

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

28 January 2019

Report of the Director of Finance and Transformation

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 ANNUAL REVIEW OF WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

This report informs Members of the outcome of the annual review of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Whistleblowing Policy provides employees and Members with information about how they may report concerns regarding breaches of laws, regulations, policies or procedures committed by other employees or Members of the Council. It also outlines how the Council will deal with those concerns once they have been reported.

1.2 Whistleblowing Policy

1.2.1 The Whistleblowing Policy was last reviewed by the Committee in January 2018. This latest review found that no changes were required at this time. However, it should be noted that the Fraud Team will be subject to an independent review this financial year and the outcomes of that review may require in-year changes to be made to the Policy and, if so, will be brought back to the Committee once updated.

1.2.2 A copy of the Whistleblowing Policy is attached at **[Annex 1]**.

1.3 Action Following Approval of the Policy

1.3.1 The Whistleblowing Policy is being considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 21 January. The Policy, once approved, will be circulated to all staff with computer access using Netconsent and made available on the Council website.

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 The Policy is not mandatory, but does comply with best practice and refer to the relevant legislation where appropriate.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 Providing clear guidelines to staff on how they may report concerns of inappropriate conduct or fraud strengthen the Council's zero tolerance approach to fraud, bribery and corruption.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 While there is no statutory requirement to have an appropriate mechanism for dealing with whistleblowing, it is relevant to helping the Council comply with associated law. Failure to have an adequate whistleblowing mechanism carries significant reputational risk.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Crime & Disorder Reduction

1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 Members are asked to **approve**, subject to any required amendments, the Whistleblowing Policy attached at **[Annex 1]**.

Background papers:

contact: Samantha Buckland

Nil

Sharon Shelton
Director of Finance and Transformation