

**REPORT TO:** Standards Committee  
**DATE:** 26<sup>th</sup> May 2010  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director - Resources  
**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**

2.1 That the Report be noted and referred to Council for information.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 During the municipal year the Standards Committee was made up of ten members, comprising of three independent members, two Parish Councillors, and five members of Halton Borough Council. The Membership during the year 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 Kevan Wainwright and Councillor Mike Wharton

The Committee met on four 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 on 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 At the first meeting of the municipal year, the Committee received a report from the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which outlined the local application of the systems for Declaration of Interests by Members in order to maintain the values of good governance and acceptable behaviour. The Committee was informed that integrity in local government was essential to command the confidence of the community and of all organisations with which the Council came into contact. It was further noted that it was relevant also in relation to finance, competing for limited national and regional resources, and recruitment. Personal and Personal and Prejudicial interests were defined, and the Report set out Halton's Best Practice. It is pointed out that the Register of Members Interests was held by the Committee Services Manager and a Register of Gifts and Hospitality was also maintained by her where members were required to register any gifts and hospitality worth £25 or over received in connection with official duties as a Member, together with the identity of the giver of the gift or hospitality. It was proposed that a similar Report be brought to the Committee on a yearly basis.

The Committee received and considered guidance from Standards for England on the powers to suspend a Standards Committee's Assessment and Review functions, the establishment of joint Standards Committees, and on "other action" which can be taken following an assessment of a complaint. In addition to this, Members watched the new training DVD issued by Standards for England entitled "Assessment made clear" which was designed to help Standards Committee Members assess complaints about elected or co-opted members.

The Members received regular updates of information coming out from Standards for England, together with digests of cases which had been heard in other authorities.

The Monitoring Officer reported on matters of relevance following his and Councillor Wharton's attendance at the Standards for England Annual Assembly which had taken place in October.

A revised version of the Members Code of Conduct had been expected to be released in the Autumn, but this was subsequently delayed, and Monitoring Officers were advised that it would not be published until after the general election. The Committee will consider the new Code as soon as possible following publication, and will ensure that appropriate training is provided to all Members after adoption.

#### **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 Borough Council

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 The Report of itself does not contain specific Equality and Diversity issues

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

9.2 None