

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

WHISTLEBLOWING UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Committee on whistleblowing concerns that have been reported during 2016.

Information and Advice

2. 'Whistleblowing' means the reporting by employees of suspected misconduct, illegal acts or failure to act within the Council. The aim of the County Council's Whistleblowing Policy is to encourage employees and others who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns. Having effective whistleblowing procedures enables employees to raise serious concerns within the County Council rather than ignoring a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside the County Council.
3. The County Council's Whistleblowing Policy is designed to ensure that employees can raise concerns without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination, disadvantage or dismissal. Employees who raise concerns under the Whistleblowing Policy have protection against victimisation and dismissal under the law.
4. The County Council logs concerns it receives centrally on its corporate register. All matters which fall under the Whistleblowing Policy are required to be reported to the Monitoring Officer.
5. During 2016, four concerns were reported under the Whistleblowing Policy. Given the confidential nature of the complaints this report can only refer to the general nature of the complaint; especially in the case of those investigations which are ongoing. The complaints can be summarised as follows: -

No.	Nature of complaint	Dept.	Status of complaint	Outcome
1	Allegation that an education transport service provider may have defrauded the Council.	Place	Investigation concluded.	The procedures for booking and paying for journeys with the company were found to be robust. No evidence of fraudulent claims being made.
2	Concerns questioning whether use of funds by a	CFCS	Investigation concluded.	No evidence of inappropriate use of funds.

	locality team in the Youth Service were value-for money. Concerns focused on the level of funds held in a locality bank account, and on the nature of some expenditure.			
3	Allegations regarding inappropriate practice.	CFCS	Ongoing investigation.	-
4	Concerns relating to the effectiveness of controls used to protect against misuse of service user data.	ASCHPP	Ongoing investigation.	-

6. The following table sets out the number of complaints for each Department recorded for the last three years:

Year	Number of complaints recorded per Department			
	ASCHPP Resources	CFCS	Place	
2016	1	2	1	-
2015	-	-	1	-
2014	-	2	-	-

7. It is important to ensure that the effectiveness of the Whistleblowing Policy is kept under review and that it is well publicised. The County Council's Whistleblowing Policy is published on the County Council's website. It is suggested that the Committee support publication of a Whistleblowing news article in the Council's Team Talk (departmental news bulletin).

Other Options Considered

8. No other options are appropriate.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

9. It is important to ensure employees are aware of the Whistleblowing Policy, and therefore it is considered worthwhile to continue promoting and publicising the Policy.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service

users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Committee supports the publication of a Whistleblowing news article in the Council’s Team Talk (departmental news bulletin).

**Jayne Francis-Ward
Monitoring Officer**

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 30/01/2017)

11. Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments (TMR 20/01/2017)

12. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All