

**Meeting**                      Audit Committee  
**Portfolio Area**            Resources  
**Date**                            9<sup>th</sup> November 2022



## REVISED WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY 2022

### NON-KEY DECISION

#### 1            **PURPOSE**

- 1.1            For members to review and adopt a new Whistleblowing Policy that can then be implemented across the Council.

#### 2            **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1            The Council has a Policy in place, this has not been reviewed for some time. Officers believe that a new Policy and a communication plan to launch this will provide assurance to staff who want to raise genuine concerns at work.
- 2.2            Due to changes in the senior management at the Council a key change will be to create a Whistleblowing Group that will review and assess all concerns raised to provide more transparency and consistency in the process.
- 2.3            That the Councils Head of Human Resources owns this Policy and brings an annual report to this Committee on all disclosures made to the Council under this Policy.

#### 3            **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1            The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) amended the Employment Rights Act 1996 (“the Act”) to create a framework for whistleblowing across the private, public and voluntary sectors. The Act provides individuals in the workplace with protection from victimisation where they make a protected

disclosure about malpractice or wrongdoing at work in accordance with the Act's provisions.

3.2 The Council is a 'prescribed person' under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, meaning that whistleblowers are provided with protection when disclosing certain information to us. The Prescribed Persons (Reports on Disclosures of Information) Regulations 2017 require prescribed persons to report annually on whistleblowing disclosures made to them.

3.3 The Council has a Whistleblowing Policy in place but this has not been shared as widely as possible with staff and may not have created the assurance required to protect those who want to raise genuine concerns at work

#### **4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS**

4.1 The Council is a Prescribed Person and has to have in place to appropriate framework for concerns to be raised, logged, actioned and reported on.

4.2 Having a Policy which provides assurance to staff supports the Councils reputation as a good employer.

4.3 Officers working in Human Resources, Legal Services and Senior Leadership have been consulted and the proposed policy has been shared with the Corporate Governance Group for comment.

#### **5 IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications as this Policy replaces an earlier version

##### **Legal Implications**

5.2 The Council has a duty to have in place a Policy and the new Policy replaces the older version.

##### **Risk Implications**

5.3 There are no risk implications by replacing the older Policy.

#### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

**BD1 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)**

**BD2 The Prescribed Persons (Reports on Disclosures of Information) Regulations 2017**

#### **APPENDICES**

**A Stevenage Borough Council – Whistleblowing Policy 2022**