

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Standards Committee on Wednesday, 5 September 2007 in Committee Room 1, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Mr B. Badrock (Chairman), Mr T. Luxton, Parish Councillor Crawford, and Councillors Parker and Redhead

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Lewis, Wainwright and Wharton

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: L. Cairns and R. Barnett

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE COMMITTEE

		<i>Action</i>
STC6	MINUTES	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2007, having been printed and circulated, were signed as a correct record.</p>	
STC7	COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN	
	<p>The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy outlining a proposed action list for Members to use to formulate and prioritise a work programme.</p> <p>An updated action list was tabled, which the Committee analysed in detail. It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actions 1, 5, 8 and 10 be merged as high priority with a deadline of December 2007;• Action 2 be classed as low priority;• Action 3 be classed as high priority with a deadline of March 2008;• Actions 9 and 16 be merged as high priority with a deadline of February 2008 – the new monitoring officer to review the video when in post, taking into	

account recent changes, to determine what amendments are required;

- Action 10 be classed as high priority with a deadline of December 2007;
- the deadline for Action 11 be amended to January 2008;
- Actions 12 and 13 be merged as medium priority with deadlines of February and June respectively;
- Action 14 be classed as high priority;
- Action 15 be classed as medium priority with a deadline of March 2008;
- a further action be added to read “Halton’s preparations, arrangements and training for dealing with local filter duties”, classed as high priority with a deadline of November 2007.

Members noted that all the places at the Standards Board Conference had been filled and Halton was now on a waiting list. The way places were allocated had previously been raised as an issue by AIMSce, the organisation that provided support to authorities’ independent standards committee members. In order to avoid this situation in the future, it was agreed that delegated authority should be given to officers to automatically book two places as soon as notification of the event was received. In the meantime, officers were requested to investigate whether it would be possible for the Authority to send two people in an observer capacity. Failing this, a copy of the papers from the day should be requested.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the actions outlined above to prioritise the work programme be carried out; and
- (2) officers be delegated authority to secure two places on all future Standards Committee conferences.

Monitoring Officer

STC8 STANDARDS BOARD INFORMATION ROUND-UP

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy together with a copy of Bulletin 34 issued by the Standards Board for England. It was noted that the Occasional Paper on predetermination and bias, promised by the end of July, had not been published to date. This advice would be fundamental to the guidance that the Committee had previously requested.

Members noted the contents of the Bulletin, in particular:

- the need for a process to be followed when Councillors were considering the possibility of releasing confidential information;
- the fact that the Standards Board's training DVD had not yet been circulated; and
- the advice in respect of Paragraph 7 of the Code in relation to Parish Councils.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) contact be made with the Standards Board to gain an update on when the Occasional Paper is to be published.

Monitoring Officer

Meeting ended at 4.40 p.m.