

13 October 2015

Report of	Monitoring Officer	Author	Andrew Weavers ☎ 282213
Title	Review of the Council's Ethical Governance Policies		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report requests the Committee to review the Council's updated Ethical Governance policies

1. Decision(s) Required

1.1 To review the following revised policies:

- Anti-Fraud and Corruption
- Whistleblowing
- Anti-Money Laundering
- Covert Surveillance
- Corporate Information Security
- Data Protection

and to recommend to Council that they be approved for inclusion in the Council's Policy Framework.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council is committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance including the elimination of fraud and corruption and to ensuring that all activities are conducted ethically, honestly, openly and accountably so as to protect public safety and public money.
- 2.2 A varied range of policies and procedures form the Corporate Governance framework and a selection of these relate to Ethical Governance - those specifically regarding conduct and integrity.
- 2.3 The Ethical Governance policies set out the standards of conduct and integrity that it expects from staff, elected members, suppliers, partners, volunteers and the public. Breaches of the policies will be pursued and procedures have been introduced to enable any person to raise genuine concerns they may have about the conduct of anybody acting for or on behalf of the Council.
- 2.4 In February 2012 full Council adopted a statement of intent in relation to both Ethical and Corporate Governance which gave a high organisational commitment to zero tolerance of fraud, corruption and bribery. The Ethical Governance policies were also adopted as part of the Council's policy framework. The opportunity has been taken to update the statement of intent.

3. Review of Ethical Governance Policies

- 3.1 The Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Whistleblowing, Anti-Money Laundering, Covert Surveillance and Corporate Information Security policies were last reviewed by this Committee at its meeting on 14 October 2014.
- 3.2 These policies have been reviewed to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and no changes are proposed to the policies apart from the Information Security Policy which has been updated to include reference to employees being required to inform Corporate ICT of any suspected breaches or incidents and for users to adhere to the password policy.
- 3.3 The opportunity has been taken to include within this review the Council's Data Protection Policy which was last reviewed in 2012. The Council is required to have policy statement to demonstrate how it deals with and treats personal information. The attached version has been updated to reflect current practices.
- 3.4 The Covert Surveillance Policy has been updated with links to revised national guidance on its use. The Council has not sought any authorisations for the use of covert surveillance in the past year.
- 3.5 The Monitoring Officer writes an annually to both Members and Officers reminding them of their obligations regarding the Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Whistleblowing policies.
- 3.6 On 1 October 2015 the statutory responsibility for investigating and prosecuting housing benefit fraud cases (together with the staff) transferred from the Council to the Department of Work and Pensions. Accordingly as the Council no longer has responsibility for pursuing benefit fraud it no longer requires a Sanctions Policy. All fraud cases are now pursued by the Department of Work and Pensions with any recovered monies being returned to the Council.

4. Strategic Plan References

- 4.1 The manner in which the Council governs its business is an underpinning mechanism in the Council's Strategic Plan aims to set out the direction and future potential for our Borough.

5. Publicity Considerations

- 5.1 Amendments to the Council's ethical governance policies will be included in the Constitution and will be published on the Council's website.

6. Financial, Equality, Diversity and Human Rights, Consultation, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 None.