

Audit and Governance Committee

Meeting to be held on 30 September 2013

Electoral Division affected: All

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Whistleblowing Act) Summary 2012/13

(Appendix A refers)

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

This report summarises the complaints 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 and communicated to all staff on 9 March 2012. The current arrangements for publicising the policy include periodic news items in staff newsletters, 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. Complaints 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 May 2012 we have received 21 complaints which fall under the whistleblowing policy. Details of these complaints are shown at Appendix A. Historically there have been fluctuations from year to year in the number of complaints. The 21 complaints represent a significant increase on the 7 cases logged in the previous 12 months. This may be as a result of the policy being re-communicated and a number of high profile investigations.

Whistleblowers are directed to either the council's Internal Audit Service for complaints with a financial implication or to the council's Human Resources Service for other complaints.

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
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Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate: