

Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy and Whistleblowing Procedure

Standards Committee

23 July 2007

Author: Head of Internal Audit; and
Monitoring Officer

Parish / Wards Affected: All

Purpose

To receive the updated Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Fraud Response Plan and Fraud Awareness Guide and to approve their implementation

Recommendations

- It is recommended that the Standards Committee approve the adoption of the updated Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, the Whistleblowing Policy and the Fraud Response Plan
- It is recommended that the Head of Internal Audit be authorised to roll out the Fraud Awareness Guidance to relevant Members and Officers.

1. Reasons

- 1.1 To ensure that the Council's Policies on Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Whistleblowing are up-to-date and reflect best practice.
- 1.2 To ensure that Members and officers are made aware of how to identify the types of fraud, how it occurs, indicators of potential fraud and how to respond if it is discovered.
- 1.3 The Committee requested at the meeting on 29th January 2007 that the policies be brought back for approval following appropriate consultation with relevant parties. This consultation has now been completed.

2. Detail

- 2.1 The Council controls millions of pounds of public money and takes very seriously the high expectations of the public and the degree of scrutiny to which the affairs of the Council are subject.
- 2.2 In carrying out its functions and responsibilities the Council wishes to promote a culture of openness and fairness and expects that elected members and employees at all levels will adopt the highest standards of propriety and accountability. Proper accountability, achieved through probity, internal control and honest administration is therefore essential.

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- 2.3 The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy sets out measures designed to frustrate any attempted fraudulent or corrupt acts and the steps to be taken if such action occurs.
- 2.4 The Council's Whistleblowing Policy supports the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, and makes it clear that concerns can be raised without the fear of reprisals. It is intended to encourage and enable employees, Members and Governors to raise serious concerns within the Council, irrespective of seniority, rank or status, rather than overlooking a problem or reporting the matter externally.
- 2.5 Both the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy (Appendix 1) and the Whistleblowing Policy (Appendix 2) have been updated to ensure that they reflect changes in legislation and reflect best practice.
- 2.6 A Fraud Awareness Guide (Appendix 4) has also been prepared to complement the above documents and to raise manager's awareness of fraud.

Alternative Options

As detailed above there are various providers who are able to provide this external assessment. However, the administration and validation of alternative, particularly any locally approved, providers will also have an impact on Internal Audit resources.

Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- There are no direct financial or procurement implications. The cost of carrying out any investigations is currently borne by the Director of Law and Democratic Services or Internal Audit's budget.

Legal / Human Rights Implications

- The policies and procedures have been written to take account of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and takes account of other relevant legislation such as the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, the Local Government Act 1972 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003.

Links to Corporate Plans and Policies (in particular to Swindon 2010 Promises)

- The outcome of complaints links with the theme 'Council for the Future' and the wish to improve the Council's performance and ensure that the Council's corporate governance system are considered to be accountable, effective and transparent (Objective 1).

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Nick Hobbs on 01793 463940 or Email nhobbs@swindon.gov.uk

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Standards Committee

23 July 2007

Consultees

- The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports).
- Group Director Resources
- Director of Human Resources
- Directors Team
- External Audit – both Robson Rhodes RSMi and the Audit Commission

Background Papers and Appendices

- Appendix 1: Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy
- Appendix 2: Whistleblowing Policy
- Appendix 3: Fraud Response Plan
- Appendix 4: Fraud Awareness Guide