

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY ANNUAL REPORT

*To:* Audit & Accounts Committee

*Date:* October 2020

*From:* Duncan Wilkinson, Chief Internal Auditor

*Electoral division(s):* All

*Forward Plan ref:* N/A *Key decision:* N/A

*Purpose:* Annual report on the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

*Recommendation:* Audit and Accounts Committee to approve the report.

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Internal Audit produces an annual report to the Audit and Accounts Committee as per Section 8 of the Whistleblowing Policy, to identify any patterns of concern and assess the effectiveness of the policy.

## 2. UPDATES

- 2.1 Cambridgeshire County Council's Whistleblowing Policy revised and updated in January 2020 (see Annex A).

Updates included:

- Updated key officer contact information;
- Updated Public Concern at Work to Protect.

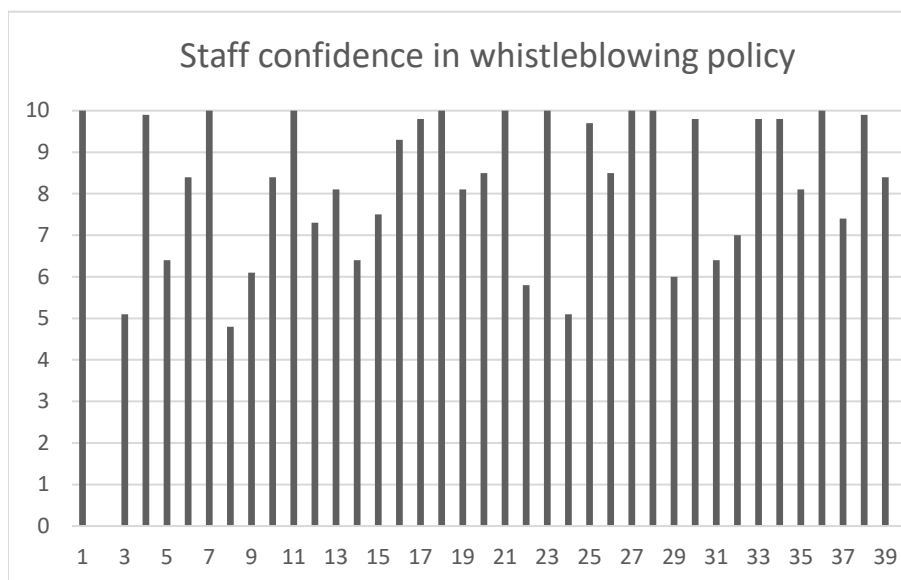
## 3. PUBLICITY AND AWARENESS

- 3.1 Following the approval of the Whistleblowing Policy by the Audit and Accounts Committee, the revised policy will immediately be made available to staff via the Council's intranet, and to members of the public via the Council's public website.
- 3.2 The Internal Audit team also conducted a publicity campaign to promote the policy and awareness of whistleblowing processes throughout the organisation and a revised poster campaign across the Council's buildings will be undertaken.
- 3.3 The Local Authority's whistleblowing poster for schools was also updated, and this was sent to all maintained schools in February 2020, requiring them to display the posters.
- 3.4 Internal Audit has also worked with the Communications team to raise awareness via the 'Daily Blog' on the Council's intranet and in the Friday Focus newsletter, with a post explaining how to raise concerns.

## 4. STAFF SURVEY

- 4.1 In line with the policy, a staff survey was conducted in December 2019, to gauge staff awareness of the policy.
- 4.2 One hundred randomly-selected members of staff were asked to complete an online survey, and 42 responses were received.

Results	
95% of staff were aware of the Whistleblowing Policy	98% of staff confirmed that they would feel confident in raising a serious concern either with their line manager, another senior member of staff, or via the Whistleblowing Policy



4.3 None of the members of staff indicated that they had considered using the whistleblowing process in the last 12 months.

4.4 Recognising the 42% return rate, the responses received from the whistleblowing survey provides assurance that staff are aware of the policy and felt confident to use it if they wanted to raise a concern.

## 5. WHISTLEBLOWING CASES 2019/20

5.1 In line with the policy, Internal Audit was advised on 21 cases that had been raised under the whistleblowing process in 2019/20. The table below shows the number of cases and what the outcomes were.

Whistleblowing Cases	Outcome
9	Dealt with by Internal Audit
4	Referred to HR
1	Referred to the Police
1	Referred to Executive Director
6	Referred to Counter Fraud Team

- 5.2 In order to maintain the necessary confidentiality it is not possible to report any detail publicly until the matter has been concluded and the legal duty to ensure whistleblowers do not suffer harassment or victimisation continues after closure of investigations.
- 5.3 Investigative outcomes are reported within Internal Audits periodic updates to the Accounts & Audit Committee.
- 5.4 No whistleblower highlighted complaint that they had been harassed / victimised, providing further assurance regarding the application of the policy.
6. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY
- 6.1 A copy of the Whistleblowing Policy is provided at Annex A, for reference.

Source Documents	Location
Whistleblowing Policy	Box OCT1108 Shire Hall Castle Hill Cambridge, CB3 0AP