

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

Report of the Chief Accountant to the GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 23 April 2008 and STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 6 May 2008

Whistleblowing Policy

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To approve the Whistleblowing policy, that aims to ensure that the staff and public can raise concerns without worrying about being victimised or discriminated against.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Approves the Whistleblowing Policy

Note: In preparing this report, due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental and risk management considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial or human resources implications and comments received are reflected in the report.

3. Information, Issues and Options

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 At its meeting on 4th December 2007 the Local Joint Consultative Committee considered the draft Whistleblowing Policy. It made a number of suggested amendments. The policy and recommended amendments were put before Cabinet on 8th January 2008, who approved the revisions, subject to approval by General Purposes Committee

- 3.1.2 The revised policy and guidelines are appended to this report.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 This policy aims to ensure that any concerns can be raised with confidence and without any worry on the part of the whistleblower about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.
- 3.2.2 This policy is intended to deal with serious or sensitive concerns about inappropriate behaviour concerning a range of activities from suspected fraud to health and safety matters. The complete range is set out in section three of the policy.
- 3.2.3 The policy sets out the procedures reporting concerns as well as the measures that the Council has in place to protect the person raising the concern. It also sets out how the authority will deal with allegations and who will deal with them.
- 3.2.4 Guidance for officers is set out in appendix 1 of the policy and guidance for managers in appendix 2. These set out the actions officers should take if made aware of concerns of inappropriate behaviour. Employees can get independent advice or support from a charitable organisation called Public Concern at Work. Contact details are provided in the policy.
- 3.2.5 The policy and guidelines will be communicated to staff and will be placed on the intranet. It will also form part of the induction pack for new members of staff and the

Members Information Pack. The policy will also be placed on Breckland's website to ensure that external stakeholders know about the procedures for reporting a concern.

3.3 Options

3.3.1 To approve the Whistleblowing Policy

3.3.2 Not to have a Whistleblowing Policy

3.4 Reasons for Recommendation

3.4.1 The Whistleblowing policy aims to ensure that the staff and public can raise concerns without worrying about being victimised or discriminated against.

4. **Risk and Financial Implications**

4.1 Risk

4.1.1 No additional risks arise as a result of replacing the Confidential Reporting Code with this Whistleblowing Policy

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 None

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

6. **Other Implications**

- a) Equalities: No - implicit within process
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: Reporting of potential fraudulent activities may result in criminal proceedings
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: None
- d) Human Resources: None
- e) Human Rights: None
- f) Other: None

7. **Alignment to Council Priorities**

7.1 The nature of the policy covers the full range of council services and priorities

8. **Ward/Community Affected**

8.1 All

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Appendices attached to this report:

Whistleblowing Policy