

Report To: Corporate Governance Committee
Date of Meeting: 21st November 2018
Lead Member / Officer: Monitoring Officer
Report Author: Gary Williams
Title: **Whistleblowing Policy – Annual Report**

1. What is the report about?

This report is about the operation of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy since the last annual report in November 2017.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

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.

3. What are the Recommendations?

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

4. Report details

In April 2016 Council approved an updated and amended Whistleblowing Policy. As with the previous policy there is a requirement for the Monitoring Officer to report once each year to the Corporate Governance Committee on the operation of the Policy.

Following the adoption of the Policy, there was an awareness raising exercise which included a presentation to the management teams of the various services in the Council, a payslip message and the placing of information on the intranet. HR Business Partners continue to raise awareness of the policy at departmental management teams that they attend.

The last report to the Committee was made in November 2017 and covered the period from July 2016 to November 2017. During that period there had been no concerns raised under the Policy.

This report covers the period from 30th November 2017 to 31st October 2018.

In the period covered by this report there have been two concerns raised under the Policy. A summary of these concerns is set out in Appendix 1 to this report. Both of these concerns are currently being investigated through the Council's internal procedures.

It is recommended in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business because it is likely that exempt information as defined in paragraphs 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed.

The concerns were raised in respect of two separate schools and are different in their nature. There would not appear to be any connection between the two concerns nor any underlying theme that needs to be addressed.

Further work that is anticipated in the coming year include the development of a microsite for leadership and the Council's new induction process which will enable the highlighting of key policies and changes that have been made. This will be another tool which will help to maintain awareness of the policy. In addition, regular articles will appear on LINC to raise awareness of a number of our HR policies. The Whistleblowing Policy will be included in this.

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

Robust whistleblowing arrangements support good governance throughout the Council which in turn enables effective delivery of priorities.

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 Well-being Impact Assessment? The completed Well-being Impact Assessment report can be downloaded from the [website](#) and 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.