

Report To:	STANDARDS AND PERSONNEL APPEALS COMMITTEE	Date:	27 MARCH 2017
Heading:	ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY		
Portfolio Holder:	N/A		
Ward/s:	N/A		
Key Decision:	NO		
Subject To Call-In:	NO		

Purpose Of Report

To provide the Committee with an annual update as required by paragraph 9.1 of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

Recommendation(s)

To note the review of the Whistleblowing Policy and how it has operated in the preceding 12 months.

Reasons For Recommendation(s)

To ensure the Committee is adequately informed to enable it to monitor the operation of the Whistleblowing Policy in accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference as set out in Part 3, Paragraph 1.8 of the Constitution.

To ensure the policy remains up to date and fit for purpose.

Alternative Options Considered (With Reasons Why Not Adopted)

None as this is a requirement of the Constitution.

Detailed Information

The Committee last reviewed the policy at its meeting on 14 March 2016 and approved changes to the document.

Paragraph 9.1 of the Whistleblowing Policy states that:

“The Monitoring Officer has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. This Officer maintains a record of concerns raised and the outcomes (in a form which does not endanger your confidentiality) and will report these to the Standards Committee once a year. The Whistleblowing Policy will also be reviewed on a bi-annual basis.”

Application of Policy

During the past 12 months there have been 2 reported incidents of whistleblowing drawn to the Monitoring Officer’s attention.

The first complaint was investigated. The complaint related to accuracy of recording of time by an employee. A disciplinary investigation was undertaken and a management instruction given on its conclusion.

A systems audit was carried out in relation to the second complaint. The complaint related to alleged flaws in systems. The audit has resulted in a number of management recommendations being made to improve the processes used in the section.

The following table sets out the application of the Whistleblowing Policy since 2010 to the present date:

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	NO FURTHER ACTION	MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	DISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION
2010	4	1	2	1
2011	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
2012	3	0	2	1 (action taken)
2013	1	0	0	1 (action taken)
2014	4	1	1	3 (2 with action taken)
2015	2	1	1	0
2016	2	0	1	1
2017 (to date)	0	N/A	N/A	N/A

The Committee previously asked for information regarding the types of complaints made in order to identify trends and enable the Committee, if appropriate, to make recommendations.

From the information available, the complaints can be analysed as follows:

TYPE OF COMPLAINT	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
Time recording failures – which challenge that flexi time, TOIL and annual leave has been taken when not accrued	6
Failure to follow systems/processes	3
Issues relating to line management	1
Working whilst off sick	1
Inappropriate comments	1
Data Protection Breach	1
Misuse of Council resources	1

As can be seen, the only recurring trend appears to be in relation to time recording by staff. In 2013 as part of an investigation, the Monitoring Officer made 10 corporate recommendations to improve time recording systems and remind staff of their responsibilities. These were implemented. Following further similar complaints in 2014, further corporate recommendations were made and reminders given to all staff about time recording.

Review of Policy

A review of the policy has been undertaken. No substantive changes are recommended.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The Council is committed to treating its employees fairly and respectfully.
The Council aims to be an employer of choice and an organisation people want to work for.

Legal:

The policy has been written to take account of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects workers making disclosures in good faith.

Finance:

This report is effective from 27/03/2017 and has the following financial implications:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	None
General Fund – Capital Programme	None
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	None
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	None

Human Resources / Equality and Diversity:

Regular review, maintenance and consistent application of the Whistleblowing Policy infer good employment practices. As such it is important to maintain the integrity of the policy.

Other Implications:

None

Reason(s) for Urgency (if applicable):

N/A

Background Papers

Whistleblowing Policy – available on the Council's website.

Report Author and Contact Officer

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