

REPORT ON UPDATED WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Audit Committee – 13 January 2015

Report of the: Chief Finance Officer

Status: For Consideration

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Key Aim of Effective Management of Council Resources

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Ramsay

Contact Officer(s) Bami Cole Ext. 7236

Recommendation to Audit Committee: That Members:

Review and approve the proposed amendments to the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

Introduction

- 1 This report sets out the proposed amendments to the Council's Whistleblowing Policy, which incorporates the requirements of the new Statutory Code of Practice, recommended by the Whistleblowing Commission in 2013.
- 2 The Whistleblowing Commission was established in February 2013 by the Whistleblowing Charity, 'Public Concern at Work'. The Commission produced a code of practice in 2013 which is intended to make whistleblowing more effective within organisations and recommends that it is rooted in statute. The code could be taken into account in court cases and by regulators.
- 3 The Code of Practice provides practical guidance to employers, workers and their representatives and sets out recommendations for raising, handling, training and reviewing whistleblowing in the work place.

Summary of Issues Raised Within the Report

- 4 The Council's existing whistleblowing policy substantially meets the code requirements. However, where appropriate, amendments have been made to incorporate the new code of practice, in order to reflect the latest development in best practice. The whistleblowing policy reflects Sevenoaks Council's existing anti-fraud and corruption framework.
- 5 A sound whistle blowing arrangement is an essential part of good governance. Sevenoaks District Council is committed to good governance and robust anti-fraud and corruption arrangements.

6 Details of Amendments to the Policy.

The existing whistleblowing policy has been amended to reflect the new code and is attached as an appendix to this report. Only minor changes have been where appropriate, to reflect the new Code of Practice. The changes made are set out in “blue” for easy identification by Members. The Strategic Management Team approved the changes on 11 December 2014. The changes are set out on the following sections of the policy, attached as Appendix A to this report:

- 1.1 and 1.2 (Overview)
- 2.3 (Aims and Scope of this Policy)
- 3.1.4 (Safeguards)
- 3.3.1 (Anonymous Allegations)
- 4.1 and 4.2 (How to Raise a Concern)
- 7.1 (How the Matter Can be Taken Further)
- 9.1 and 9.2 (Training, Disseminating and Monitoring)
- Annexes 1 and 2

Key Implications

Financial

7 Not applicable

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

8 The Council is required to have sound anti-fraud and corruption arrangement as part of its overall governance framework. By adopting the requirements of The Whistleblowing Commission’s Code of Practice, the Council will be compliant with regulatory requirements, as well as ensuring that it has effective arrangements in place to manage the risk of fraud occurring.

Value for Money and Asset Management

9 A sound whistle blowing arrangement will contribute towards the Council’s value for money aim in service delivery and effective asset management.

Equality Impacts

10 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users

Conclusions

11 The Council is required to have sound anti-fraud and corruption arrangement as part of its overall governance framework. By adopting the requirements of The Whistleblowing Commissions’ Code of Practice, the Council will be compliant with regulatory requirements.

Appendices

Appendix A – Whistleblowing Policy
January 2015

Background Papers:

Whistleblowing Commission Code of
Practice 2013.

**Adrian Rowbotham
Chief Finance Officer**