

# Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10am, Tuesday 8 December 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 July – 30 September 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 July – 30 September 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) 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 seven new disclosures:

Category	Number of disclosures
Major/significant disclosures	1
Minor/operational disclosures	5
Category still to be determined	0
Non-qualifying disclosures	1

- 4.2 This reporting period covers months four-six of coronavirus pandemic measures, with national lockdown restrictions lifting but most Council staff still working remotely, many of those from home.

- 4.3 The number of disclosures received this quarter has returned to being within the usual range, which is likely attributable to staff adjusting to new working arrangements and returning to using the whistleblowing service.
- 4.4 The annual review of the whistleblowing policy, which was delayed due to the impacts of Coronavirus, has recommenced with the opportunity being taken to incorporate additional requested amendments.
- 4.5 It is hoped that Trade Union consultation can be commenced by the end of this year, with presentation to the Policy and Sustainability Committee for approval in early 2021.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Trade Union consultation at 4.5 will take place as soon as possible.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 Costs incurred for the whistleblowing service during the three-month period 1 July – 30 September 2020 totalled £8,915.40 (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.