

Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10.00am, Thursday 5 March 2015

Whistleblowing policy: update

Item number	7.9
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	

Executive summary

This report provides a high level overview of the operation of the Council's whistleblowing hotline for the period 1 August 2014 to 16 February 2015.

Links

Coalition pledges	P27
Council outcomes	CO15, CO25, CO27
Single Outcome Agreement	

Whistleblowing policy: update

Recommendations

- 1.1 To note the report.

Background

- 2.1 The Council's objective of introducing and developing good governance and best practice in its approach to whistleblowing arrangements took a major step forward with the launch of its new confidential hotline service on 12 May 2014, provided by independent company Safecall.
- 2.2 Committee considered the first update report in September 2014 and a verbal update report from the Chief Executive in November 2014. This report covers the period from 1 August 2014 to 16 February 2015.

Main report

Disclosures

- 3.1 During the reporting period Safecall received 11 disclosures as follows:

Category	Number of disclosures
Major/significant qualifying disclosures	2
Minor/operational qualifying disclosures	7
Non-qualifying disclosures	2

Whistleblowing pilot review

- 3.2 The Finance and Resources Committee agreed to support a one-year pilot of the whistleblowing service, with a review at six months to determine whether the

arrangements increased the reported frequency of protected disclosures and to confirm the service represents value for money.

- 3.3 CMT agreed Terms of Reference for the review at their meeting on 28 January 2015. These include:
 - 3.3.1 policy review
 - 3.3.2 roles and responsibilities
 - 3.3.3 reporting arrangements
 - 3.3.4 enhanced awareness
 - 3.3.5 stakeholder requirements
 - 3.3.6 provision of support.
- 3.4 There will be extensive consultation with key stakeholders.
- 3.5 The review report will be considered by the Chief Executive and CMT with recommendations reported to the Finance and Resources Committee in Spring 2015.

Measures of success

- 4.1 Employees feel able to report suspected wrongdoing as early as possible in the knowledge that:
 - 4.1.1 their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately;
 - 4.1.2 they will be protected from victimisation; and
 - 4.1.3 the provisions of the whistleblowing policy ensure all matters at the Council are fully transparent and officers are accountable.

Financial impact

- 5.1 The cost of the whistleblowing hotline between 1 August 2014 and 31 January 2015 is as follows:
 - 5.1.1 provision of confidential reporting hotline - £11,797.50
 - 5.1.2 August 2014: major investigations - £10,144.45
 - 5.1.3 September 2014: major investigations - £5,539.25
 - 5.1.4 October 2014: major investigations - £2,258.15
 - 5.1.5 November 2014: major investigations - £5,925.00
 - 5.1.6 December 2014: major investigations - £5,105.15
 - 5.1.7 January 2015: major investigations - £5,070.00
- 5.2 The costs are within the estimated budget for the pilot and are monitored regularly.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The whistleblowing policy was developed and agreed to complement existing management reporting arrangements and to ensure employees have the right to raise concerns in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously, that matters will be investigated appropriately and confidentiality will be maintained.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Consultation was undertaken with the trades unions to secure a local agreement.
- 9.2 A range of stakeholders, including whistleblowers and trades unions, will be consulted during the pilot review.

Background reading/external references

[Finance and Resources Committee 19 September 2013: item 7.2 - Revised Whistleblowing Policy](#)

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Links

Coalition pledges	P27 – seek to work in full partnership with Council staff and their representatives.
Council outcomes	CO15 – the public is protected. CO25 – the Council has efficient and effective services that

deliver on objectives.

CO27 – the Council supports, invests in and develops our people.

**Single Outcome
Agreement
Appendices**