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## **Audit and Standards Committee – 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

### **Report of the Monitoring Officer**

#### **Whistleblowing Policy**

##### **Purpose of Report**

1. To monitor the operation of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

##### **Recommendation**

2. It is recommended that the Committee comment on and note the outcome of the recent monitoring of the Whistleblowing Policy.

##### **Background**

3. Within its terms of reference the Audit and Standards Committee is responsible for advising the Council on its Whistleblowing reporting policy and monitoring its operation.
4. The Policy was first introduced in July 1999 and was last updated in March 2020. A copy of the current policy is attached at Appendix A. There are no key changes to the document. The remaining changes are minor updates regarding contact details.
5. 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 February 2020 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?**

6. There have been three reports of use of the Policy in the last 12 months, with one referral each, in relation to Housing, Public Health and Schools. During the last year there were no referrals in relation to any other Division.



7. Of the three disclosures noted above, one relates to an allegation that the Council was using a disproportionate amount to fund the Anti-Social Behaviour Team in Housing. Details of the Public Health and Schools referrals are presented in the Annual Fraud report. All three disclosures have been investigated.

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

8. Generally Directorates make use of briefings, emails, newsletters, events, management meetings, posters on noticeboards, annual reminders and the induction process.

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

9. 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?**

10. The updated Whistleblowing Policy will be published in the Chief Executive's Blog and Corporate Brief, following approval by the Audit and Standards Committee.

**Finance**

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

**Law**

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

**Equality Impact**

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

**Human Resources/Organisational Development**

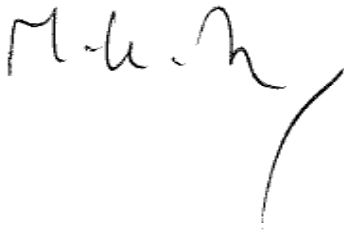
14. There are no human resources or organisational development implications relating to this report.

## **Commercial/Procurement**

15. There are no commercial/procurement considerations associated with this report.

## **Health, Wellbeing and Safety**

16. There is no direct impact on the health, wellbeing and safety of the Borough's residents as a result of this report.



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## **List of Background Papers**

Various emails from Directorates

