



Regulatory and Other Committee

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

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date:	19 November 2018
Subject:	Whistleblowing Annual Report 2017-18

Summary:

This report provides an overview of the Council's whistleblowing arrangements throughout the year 2017/18.

Recommendation(s):

Items to note:

- a) whistleblowing activity for 2017-18
- b) ongoing work to raise awareness and provide assurance on the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for whistleblowing
- c) revisions to the Whistleblowing Policy are submitted for approval

Background

1. This report provides a summary and analysis of whistleblowing disclosures received by the Council during the period from April 2017 to March 2018. Details reported include:
 - Whistleblowing activity (analysed by type of issues reported)
 - Referrals made (analysed by Council director area) – to identify any trends emerging and to compare with activity from previous years
 - Action taken and outcomes from whistleblowing disclosures including learning points
 - Measures taken to promote the whistleblowing facility and ensure the Council's whistleblowing arrangements remain effective
 - Revisions to Whistleblowing Policy to reflect changes in legislation

Conclusion

2. The number of whistleblowing concerns raised in 2017/18 increased quite significantly (by 24%) on the previous year. While the number of fraud referrals made through the whistleblowing facility has stabilised after a recent upwards trend, there are other types of referrals that have increased – these include misconduct reports, safeguarding concerns and potential breaches in policy. The continued high level of disclosures made through the reporting line provides assurance that the Council's arrangements remain effective and that whistleblowers continue to have confidence in the facility.
3. We continue to respond to trends identified in whistleblowing activity and target specific areas within our work plans for proactive work. We also continue to promote awareness of the Council's Whistleblowing arrangements to ensure stakeholders know how to report issues. The level of activity (both for the Council and neighbouring councils) within Lincolnshire provides evidence that we are effective in encouraging whistleblowing and that supporting arrangements in place are operating well.
4. We have updated the Whistleblowing Policy. The main purpose for the revisions made was to reflect changes in legislation. The policy now correctly reflects the Public Interest Disclosure Act and further changes have been made to ensure General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) is covered. Best practice recommended by Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) is also included.

Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Whistleblowing Annual Report 2017-18
Appendix B	Whistleblowing Policy (Revised)
Appendix C	Whistleblowing Process Flowchart

Background Papers

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

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