

REPORT TO: Standards Committee
DATE: 3rd June 2009
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy
SUBJECT: Standards Committee Annual Report
WARDS: N/A

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 referred to Council for information

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Standards Committee is made up of ten members, comprising three independent members, two Parish Councillors, and five members of Halton Borough Council. During the Municipal Year, the Membership was Mr. Bill Badrock (Chairman), Mr. Tony Luxton, Vice Chairman, Mr. Robert Garner, Parish Councillor Ronald Crawford, Parish Councillor Canon David Felix, Councillor Phillip Balmer, Councillor Stan Parker, Councillor Linda Redhead, Councillor Kevin Wainwright, and Councillor Mike Wharton.

The Committee met on five occasions throughout the Municipal Year.

3,2 The role of the Standards Committee is to:-

- Help Councillors 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 Interests.

3.3 The Municipal Year was a time of considerable change in the operation of the Committee. New legislative requirements necessitated the appointment of two additional Members, and Mr. Garner and Reverend Canon Felix were welcomed on to the Committee. Arrangements for local assessment of complaints came into force in May 2008, and the Standards Committee established a Assessment Sub Committee and Review Sub Committee to deal with the new position. The Committee also approved the establishment of mutual arrangements with nearby Authorities with regard to independent members when necessary. Members considered carefully the guidance issued by the Standards Board for England about the operation of the new arrangements.

3.2 Joint training sessions with Warrington Borough Council were carried out during the year in order to equip members as fully as possible for dealing with local assessment.

The Standards Committee section of the Council's Web Site was developed, and publicity given to the work of the Committee by way of an article in Inside Halton Magazine.

The Committee considered and provided comments on the DCLG Consultation Document relating to Member and Officer Code of Conduct, and also considered and approved the Local Code of Corporate Governance prior to it being referred to the Council for adoption.

Members received regular reports throughout the year providing updates on developments at the Standards Board for England, including copies of all bulletins produced during the year.

The Chair and the Monitoring Officer reported on matters of relevance following their attendance at the Standards Board annual conference in Birmingham in October.

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 None

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act