

# Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

**10am, Tuesday 21 September 2021**

## Whistleblowing update

**Item number**

**Executive/routine**

**Wards**

**Council Commitments**

### **1. Recommendations**

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- 1.1 To note whistleblowing activity for the quarter 1 April – 30 June 2021.

**Andrew Kerr**

Chief Executive

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# Report

## Whistleblowing update

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report provides a high-level overview of the operation of the Council's whistleblowing service for the quarter 1 April – 30 June 2021.
- 2.2 This reporting period covers months thirteen to fifteen of coronavirus pandemic measures, with restrictions gradually easing but with significant numbers of Council staff still working from home.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The Council's whistleblowing service (including a confidential reporting line) is contracted to an independent external organisation, Safecall Limited.
- 3.2 The Council's Whistleblowing policy (section 4.3.2) notes that quarterly summary reports on whistleblowing activity will be presented to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee.

### 4. Main report

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#### 4.1 Disclosures

During the reporting period Safecall received eight new disclosures:

Category	Number of disclosures
Major/significant disclosures	0
Minor/operational disclosures	6
Category still to be determined	1
Non-qualifying disclosures	1

- 4.2 The downward trend in the number of disclosures received has continued, from 26 in the last quarter of 2020 to 12 in the first quarter of 2021 and eight in this reporting period.
- 4.3 The Monitoring Officer's team continued to assist the Pinsent Masons' review team in the provision of documents and other information relevant to their enquiries.
- 4.4 Consultation with the Trade Unions on amendments to the Whistleblowing Policy is ongoing.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Proposed amendments to the whistleblowing policy will be presented to the Policy and Sustainability Committee for approval once agreement has been reached with the Trade Unions. It will be sent to members of GRBV for information.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 Costs incurred for the whistleblowing service during the three-month period 1 March – 30 June 2021 totalled £21,075.00 (excluding VAT).

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 The whistleblowing policy was developed and agreed to complement management reporting arrangements and to ensure all matters at the Council are fully transparent and officers are accountable.
- 7.2 The aim of the policy and the appointment of an independent service provider is to empower employees to report suspected wrongdoing as early as possible in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately; that they will be protected from victimisation and other forms of detriment; and that their confidentiality will be maintained.
- 7.3 The whistleblowing policy, and subsequent reviews, have been consulted on with the trades unions to secure a local agreement.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 [Finance and Resources Committee 23 May 2019: item 7.20 Whistleblowing Policy](#)

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 None.