

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY 22nd January 2009

Report of the Monitoring Officer

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable the Committee to review the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee review the Whistleblowing Policy and approve the amendments as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- (2) That the Monitoring Officer report to the Committee annually on the operation of the Policy.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's Whistleblowing Policy was introduced in 1999 having been approved by the then Finance and Corporate Policy Strategy Committee. It was last amended in September 2002 following consultation with the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)..
- 1.2 The Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee include "monitoring and reviewing as necessary the operation of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy".
- 1.3 Over the years, the Policy has been little used, and it is proposed now to update the Policy and at the same time to publicise it through the monthly "First Brief", to ensure that employees are aware of its existence and how to use it.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 The proposed amended version of the Policy is attached at Appendix 1, and the current Policy and Code of Practice is at Appendix 2. The Code of Practice seems to duplicate much of the Policy, and there seems to be no good reason for having two separate documents. The changes that are being proposed are mainly drafting changes and do not alter the substance of the Policy. The Monitoring Officer, in reviewing the Policy, has considered examples of good practice from other local authorities, and a Code of Practice published by the British Standards Institution.

2.2 It is proposed that the amended Policy should be re-launched to employees through the Council's "First Brief" procedure, which is a monthly briefing for all employees. This will ensure that employees know how they can raise any concerns covered by the Policy.

2.3 To enable the Committee to fulfil its responsibility to monitor and review the Policy, it is recommended that the Monitoring Officer should report to the Committee on an annual basis.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 The views of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) are being sought and will be reported orally at the meeting.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

4.1 The options open to the Committee are to amend the Policy as appended to this report, or to make other amendments, or to leave the current Policy unchanged. The Monitoring Officer's recommendation would be to approve the amendments in Appendix 1.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising from this report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Policy will accord with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The report has been prepared by the Monitoring Officer in her role as adviser to the Standards Committee.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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