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## **Audit and Standards Committee – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021**

### **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 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 April 2020. Audit and Standards Committee approved the policy at its meeting in August following cancellation of the committee meeting in April. A copy of the updated policy is attached at Appendix A. There are no key changes to the document. The remaining changes are references to schools and minor updates relating to 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 April 2021 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 has been one report of use of the Policy since it's review in 2020. That is currently being investigated and I understand relates to management style.



An anonymous letter was received in relation to the Adult Social Care Service area, and in view of the anonymous nature of the complaint this was informally resolved with assistance from Human Resources.

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

7. 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?**

8. 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?**

9. 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**

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

**Law**

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

**Risk Management**

12. The Whistleblowing Report and Policy does not create any risks for the Council, but by having a Whistleblowing Policy it does help for potentially serious issues to be identified and addressed.

**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**

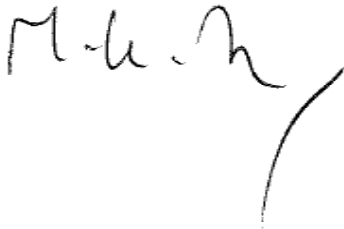
14. There are no human resources or organisational development implications relating to this report.

## **Commercial/Procurement**

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

## **Council Priorities**

16. The Whistleblowing Policy forms part of the Council's overall governance arrangements. Effective governance is essential to underpin the successful delivery of key Council priorities including the Borough Vision, Council Plan and Future Council Programme.



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## **List of Background Papers**

Various emails from Directorates