

Audit Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	16 July 2025
Report Title	Updated Whistleblowing Policy
EMT Lead	Lisa Fillery – Director of Resources
Head of Service	Katherine Woodward – Head of Audit
Lead Officer	Mark Goodwin - Audit Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. That the Audit Committee approves the updated Whistleblowing Policy.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The attached policy (at Appendix 1) sets out a refreshed policy for supporting anyone who works at, and for, the council, who want to raise concerns at Swale Borough Council. The policy updates a previous version which was ratified by Strategic Management Team in July 2019. It has been updated to conform with best practice guidance from the Institute of Internal Audit (IIA), ACAS and Protect (formally Public Concern at Work).
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the changes contained in Appendix 1:
 - The policy sets out refreshed names and a wider commitment from Executive Management Team as points of contact to raise concerns.
 - The policy includes a section on routes to raise other concerns (at page 3).
 - The policy including links to legislation, internal contacts and other policies.
 - The policy signposts to external organisations
 - The policy strengthens a commitment for reporting to the Audit Committee and for review.

2 Background

- 2.1 Whistleblowing is an important part of organisational governance it promotes transparency and accountability providing a mechanism to encourage staff to speak up about wrongdoings. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy was last published in July 2019 and requires updating.
- 2.2 It is envisioned that the policy once approved and operating will be supported through promotion to raise awareness amongst staff and provide assurance that their concerns will be taken seriously.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 We propose that the Committee approves the refreshed Whistleblowing Policy.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council has duties under the Public Disclosure Act 1998. Aside from external requirements, supporting people who wish to raise concerns is a mark of a well governed organisation and, done right brings significant benefits in allowing an organisation to identify and respond to emerging problems before they become serious issues.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The Whistleblowing Policy has been separately presented to Strategic Management Team. The Head of Human Resources has been consulted separately on the policy along with the Council's officer contact for Unison.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	None on the Corporate Plan of itself. However, the nature of the issues that may be raised by staff under the Whistleblowing Policy may have impacts, but these will be considered in subsequent outcome reports.
Financial, Resource and Property	No implications have been identified.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage.
Crime and Disorder	No implications have been identified.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	No implications have been identified.
Health and Wellbeing	No implications have been identified.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	No implications have been identified. The Council has a route in place for raising Safeguarding concerns.

Risk Management and Health and Safety	No implications have been identified.
Equality and Diversity	No implications have been identified.
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications have been identified.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:
- Appendix 1: Swale Borough Council Whistleblowing Policy

8 Background Papers

- Whistleblowing Policy ratified July 2019.