

Audit and Governance Committee

Meeting to be held on 29 September 2014

Electoral Division affected: All

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Whistleblowing Act) Summary 2013/14 (Appendix A refers)

Contact for further information:

Ian Rushworth, Audit Manager, County Treasurer's Directorate, (01772) 534779

Katie Dunne, Service Manager (Corporate HR Team), OCL, (01772) 535355

Executive Summary

This report summarises the concerns dealt with arising from the council's Whistleblowing Policy in the previous 12 months.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the report.

Background

The Public Interest Disclosure Act, 1998, more commonly known as the 'Whistleblowing Act', requires employers to make arrangements which allow their employees to make complaints on serious matters without fear of victimisation.

The council's Whistleblowing Policy was revised in June 2013 to reflect the changes to the UK legislation, primarily which whistleblowers must believe their disclosure is in the public interest to be protected by the Act. The current arrangements for publicising the policy include periodic news items in staff communications, the continued display of posters in council buildings and the intranet site.

The whistleblowing arrangements do not override other existing statutory complaint arrangements and are only available to employees where serious or potentially serious matters are of concern. Concerns are expected to relate to:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
- Health and Safety risks
- Damage to the environment
- Unauthorised use of public funds
- Possible fraud and corruption
- Sexual or physical abuse of clients
- Other unethical conduct

In the 12 months since our last report in 2013 we have received 21 concerns (same number as the previous 12 months) which fall under the whistleblowing policy. Details of these concerns are provided at Appendix A.

Whistleblowers are directed to either the council's Internal Audit Service for concerns with a financial implication or to the council's Human Resources Service for other concerns. 12 of the 21 whistleblowing concerns had a financial implication.

Consultations

Not applicable.

Implications

Not applicable.

Risk management

Not applicable.

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Ext
-------	------	-------------------------

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate: