

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

20 June 2011

Report of the Director of Finance

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING CODE “WHISTLEBLOWING”

This summary advises Members of a review of the Confidential Reporting Code that has resulted in a draft revision that Members are asked to consider and recommend for endorsement by the General Purposes Committee

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Members will be aware that the Council has had a Confidential Reporting Code in place for a number of years. The Code is designed to meet legal requirements and to encourage anybody to raise concerns with the knowledge of how it will be dealt with.
- 1.1.2 The code requires it to be reviewed at least annually and to be considered by the Audit Committee for recommendation for final approval by the General Purposes Committee.
- 1.1.3 As part of the Audit partnership there has been a move to standardise Internal Audit related policies between Tonbridge & Malling and Gravesham. This particular Code was last approved by Members in June 2010. Following this a meeting took place between the partners' Heads of Audit where a number of policies were drafted. A revised “whistleblowing” code was approved by Gravesham Members in September 2010.
- 1.1.4 The attached draft to this report mirrors the code agreed and approved by Gravesham to ensure that the partnership has a consistent approach to “whistleblowing” at both authorities. **[Annex 1]**
- 1.1.5 The content of the code is not dissimilar to the previous code approved by Members in June 2010 but has been reformatted.
- 1.1.6 Once approved the code is put on the Council Intranet and website as well as being circulated to staff using the distribution software “Netconsent”.

1.2 Legal Implications

- 1.2.1 Although the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 does not require the Council to set up an appropriate mechanism for dealing with whistleblowing, makes clear the important role that such a mechanism can play in helping the council comply with the law.

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.3.1 The early reporting of any concern may enable prompt action to be taken minimising any potential financial cost to the Council.

1.4 Risk Assessment

- 1.4.1 Having a sound "whistleblowing" code in place enables staff to be confident of how concerns will be dealt with and encourages staff to raise concerns.

1.5 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.5.1 This code is available to all irrespective of any equality issues and is designed to ensure a consistent approach to dealing with any concern raised. It has provision for dealing with any vexatious allegations.

1.6 Recommendations

- 1.6.1 Members are asked to review the draft code and subject to any required amendments to **RECOMMEND** that it is endorsed by the next General Purposes Committee.

Background papers:

contact: David Buckley

Nil

Sharon Shelton
Director of Finance

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The code is designed to ensure consistent treatment of concerns raised.

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	No	It is a code for setting out the process for dealing with concerns raised.
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.