

**STANDARDS AND ETHICS
COMMITTEE**

22 MARCH 2017

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND LEGAL
SERVICES AND MONITORING OFFICER**

WHISTLEBLOWING UPDATE

Reason for this Report

1. To provide the Committee with information to enable it to oversee and monitor the Council's whistleblowing procedures and to consider any ethical issues arising.

Background

2. The Standards & Ethics Committee has responsibility to 'oversee and monitor the Council's Whistleblowing procedures and to consider ethical issues arising' (paragraph (e) of the Committee's terms of reference).
3. The Whistleblowing Policy sets out the arrangements adopted by the Council aimed at ensuring that workers are able to raise concerns in the public interest about a danger, risk, malpractice or wrongdoing within the Council without fear of adverse consequences. The Policy explains the statutory protection available to workers under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, and is intended to encourage and enable workers to raise serious concerns within the Council rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside.
4. The Whistleblowing Policy was revised and approved by Cabinet in October 2014 on the recommendations of this Committee, to reflect legislative changes, clarify certain provisions and adopt best practice. The revised Policy has been publicised through posters in all core Council buildings, and articles in the Core Brief, Your Inbox and Our News disseminated to all staff.
5. Under the Policy, the Monitoring Officer is required to keep a record of all reports made and their outcomes and to report periodically to the Standards Committee. At its meeting in March 2016, the Committee considered information on reports made during 2014 and 2015. The Committee noted that a relatively high number of reports had been made during 2014, which may in part have been attributable to an increased awareness of the Policy, following its review and reissue. Members noted that arrangements were being put in hand to ensure that publicity of the Policy is renewed and re-issued at regular intervals to ensure awareness is maintained.

Issues

6. The number of whistleblowing reports notified to the Monitoring Officer during 2016 is four. Further information on the concerns raised and the respective outcomes will be provided to Members at the Committee meeting on an exempt and confidential basis.
7. The Committee is invited to note the contents of this report and further information provided at the meeting, and make any observations as appropriate.

Legal Implications

8. The legal implications are contained within the body of the report.

Financial Implications

9. There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to note the information provided and make any observations as appropriate.

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance and Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

15 March 2017

The following Background Papers have been taken into account:

Report of Monitoring Officer to the Standards & Ethics Committee - 'Whistleblowing Update dated 22 March 2016; and minutes thereof