
**REPORT OF THE INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER
AGENDA ITEM: 7**

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 January 2014, the Committee considered information on reports made during 2012 and 2013 and the number of reports made since 2007. The Committee requested comparative information on the number of reports received in other Welsh Authorities, which was considered at its meeting in March 2014. The Committee noted that the numbers of

reports received in Cardiff were broadly similar to the numbers received in other Authorities.

Issues

6. The number of whistleblowing reports notified to the Monitoring Officer during 2014 and 2015 is as follows:

2015	- 1
2014	- 7

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. To put these numbers into context, the Committee may wish to note the number of whistleblowing reports recorded by the Monitoring Officer in previous years (reported to the Committee in January 2014), as follows:

2013	- 2
2012	- 2
2011	- 0
2010	- 1
2009	- 4
2008	- 2
2007	- 5

8. Members will note the relatively high number of reports made during 2014, which may in part be attributable to an increased awareness of the Whistleblowing Policy, as a result of the Committee's review and the adoption of a revised Policy and associated publicity measures. Members will note that there was a similar increase in numbers during 2007 when the Policy was previously reviewed and publicised. Arrangements have now been put in hand to ensure that publicity of the Policy is renewed and re-issued at regular intervals to ensure awareness is maintained.
9. One recently concluded investigation has identified that managers and human resources staff may require further information and training on the scope of the Whistleblowing Policy, to ensure that the procedure is properly and promptly implemented. Further guidance is being developed to address this issue.
10. 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

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

Financial Implications

12. 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.

David Marr
Interim Monitoring Officer
15 March 2016

The following Background Papers have been taken into account:

Reports of Monitoring Officer to the Standards & Ethics Committee - 'Whistleblowing Policy dated 28 January 2014 and 18 March 2014; and minutes thereof

Cabinet report 'Revised Whistleblowing Policy', dated 9 October 2014; and decision in respect thereof