



AUDIT COMMITTEE

Subject Heading:

Whistleblowing Policy

SLT Lead:

Jane West
Chief Operating Officer

Report Author and contact details:

Jeremy Welburn
Head of Assurance
Tel: 01708 432610 / 07976539248
E-mail: jeremy.welburn@onesource.co.uk

Policy context:

To update the Committee on the arrangements in place.

Financial summary:

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report which is for noting and/or providing an opportunity for questions to be raised.

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering	[X]
Places making Havering	[X]
Opportunities making Havering	[X]
Connections making Havering	[X]

SUMMARY

Robust arrangements regarding Whistleblowing, also known as 'Confidential Reporting', is a key in maintaining effective governance arrangements within the Public Sector. It is a process used to "empower the honest majority" in the fight against fraud and corruption.

The review of the Council's Whistleblowing arrangements was undertaken in January 2020. No specific actions have arisen from the review. The on-going promotion of the policy is part of the action plan to implement the anti-fraud and corruption strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 To note and comment on the contents of the report.
- 2 To approve the updated Confidential Reporting Policy.

REPORT DETAIL

- 1.1 The Confidential Reporting Policy is more commonly referred to as the 'Whistleblowing Policy' and forms part of the Council's Corporate Governance Framework.
- 1.2 The Whistleblowing information is located with the Human Resources policies and procedures on the intranet. All new starters to the organisation receive a copy of the policy as part of their induction pack, which they are asked to sign a declaration indicating they have received and read. Information on Whistleblowing is also included within the managers induction days and other training/awareness workshops.
- 1.3 On approval by the Committee the updated policy will be publicised to all relevant parties and will be made available on the intranet.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

Fraud and corruption will often lead to financial loss to the authority. By maintaining robust anti-fraud and corruption arrangements and a clear strategy in this area, the risk of such losses will be reduced. Arrangements must be sufficient to ensure that controls are implemented, based on risk, to prevent, deter and detect fraud. The work of the fraud team often identifies losses which may be recouped by the Council. There are no financial implications or risks arising directly from this report.

Legal implications and risks:

None arising directly from this report.

Human Resources implications and risks:

There are no HR implications arising from this report, HR are involved with investigations resulting from reports particularly where an investigation triggers a disciplinary process. All action taken in response to an investigation under the Confidential Reporting Policy would be taken in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures and or the Council's Fraud Strategy.

Equalities implications and risks:

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.