

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

DATE: 17th July 2012

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

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 and to recommend Members to invite Council to note the Report.

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

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 During the municipal year the Standards Committee was made up of eleven Members, comprising of four 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, Mrs. Anita Morris, Parish Councillor Bernie Allen, Parish Councillor Canon David Felix, Councillor Peter Browne, Councillor Stan Parker, Councillor Linda Redhead, Councillor John Swain and Councillor Kevan Wainwright. The Committee met on three occasions throughout the municipal 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 At the May meeting, Members received a Report outlining the application of systems for Declaration of Interests by Members. The Committee was reminded that the integrity in Local Government was essential. Personal and personal and prejudicial interests were defined, and the Report contained details of Halton's Best Practice. The Register of Members Interests was held by the Principal Committee Services Officer who also maintained a register of gifts and hospitality, in which Members were required to register any such gifts of hospitality worth £25 or more received in connection with official duties as a Member. It was clear that both registers were being used appropriately.
- 3.4 Much of the workload during the year was taken up with the changing landscape of the Standards Regime. This culminated in a detailed presentation by the Monitoring Officer at the February meeting dealing with the Localism Act and what it meant to the Standards framework.
- 3.5 One complaint had been received during the year from a member of the public, which was considered by the Assessment Sub- Committee in July. It was concluded the matters contained in the complaint did not amount to a breach of the Code of Conduct, and no further action was taken.
- 3.6 As the Localism Act involved the abolition of Standards for England and the former Standards Regime, the result was that that the Statutory role of Independent Members of the Committee and the Parish Council Members would cease to have effect. As such, those Members would stand down from the Committee at the end of the municipal year. The Committee placed on record its thanks to them for their invaluable contribution to Standards in Halton.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

41 None

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS 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