

AUDIT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM. 5
3 FEBRUARY 2014	PUBLIC REPORT

Cabinet Member responsible:	Councillor Seaton, Resources Portfolio Holder	
Contact Officer(s):	Kim Sawyer, Director of Governance	452361

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM : Kim Sawyer, Director of Governance
Audit Committee is recommended to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the attached updated Whistleblowing Policy; and 2. Recommend the policy for approval by the Joint Consultation Forum and Employment Committee.

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

This report is submitted to the Committee as part of the work to ensure best practice is established within the Council's anti-fraud and corruption strategies.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The main purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's approval for an updated Whistleblowing Policy following the changes introduced by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.
- 2.2 This report is to be considered in accordance with its Terms of Reference 2.2.1.14 - *To monitor council policies on "raising concern at work" and the anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategy and the Council's complaints process.*

3. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

- 3.1 The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with this commitment, Members, officers, our partners and the wider public are encouraged to voice their concerns about any aspect of the Council's work. There may be occasions where certain cases will need to proceed on a confidential basis.
- 3.2 Those with concerns may feel unable to express their concerns through fear of harassment or victimisation. These fears may cause an individual to choose to ignore the concern. The purpose of this policy sets out our commitment to those individuals who report their concerns that they can do so without fear of recrimination.
- 3.3 The attached policy applies to all Members, officers (permanent or temporary, partners and the public.
- 3.4 The operational procedures for reporting concerns under the Whistleblowing Policy are contained within the Whistleblowing Plan as Appendix 1. This sets out how individuals

can report concerns, the protection they can expect and how the Council will respond. This policy recognises the synergy between whistleblowing and anti-bribery measures. It provides a coherent and consistent framework to enable Peterborough City Council members, officers, our Partners and the wider audience to understand and implement arrangements to enable compliance.

4. CONSULTATION

Consultation has taken place between the following parties:

- Director of Governance
- Executive Director of Strategic Resources (as the designated s.151 officer); and
- Chief Internal Auditor

5. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

That the Council will have in place an up to date policy to meet its whistleblowing responsibilities.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council should have policy and procedures in place to prevent bribery and corruption either by individuals seeking to make a gain or those accepting such inducements. The Council is a commercial organisation as defined by the Public Interest Disclosure Act and could be liable to prosecution should we fail to have adequate safeguards in place to prevent bribery.

7. IMPLICATIONS

The implications of this report are that the Council will become more aware and will continue to consider the risks and consequences of this type of abuse. This policy along with other policies such as the Fraud and Corruption Policy will continue to highlight that fraud and corruption are unacceptable. The presumption must be about preventing corruption by designing systems to stop it happening in the first place but where it occurs, there should be an equal presumption that its perpetrators will face tough action. This can only serve to increase the standards of conduct in the Council.

8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998; and
- Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Whistleblowing Policy