Committee Report Checklist

Please submit the completed checklists with your report. If final draft report does not include all the information/sign offs required, your item will be delayed until the next meeting cycle.

Stage 1
Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Yes / No	Date
Councillor engagement / input from Chair prior to briefing	**N**	
Relevant Group Head review	**Y**	
MAT+ review (to have been circulated **at least 5 working days before Stage 2**)		**03/11/26**
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	**Y**	
	Reviewed by	
Finance comments (circulate to Finance)		
Risk comments (circulate to Lee O'Neil)	**LO**	**10/11/26**
Legal comments (circulate to legal@spelthorne.gov.uk)	**LH**	**03/11/26**
HR comments (if applicable)		

For reports with material financial or legal implications the author should engage with the respective teams at the outset and receive input to their reports prior to asking for MO or s151 comments.

Do not forward to stage 2 unless all the above have been completed.

Stage 2
Report checklist – responsibility of report owner

ITEM	Completed by	Date rec'd
Monitoring Officer commentary – at least **5 working days before MAT**	**L Heron**	**03/11/26**
S151 Officer commentary – at least **5 working days before MAT**	**T.Collier**	**09/11/26**
Commissioner engagement	**J. Kingston**	**18/11/26**
	Delete as applicable:	No issues
Relevant MAT member sign-off		
Report reviewed by Management Team		

Audit Committee

26 November 2026

Title	Annual Review of the Confidential Reporting Code
Purpose of the report	To inform and assure
Report Author	Linda Heron, Monitoring Officer
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:** **1. Note the updated Confidential Reporting Code; and** **2. Agree to retain the current Confidential Reporting Code as updated.**
Reason for Recommendation	The current Code continues to be fit for purpose and covers all relevant matters.

1. Executive summary of the report *(expand detail in Key Issues section below)*

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
An annual review of the Confidential Reporting Code is required	To ensure continued good governance within the Council and to protect employees
This is what we want to do about it	**These are the next steps**
Note the review that has taken place	Agree the updated Confidential Reporting Code

2. Key issues

2.1 Effective confidential reporting arrangements are an important part of the Council's governance and anti-fraud framework, providing employees, elected members, contractors and other stakeholders with a mechanism for raising concerns about suspected fraud, corruption, malpractice, breaches of policy or other misconduct.

2.2 This report provides assurance to elected members that the annual review of the Confidential Reporting Code ("the Code") has been completed and that the Code remains fit for purpose.

2.3 The Code forms part of the Council's Constitution and sets out how serious concerns about the Council's activities can be raised, together with the protections available under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

2.4 The Code outlines:

(a) the types of concerns that may be reported;

(b) alternative procedures for employment-related matters;

(c) safeguards against victimisation or harassment; and

(d) the process for reporting and investigating concerns, including relevant points of contact.

2.5 Awareness of the Code is promoted through the Council's intranet, staff noticeboards, staff meetings and a mandatory annual Workrite e-learning module for all employees.

2.6 There is a requirement for the Code to be reviewed annually by the Council's Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer has concluded that the current Code continues to be effective and does not require modification save updating contact details. The updated Code is attached at **Appendix A.**

2.7 No concerns have been raised under the Code since the previous review in November 2025.

3. Options appraisal and proposal

3.1 **Option 1** (recommended) The Audit Committee can agree to continue with the current Code (as amended).

3.2 **Option 2** The Audit Committee can propose alternative amendments. If so, these alternative amendments will need to be recommended to the Council for consideration.

4. Governance and Risk Considerations

4.1 The Code supports the Council's commitment to openness, accountability and ethical conduct by providing a clear route for concerns to be reported and addressed. Effective reporting arrangements help to protect public resources, strengthen governance and support organisational learning.

4.2 Robust procedures, supported by regular communications, training and periodic review, help reduce the risk of fraud, corruption and other misconduct going undetected. They also encourage a culture in which concerns can be raised and investigated appropriately.

4.3 Although no concerns have been reported since the last review, and reporting levels have remained low in recent years, this position continues to be monitored. Low reporting rates may reflect a positive organisational culture, but they can also indicate a lack of awareness or confidence in reporting mechanisms.

4.4 The Council therefore continues to promote awareness of the Code and encourages employees and stakeholders to raise concerns without fear of reprisal. Maintaining confidence in the reporting process is essential to ensuring that potential issues are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.

5. Financial implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

6. Legal comments

6.1 The Employment Rights Act 1996, as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, provides legal protection for workers who make disclosures in the public interest regarding wrongdoing or malpractice within the workplace. These protections are intended to safeguard individuals from dismissal or detrimental treatment as a consequence of raising genuine concerns and include the right to seek redress through an Employment Tribunal where appropriate.

6.2 Although the legislation does not require local authorities to have a written whistleblowing policy, maintaining a clear and accessible framework for reporting concerns is considered best practice. The Council's arrangements support a culture of openness and integrity, ensuring that employees and other stakeholders understand how to raise concerns and have confidence that these will be addressed appropriately.

Corporate implications

7. Commissioners' comments

7.1 There are no comments from the Commissioners.

8. S151 Officer comments

8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report. The described arrangements are implemented within existing resources and budgets.

8.2 Effective whistleblowing arrangements support the Council's wider governance framework and contribute to the prevention and detection of fraud, corruption and other forms of misconduct. As such, they help mitigate the risk of financial loss, reputational damage and potential legal costs that could arise from wrongdoing going undetected.

9. Monitoring Officer comments

9.1 The Monitoring Officer confirms that the relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

10. Procurement comments

10.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this review.

11. Equality and Diversity

11.1 There are no equality, diversity or inclusion implications arising directly from this report, as the Code applies equally to all employees and stakeholders and is accessible to all those who may need to use it.

12. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

12.1 There are no sustainability / climate change implications arising directly from this report.

13. Other considerations

13.1 None

14. Local Government Reorganisation Implications

14.1 There are no LGR-related procurement or contract extension implications associated with this review. The review is intended to ensure that the Council remains legally compliant for the duration of its remaining operational period.

15. Timetable for implementation

15.1 If the Audit Committee agrees to continue with the current Code (as updated), the Monitoring Officer will arrange for the Code to be updated accordingly under the delegation in Part 2 Article 13 para 13.2(b) of the Constitution as soon as reasonably practicable.

15.2 If amendments are recommended, these would not come into effect until adopted by the next Council meeting.

16. Contact

16.1 Linda Heron, Group Head Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer (l.heron@spelthorne.gov.uk)

Please submit any material questions to the Committee Chair and Officer Contact by two days in advance of the meeting.

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:
Appendix A – Part 5e Confidential Reporting Code