

# Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10am, Tuesday 29 August 2017

## Whistleblowing update

Item number	7.5
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	

### Executive summary

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This report provides a high level overview of the operation of the Council's whistleblowing hotline for the period 1 January to 30 June 2017.

## Whistleblowing update

### Recommendations

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- 1.1 To note the report.

### Background

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- 2.1 The Council launched its confidential whistleblowing hotline service, provided by independent company Safecall, on 12 May 2014.
- 2.2 This report covers the period from 1 January to 30 June 2017.

### Main report

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#### Reports to Safecall

- 3.1 During the reporting period Safecall received nine new reports as follows:

Category	Number of disclosures
Major/significant qualifying disclosures	5
Minor/operational qualifying disclosures	2
Category to be determined	0
Non-qualifying disclosures	2

#### Whistleblowing Review - Action Plan Progress

- 3.2 Progress against outstanding actions has been limited while staff have been working on the Local Government and UK Parliamentary elections.
- 3.3 The Council's Whistleblowing Policy was reviewed to reflect the findings of the pilot review and was approved for immediate implementation by the Finance and Resources Committee on 23 March 2017.

- 3.4 A whistleblowing toolkit, to assist all of those who might be involved in the process, has been published on the Orb.
- 3.5 A draft guide and toolkit for investigating officers has been tested by a senior manager who investigated a minor disclosure. This will be refined and developed further for issue to the investigating officers of future disclosures.
- 3.6 With service area reviews now completed, it is our intention to compile a new list of nominees from service areas to be trained as investigating officers in partnership with Safecall.

### **Scottish Parliament Health and Sport Committee**

- 3.7 The Committee asked the Council to appear before them on 13 June 2017 during their consideration of Petition PE1605 (Whistleblowing in the NHS – a safer way to report mismanagement and bullying).
- 3.8 The petitioner had cited the Council's whistleblowing arrangements, in particular the provision of an independent hotline, as a potential model for NHS Scotland.
- 3.9 Kirsty-Louise Campbell, Senior Manager: Strategy and Insight, and Laura Callender, Governance Compliance Manager, appeared before the Committee to answer members' questions relating to the Council's whistleblowing arrangements.

### **CIPFA Public Finance Innovation Awards 2017**

- 3.10 The Council's whistleblowing service was shortlisted as a finalist but did not win the Good Governance Award category in London in April 2017.

## **Measures of success**

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- 4.1 Employees feel able to report suspected wrongdoing as early as possible in the knowledge that:
  - 4.1.1 their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately;
  - 4.1.2 they will be protected from victimisation; and
  - 4.1.3 the provisions of the whistleblowing policy ensure all matters at the Council are fully transparent and officers are accountable.

## **Financial impact**

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- 5.1 The cost of the whistleblowing hotline for the six month period 1 January to 30 June 2017 was £9,450 + VAT.

## **Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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- 6.1 The whistleblowing policy was developed and agreed to complement existing management reporting arrangements and to ensure employees have the right to

raise concerns in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously, that matters will be investigated appropriately and confidentiality will be maintained.

## Equalities impact

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7.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report.

## Sustainability impact

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8.1 There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

## Consultation and engagement

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- 9.1 A range of stakeholders, including whistleblowers and trades unions, were consulted during the pilot review.
- 9.2 There was consultation with the trades unions to secure a local agreement in relation to the revised whistleblowing policy.

## Background reading/external references

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[Finance and Resources Committee 27 August 2015: item 7.13 - Review of Whistleblowing Arrangements](#)

[Finance and Resources Committee 23 March 2017: item 7.2 - Whistleblowing Policy](#)

## Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

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