

Report to: Audit & Governance Committee Meeting
1 February 2023

Director or Business Manager Lead: Sue Bearman, Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services, Monitoring Officer

Lead Officer: 01636 655935, Sue.Bearman@nsdc.info

Report Summary	
Report Title	Review of the Council’s Whistleblowing Policy
Purpose of Report	For the Committee to consider an updated version of the Council’s Whistleblowing Policy and proposals to raise awareness of the Policy.
Recommendations	That Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopts the revised Whistleblowing Policy attached as Appendix 1 to this report subject to consultation with the Council’s Joint Consultative Committee; 2. Approves proposals for raising awareness of the Policy; and 3. Includes an annual review of the Whistleblowing Policy and concerns raised under it in the Committee’s work plan
Reason for Recommendation	To ensure the Council meets its Community Plan objectives to be professional and trustworthy by demonstrating integrity, and being welcoming and responsive by being open to feedback and challenge and swift to act.

1.0 Background

1.1 The Council has an adopted Whistleblowing Policy which requires some updating due to changes in the Council’s structure, and external contacts. A review of the Policy has also been identified as an audit requirement for this financial year.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered

2.1 The Policy has been reviewed and updated by comparison against other local authority policies and the guidance provided by Government. The revised Policy is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. For completeness, the current Policy, with tracked changes to show amendments, is attached at **Appendix 2**.

2.2 The majority of the amendments are not material – the order of the content has been amended with the aim of making the Policy more user friendly, and some words have been added to clarify some of the provisions, but not alter them. Contact details have

been updated where necessary and are now grouped together at the end of the document for easy reference.

- 2.3 Material amendments are summarised below: -
 - 2.3.1 The Responsible Officer is the Council's Monitoring Officer
 - 2.3.2 The Monitoring Officer will maintain a corporate register of concerns raised and the results of any investigations
 - 2.3.3 The Audit & Governance Committee will keep the Policy under review and will receive an annual report on its operation
- 2.4 If Audit & Governance is satisfied in principle with the revised Policy, it will be referred to the Council's Joint Consultative Committee (the Council has established the Joint Consultative Committee to provide a regular method of consultation and where appropriate negotiation between the Council and its employees) for review. Any substantive comments or concerns will be reported back to Audit & Governance Committee.
- 2.5 If few or no Whistleblowing complaints are received this could be due to lack of awareness. It is therefore proposed for the Monitoring Officer to work with Corporate Communications to promote the existence of the Policy through the Council's staff newsletter and other appropriate platforms. A summary of actions taken will be reported back to Committee in the first annual report.
- 2.6 To ensure appropriate oversight going forward, it is proposed that an annual review of the Whistleblowing Policy and concerns received, is added to the Committee's work plan.
- 2.7 Once approved, the updated Policy will be shared with the Council's wholly owned companies, Active 4 Today Limited and Arkwood Developments Limited, as a template.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations officers have considered the following implications; Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

(Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy Guidance and Code of Practice is [published](#))