

Subject: Use of Whistleblowing Policy

Status: For Publication

Report to: Standards Committee

Date: 1st October 2009

Report of: Assistant Head of Legal Services

Portfolio

Holder: N/A

Key Decision: No

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To advise and update the Committee on the use of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:-

- Delivering quality Services to our customers
- Encouraging healthy and respectful communities
- Promoting the Borough
- Providing value for money services

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

If the policy is not highlighted and followed:

- Possible fraud and corruption.
- Service delivery undermined.
- Malpractice/Maladministration.
- Possible ultra vires decisions.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Committee has requested an update report on the use of the Whistleblowing Policy both internally by Council staff and by our partners and contractors.
- 4.2 To date, Legal Services are not aware of any reports or investigations under the Whistleblowing Policy.
- 4.3 The policy, dated 5th September 2006, is backed up with policy summaries and a leaflet called "Blow the Whistle".
- 4.4 All new members of staff are made aware of this and other policies as part of their induction and are handed hard copies for their personal files. The Blow the Whistle leaflet forms part of the literature and staff are encouraged to use the policy if the need arises.
- 4.5 The policy is further promoted on an annual basis via Team Meetings, Core Brief and Grapevine and continually through the display of the above leaflet in offices throughout the Council.
- 4.6 Our partners and contractors are also subject to the policy and this is specifically highlighted within our terms and conditions as a Corporate Requirement. Legal are however unaware of any reports made under the policy despite contract management.
- 4.7 The reasoning behind the apparent lack of use of the policy could be down to a number of factors including:
- The need to use the policy has not arisen.
 - Any issues have been dealt with on a more informal basis or have been minor in nature and there has not been the need to formally invoke the policy.
 - Staff and partners still feel uncomfortable using the policy for fear of recrimination.
 - Apathy.
- 4.8 The policy will be subject to review as necessary.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 5.1 To follow.

6. MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 Comments as contained in the report.

7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

7.1 To follow

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Whilst the Whistleblowing Policy is clearly highlighted there is an apparent lack of take up or use of the policy. What is clear is that those who need to be aware of the policy are made aware of it and reasonable steps are taken to remind staff of its presence.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

9.1 To note the report.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 Consultation has been carried out within the Legal, Executive and People and Policy service areas.

11. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Community Impact Assessment required No

Is a Community Impact Assessment attached No

12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required No

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached No

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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
“Blow the Whistle” Leaflet	Internet and Futures Park
Whistleblowing Policy and Summary	Internet and Futures Park

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