councillor Lauren Cassidy	Labour
Councillor Arthur Cole	Labour
Councillor Joan Lowe	Labour
Councillor Tony McDermott	Labour
Councillor Tom McInerney	Labour
Councillor Stan Parker	Labour
Councillor Kevan Wainwright	Labour
Mr Tony Luxton	Co-optee
Mrs Anita Morris	Co-optee

*Please contact Angela Scott on 0151 511 8670 or
angela.scott@halton.gov.uk for further information.*

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

Part I

Item No.	Page No.
1. MINUTES	1 - 4
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
3. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT	5 - 7
4. STANDARDS COMMITTEE UPDATE	8 - 10
5. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS	
The Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/ Monitoring Officer will provide a verbal update on this item.	

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.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Standards Committee Tuesday, 8 April 2014 The Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors P. Lloyd Jones (Chairman), M. Bradshaw, Cole, J. Lowe, McDermott, T. McInerney, Parker, Wainwright and Mr A. Luxton (Co-optee)

Apologies for Absence: Mrs Anita Morris (Co-optee)

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney and A. Scott

Also in attendance: Councillor Polhill (Leader, Halton Borough Council) and Mr D. Parr (Chief Executive, Halton Borough Council), Professor D. Norman and Mr R. Radley (Independent Persons)

**ITEMS DEALT WITH
UNDER DUTIES
EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE**

STC5 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2013, having been printed and circulated, were signed as a correct record.

In considering the minutes it was noted that all Parish Council Register of Interest Forms had been completed and returned to the Monitoring Officer.

STC6 ATTENDANCE BY THE LEADER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE TO DISCUSS STANDARDS ISSUES

At the invitation of the Committee, Councillor Rob Polhill, Leader of Halton Borough Council and David Parr, Chief Executive of Halton Borough Council attended the meeting to discuss their respective roles and responsibilities relating to leadership in public office with Members.

The following issues were discussed:-

- How the Standards Committee could usefully address the promotion and maintenance of high standards of ethical behaviour on behalf of the Council;

Action

- The advisory role of the Committee on the Authorities' adopted Code of Conduct;
- The Member/Officer relationship;
- The distinction between the public role of an Elected Member and their entitlement to a private life;
- The Nolan Principles and the Council's adopted Code of Conduct; and
- Training for Elected Members and Parish Councils on matters pertaining to their respective Codes of Conduct and Standards issues.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Polhill and David Parr be thanked for their attendance.

STC7 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:-

- Teeside;
- Barnet;
- Wirral;
- London Borough of Ealing;
- Fenland (Cambridgeshire); and
- Gwynedd.

The Committee commented that they found these reports to be very useful and helpful in terms of Members' learning and development.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

STC8 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Committee considered:

- (1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Committee during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of

the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and

- (2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

STC9 VERBAL REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER ON A COMPLAINT

The Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer, reported the outcome of a complaint which he had recently received.

It was noted that, under the arrangements for considering complaints against an Elected Member, the Monitoring Officer had consulted Professor Norman, Independent Person appointed to deal with such business. Professor Norman and the Monitoring Officer had interviewed both parties and reached a decision not to proceed to a formal investigation. Both parties involved had been advised of the outcome.

The Committee wished to place on record their thanks to Professor Norman for his role in considering the matter.

RESOLVED: That the verbal update be noted.

STC10 VOTE OF THANKS

The Committee wished to place on record their thanks to Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones, for his role as Chair of the Committee since 2012.

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Meeting ended at 11.40 a.m.

REPORT TO:	Standards Committee
DATE:	11 February 2015
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer
PORTFOLIO:	Leader
SUBJECT:	Standards Committee Annual Report
WARDS:	Boroughwide

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 major change made to the standards regime by the Localism Act 2011 became embedded in the Council's processes during the municipal year. Throughout the year, the Standards Committee was made up of nine elected Members, Councillors Peter Lloyd Jones (Chairman) Marjorie Bradshaw, Arthur Cole, , Joan Lowe, Tony McDermott, Tom McInerney, Stan Parker, Kevan Wainwright, and Bill Woolfall. In addition, there were two co-opted Independent Members, Mr Tony Luxton and Mrs Anita Morris. The positions for two co-opted Parish Council Members remained vacant throughout the year. The Council appointed three independent persons under the provisions of the Localism Act, Professor David Norman, Mrs Diane Howard, and Mr Roy Radley. All were invited to each meeting. The Committee met on two occasions during the year.

3.2 The role of the Standards Committee is to:-

- Help Councillor 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 Interest.

3.3 The September meeting received the Annual Report of the Committee, an update on cases across the country, and also a report on Declaration of Interests by Members.

3.4 In April, the Leader and Chief Executive attended to discuss standards issues from their perspective, and to demonstrate their commitment to the work of the Committee and the upholding of the highest possible standards of conduct in Halton. The meeting also received a verbal report on the outcome of a complaint, and the usual digest of cases elsewhere.

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 risks have been identified which require control measures.**

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 There are no background papers within the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

DATE: 11 February 2015

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer

SUBJECT: Standards Committee Update

PORTFOLIO: Leader

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform Members of Standards issues which have arisen in other parts of the country.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Members' attention is drawn to a number of press articles attached to this report concerning Standards issues in other parts of the UK.

3.2 The intention is to give Members a flavour of matters dealt with by other authorities, how the local codes have been interpreted, and the way sanctions have been imposed. It is hoped that this will prompt discussion at the meeting.

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 would require control measures

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Report of itself does not contain any specific equality and diversity issues

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

GET WEST LONDON 2/9/14

<http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/local-news/police-hounslow-failed-adequately-investigate-7709895>

GAZETTE LIVE 2/1/15

<http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/mayor-ray-mallon-put-himself-8376177>

THIS IS WILTSHIRE 11/7/14

http://www.thisiswiltshire.co.uk/news/11335338.Warminster_row_over_councillor_s_vote_on_homes_bid/

WIGAN COUNCIL 18/12/14

<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/News/Articles/2014/Dec/Councillor-unapologetic-for-bad-behaviour.aspx>

LEIGH JOURNAL 19/12/14

http://www.leighjournal.co.uk/news/11677522.Councillor_up_in_front_of_standards_committee_or_failing_to_apologise/

CHAD 6/12/14

<http://www.chad.co.uk/news/local/councillor-shrugs-off-watchdog-rap-1-6991070>

LOCALGOV.CO.UK 6/1/15

<http://www.localgov.co.uk/Councillor-quits-role-after-vile-comment-about-alleged-rape-victim/37883>