

REPORT TO: Audit & Governance Board

DATE: 22 March 2023

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

PORTFOLIO: Leader's

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 Audit & Governance Board assumed responsibility for the work of the former Standards Committee in 2021.
- 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 There are no proposed changes to the Code of Conduct for Members for the Board to consider this year.
- 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, who accepted an invitation to attend the Board meeting last year, but has now expressed a wish to stand down having given considerable assistance to the Council on standards issues over a large number of years. The Chair has agreed to invite the two Independent Persons appointed by the Council to assist with Code of Conduct complaints to this meeting.

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 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None arising from this report.

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.