

<b>REPORT TO</b>	<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>
<b>GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> September 2014</b>

Report template revised June 2008



<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>ITEM</b>
<b>Revised Whistleblowing Policy</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Ian Parker</b>	<b>4</b>

## **SUMMARY AND LINK TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

The purpose of this report is to seek members' approval of the attached Whistle Blowing Policy which has been updated to take account of recommendations contained in the recently published national Whistle Blowing Code of Practice.

The report links with all of the corporate objectives but particularly with regard to an 'efficient, effective and exceptional council'.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee approve the adoption of the revised Whistleblowing Policy.

## **DETAILS AND REASONING**

### **Background**

In 2013 Public Concern at Work launched the Whistleblowing Commission chaired by Sir Anthony Hooper to examine the effectiveness of whistleblowing in the workplace and to make recommendations for change. The Commission recommended the introduction of a statutory Code of Practice for whistleblowing arrangements that would apply to employers, workers and their representatives and for the Code of Practice to be taken into account by courts considering whistleblowing issues.

The Commission further recommended that this Code could be used by regulators to assess the effectiveness of the whistleblowing arrangements of those that they regulate (for example External Audit).

The Code of Practice has 15 recommendations for raising, handling, training and reviewing workplace whistleblowing and these are shown in the attached leaflet.

Members will be aware that the Council has adopted a Whistleblowing Policy for many years and it is pleasing to note that it is already largely compliant with the new Code of Practice. However the following provisions are new and have been incorporated within the revised Policy.

- To give an assurance to employees that their identity will be kept confidential if they so request unless the disclosure is required by law (Recommendation 5(d) and 9)
- To sanction anyone who subjects an employee to a detriment because he/she raised a concern in good faith (Recommendations 6 and 11)

- To arrange for periodic audits of the effectiveness of the whistleblowing arrangements (Recommendation 7(d))
- To make provision for the independent oversight and review of the whistleblowing arrangements by the Audit/Governance Committee (Recommendation 7(e))
- To include information about the effectiveness of the whistleblowing arrangements in the Annual Report (Recommendation 8)

To enable compliance with the final bullet point (Recommendation 8) the required information will be included within the Council’s Annual Governance Statement.

Recommendation 3 of the Code also states that “when developing whistleblowing arrangements employers should consult staff and their representatives”. Such arrangements would typically include providing a presentation to the Core Managers and wider communications to all staff via the Team Briefing process. Additionally the Trade Union will be more formally consulted upon as part of normal employer/ee regular meetings.

From an Elected Member perspective, whistleblowing and specifically SRBC’s policy will be included within the wider anti-fraud and corruption policies of the Council at induction.

**WIDER IMPLICATIONS**

In the preparation of this report, consideration has been given to the impact of its proposals in all the areas listed below, and the table shows any implications in respect of each of these.

<b>FINANCIAL</b>	None
<b>LEGAL</b>	Part of a Statutory Code of Practice
<b>RISK</b>	There is inherent risk not to adopt the statutory code of practice
<b>THE IMPACT ON EQUALITY</b>	There are no equality impacts within this report.

**OTHER (see below)**

<i>Asset Management</i>	<i>Corporate Plans and Policies</i>	<i>Crime and Disorder</i>	<i>Efficiency Savings/Value for Money</i>
<i>Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion</i>	<i>Freedom of Information/ Data Protection</i>	<i>Health and Safety</i>	<i>Health Inequalities</i>
<i>Human Rights Act 1998</i>	<i>Implementing Electronic Government</i>	<i>Staffing, Training and Development</i>	<i>Sustainability</i>

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Whistleblowing Commission Report on the Effectiveness of Existing Arrangements for Workplace Whistleblowing in the UK