

PE1488/N

Glasgow City Council Whistleblowing Policy

To: Public Petitions Committee

From: Glasgow City Council, Head of Audit and Inspection

“How are elected members of local authorities involved in the local authority’s whistleblowing policy?”

1. Policy oversight and responsibilities

- 1.1 Glasgow City Council established a whistleblowing policy and reporting facilities for employees and members of the public in financial year 1999/2000. The Glasgow City Council whistleblowing policy is administered by the Internal Audit Section within the Council.
- 1.2 Policies are approved by Glasgow City Council’s Executive Committee and are incorporated into the Council’s Local Code of Governance. Each new incoming Council approves the Financial Regulations, Management & Control – A Code of Practice, the part of the Local Code of Governance which contains the whistleblowing policy.
- 1.3 Scrutiny of the operation of the policy is overseen by the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee (FASC) whose terms of reference includes monitoring the annual strategic audit plan and reviewing all Council Audit and Inspection work against the plan. The FASC is made up of 15 elected members and is chaired by a member of the opposition party.
- 1.4 Every 6 months members of FASC are advised of the number, range and outcome of Whistleblowing cases as part of the Internal Audit Performance Report. The second of these reports is the Head of Audit & Inspection’s Annual Report to Members and shows the total whistleblowing activity for the financial year being reported on.
- 1.5 Detailed information on outcomes is rarely provided because of the nature of the allegations and the human rights of the parties concerned. Furthermore the reports are public documents so the level of detail provided in them is limited but members are often provided with verbal updates on specific issues.

2. Keeping the Policy Updated

- 2.1 The whistleblowing policy is regularly reviewed and re-launched. The latest revision to take account of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 took place in 2013/14 and is available on the Council’s website. Other examples of how the whistleblowing policy and facilities are kept up to date include:

- Providing guidance for online reporting,
- Regularly reviewing and updating the pre-recorded out of hours message on the hotline and ensuring the instructions provided to callers is clear and concise,
- Promotional activities undertaken such as articles in the Glasgow City Council Employee magazine and distributing posters in Council offices.

2.2 Members of the FASC are advised of updates to policies and improvements to guidance. They are advised when the policy is being re-launched and are provided with copies of promotional material.

2.3 In addition to the whistleblowing policy a proposed corporate fraud policy has been developed and was reported to the FASC in April 2014. Members were asked to note the report and to agree the policy be referred to the Council's Executive Committee for approval. This policy makes it clear the Head of Audit and Inspection is responsible for maintaining the whistleblowing facility.