

To: Members of the Standards Committee

Independent Members – Mr A Mackie (Chair),  
Mr T M Organ and Mr W J Ravenscroft and 1 Vacancy  
Councillors S Bland, C Fitzsimmons, B Maher, T  
McCarthy and J Walker  
Parish Council Members – Parish Councillors  
V Allen, M Banner and G Warburton

Diana Terris  
Chief Executive  
Town Hall  
Sankey Street  
Warrington  
WA1 1UH

31 August 2011

Standards Committee

Thursday, 8 September 2012 at 6.30pm

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Warrington

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**AGENDA**

**Part 1**

Items open to members of the public (including the press) subject to any statutory right of exclusion.

- |  | <b>Page<br/>Number</b> |
|--|------------------------|
| <b>1. <u>Apologies for Absence</u></b>   |                        |
| To record any apologies for absence received   |                        |
| <b>2. <u>Code of Conduct – Declaration of Interests</u></b>  |                        |
| Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or prejudicial interest they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when the item is reached.               |                        |
| <b>3. <u>Minutes</u></b>   | <b>1</b>               |
| To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 July 2011 as a correct record.  |                        |
| <b>4. <u>Future of Standards - Parish Perspective</u></b>  | <b>3</b>               |
| Jackie Weaver - Chief Officer, Cheshire Association of Local Councils has been asked to attend the meeting to discuss the Localism Bill and the effects of this from a parish council perspective. |                        |

## **Part 2**

Items of a “confidential or other special nature” during which it is likely that the meeting will not be open to the public and press as there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972.

**Nil**

**If you would like this information provided in another language or format, including large print, Braille, audio or British Sign Language, please call 01925 443322 or ask at the reception desk in Contact Warrington, Horsemarket Street, Warrington.**



## STANDARDS COMMITTEE

8 September 2011

Present: Mr A Mackie (Independent Chair)  
Independent Members – W Ravenscroft,  
Councillors – S Bland, B Maher, A McCarthy  
and J Walker, Parish Councillors – V Allen, M Banner

### **ST 8 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C Fitzsimmons and Parish Councillor G Warburton.

### **ST 9 Code of Conduct**

There were no declarations of interest received.

### **ST 10 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2011 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (with an amendment to include apologies from Councillor C Fitzsimmons and Independent Member V Allen).

### **ST 11 Future of Standards – Parish Perspective**

The Committee received a verbal presentation from Jackie Weaver, Chief Officer, Cheshire Association of Local Councils'; the presentation was in relation to the new Localism Bill and the future of the standards regime from a Parish Council perspective.

It was reported that for Town and Parish Councils the key areas of concern arising from the Localism Bill;-

- the previous code of Conduct set out standards which protected Members from having to consider the wider legal framework
- public uncertainty – the public would not know whether their local Parish / Town Council had a Code and if so what it would be. This Code would be separate from disclosure of interest which again would be very confusing
- if a local code was to be agreed what sanctions were available
- by virtue of their size how would local Councils be able to retain objectivity and additionally fund their training needs
- there was still a requirement for the promotion and maintenance of high standards but not guidance on the application, this could lead to differing standards in different areas

It was suggested that Councils could adopt the Nolan Principles and enshrine them in their Standing Orders in lieu of their own code, but in any event all Councils would need to review their policies for dealing with complaints.

It was noted that the Lords had slightly different views; however none of these had been included in the committee stage. Their view included;-

- a code of conduct for Members for all local authorities should be mandatory, not voluntary
- the code of conduct for all local authorities should be uniformed to ensure there was no local diversity about what was appropriate conduct for all Councillors in all local authorities
- a nationally uniformed code of conduct did not have to be drafted by Government, it could be drafted by bodies or associations which represented local authorities
- uncertainty about the introduction of criminal offences for Councillors who fail to register and declare certain financial and other interests
- the continuation of independent Standards Committees (of principal authorities) to investigate and determine allegations about Councillors' conduct
- the need for a Councillor to have the right of appeal in respect of a decision concerning his / her conduct

Mrs Weaver was thanked for her presentation and views.

Decision – That Parish Council Clerks be invited to the next meeting of the Committee to discuss training, funding and future provision

Dated.....

Signed.....