



**Governance and Audit
Committee**

**Tuesday, 29 November
2022**

Review of Whistleblowing Activity 2021-22

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

Emma Redwood
Assistant Director People & Democratic Services

emma.redwood@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

To provide the Governance and Audit Committee with a summary of Whistleblowing incidents recorded

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. That the Governance and Audit Committee note the contents of the report**
- 2. That the Governance and Audit Committee continues to receive annual reports in relation to the policy implementation and incidents**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: Review of the Council's arrangements for whistleblowing on an annual basis ensures that the organisation continues to meet its statutory obligations in respect of whistleblowing legislation and represents good governance.

Financial: FIN/111/23

There are no specific financial implications associated with this report. Effective whistleblowing arrangements assists the Council to ensure that any misconduct / wrongdoing which could have a detrimental financial impact on the Council is appropriately dealt with.

Staffing: None identified.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

West Lindsey District Council has a commitment to equal opportunities. It seeks to ensure that no potential or current employee receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Data Protection Implications:

None identified.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

None identified.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

None identified.

Health Implications:

None identified.

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

None.

Risk Assessment:

The legislation gives all employees protection from suffering any detriment as a result of making a protected disclosure. Whilst members of the public are not

protected by law, the Council treats all whistleblowers in the same way. Information is available to employees and members of the public on how they can access the Council's whistleblowing process and the Council considers actions to raise awareness. Assurance that concerns are dealt with effectively is provided to the Council's Audit and Procurement Committee through this annual report.

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

Key Decision:

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

Yes

No

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Whistleblowing Policy provides a method for employees to raise concerns about the running of the Council, or concerning behaviours exhibited within it, without the risk of victimisation. All employees have access to this policy. This committee has been receiving updates on this matter since 2008.
- 1.2 The policy was reviewed by the Governance and Audit committee in 2021 with recommendations made for the Joint Staff Consultative Committee to consider. The reviewed policy was presented to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in April 2022 and was agreed for adoption.

2. Whistleblowing Policy

- 2.1 There have been 5 referrals made to the Whistleblowing helpline in the period April 2021 to March 2022. 1 referral was made in April 2022 which falls outside of this reports period but has been included for information.
 - 4 referrals were passed to the DWP
 - 1 referral was made regarding planning permission and was passed to the service as a planning query
 - 1 was made by a fraud investigator from Crawley Borough council to locate a person suspected of committing social housing fraud (this is April 2022)
- 2.2 There have been no incidents of whistleblowing raised internally within the Council.
- 2.3 For transparency purposes, this report is presented to the Governance and Audit committee annually; even in the event of no whistleblowing incidents.
- 2.4 The Counter Fraud Team are the gatekeeper for all whistleblowing referrals for the District Council.
- 2.5 The policy continues to be communicated to staff, and is included in the quarterly corporate induction programme. The policy is also on the council's website.

3. Recommendations

1. That the Governance and Audit Committee note the contents of the report
2. That the Governance and Audit Committee continues to receive annual reports in relation to the policy implementation and incidents