

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Governance & Audit & Standards Committee
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	21 January 2022
<b>Subject:</b>	Whistleblowing Annual Report and Policy
<b>Report by:</b>	Elizabeth Goodwin - Chief Internal Auditor
<b>Wards affected:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Full Council decision:</b>	No

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## **1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To update Members of this Committee on the nature and handling of any whistleblowing concerns which have been raised for the period January 2021 to December 2021. In addition to this to confirm that, following the annual review of the whistleblowing policy, there are no current proposed changes.

## **2 Recommendations**

It is recommended that Members of the Governance and Audit and Standards Committee:

- 2.1 Note this report and the attached Appendix A and consider whether any further action is required.
- 2.2 Note the whistleblowing policy, Appendix B, where there are no proposed changes.

## **3 Background**

- 3.1 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives employees certain rights in relation to whistleblowing. An employee has a right to make a protected disclosure to prescribed persons where the employee reasonably believes:
- 3.1.1 A criminal offence has, or is going to be committed;
  - 3.1.2 There is a breach of a legal obligation;
  - 3.1.3 A miscarriage of justice;
  - 3.1.4 There is a danger to the health and safety of any individual;
  - 3.1.5 There will be damage to the environment; or
  - 3.1.6 There is deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the above five matters.
- 3.2 The Act provides that employees shall suffer no detriment to their employment as a result of blowing the whistle, including disciplinary action.

- 3.3 The Policy applies to all Council staff, including employees, temporary workers, agency staff and any contractor remunerated by the Council.
- 3.4 As requested by the Governance & Audit & Standards Committee, an annual report is produced each year in respect of whistleblowing concerns. This year's report is attached as Appendix A.
- 3.5 After having considered Appendix A, Members are asked to decide whether there is any cause for concern and to consider whether any further action is required by the Committee, or the Chief Internal Auditor.
- 3.6 Six whistleblowing cases were received during 2021. Five proceeded to investigation, to which three are still in progress. Recommendations were made and action taken as appropriate for the remaining two, as noted on Appendix A. The sixth case has been closed as insufficient information was received to enable any work to proceed.

#### **4 Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 To make Members of the Committee aware of the current position with regard to whistleblowing and ensure that any appropriate action is taken.

#### **5 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010.

#### **6 Legal implications**

- 6.1 The Legal implications are incorporated within the body of this report. There are no other immediate legal implications arising from this report

#### **7 Director of Finance's comments:**

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.

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Chief Internal Auditor

**Appendices: Appendix A - Schedule of Whistleblowing Concerns Jan 2021 - Dec 2021  
Appendix B - Whistleblowing Policy**

#### **Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
Whistleblowing Policy	<a href="http://svp-policyhub02/PolicyHubAdmin/Inbox/MyLibrary">http://svp-policyhub02/PolicyHubAdmin/Inbox/MyLibrary</a>