

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

CABINET : 8 JANUARY 2008

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR THE CABINET OFFICE
(Author: Chief Accountant)

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Summary: This policy provides member, employees and other stakeholders with an explanation and instructions of how Breckland will deal with serious or sensitive concerns about inappropriate behaviour. It replaces the previous 'confidential reporting code' code, and is linked with the strategy to fight fraud and corruption.

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council is committed to maintaining an open culture with the highest standards of honesty and accountability. It takes all inappropriate behaviour very seriously and is committed to investigating any genuine concerns raised with it.
- 1.2 Breckland Council currently has in place a confidential reporting code which provides channels for any Members, employees and other stakeholders to report any serious concerns about inappropriate behaviour. This code was reviewed as part of the work recently conducted by the Audit Manager in developing the authority's arrangements for fighting fraud and corruption. The Whistleblowing policy is designed to complement the strategy to help fight fraud and corruption and forms an integral part of the Council's internal controls, which helps strengthen its position in relation to Use of Resources.

2. KEY DECISION

- 2.1 This is a key decision

3. COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The matters raised in this report fall within the following Council priorities:
- A safe and healthy environment
 - A well planned place to live which encourages vibrant communities
 - A prosperous place to live and work

The nature of the strategy covers the full range of council services and priorities.

4. THE WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.

- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.

5. RISK

- 5.1 Not having an effective policy and clear instructions

6. OPTIONS AVAILABLE

- 6.1 To recommend the policy to Council for approval
6.2 Not to have a policy

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 7.1 To set out the way the Council will deal with concerns about inappropriate behaviour.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To recommend to Council the approval of the Whistleblowing Policy

Appendices:

Whistleblowing Policy