

Title of meeting:	Governance & Audit & Standards Committee
Date of meeting:	24 th January 2024
Subject:	Whistleblowing Annual Report and Policy
Report by:	Elizabeth Goodwin - Chief Internal Auditor
Wards affected:	Not applicable
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

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 2023 to December 2023. In addition to this to confirm that, following the annual review of the whistleblowing policy, there are no current proposed changes, since those agreed at the January 2022 committee meeting.

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 2023. By comparison, in 2022, 3 whistleblowing cases were received.

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 2023 - Dec 2023
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:

Title of document	Location
Whistleblowing Policy	http://svp-policyhub02/PolicyHubAdmin/Inbox/MyLibrary