

REPORT TO:	Standards Committee
REPORT NO:	COGC/20/19
DATE:	6 June 2019
LEAD:	Sioned Wyn Davies, Monitoring Officer
CONTACT OFFICER:	Linda Roberts, Deputy Monitoring Officer (Tel: 292221)
SUBJECT:	Whistleblowing Policy
WARD:	N/A

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report is submitted in accordance with the Council's Whistleblowing Policy which contains a requirement that the Monitoring Officer bring a report to the Standards Committee at least once a year on the operation of the Policy and any changes in practice introduced as a result of concerns raised under the Policy.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Standards Committee last received a report on the operation of the Whistleblowing Policy on 7 June 2018.
- 2.2 The number and nature of concerns raised do not give rise to any significant corporate concerns.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **That the Standards Committee considers the contents of the report.**

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To fulfil the Standards Committee function of overseeing the Council's Whistleblowing regime.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4.1 The Standards Committee last received a report on the operation of the Whistleblowing Policy at its meeting on 7 June 2018 when it was reported that seven concerns had been raised over the previous reporting period.

4.2 During the period since the Standards Committee last received a report on the operation of the Policy four concerns have been reported, summarised as follows:

Department	Outcome
Environment and Planning	Anonymous concern raised. No evidence to support allegations.
Environment and Planning	In progress. Outcome anticipated shortly.
Environment and Planning	Investigation in progress.
Housing and Economy	Investigation in progress.

4.3 In accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy, the Chief Officer Governance & Corporate reviews all concerns and outcomes on a periodic basis to ensure they are investigated in accordance with the Policy.

4.4 In October 2018 the Council's Internal Audit Services reported on the accessibility and effectiveness of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy. The audit included consideration of the results of an employee survey and staff awareness of the Policy. The report found that the Policy is used effectively and its use is regularly monitored. The audit also found that there is a high level of awareness of the Policy and where to access it. The report identified that minor updates were needed to the Policy including changes in job titles. In continuing to raise awareness across the workforce it was identified that there should be particular emphasis on raising awareness with managers of their responsibilities and allaying concerns about victimisation for employees. Such issues are to be addressed through training of senior managers and consideration of a training module through the Council's e-learning platform.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 **Policy Framework** – A strong ethical framework and governance arrangements support the Council Plan objective of building and efficient and effective organisation that can best support local well-being. The work of the Standards Committee in overseeing the Whistleblowing Policy is an essential part of the framework.

5.2 **Budget** – The report has no budgetary implications

5.3 **Legal** – There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

5.4 **Staffing** – The report has no staffing implications.

5.5 **Equality/Human Rights – Equality/Human Rights** – Members are advised of their duty to consider the full Equality Impact Assessment which is available at <http://vmwinsqld/equalityisalive/Menu.aspx> report number CCS/EIA00028/2014.

Members of the public can request a copy of the full Equality Impact Assessment from the Contact Officer named in the header box of this report. There are no specific implications arising from this report. Any concerns raised under the Whistleblowing Policy giving rise to equalities and/or human rights issues would be considered and addressed in connection with those individual concerns and associated investigations.

5.6 **Risks** – In the absence of a robust and effective Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure with which employees and third parties engaging with the Council are familiar, there is a risk that concerns about malpractice will not come to the attention of the Council. It is essential that employees understand that they will be protected if they raise a concern in the reasonable belief that their report is made in the public interest.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 This report has not been subject to any consultation as it does not involve any decision-making or recommendations.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	LOCATION	WEBSITE INFO.
Whistleblowing Information	Wrexham Intranet	http://www.internal.wrexham.gov.uk/wordpress/sam/departments/chief-exec/human-resources/whistleblowing-policy/