

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

DATE: 13th February 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Monitoring Officer

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: The Leader

SUBJECT: The Committee on Standards in Public Life

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The report is to bring to Members' attention the recently published report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 On 17th January 2013 the Committee on Standards in Public Life published its latest Report. This was an overview, looking at where the committee felt standards lay in light of its previous reports and Government actions. It includes thoughts on the Local Government Framework and makes it clear that it still has some concerns about arrangements.

3.2 The Committee is of the view that standards of behaviour have improved significantly in many areas of public life since it first reported in 1995. It believes that the considerable effort and expense devoted to the objective has not been wasted.

3.3 However, the Committee feels that doubts remain in almost all areas looked into. In particular, they have significant concerns about large political donations. They feel that many of the worst excesses of local authority members have been ended, but instances of unacceptable behaviour continue to occur. Whilst they consider that arrangements for making public appointments have been improved, accusations in some quarters still persist. The Committee makes mention of recent public scandals of a significant kind, which continue to occur on a regular basis. It feels that while standards of behaviour in the UK are generally high compared with those in many other countries, there remains much to do.

3.4 In promoting high standards, the Committee believes that the key elements remain as robust principles, effective codes tailored to the particular circumstances of the body concerned, training and guidance,

good relevant prompts, strong leadership and organisational processes demonstrating the principles in practice, sure and effective responses to unethical behaviour and independent scrutiny.

- 3.5 The Committee is of the opinion that the way forward is in individuals taking personal responsibility, and for there to be active management and constant vigilance.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.