

Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10am, Thursday 21 April 2016

Whistleblowing update

Item number	7.12
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 December 2015 to 29 February 2016.

Links

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

Whistleblowing update

Recommendations

- 1.1 To note the report.

Background

- 2.1 The Council launched its confidential whistleblowing hotline service, provided by independent company Safecall, on 12 May 2014.
- 2.2 This report covers the period from 1 December 2015 to 29 February 2016.

Main report

Reports to Safecall

- 3.1 During the reporting period Safecall received four new reports as follows:

Category	Number of disclosures
Major/significant qualifying disclosures	1
Minor/operational qualifying disclosures	1
Category to be determined	1
Non-qualifying disclosures	1

Whistleblowing Review - Action Plan Progress

- 3.2 The review of the pilot was completed in August 2015 with conclusions and recommendations reported to Finance and Resources Committee on 27 August 2015. An action plan was approved to develop the existing service and prepare for the procurement of continued service on expiry of the pilot term.

- 3.3 Progress against the action plan is being monitored with re-procurement having been the focus of activity during this reporting period. Tenders were returned on 8 March 2016 and are currently being evaluated with contract award scheduled for early April.
- 3.4 Guidance and information for staff has been improved and is available on the Orb, with alternative delivery mechanisms for hard to reach staff being explored. Posters publicising the service have been distributed for display on staff notice boards across the Council's estate.
- 3.5 The implementation of new contractual arrangements is our current priority, along with policy and procedure updates and training for investigating managers.

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 12 November 2015 and 11 February 2016 was £7,024.
- 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, were consulted during the pilot review.

Background reading/external references

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

[Finance and Resources Committee 27 August 2015: item 7.13 - Review of Whistleblowing Arrangements](#)

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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	