

COMMITTEE	Audit, Scrutiny and Risk
DATE	26 September 2017
REPORT TITLE	Whistleblowing Policy
REPORT NUMBER	CG/17/110
HEAD OF SERVICE	Morven Spalding
REPORT AUTHOR	David Forman

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with details on the implementation, communication and monitoring of the Whistleblowing policy, following a request at the last Audit, Scrutiny and Risk Committee of 27 June 2017.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1** It is recommended that Committee notes the details on implementation, communication and monitoring of the Whistleblowing policy.

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

3.1 Background

At Audit, Scrutiny and Risk Committee on 27th June 2017, officers were requested, in response to the findings of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee - Annual Report - OCE/17/007, to complete a report providing an update on the Whistleblowing Policy specifically, how it is implemented, communicated and monitored throughout the organisation.

3.2 Implementation and Communication of the Whistleblowing policy

The Whistleblowing policy is an HR related policy and is included in the suite of HR policies published on the Zone. As part of the HR policy design and review process, following committee approval for a new or revised policy, the HR officer responsible for it ensures that the policy document is uploaded to the intranet replacing the existing version and arranges for a briefing on the new or revised policy to HR Service Centre so that any queries lodged by managers or employees can be responded to. The HR officer prepares a communication outlining the new or revised policy for the Web Monitor to

place on the Zone under 'Internal News', and an e-mail is sent to the 'Communications Champions' for cascading to managers and employees within each directorate to raise awareness throughout the organisation. A link to the policy document and a summary of changes sheet is included in both. Details of HR policy developments/reviews are also communicated on the 'Your HR' system, and employee briefings are undertaken as appropriate. This is what occurred on the last occasion the Whistleblowing policy was reviewed in July 2016 when some specific changes were made to the document, with employees' team briefed at that time. Any future reviews of the policy would go through a similar process.

3.3 Monitoring of the Whistleblowing policy

The Monitoring Officer in the Council is the Head of Legal and Democratic Services whose role in relation to the Council's Whistleblowing policy is summarised as follows:-

- Where the manager receiving the complaint considers it is one of whistleblowing the Monitoring Officer is informed through completion of a standard form.
- On receipt of the form the Monitoring Officer checks whether it relates to the acts or issues which qualify for protection as detailed in the policy.
- The Monitoring Officer then acknowledges the individual's concern in writing and confirms whether protection applies under the policy.
- Where the matter falls under the policy, the Monitoring Officer then identifies and appoints an investigating officer to look into the concern and notifies the individual of whom this will be. The Monitoring Officer discusses and agrees the scope of the investigation with the investigating officer.
- The investigating officer undertakes the investigation and on its conclusion compiles a written report for the Monitoring Officer.
- The final decision on the outcome of the investigation lies with the Monitoring Officer, in discussion with the investigating officer.
- Once the outcome is decided on, the Monitoring Officer will meet with the individual to explain the outcome and the reasons for the decision. In most circumstances, the Monitoring Officer should release the full report to the individual who raised the concern.
- Following the outcome, the Monitoring Officer writes to the relevant Head of Service to communicate any action points arising from the whistleblowing concern with these to be implemented within the timescale set by the Monitoring Officer.
- The Monitoring Officer is also responsible for reporting the number and progress of all whistleblowing concerns to each meeting of the appropriate Committee.

- 3.4** In relation to the last bullet point above, monitoring is undertaken of the number and progress of cases addressed through the policy, with the Monitoring Officer also having a general role to feedback to HR on the effectiveness of the policy/procedure, as appropriate. The HR Service aims to review its policies/procedures on a three year rolling basis and any feedback received on the operation of a policy/procedure would be taken into account as part of that. A review can be brought forward where the need arises. The use of focus groups, benchmarking with other organisations and consultation with the trade unions and other stakeholders comprises part of the policy/procedure development and review process. Any legislative changes would also be taken into account, with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013) being the relevant pieces of current legislation relating to Whistleblowing.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 Financial

Financial risk has been considered and there is no risk identified.

6.2 Employee

Employee risk has been considered and there is no risk identified.

6.3 Customer / citizen

Customer risk has been considered and there is no risk identified.

6.4 Environmental

Environmental risk has been considered and there is no risk identified.

6.5 Technological

Technological risk has been considered and there is no risk identified.

6.6 Legal

Legal risk has been considered and there is no risk identified.

6.7 Reputational

Reputational risk has been considered and there is no risk identified.

7. IMPACT SECTION

7.1 Economy

There are no identified economic impacts associated with this report.

7.2 People

There are no identified People impacts associated with this report.

7.3 Place

There are no identified Place impacts associated with this report.

7.4 Technology

There are no identified Technology impacts associated with this report.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 No background papers were consulted in the preparation of this report.

9. APPENDICES (if applicable)

9.1 There are no appendices associated with this report.

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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