

Regulatory and Other Committee

Open Report on behalf of Pete Moore, Executive Director Finance & Public Protection

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date:	21 November 2016
Subject:	Whistleblowing Annual Report 2015-16

Summary:

This report provides an overview of the Council's whistleblowing arrangements throughout the year 2015/16.

Recommendation(s):

Items to note:

- a) whistleblowing activity for 2015-16
- b) ongoing work to raise awareness and provide assurance on the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for whistleblowing
- c) the Whistleblowing Policy has been reviewed and is included with the report for consultation

Background

1. This report provides a summary and analysis of whistleblowing disclosures received by the Council during the period from April 2015 to March 2016. Details reported include:
 - Whistleblowing activity (analysed by type)
 - Referrals made (analysed by Council directorate) – to identify any trends emerging and potential measures to respond
 - Action taken and outcomes from whistleblowing disclosures including training and learning opportunities
 - Measures taken to ensure the Council's whistleblowing arrangements are effective

Conclusion

2. A continued increase in whistleblowing concerns raised has been identified in 2015/16 - we believe that the growth in disclosures made through the

Whistleblowing line provides assurance that the Council's arrangements remain effective and that callers have confidence in the facility.

3. As noted within the previous Annual Whistleblowing Report (2014-15) we have made extensive efforts to promote awareness of the Council's Whistleblowing arrangements. We feel that the increased traffic using the reporting facility is evidence that our publicity campaigns have achieved significant success in terms of stakeholders awareness of how to report their concerns.

Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

The Counter Fraud and Investigations Team completed a review of the Whistleblowing Policy in October 2016. The review including a benchmarking exercise to compare the policy against 5 other Local Authorities, and against current legislation, to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Arrangements to preserve confidentiality and protect the Whistleblower are highlighted and confirm that the Council will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of the Whistleblower. The policy continues to provide clear guidance on what should be reported, how to raise a concern and gives key contact details.

Minor amendments have been made to reflect staffing changes and no further changes are proposed.

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Whistleblowing Annual Report 2015-16
Appendix B	Whistleblowing Policy

Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Lucy Pledge, who can be contacted on 01522-553692 or lucy.pledge@lincolnshire.gov.uk.