



Audit & Governance Committee
12 July 2023

Whistleblowing Annual Report

Purpose of the report:

This report presents the annual whistleblowing report of the Council as a new report to the Audit and Governance Committee to improve transparency and accountability. The report summarises the whistleblowing activity over the last year and analyses the effectiveness of the Council's system.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Review the contents of the Annual Whistleblowing report to satisfy themselves that the governance arrangements are operating effectively; and
2. Make any recommendations for improvement.

Introduction

- 1 The Council is required to have an effective whistleblowing policy and arrangement in place. The annual report has not previously been reported to the Audit and Governance Committee and it was recommended by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny as an improvement the Council should make in its governance arrangements. This was agreed by the Committee in its governance action plan agreed in January 2023.

Whistleblowing Annual Report 2022/23

- 2 As part of its governance arrangements the Council must ensure that effective arrangements for Whistleblowing are in place to which officers, staff and all those contracting with or appointed by the authority have access.
- 3 An effective and positive whistleblowing culture has the following advantages:
 - Detects and deters wrongdoing.
 - Provides information to managers so they can make decisions and contain the risk.
 - Demonstrates to stakeholders that Surrey County council is serious about good governance.

- Reduces the chance of anonymous or malicious leaks.
- Reduces the chance of Legal claims against the Council; and
- Clear whistleblowing arrangements are likely to help with a defence under the Bribery Act 2010.

The annual report is attached at Annex A for the Committee's consideration.

Consultation

- 4 The Governance Panel and the Whistleblowing monitoring group which meets quarterly has previously considered the report.

Implications

Financial

- 5 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Continued improvements in governance will support the delivery of the council's objectives.

Equalities

- 6 There are no direct equalities implications of this report.

Risk management

- 7 Strong whistleblowing arrangements support the council's commitment to good governance and the effective delivery of services and achievement of objectives.

What happens next

- 8 Whistleblowing is monitored quarterly by officers. Any recommendations from the Committee will be incorporated into future reports.

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Sources/background papers: Code of Corporate Governance. CIPFA/SOLACE framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*.

Annexes/Appendices:

Annex A – Whistleblowing Annual Report
