

<b>Report to:</b>	Standards Committee
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships / Monitoring Officer
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	20 July 2017

## WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider a proposed revision of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To agree to the revisions to the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure, as submitted.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Under the Council's constitution, the Standards Committee has a duty to monitor and review as necessary the operation of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

To keep the current policy, however it is out of date and needs refreshing.

### 4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 This report covers all of the Council's priorities.

### 5.0 Background Information

5.1 As part of the ongoing development and continuous improvement of Council Policy and practice an internal project group was established to review the current procedure.

The group included:

- Director of Governance and Partnership services (Monitoring Officer)
- Employee Relations Manager and Deputy Manager
- Chief Internal Auditor
- HR Policy Officer

5.2 The revised procedure is shown at Appendix 3(a) of this report

The proposed changes include:

- Updates to reflect the latest Council's constitution and supporting policies
- Updates to reflect the Council core values
- Clarification which existing procedures can be used to deal with issues of concern
- Providing clarification how issues of fraud can be dealt with
- Providing additional information how customer complaints can be dealt with
- Putting forward additional officers to the Departmental Contacts list
- Making reference to further information about the Public Interest Act.

It is noted that the proposed changes reflect the best practice requirements from the Whistleblowing Commission - Code of Practice.

5.3 As good practice the procedure names a number of officers who act a whistleblowing champions within Departments – part of their role is to act as a key contact point to receive and filter Whistleblowing cases. It was recognised that due to officers leaving the Council the list of named contacts had diminished. Therefore, to add further capacity a number of new officers have been included as suggested additions. Relevant coaching will be given to all those quoted in the process.

5.4 As the whistleblowing procedure is an important part of ensuring that the Council ethics and integrity is upheld. It is intended (when approved) to communicate the launch of the approved document by the following means:

- Hub News items
- Newsletters
- Briefing for Departmental contacts

5.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.6 **List of Appendices:**

Appendix 3(a) – Draft Whistleblowing Procedure

**6.0 Legal considerations:**

6.1 The proposed procedure fulfils the Council's obligation regarding whistleblowing.

**7.0 Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 The Framework applies to all employees of Blackpool Council.

**8.0 Equalities considerations:**

8.1 Equality issues of this policy have been explored alongside the framework and an equality analysis has been completed accordingly.

**9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 A clear revised procedure will reduce or eliminate the risk of inconsistent employee practices and procedures.

**11.0 Ethical considerations:**

11.1 The revised procedure will be integral to the ethos of the Council's Core value:

*'We act with integrity and we are trustworthy in all our dealings with people and we are open about the decisions we make and the services we offer'.*

**12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

12.1 Consultation has taken place within the Council from the key service leads regarding governance.

**13.0 Background papers:**

13.1 None.