

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

22 June 2009

Joint Report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING CODE

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Members may recall that the Council introduced a Confidential Reporting ("Whistleblowing") Code as part of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy. Members of the Policy and Resources Committee approved this Code in September 2000. The Code was designed to comply with the protection to individuals introduced by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

1.1.2 The Council has a culture of encouraging openness and honesty in its activities and the Code reinforces this approach. In order to ensure that is kept up to date and relevant the Code is reviewed on an annual basis and endorsed by the General Purposes Committee following consideration by the Audit Committee.

1.1.3 Following the review the revised Code is circulated to staff using Groupwise, Staffnet and the Council website.

1.2 Reporting Concerns

1.2.1 Concerns raised using the Code have previously been reported to the Audit Committee. Allegations relating to Benefit Fraud are investigated by the Benefit Investigation Section are not treated as being raised through the Code.

1.3 Review of Code

1.3.1 Although the Audit Committee receives reports of concerns raised through the Code the General Purposes Committee retains the responsibility for reviewing and endorsing it. The Code was last reviewed and endorsed by Members of General Purposes Committee in June 2008.

1.3.2 At that time it was noted that the Code would require amendment when the Monitoring Officer was appointed. This has now taken place and the Central Services Director is the Monitoring Officer. This update is considered to be the only amendment required from this review.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 There is a legal requirement for the Council to provide a Confidential Reporting Code and the current version of the Code meets the requirements of the legislation.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 The provision of a Code that protects individuals raising concerns encourages concerns to be raised at an early stage reducing financial impact.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 The Code encourages concerns to be raised by individuals and ensures that they are investigated consistently.

1.7 Policy Considerations

- 1.7.1 Crime & Disorder Reduction – The Code assists in the reduction of Crime & Disorder Reduction by providing a method for concerns to be raised and investigated in a consistent manner.

1.8 Recommendations

- 1.8.1 Members are asked to **RECOMMEND** endorsement of the Code to the General Purposes Committee.

Background papers:

contact: David Buckley

Nil

David Hughes
Chief Executive

Sharon Shelton
Director of Finance