



Standards Committee

Wednesday, 12 February 2020 at
2.00 p.m.

Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David W R'.

Chief Executive

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Marjorie Bradshaw	Conservative
Councillor Harry Howard	Labour
Councillor Joan Lowe	Labour
Councillor Tony McDermott	Labour
Councillor Pauline Sinnott	Labour
Councillor Kevan Wainwright	Labour
Councillor Mike Wharton	Labour
Councillor Geoff Zygadlo	Labour
Mr Tony Luxton	Independent Co-optee
Canon David Felix	Parish Council 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 - 3
2. APOLOGIES	
3. 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.	
4. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT	4 - 6
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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 Wednesday, 6 February 2019 Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors P. Lloyd Jones (Chair), M. Bradshaw, Howard, J. Lowe, Sinnott, Wainwright, Wharton, Zygadlo, Mr A. Luxton (Independent Co-optee) and Reverend D. Felix (Parish Council Co-optee), Professor D. Norman (Independent Person) and Mr R. Radley (Independent Person)

Apologies for Absence: Councillor McDermott and Mrs D. Howard (Independent Person)

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney and A. Scott

Also in attendance: One member of the press

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

	<i>Action</i>
STC1 MINUTES	
<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2018, having been circulated, were signed as a correct record.</p>	
STC2 RESIGNATION OF INDEPENDENT CO-OPTEE	
<p>The Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer reported that he had received a letter of resignation from Mrs Anita Morris, Independent Co-optee.</p> <p>Mrs Morris had served on the Committee for a number of years, but had been unable to attend recent meetings due to conflicting demands. The Committee understood the situation and reluctantly accepted her resignation. The Chair expressed his thanks for her contribution to the work of the Committee.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the resignation of Mrs Morris, Independent Co-optee, be accepted.</p>	

STC3 STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

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.

At the meeting in February 2018, Members had considered the Annual Report, which summarised the work of the Committee. There had been an update on issues that had arisen in other parts of the country, which provided an insight into the nature of matters raised and how they were dealt with elsewhere.

A verbal update was given on local matters which had been considered since the previous meeting.

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

Operational
Director, Legal
and Democratic
Services/Monitoring
Officer

STC4 STANDARDS COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT

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 been proceeded.

Details on recent cases were given from a range of locations which included the following:-

- Rochdale;
- Stoke on Trent;
- Wigan;
- Devon;
- Northamptonshire;
- East Riding;
- Leicestershire;
- Sheffield;
- Coventry; and
- Staffordshire.

A verbal update was given on three local matters that had been considered since the last meeting. It was reported that one of the Committees' Independent Persons had been consulted on one of the cases.

RESOLVED: That the report and verbal update be noted.

STC5 COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

The Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer provided the Committee with a verbal update on the publication of a report into local government standards, by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

It was reported that the independent Committee on Standards in Public Life advised the Prime Minister on ethical standards across the whole of public life in the UK. Their report and recommendations on ethical standards in local government, followed a year-long review and wide consultation, was published on 30 January 2019. Key recommendations included:-

- A new power for local authorities to suspend Councillors without allowances for up to six months;
- Revised rules on declaring interests, gifts and hospitality;
- Local authorities to retain ownership of their own Codes of Conduct;
- A right of appeal for suspended Councillors to the Local Government Ombudsman;
- A strengthened role for the Independent Person; and
- Greater transparency about the number and nature of Code complaints.

The review covered all 353 principal authorities in England, and its remit was to review the effectiveness of the current arrangements for standards in local government, particularly in light of the changes made by the Localism Act 2011.

It was agreed that a link to the publication would be sent to all members of the Committee as well as to all Borough Councillors.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

Meeting ended at 2.38 p.m.

REPORT TO:	Standards Committee
DATE:	12 February 2020
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer
PORTFOLIO:	Leader
SUBJECT:	Standards Committee Annual Report
WARDS:	Borough-Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To summarise the work of the Committee in the last municipal year.

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

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Throughout the year Standards Committee was made up of Councillors P Lloyd Jones (Chair), M Bradshaw, Howard, J Lowe, McDermott, Sinnott, Wainwright, Wharton and Zygadlo. In addition, there was one co-opted independent member, Mr Tony Luxton. There was also one co-opted Parish Council Member, Rev Canon D Felix and one vacancy. The Council's three independent members under the provisions of the Localism Act were Professor David Norman, Mrs Diane Howard and Mr Roy Radley. The Committee met on one occasion 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 a high standard 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 Members' 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 At the meeting on 6 February 2019, the resignation of Mrs Anita Morris as a co-opted independent member was noted.

Members considered the Annual Report which summarised the work of the Committee in the last municipal year.

In addition, Members also received a report which provided an update on issues which had arisen in other parts of the country, which gave an insight into the kinds of issues faced and the manner in which they had proceeded.

A verbal update was given on local matters which had been considered since the last meeting.

The Monitoring Officer reported that no matters had been brought to his attention which required a formal investigation.

Members received a verbal report on the recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, which had been published a few days before the meeting. Legislative developments are still awaited.

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 controlled measures.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None.

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

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

REPORT TO:	Standards Committee
DATE:	12 February 2020
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer
PORTFOLIO:	Leader
SUBJECT:	Standards Committee Update
WARDS:	Borough-Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform Members of Standards issues which have arisen recently.

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, and how sanctions have been imposed. It is hoped that this will prompt discussion at the meeting.
- 3.3 The Monitoring Officer will give a verbal update at the meeting on local issues relating to Halton.

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 The report itself does not contain any specific equality and diversity issues.

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

Interesting cases

Authority	Details	Link
Lewisham	Council considers holding councillors to account for public behaviour regardless of whether they're acting in their public capacity	https://www.newsshopper.co.uk/news/18152509.allegations-lewisham-councillors-breaches-code-conduct-allegations-published/
Bournemouth	Investigation concludes that Councillor was acting in her personal capacity when she retweeted an allegedly anti-semitic article	https://www.bournemouthcho.co.uk/news/18144809.lisa-lewis-acted-personal-capacity-shared-article/
Isle of Wight	Councillor cleared of confidentiality Code breach after appeals sub-committee decide that agenda should not have been marked confidential	https://onthewight.com/councillor-cleared-of-code-of-conduct-breach/
Hackney	Councillor under investigation by Party into alleged homophobic comments	https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2020/01/28/conservative-councillor-under-investigation-as-homophobic-taunts-continue/
Dudley	Councillor suspended indefinitely from group for Islamophobic and sexist comments made on Twitter	https://www.expressandstar.com/news/politics/2020/01/28/disgraced-dudley-councillor-kicked-out-by-tories/
Bromley	Councillors face increasing abuse on social media	http://www.bromleyboroughnews.co.uk/article.cfm?id=130602&headline=Councillors%20facing%20increasing%20abuse%20on%20social%20media&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2019