

Audit and Standards Committee – 17th April 2014

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Confidential Reporting Policy

Purpose of Report

1. To monitor the operation of the Council's Confidential Reporting Policy.

Background

2. Within its terms of reference the Audit and Standards Committee is responsible for advising the Council on its confidential reporting (i.e. whistle-blowing) policy and monitoring its operation.
3. The Policy was first introduced in July 1999 and was last updated in April 2014. A copy of the current policy is attached at Appendix 1.

A few minor changes have been made to the updated 2014 policy and includes specific reference to the Trade Unions that have been consulted on in developing the policy and specific Acts that the policy has been written in accordance with. The policy also references updated web sites and contact names where applicable. The policy now also directs employees who have concerns to raise them either through line management or senior management but also through the named Directorate contact detailed on the Confidential Reporting Policy posters located in their work area.

4. In my capacity as Monitoring Officer I regularly monitor the Policy by surveying each Directorate and asking a number of standard questions. The latest survey was undertaken during Spring 2014 and the results are set out below

Are you aware of any use of the Policy by your staff and, if so, please supply appropriate details?

5. There has been two recorded uses of the policy:-
 - In the Directorate of Urban Environment (an anonymous allegation which was fully investigated and found to be malicious);
 - In the Directorate of Corporate Resources (an anonymous allegation of fraud which was investigated by Internal Audit and the allegation was not substantiated).

There have been no other incidents of use of the Policy by staff reported this year for any of the Directorates.

How are your staff reminded of the existence of the policy e.g. newsletters and briefings?

6. Generally Directorates make use of briefings, newsletters, management meetings, posters and the induction process.

Are there regular checks of posters and leaflets to make sure that they are up to date and readily available?

7. All Directorates report that regular (i.e. at least annually) checks do take place and any missing or out-dated posters are replaced. Where posters are not used, the policy itself is made available to managers or is displayed on a prominent notice board.

What is the outcome of your Directorate's review of the policy?

8. Each Directorate has reviewed the Policy and considers that it is appropriate for the areas it covers.

Finance

9. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Law

10. The relevant legislation is contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which affords some statutory protection for whistle-blowers.

Equality Impact

11. This report takes into account the Council's policy on equality and diversity and an Equality Impact Assessment has been produced.

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that the Committee note the outcome of the recent monitoring of the Confidential Reporting Policy.



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Philip Tart
Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer: Philip Tart
Telephone: 01384 (81)5300
Email: philip.tart@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers

Various emails from Directorates