

**REPORT TO:** Corporate PPB

**DATE:** 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive

**PORTFOLIO:** Leader

**SUBJECT:** Corporate PPB Topic Group – Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide the Board with the findings of a review of the Council's existing Corporate Complaints Handling Procedures which was undertaken as part of the 2013 - 14 Corporate PPB work programme.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1) That the Corporate Policy & Performance Board supports the recommendations contained within the report.**
- 2) The report be submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Council takes pride in the fact that it operates on the principle of getting things right first time and that public satisfaction with services remains positive. However it remains important that the organisation continues to have an effective system in place whereby stakeholders can express their views, both positive and negative, in order that we can learn and take appropriate action where things may have gone wrong.

3.2 In light of the current operating environment, and the ongoing fiscal constraints which we face, it was considered appropriate to undertake a review of existing arrangements for handling Corporate Complaints in order to ensure the system remained fit for purpose, was consistent with recognised good practice, and reflected best value principles in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

3.3 A thorough review has been undertaken which included a review of existing good practice literature, a benchmarking exercise with a number of authorities and a small number of other organisations and in-depth discussions between Elected Members and Officers.

- 3.4 As a result of this work it was concluded that existing arrangements had a number of strengths in that the procedure, which largely followed good practice guidance, is well documented and publicised, is accessible through a range of channels and provides information which is shared periodically with Elected Members and Senior Officers.
- 3.5 However whilst acknowledging these strengths it was considered that there was some scope to further improve arrangements and reduce operational budget allocations. The recommendations within the report are intended to ensure that the collection of information is more consistent and complete, that the procedure is simplified to reduce potential / actual operating costs and avoid matters becoming protracted for a complainant's perspective, and that staff dealing with complaints are provided with sufficient support, resources and skills to allow them to deal with complaints effectively.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 If endorsed the recommendations would require that the Council's existing Corporate Complaints Procedure be revised. Additionally the report also contains a recommendation that consideration be given to the development of a Corporate Unacceptable Behaviour / Actions policy.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

The adoption of the recommendations will result in some limited and initial resource requirements e.g. to rewrite policy and produce guidance notes etc. However the adoption of a more streamlined and quality assured process will reduce the overall and ongoing budget costs to the authority.

#### **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**

There is a risk that current arrangements for handling corporate complaints result in duplication and inconsistency and that the quality of the Councils response to complaints remains variable. The recommendations within the report are intended to mitigate against such risk as far as is reasonably possible.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

It is imperative that the Corporate Complaints Procedure remains accessible to all stakeholders within the community. The existing and continued use of a range of communication channels will ensure that the procedure remains accessible to all groups and individuals.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.