

Report To: Corporate Governance Committee

Date of Meeting: 13th July 2016

Lead Member / Officer: Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer

Report Author: Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer

Title: Whistleblowing Policy – Annual Report

1. What is the report about?

This report is submitted in accordance with the Council's Whistleblowing Policy which contains a requirement that the Monitoring Officer bring a report to this Committee at least once a year on the operation of the Policy and any changes in practice introduced as a result of concerns raised under the Policy.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To provide members with information relating to the operation of the policy over the past year both before and after adoption of the recently revised policy.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee consider and comment upon the information provided in this report.

4. Report details.

The Council recently approved a revised and updated Whistleblowing Policy which included a requirement that at least annually the Monitoring Officer should in an anonymised format report on the operation of the policy and any changes to practice introduced as a result of a concern raised under this policy.

This report deals with concerns raised under the policy since 1st April 2015 to date. A table in Appendix 1 sets out the nature of those concerns and how they have been dealt with.

There have been two concerns raised under the policy during this time. The first related to an unauthorised disclosure of confidential information due to the information not having been kept securely. Changes to the practice within the department concerned have been made to ensure that the risk of such an occurrence is minimised in future.

The second concern relates to allegations made by a former employee in respect of practices relating to the management of extra care accommodation. An investigation has been undertaken but the outcome has yet to be determined.

There would not appear to be any pattern or theme emerging from these concerns.

The revised updated policy along with a number of other employee related policies that have been agreed has now been formatted and recently been returned from translation. The new HR intranet pages are due to be launched by the end of July and as part of the launch of these pages it is intended to focus on the promotion of these new policies including the new whistleblowing policy

HR Business Partners will be promoting the policy within their client services in management meetings in order that managers will receive information directly.

HR is also looking at the possibility of having the presentation of the policy put into an e-learning format to raise awareness. Clearly awareness among staff and others of the policy is key to its success and it is hoped that a co-ordinated launch will achieve this.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The Whistle blowing Policy will assist the Corporate Priorities by helping to modernise the council by ensuring that managers and employees are aware of their obligations in line with legislation and good practice.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

There are no direct costs associated with this report.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

There is no requirement for an assessment in respect of this report.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

There have been no consultations in respect of this report.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

Robust whistleblowing arrangements help to support good governance throughout the Council.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

In the absence of a robust and effective Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure with which employees and third parties engaging with the Council are familiar, there is a risk that concerns about malpractice will not come to the attention of the Council. It is essential that employees understand that they will be protected if they raise a concern in the reasonable belief that their report is made in the public interest.

11. Power to make the Decision

No decision is required.