

REPORT TO: Audit & Governance Board

DATE: 23 March 2022

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

PORTFOLIO: Leader

SUBJECT: Standards Update

WARDS: Borough-Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform Members of Standards issues which have arisen recently.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Members will recall that on 7 July 2021, this Board considered a report on revisions to committee structures and recommended to Council, among other things, that the work of the former Standards Committee be undertaken by this Board. Council subsequently approved that.
- 3.2 In discussions with the Chair, it was agreed that reports on Standards issues would be brought as & when necessary, but that it would be helpful to bring an update to the last meeting of each municipal year in any event, with the intention of giving Members information on any national & local developments of interest, and providing the Monitoring Officer with the opportunity of informing Members verbally of any complaints received in Halton.
- 3.3 It will be noted that a separate report proposing very minor amendments to the Code of Conduct appears elsewhere on this agenda.
- 3.4 At the Standards Committee each year, a report would be brought to draw to Members' attention a number of press articles concerning Standards issues in other parts of the UK.
- 3.5 The intention was to give Members a flavour of matters dealt with by other authorities, and how sanctions have been imposed. It was hoped that this would prompt discussion at the meeting. However, it has proven difficult to obtain articles this year, though efforts continue, and any which are found will be circulated to Members.
- 3.6 It is proposed that the Monitoring Officer will provide a verbal update on Halton cases in the usual way.

- 3.7 Should Members consider it helpful, they could resolve that this report be forwarded to Council for information along with the minutes in place of the previous Standards Committee annual report.
- 3.8 Standards Committee had a co-opted member, Mr. Tony Luxton, and the Chair has agreed that he be invited to this meeting along with the two Independent Persons appointed by the Council to assist with Code of Conduct complaints.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is vital that the highest standards of conduct are maintained.

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 risks have been identified which 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.