

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 24 March 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Annual Review of Constitution 2016

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek the approval of the Council to a number of changes to the Constitution.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Council be recommended to approve the changes to the Constitution including the matters set out in Appendix 1.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The revised version picks up the changes to the Council's working arrangements that have taken place during the year, as well as other changes which are intended to assist the Council to operate more effectively.

3.2 The proposals for change have been considered by the Chief Executive and the Executive Board Member for Resources in accordance with Article 16.02. Apart from the purely technical changes, the proposed amendments that are considered to be of particular significance are listed in Appendix 1 to this report.

4.0 POLICY, FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 All legislative changes have been considered. However, no further amendments, over and above those already outlined, are required at the present time. Any other required changes during the period 2016/17 will be the subject of further reports when dates and details are available.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton.

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton.

5.3 A Healthy Halton.

5.4 A Safer Halton.

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal.

The changes proposed are designed to support the continued delivery of the Council's priorities.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 The Council needs to ensure that its Constitution is regularly updated so that it continues to support efficient, transparent and accountable decision-making by the authority.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

Proposed Significant Changes to the Constitution

Procurement Standing Orders

These have been amended to keep up with changes in procedures. A full set of the Procurement Standing Orders, showing track changes, together with a summary of those changes, is available for inspection.

Finance Standing Orders

The delegated limits for Certifying Officers provides for Divisional Managers and Group Solicitors to authorise expenditure up to £100k. As the number of Divisional Managers has reduced in some areas, some other specifically named managers have been given authority for the same value of expenditure.

Standing Orders Relating to Duties of Proper Officers and Delegation to Officers

These have been updated to reflect the changes to Directorate structures and responsibilities.

Local Code of Corporate Governance

This has been updated in line with findings from the internal audit of the Local Code of Corporate Governance which was undertaken in accordance with the 2015/16 Internal Audit Plan (July 2015).

Staff and Officer Employment Rules

Changes to the Standing Orders relating to Staff and Officer Employment Rules were agreed by full Council in July 2015. This review has been the first opportunity to incorporate the changes into the printed version of the document, although the new rules have been adopted in the interim period.

Whistleblowing Policy

The update is needed as a result of legislative changes which are not specific to Halton. The update also makes reference to the new Whistleblowing Advice Line ran by the NSPCC Helpline which has officially launched. This has been developed to provide support to employees wishing to raise concerns over how child protection issues are being handled in their own or other organisations. The advice line is not intended to replace any current practices or responsibilities of organisations working with children and helpline advisors would encourage professionals to raise any concerns about a child to their

own employer in the first instance. However, the advice line offers an alternative route if whistleblowing internally is difficult or professionals have concerns around how matters are being handled.