

Decision Maker: GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Date: 17 July 2013

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: RAISING CONCERNS (WHISTLEBLOWING) POLICY

Contact Officer: Graham Walton, Democratic Services Manager
Tel: 0208 461 7743 E-mail: graham.walton@bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Mark Bowen, Director of Corporate Services

Ward: N/A

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 The Council's whistleblowing policy was last updated in 2008. A revised policy was considered by Audit Sub-Committee on 6th June 2013, who referred it to this committee for adoption.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the attached Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy (appendix 2) be adopted.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No Cost:
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Internal Audit
 4. Total current budget for this head: £552k including £250k net cost for fraud partnership
 5. Source of funding: General Fund, Admin subsidy, Admin Penalties, Legal Cost recoveries, provision of sold services to academies.
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 6.4fte including 0.5fte to cover risk management
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 208 days per quarter
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-Statutory - Government Guidance:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable: This report does not involve an executive decision
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): N/A
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 Members will recall that some of the major investigations carried out by Internal Audit over the past two years have been as a result of whistleblowing allegations. The Council's current Confidential Reporting code (Raising Concerns) was last updated in July 2008. The policy has now been updated in line with best practice and with current titles and contacts. The Council recently subscribed to an organisation specialising in public concern at work and their expertise has been built in to the revised wording. Previous debates on this subject highlighted a need that there should be mechanism whereby staff could go to a nominated Member/s possibly the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of Audit Sub Committee, and this has been reflected in the new text.
- 3.2 A good policy is written from the point of view of the whistleblower and gives them confidence and encouragement to come forward and raise concerns openly. It should provide staff with a clear step by step guidance on who to contact, how to contact and a brief outline of the process. The updated version has been abridged so that it is less daunting and confusing for the whistleblower.
- 3.3 The Audit Sub-Committee considered the draft policy at its meeting on 5th June 2013. The Sub-Committee agreed the draft policy, subject to adding the Vice-Chairman of Audit Sub-Committee as a potential contact and to including mention of Councillors in the text. The 2008 policy is attached for information and comparison as appendix 1; the revised policy is attached as appendix 2.
- 3.4 The Committee is asked to adopt the revised whistleblowing/raising concerns policy.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Policy/Financial/legal/Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	None