

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 11 AUGUST 2009

REPORT BY MONITORING OFFICER

8. ANTI-FRAUD AND ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGY AND DISCLOSURE (WHISTLEBLOWING) CODE

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

'D' RECOMMENDATION – that the Standards Committee has the following comments on the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy and Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Code.

1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 To update existing strategies and policies in accordance with the business arrangements within the Council.

2.0 Contribution to the Council's Priorities

2.1 **Fit for purpose, services fit for you**

Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.

3.0 Background

3.1 The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and the Confidential Reporting Code were approved by Human Resources Committee on 5 July 2007. These documents were also submitted to the Standards Committee on 19 August 2008 and the Committee supported the view that the documents needed to be simplified. Both documents have subsequently been reviewed and revised.

4.0 Report

4.1 The above strategies and protocols have recently been reviewed by the Internal Audit and Business Improvement Manager, the Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Director of Internal Services, together with significant input from one of the lay members of the

Standards Committee. Corporate Management Team gave their approval on 9 June 2009.

- 4.2 Two revised documents have been drawn up entitled the “Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy” and “Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Code. The two documents link together to provide a consistent approach to the management of anti-fraud measures throughout the Council.
- 4.3 The Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy (Appendix ‘A8’, pages 8.4 - 8.11) helps the Council to foster a culture of integrity, honesty and openness throughout the organization. Fraud and corruption are not tolerated or given tacit consent, and all should be alert to any evidence of irregularities and be ready to act upon such evidence.
- 4.4 The Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Code (Appendix ‘B8’, pages 8.12 - 8.26) encourages Members, employees and those with whom the Council has dealings to report any reasons to suspect fraud and corruption, without fear of reprisals. The code details the ways in which such information will be handled and followed up.
- 4.5 The two revised documents were presented to the Human Resources Committee on 15 July 2009. The Committee did not propose any changes. The documents will be presented to future meeting of the Audit Committee.
- 5.0 Consultation
- 5.1 UNISON has been consulted and has indicated support for these revised documents.
- 5.2 External Audit has been consulted on the proposals to revise the strategies and protocols.
- 6.0 Legal Implications
- 6.1 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 provides legal protection for those making disclosures.
- 7.0 Financial Implications
- 7.1 There are no financial implications.
- 8.0 Human Resource Implications
- 8.1 As detailed in the report

9.0 Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 Absence of these codes would increase the risks of fraud and corruption issues. A disclosure code will improve the ability of the Council to comply with its legal obligation and provide a procedure for dealing with disclosures effectively.

Background Papers

Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and Confidential Reporting Code - Human Resources Committee 5 July 2007.

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