

**REPORT TO:** Standards Committee

**DATE:** 10 November 2010

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Resources

**SUBJECT:** Press Release – Communities Minister

**WARDS:** N/A

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To advise members of a recent press release from the Communities Minister Andrew Stunell, setting out the future of the ethical regime.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the report be noted.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 On 20<sup>th</sup> September 2010, a press release was published from the Communities Minister Andrew Stunell setting out his views on the future of the Standards regime.

3.2 Mr. Stunell indicated that serious misconduct for personal gain would become a criminal offence, and pointed out that the Government would legislate to ensure that whilst abusing a position for personal gain would result in criminal sanctions, ineffective or irresponsible behaviour would be a matter for the electorate rather than Standards for England. A newly empowered Local Government Ombudsman would investigate incompetence on behalf of local people.

3.3 Mr. Stunell also said that the Government would legislate to make it clear that Councillors can campaign and vote freely on their issues.

3.4 Further reports will be brought forward as soon as possible dealing with any developments.

## **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 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**

9.1 None.