

REPORT TO: Standards Committee
DATE: 9th September 2009
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy
SUBJECT: Work Programme
WARDS: N/A

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update Members on the emerging work programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Report be noted and that Members comment on the emerging work programme.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Members will recall having received a report at the last meeting seeking items for a work plan for the municipal year.

Members have agreed to keep under review the Standards Committee (Further Provisions) Regulations 2009 which at that time were not as yet in force. Those regulations have now been issued, and are reported elsewhere on this Agenda.

Members also wished to consider trends emerging from the quarterly and annual returns provided to the Standards Board by Councils across the country. An update is contained within Bulletin 44 elsewhere on the Agenda.

Members sought clarification on the indemnity position in so far as it relates to independent members on this committee. The Monitoring Officer has been in touch with the insurance section and has been able to obtain confirmation that the policy cover does extend to include indemnity to members (including independent members) at the request of the Council. The Indemnity only operates if the Council would have been entitled to indemnity if the claim had been made against it rather than the individual. In the event that the Member is entitled to indemnity from another source, the other insurance cover should be utilised. The other proviso is that the Council's insurers have sole conduct and control of the claim. The only potential gap that the insurers can think of in relation to Members is for pure legal expenses rather than the conventional liability cover.

Members had asked for regular training on the Code of Conduct to continue, and it can be confirmed that a further session will take place on 20th October next.

Members had also asked at the last meeting whether there was a qualified mediator available to the Council internally who could be used to provide mediation training. It has also been suggested that a brain storming session would be beneficial with a qualified facilitator. The Monitoring Officer agreed to discuss the suggestion with the Divisional Manager responsible for training. He has been able to confirm that the Council does not have qualified mediators, and that an appropriate facilitator would have to be someone with a detailed knowledge of the standards regime.

Members are invited to discuss the responses to queries raised at the next meeting, and make further comment.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATION

5.1 None

6.0 IMPLIATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and young people in Halton** – None

6.2 **Employment and Learning 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 There are no such issues arising directly from this Report

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

9.1 There are no documents under the meaning of the Act.