

AUDIT COMMITTEE – 11th JUNE 2021

Report of the Head of Strategic Support

Part A

ITEM 10 ANNUAL UPDATE RE THE ANTI- FRAUD & CORRUPTION STRATEGY AND WHISTLE - BLOWING POLICY

Purpose of Report

To provide information on the operation of the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy and Whistle-blowing Policy during 2020/21.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to note the information on the operation of the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy and the Whistle-blowing Policy.

Reason

To ensure the Committee is kept up to date on the operation of the policies, and instances where they have been applied.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The Council is obliged under the Public Interest Disclosure Act to maintain a Whistle-blowing Policy, designed to encourage staff, elected Members, contractors and the public to raise legitimate concerns about wrong-doing within the Council without fear of reprisal. In line with its role of community leadership, and its responsibilities for the stewardship of public funds, the Council also has an Anti-fraud & Corruption Strategy setting out how cases of fraud and corruption will be prevented, and how suspicions will be dealt with.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions

Updates will continue to be provided to the Committee on an annual basis.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications relating to this report

Risk Management

There are no risks arising from this report.

Background Papers: None

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Part B

1. Background

All new members of staff receive awareness training re the documents as part of their Induction process. The Whistle-blowing Policy is also provided to potential suppliers as part of the procurement process.

2. Policy Documents

The documents have been reviewed and no amendments have been identified.

3. Whistleblowing Notifications

No whistleblowing notifications were received during the year.

4. Fraud

Investigation of housing benefit fraud is now undertaken by the DWP Single Fraud Investigation Service and the DWP Fraud and Error Service.

The Internal Audit team have been closely involved in the various Covid related grants that have been awarded during the pandemic, and 14 cases of fraud totalling £155,000 have been identified of which £99,000 has been recovered to date.