

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

21 June 2010

Joint Report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING CODE

Summary

This report informs Members of the revision to the Confidential Reporting Code and recommends that Members of the Audit Committee endorse the Code to the General Purposes Committee.

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 Staff are encouraged to raise concerns through their Manager in the first instance. However, if this proves unsatisfactory then they can use the Confidential Reporting Code to raise those concerns.
- 1.2.2 This Committee receives reports on any concerns raised and the outcome on the investigation of those concerns. There have not been any concerns raised using the Code in the last financial year and therefore there are no instances to report to this Committee.
- 1.2.3 In order to ensure that staff are aware of the Code and that it is kept up to date it is reviewed on an annual basis, after which it is circulated to staff. The Audit

Committee review the document as part of the overall governance of the Council and then as part of the Policy framework the General Purposes Committee review and endorse the Code.

- 1.2.4 A copy of the draft review is attached. **[Annex 1]**
- 1.2.5 The only revision to the Code is the addition of a form for users to use to raise their concerns. The reason for introducing this is to ensure that a concern is being raised using the Code and to have a record of that event.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 There is a legal requirement for the Council to provide a Confidential Reporting Code and the proposed version of the Code continues to meet the requirements of the legislation.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

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

1.5 Risk Assessment

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

1.6 Policy Considerations

- 1.6.1 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.

1.7 Recommendations

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

Background papers:

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Nil

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