

ITEM 7(a)(ii)

Extract from the Minutes of the meeting of the AUDIT COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2012 at 7.00 pm

AC31 WHISTLEBLOWING AND ANTI-FRAUD POLICIES

The Committee considered the revised Whistleblowing and Anti-Fraud Policies and recognised the protection the policies provided to the Council and its staff.

The Committee noted the concerns from Councillor White, about the findings of recent internal fraud investigations in relation to time recording. The Committee sought assurance that recommendations arising from the fraud investigations would be addressed.

The Committee heard that a Member had concerns of a weakness in the Policies and suggested that further amendment might be required, in particular, to reflect the circumstances if a Corporate Director was the subject of the complaint and who would deal with this at a senior level.

The Committee expressed concern about the current reporting process for whistleblowers and the timescales involved. The process presently allowed the whistleblower to raise their concern via a generic email address, or call the Whistleblowing hotline number on 01908 252525. The Assistant Director (Audit and Risk Management) was asked to investigate if the process could be improved.

The Committee suggested the revised Policies should be circulated to partners and contractors.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Policies be amended to take account of circumstances when Corporate Directors may be the subject of investigation of complaint.
2. That outcomes of employee disciplinary cases be publicised.
3. That consideration be given to providing a more confidential reporting system for whistle-blowing, than a generic mail-box address.
4. That the timescales for investigating whistle-blowing allegations be reviewed to seek to reduce the length of the process.
5. **That the Chair and Vice-Chairs be authorised to make any further comments on the re-drafted Policies prior to submission to Cabinet for approval.**
6. That copies of the revised Policies be circulated to partners and contractors.