

CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 5 June 2019
Report Subject	Whistleblowing Policy
Report Author	Internal Audit Manager
Type of Report	Assurance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Whistleblowing Policy enables employees, Members, and third party individuals (partners, consultants, volunteers, suppliers, contractors, including their employees) of the Council to raise any concerns that they have and gives assurance about confidentiality and protection. It details the procedure to follow in raising a concern and details how the Council will respond. The policy provides examples of the types of concerns that can be raised.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	The Committee is requested to consider and approve the changes agreed by the Audit Committee for the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT
1.01	Flintshire County Council has had a Whistleblowing Policy since 2002 and it was last reviewed and approved by Audit Committee in 2015. There is a need to review the policy periodically to ensure that it reflects any changes in working practices, legislations and other regulations.
1.02	This document has been reviewed and updated by Internal Audit in conjunction with Governance and Human Resources and Organisation Development.
1.03	As the review in 2015 of the Whistleblowing policy took place to bring it in line with the requirements of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013, there has been very few changes to the policy apart from bringing it up to date with current terminology, contact details and the movement of some sections within the policy.

	<p>One aspect of the policy that has been expanded on is to reflect the actions the Council has committed to regarding Welsh Government's Ethical Procurement Practices.</p> <p>The policy clearly informs third party individuals (partners, consultants, suppliers, volunteers, contractors and employees of Council suppliers and contractors, who are employed to deliver a service / goods to the Council) of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their responsibilities to report any concerns whether this is against the Council or the supplier / contractor (sections 5.5, 5.7, and 13.3 of the policy); • the process to follow to raise any concerns (section 8.2 of the policy); and • examples of the types of concerns that may be raised e.g. unethical employment practices. (Appendix A of the policy). <p>At the request of the Audit Committee and Trade Union further amendments were made to the policy. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signpost to other related policies e.g. Corporate Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy and Fraud & Irregularity Response Plan (section 3.4 of the policy); • incorporate 'Volunteers' as an example of a Third Party Individual (sections 1.2, 5.5 and 13.3 of the policy); • provide a definition for Irregularity (section 4.5 of the policy); • enhance the policy to confirm members are inclusive of the policy (sections 5.3, 5.4, 8.2, 12.3 and 13.2); • reference to adult and children safeguarding referral numbers (section 5.8 and appendix B of the policy); and • introduction of a Flow Chart (Appendix D of the policy).
1.04	To aid clarity and transparency two copies of the Whistleblowing Policy are included. Appendix A shows where the changes have occurred, using tracked changes, whilst Appendix B shows the revised Whistleblowing Policy without tracked changes, which is an easier read.
1.05	The Whistleblowing Policy has been shared with the Chief Executive, Chief Officer - Governance, Senior Officer – Human Resources & Organisational Development and the Trade Union for review.
1.06	This policy forms part of the Council's Constitution. The Committee is asked to consider the proposed changes to the Whistleblowing Policy, as agreed by the Audit Committee. Once the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee has agreed the revised version of this part of the Constitution, the Whistleblowing Policy will be presented to County Council for approval.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None from the report itself.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Consultation of the revised Whistleblowing Policy has been undertaken with Audit Committee members, the Chief Executive, the Council's Monitoring Officer and Chief Officer, Governance, Trade Unions and the Senior Manager, Human Resources and Organisational Development.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None from the report itself.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A – Whistleblowing Policy (with tracked changes) Appendix B – Whistleblowing Policy (without tracked changes)

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. Contact Officer: Lisa Brownbill, Internal Audit Manager Telephone: 01352 702231 E-mail: Lisa.brownbill@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Corporate Governance: the system by which local authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities. It is founded on the basis principles of openness and inclusivity, integrity and accountability together with the overarching concept of leadership. It is an inter-related system that brings together the underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes.