



**Corporate Policy &
Resources Committee**

Thursday, 14 April 2022

Subject: Whistleblowing Policy Review

Report by: Assistant Director People & Democratic Services

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Purpose / Summary: To review the Council's Whistleblowing Policy

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Corporate Policy and Resources committee approve the reviewed Whistleblowing Policy and this is adopted by the council.

Delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive to make minor housekeeping amendments to the policy in future, in consultation with the chairman of CP&R committee and chairman of JSCC.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Public bodies, such as this Council, are required to have a Whistleblowing policy and to ensure that workers are not victimised or dismissed for raising their concerns internally, or subjected to any other detriment.

(N.B.) Where there are legal implications the report MUST be seen by the MO

Financial : None directly arising from this report

(N.B.) All committee reports MUST have a Fin Ref

Staffing : None directly arising from this report

(N.B.) Where there are staffing implications the report MUST have a HR Ref

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

The Whistleblowing Policy applies to all employees equally and provides clarity as to expectations of all, regardless of equality group.

Data Protection Implications :

None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

None

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

The Whistleblowing Policy allows for staff to come forward and report their concerns without the fear of reprisals in any form

Health Implications:

None

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report :

Wherever possible please provide a hyperlink to the background paper/s
If a document is confidential and not for public viewing it should not be listed.

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|--------------------------|
| Risk Assessment : |
| Not applicable |

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

x

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

x

Background

The Council's whistleblowing policy was last reviewed in 2019. Following an annual report to the Governance and Audit Committee regarding whistleblowing activity, members recommended the policy be reviewed and take in to account feedback from G&A (June 2021).

Recommendations from G&A:

That the Joint Staff Consultative Committee and Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, when reviewing the Whistleblowing Policy consider the following recommendations:

- 1) That reference to guidance on Whistleblowing published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills be incorporated into the Whistleblowing Policy; **Government website has been included, more up to date**
- 2) That consideration be given to including the option of whistleblowing to, or at least consulting with, an independent person - for example our Internal Auditors (currently Assurance Lincolnshire) or Members (including Independent Members). **Included in section How the Council Will Respond, includes involvement of Internal Audit, Independent Member not deemed appropriate**
- 3) That the Whistleblowing Policy should incorporate details of training on the Policy to Officers both upon commencing employment and subsequently at appropriate regular intervals. **This has been included in the policy**
- 4) The role of Members in Whistleblowing should be considered and guidance provided on what to do if an Officer whistleblows to a Member. **Included that members report the matter to the Monitoring Officer.**
- 5) Consideration should be given to expand the guidance to whistleblowers on the process and likely consequences of whistleblowing. There should be a greater emphasis on managing the expectations of whistleblowers. **Clarity is given in the policy, however it depends on the nature of the issue as to how it may proceed.**
- 6) Consideration should be given to a separate whistleblowing telephone number and email with a dedicated Officer responsible for monitoring and taking appropriate action, Alternatively, if this is already in place its prominence in the policy should be increased. **Separate email and telephone number has been secured for reporting, this is dealt with by Lincolnshire County Council Counter Fraud and Investigations Team and is included within the reviewed policy.**

Scope

The policy applies to all employees. For the purpose of this policy only, the term "employees" also includes contractors and suppliers working for or on behalf of the council, on council premises or elsewhere. You can also use our whistleblowing reporting arrangements if you are a councillor, contractor, supplier, partner or member of the public. Protection however only applies to our workers.

This section has been updated with in the draft.

Main changes in draft

The changes within the draft policy have been left as tracked changes for ease of the committee establishing what has changed and how.

The main emphasis has been focused on giving more clarity on items.

Training / Awareness

On line fraud training is provided to all employees, this includes information on the Councils whistleblowing arrangements.

Whistleblowing policy is also incorporated into the staff induction process.

Further awareness sessions will be rolled out and communication sent to all staff when the policy is updated.