

Audit Committee

25 November 2021



Title	Review of the Confidential Reporting Code (Whistleblowing policy)
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Victoria Statham, Group Head Corporate Governance
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	This item is not in the current list of Corporate Priorities but still requires a Committee decision
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: Note that the review of the Confidential Reporting Code by the Monitoring Officer has taken place and agree to retain the current policy.
Reason for Recommendation	The current code is fit for purpose and covers all relevant matters.

1. Key issues

- 1.1 The Confidential Reporting Code forms part of the Council's Constitution and sets out how to raise serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work. It also sets out legal protection against reprisals under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.
- 1.2 There is a requirement for the Confidential Reporting Code to be reviewed annually by the Council's Monitoring Officer and this is then reported to the Audit Committee.
- 1.3 The Code details:
 - (a) The nature of concerns which may be reported. (Section 2)
 - (b) Other policies such as the Grievance Procedure which exist to deal with employment issues including bullying or harassment. (Section 2)
 - (c) Safeguards against harassment or victimisation as a result of raising a concern. (Section 3)

- (d) Processes for raising and dealing with concerns including the various officers and organisations who could be contacted. (Sections 7 to 10)
- 1.4 In November 2020 a review of the Code was reported to the Audit Committee with a number of amendments following a benchmarking exercise. The amendments to the code were agreed and have been in place since adoption by the full Council.
- 1.5 The conclusion of the review by the Monitoring Officer is that the policy adopted in 2020 is still fit for purpose and does not require amendment at this stage. The current Confidential Reporting Code is at Appendix A.
- 1.6 The current code refers to the Members' Code of Conduct Committee. Under the adopted committee system, this committee is now the Standard's Committee. Under delegation the Monitoring Officer will make the amendment to the name of the committee.
- 2. Options analysis and proposal**
- 2.1 The Audit Committee can agree to continue with the current code or can recommend suggested amendments. If there are suggested amendments these will need to be recommended to the Council for consideration.
- 3. Financial implications**
- 3.1 Not applicable.
- 4. Other considerations**
- 4.1 There are none.
- 5. Equality and Diversity**
- 5.1 The code is accessible for all.
- 6. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**
- 6.1 There are none.
- 7. Timetable for implementation**
- 7.1 If the Audit Committee agree that no changes are required, the policy will continue to apply. If amendments are recommended, these could not come into effect until adopted by full Council.

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Confidential Reporting Code