

# Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10am, Tuesday 29 September 2020

## 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 2020.

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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 to 30 June 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 the reporting period Safecall received one new disclosure:

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

- 4.2 This reporting period covers the first three months of the coronavirus pandemic, with national lockdown restrictions in place and the majority of Council staff working remotely, many of those from home.

- 4.3 This has resulted in a marked drop in disclosures, which might be attributable to reductions in face to face engagement between staff and physical attendance at regular places of work for the majority.
- 4.4 Trade Union consultation on proposed revisions to the Whistleblowing Policy was also delayed due to coronavirus restrictions but will take place as soon as possible. The revised policy will be presented for approval to the Policy and Sustainability Committee in due course.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Trade Union consultation at 4.4 will take place as soon as working arrangements allow.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 Costs incurred for the whistleblowing service during the three-month period 1 April to 30 June 2020 totalled £6,830.30 (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.