

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 7 MAY 2014**

REPORT BY: **HEAD OF FINANCE**

SUBJECT: **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To outline to Members the updated Whistleblowing Policy.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Flintshire County Council has had a whistleblowing policy since 2002, and it was last updated and approved by the Audit Committee in 2010. There is a need to review the policy periodically to ensure that it reflects any changes in working practice, legislation and other regulation.

2.02 The document has been reviewed and updated by Internal Audit in conjunction with the Legal and HR departments.

2.03 An update was presented to the Committee in March, however reservations were expressed in the meeting by Wales Audit Office. The paper was withdrawn and further work carried out to ensure it met the required standards.

2.04 The WAO provided information and the policy was also checked against the National Audit Office checklist.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act (June 2013) introduced changes to whistleblowing arrangements. The changes have been incorporated in this revised policy. The main changes which came into effect are:

- For employees to have protection under the act they need to reasonably believe that they are making disclosures in the public interest. The previous requirement for disclosures to be protected was for them to be made in good faith.
- Greater protection for workers who blow the whistle, particularly where they may suffer from detriment in the workplace.

- 3.02 The whistleblowing policy enables employees to raise any concerns that they may have and gives assurances about confidentiality and protection. It gives the procedure to be followed in raising a concern either internally or externally. For internal cases it details how the Council will respond. There are also examples of the types of concerns that can be raised.
- 3.03 The policy forms part of the Council's constitution. Following approval by the Audit Committee it will be presented to the Constitution Committee.

Following approval it will be re-launched on the Council's Infonet.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 The Committee is requested to consider and approve the updated policy.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 None as a direct result of this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 None as a direct result of this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 None as a direct result of this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 None as a direct result of this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01 None as a direct result of this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

- 10.01 Legal and HR departments.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

- 11.01 Legal and HR departments.

12.00 APPENDICES

- 12.01 Whistleblowing Policy.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

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