

Regulatory and Other Committee

Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham, Executive Director - Resources

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date:	18 November 2019
Subject:	Whistleblowing Annual Report 2018-19

Summary:

This report provides an overview of the Council's whistleblowing arrangements throughout the year 2018/19.

Recommendation(s):

Items to note:

- a) whistleblowing activity for 2018-19
- b) ongoing work to raise awareness and provide assurance on the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for whistleblowing

Background

1. This report provides a summary and analysis of whistleblowing disclosures received by the Council during the period from April 2018 to March 2019. Details reported include:
 - Whistleblowing activity (and analysis of issues reported)
 - Referrals made (analysed by Council director area) – to identify any trends emerging and to compare with activity from previous years
 - Resolution and outcomes from whistleblowing disclosures
 - Measures taken to promote the whistleblowing facility and ensure the Council's whistleblowing arrangements remain effective

Conclusion

2. The number of whistleblowing concerns (36) raised around Lincolnshire County Council activity in 2018/19 remained consistent with those recorded in the previous year. The nature of disclosures made also remained stable with slight increases in misconduct and policy breach referrals yet minor falls in the number of financial and safeguarding issues being reported through whistleblowing.

3. The proportion of concerns reported relating to Schools and Children's Services remains high, continuing a pattern identified over several years. We continue to work closely with management in that director area to address the issues that are raised.
4. 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. It is encouraging that 55% of those reporting issues waived their anonymity. 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.
5. 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.

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 2018-19

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 .