

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Thursday, 17 January 2019

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY (REP1857)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
1.	The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) suggest a regular review of the organisation's Whistleblowing Policy.
2.	The Council has a legal obligation to adhere to the Public Interest Disclosure Act, commonly known as Whistleblowing.
3.	The Council's Whistleblowing Policy was last reviewed in September 2016. The main content of the Policy remains compliant with expected good practices with minor changes made to the structure and length of the Policy following a training session delivered by Protect, formally known as Public Concern at Work, which is a leading independent whistleblowing charity in the United Kingdom. One key point to note is the change in emphasis to 'whistleblowing in the public interest' from 'whistleblowing in good faith'.
4.	This report enables the Audit and Governance Committee to fulfil its terms of reference, which includes ... 'To review the Councils Whistleblowing Policy'.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	All
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Cabinet Member:	Councillor Bruce Provan Cabinet Member for Resources
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Supporting Officer:	Mrs Siobhan Martin Head of Internal Audit 01394 444254 siobhan.martin@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The term 'whistleblowing' is the common phrase given to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.
- 1.2 The Whistleblowing Policy has been in existence for some time across partner Councils Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council. The Committee is asked to review and comment upon the updated Policy, which remains consistent with legislation and Council procedures.
- 1.3 Format changes have been made to the existing Policy to make the document clearer and less legalistic. Additionally, there has been a change in emphasis to 'whistleblowing in the public interest' from 'whistleblowing in good faith'. The Policy remains consistent with standards expected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the British Standards Institution PAS 1998:2008 and The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS).
- 1.4 Promotion of the updated Policy will commence in January 2019 via the Intranet, at team meetings and on the EastSuffolk website along with any communication medium advised by the Communications Team.

2 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 2.1 Any occurrences of Whistleblowing should be reported to the Head of Internal Audit and any leaning points will be reported in the Annual Internal Audit Report.

3. OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 This report does not require an Equality Impact Assessment, a Sustainability Impact Assessment or a Partnership Impact Assessment.

4. FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Non adherence to this Policy may facilitate serious financial and corporate governance weaknesses. It is a mandatory requirement that the Council adheres to the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

5. HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 5.1 Application of the law is an essential feature of how East Suffolk is accountable for the public purse and therefore having an effective Whistleblowing Policy enables the delivery of the East Suffolk Business Plan.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources, Chief Executive and Unison have been consulted.

7. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 No further options have been considered. This Policy represents the Councils statutory responsibility to act in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

8. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 By reviewing and considering the refreshed Whistleblowing Policy in accordance with best practice the Audit and Governance Committee will fulfil its responsibility within its terms of reference.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit and Governance Committee comments upon the refreshed Whistleblowing Policy.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	SCDC & WDC – Whistleblowing Policy (December 2018), V5
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Date	Type	Available From
August 2016	V4. Whistleblowing Policy	Head of Internal Audit siobhan.martin@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
Dec 2018	Protect, previously known as Public Concern at Work (Charity)	www.protect-advice.org.uk