



**Report of: Interim Director of Finance and Property (S151 Officer)**

<b>Meeting of</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Ward(s)</b>
Audit Committee	2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2019	All

<b>Delete as appropriate</b>	Non-exempt	
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Part of the report is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972) Paragraphs 1, 2, 7 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely: Information relating to an individual. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual and Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

## **THE APPENDIX TO THIS REPORT IS NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**SUBJECT: Whistleblowing Report – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

### **1. Synopsis**

1.1 The report seeks to provide assurance that whistleblowing arrangements are in place and operating effectively, and that investigating fraud is an integral part of the Council's Anti-Fraud Strategy.

The Council's Whistleblowing Officer is the Head of Internal Audit, Investigations and Risk Management.

Whistleblowing arrangements are a key element of the Council's overall governance arrangements. It is the mechanism to "empower the honest majority" in the fight against fraud and corruption and is an integral part of the Council's Anti-Fraud Strategy.

Whistleblowing allows employees, members, contractors and others, to raise concerns surrounding potential fraud and corruption. There are separate reporting mechanisms for adult and child protection allegations. Whistleblowing information is located within the Human Resources policies and procedures section of the Council's intranet.

A review of the Council's whistleblowing policy was undertaken in 2018-19 and approved by Audit Committee in January 2019.

- 1.2 The report gives detail of referrals made between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 as well as referrals carried forward from previous years.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 To note the report.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Council is obliged under the Public Interest Disclosure Act to maintain a whistleblowing policy, designed to encourage staff, members, contractors and others to raise concerns without fear of reprisal. Appendix A details the referrals that have received under the Council's Whistleblowing Policy with a status of each referral.

## **4. Implications**

### **4.1 Financial Implications**

The programme of work has been met from within the existing Internal Audit budget. Where relevant, the financial implications arising from individual investigations will be met by local budgets.

### **4.2 Legal Implications**

The original Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protected disclosure provisions, inserted in the Employment Rights Act 1996, were amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 to introduce a new public interest requirement. The Council must have regard to the Government's Whistleblowing Guidance for Employers and Code of Practice (2015).

Legal advice and support will be provided, where necessary, in relation to individual whistleblowing investigations.

### **4.3 Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

#### 4.4 Resident Impact Assessment

The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. A Resident Impact Assessment has not been completed because the decision currently being sought does not have direct impacts on residents.

#### 5. Reasons for the recommendation

5.1 The report presents an update on whistleblowing referrals received from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

### Appendices

**Appendix A** – Whistleblowing Investigations Report: 1st April 2018 to 30th June 2019 (Exempt – not for publication)

#### Final report clearance:

**Signed by:**



Annabel Scholes – Interim Director of Finance and Property (S151 Officer) **Date: 21/8/19**

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**REPORT ENDS**