

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Audit and Corporate Governance Committee

DATE: 16th March 2017

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WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR DECISION**

REVIEW OF WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

1. Purpose of Report

This report updates Members of the Audit and Governance Committee about the review of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy (now called the Confidential Reporting Code).

2. Recommendation

The Committee is requested to recommend to full Council that the Confidential Reporting Code, as attached at Appendix 1, be approved.

3. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The delivery of the Joint Wellbeing Strategy priorities is dependent on good governance arrangements being in place in order that the Council has a transparent and accountable process to enable employees and others to raise concerns within the Council without fear of threat, harassment or victimisation.

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications of this report.

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The legal basis for whistleblowing allegation are set out in the Employment Rights Act 1996 as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

It is important to ensure that the procedures used for confidential reporting do not impact disproportionately on any groups. The new procedures were written with this in mind.

5. Supporting Information

The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. With this in mind, the Council has put in place a framework for employees and others who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work, to come forward and voice these concerns.

There has been concern that employees and others do not have faith in the current Whistleblowing Policy as there has been an increasing number of anonymous complaints. The Council wishes to restore confidence in the process and has therefore made arrangements for the Policy to be reviewed and relaunched. The main features of the new Whistleblowing Policy include:-

- (a) Statement of Commitment from Leader of the Council;
- (b) Re-named as the Confidential Reporting Code;
- (c) Clarity on the process to be followed;
- (d) Greater detail on protections afforded in order to encourage open disclosure;
- (e) Reference to support for those who are affected by the raising of concerns.

The suggested new Confidential Reporting Code is attached at Appendix 1.

6. Conclusion

The Committee is asked to recommend the new Policy to full Council.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Confidential Reporting Code.

8. Background Papers

None.