

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

DATE: 1 February 2017

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

PORTFOLIO: Leader

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.

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

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Throughout the year Standards Committee was made up of nine elected members, Councillors P Lloyd Jones (Chair), M Bradshaw, Cassidy, Cole, J Lowe, McDermott, T McNerney, Parker and Wainwright. In addition, there were two co-opted independent members, Mr Tony Luxton and Mrs Anita Morris. There were also two co-opted Parish Council Members, Mr S Cluff and Rev Canon D Felix. The Council's three independent members under the provisions of the Localism Act were all reappointed at Annual Council in May 2016. These were Professor David Norman, Mrs Diane Howard and Mr Roy Radley. All were invited to each meeting. The Committee met on one occasion during the 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 a high standard 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 Members' 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 meeting in February 2016, Members considered the Annual Report, setting out an update on the Standards regime.

The Committee considered a report of the Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer on the Council's Whistleblowing Policy, in so far as it related to the work of the Standards Committee. Lisa Driscoll, Policy Officer, addressed the Committee on the current version of the Policy and it was noted that as part of the annual review of the Council's Constitution, the Policy was kept under review as regards best practice, the outcome of legal cases and model practice demonstrated by other local authorities or public bodies.

The Committee also received a report dealing with issues which had arisen in other parts of the country, which provided an insight into the kind of matters faced and the manner in which they had been dealt with. A verbal report was given on local issues, which indicated that no matters had been brought to the attention of the Monitoring Officer which required a formal investigation.

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 risks have been identified which require controlled measures.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None.

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

9.1 There are no background papers within the meaning of the Act.