

# Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10am, Tuesday 9 June 2020

## Whistleblowing update

Item number  
Executive/routine  
Wards  
Council Commitments

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 To note whistleblowing activity for two quarters 1 October – 31 December 2019 and 1 January – 31 March 2020, due to the cancellation of Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee on 24 March 2020.

**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 quarters 1 October – 31 December 2019 and 1 January – 31 March 2020.

### 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, currently Safecall Limited.
- 3.2 The Council's Whistleblowing policy (section 4.3.2) requires that quarterly summary reports on whistleblowing activity are presented to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee.

### 4. Main report

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#### 4.1 Disclosures

During this six-month reporting period Safecall received eleven new disclosures as follows:

Category	Number of disclosures
Major/significant disclosures	2
Minor/operational disclosures	5
Category still to be determined	3
Non-qualifying disclosures	1

- 4.2 The current contract with Safecall Limited for the provision of whistleblowing services ends on 11 May 2020. The six-month re-procurement process concluded with Safecall Limited being awarded the contract for a further three years, with an

option for the Council to extend for an additional two twelve-month periods. Contract award was approved by the Chief Executive under delegated authority on 6 February 2020.

- 4.3 Operational arrangements and reporting requirements with Safecall will be reviewed as part of the start of the new contract on 12 May 2020.
- 4.4 The Whistleblowing Policy has been reviewed in line with the improvements identified at the workshop held on 23 October 2019 and, following Trade Union consultation, will be presented for approval to the Policy and Sustainability Committee in due course.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Review activity outlined at 4.3 will be progressed as part of contract commencement.
- 5.2 Trade Union consultation at 4.4 will take place as soon as working arrangements allow.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The cost of the whistleblowing service for the three-month period 1 October to 31 December 2019 was £6,225 (excluding VAT) and for the period 1 January to 31 March 2020 was £4,725 (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.