

REPORT TO: Standards Committee

DATE: 10 February 2016

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

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Whistleblowing Policy

WARDS: Borough-Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To enable Members to consider the Council's Whistleblowing Policy in so far as it relates to the work of this Committee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the last meeting of this Committee, Members asked that they have sight of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy, to enable them to consider its operation in connection with the role of the Standards Committee.
- 3.2 The Policy is attached to this report as Appendix A.
- 3.3 The Policy clearly sets out its aims and scope, but stresses the importance of differentiating between a "Whistleblow" and a "Grievance". It stresses that the Policy itself is not a substitute for and does not replace other relevant policies within the Council. It should not be used where other more appropriate procedures are available, and examples are given in paragraph 3.2 of the Policy.
- 3.4 In paragraph 3.3 of the Whistleblowing Policy it is noted that it supports the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and Fraud Response Plan. These are matters which fall within the remit of the Business Efficiency Board, which receives regular reports on these issues, including a section on Whistleblowing. The last report was taken to the Board on 20 November 2014, and it was noted that there had been three Whistleblowing issues raised in the reported year. The next report is anticipated to be brought to the June meeting.
- 3.5 Paragraph 7 of the Policy sets out how any concerns should be raised. This may be to, amongst others, the Monitoring Officer and the Chair of the Standards Committee.
- 3.6 Should the concern amount to a complaint that the Members' Code of Conduct may have been breached, then there may be of course be implications for the Standards regime. The Monitoring Officer would advise on this, and if appropriate, ensure the matter is dealt with as a Standards complaint in the usual way.

3.7 The Head of Internal Audit has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the Policy and maintains a record of all concerns raised and any outcomes. This must be done in such a way as confidentiality is not compromised.

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 would require control measures.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The report itself does not contain any specific equality and diversity issues.

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.