

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

31 January 2022

Joint report of the Director of Central Services and the Director of Finance and Transformation

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE 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 this Committee in January 2021, and most recently by the Audit Committee on the 24 January 2022. As the publication date for the agenda for this meeting of the General Purposes Committee is the 21 January which pre-dates the meeting of the Audit Committee on 24 January, this Committee will be advised of any amendments made by the Audit Committee when it meets on 31 January.

1.2.2 A copy of the updated internal Whistleblowing Policy is attached at **Annex 1**. As well as the policy, it is best practice to publish to staff the procedure on how concerns of wrongdoing will be handled and progressed, therefore a new Whistleblowing Procedure is being recommended to be adopted as part of this policy review. The Whistleblowing Procedure can be found at **Annex 2**.

1.2.3 In addition, and in line with best practice it is recommended that an external policy is made available to support those working externally to TMBC who may witness wrongdoing by officers and councillors. This policy will provide the details on who and how to raise concerns a copy of the policy is attached at **Annex 3**.

1.3 Action Following Approval of the Policy

1.3.1 The policy, once approved, will be circulated to all staff with computer access using Net Consent and made available on the Council website.

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 This policy complies with best practice and refers to the relevant legislation where appropriate.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 This updated policy reinforces the Council's stance towards unlawful behaviour, inappropriate conduct, bribery and corruption, by providing clear guidelines on how people can report concerns.

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 **recommended** to approve, subject to any amendments, the Whistleblowing Policy (Annex 1), and accompanying Whistleblowing Procedure (Annex 2) and External Policy (Annex 3).

Background papers:

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Nil

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