

# **TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE – 17<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2013**

**REVIEW AND UPDATE TO THE SPEAK UP POLICY**

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FINANCE, AUDIT & INFORMATION GOVERNANCE**

## **1 PURPOSE**

1.1 To obtain approval from the Audit Committee for the updates to the Speak Up Policy.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1 That the Audit Committee approves the revised Speak Up Policy attached as Appendix A incorporating the changes as outlined in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.3 and recommends its adoption by the Council.**

## **3 SUMMARY**

3.1 The Audit Committee in January 2012 approved a revised Speak Up Policy and according to the Audit Committee terms of reference it is due for review every 2 years. However this review has been brought forward due to revised legal requirements becoming effective from June 2013. This earlier review has also provided an opportunity to update the policy to reflect organisational changes.

3.2 Following agreement the policy is promoted on posters around Council buildings and through a leaflet which is on the intranet and which forms part of the induction for new employees.

## **4 PREVIOUS MINUTES**

4.1 Standards and Audit Committee 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008  
Audit Committee 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012

## **5 INFORMATION**

5.1 The main changes are changes to references in respect to “referrals in good faith” to referrals “in the public interest”. The other two legal changes outlined in June 2013 were already incorporated into the Council’s policy.

5.2 The policy has always outlined that although confidentiality will endeavour to be maintained there may be investigative, disciplinary or legal reasons why this is not possible.

5.3 Having recognised the revised legal requirements the current review and update has confirmed that the policy is still fit for purpose and that there have been additional minor changes to reflect changes in respect to restructures, senior management arrangements and service name changes.

5.4 A revised version of the updated “Speak Up Policy” is attached as Appendix A to this report.

5.5 The Council will continue to protect all those providing information under this policy but will take appropriate action against those making malicious or vexatious allegations.

## 6 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

AREA	COMMENTS
Equal Opportunities	The policy supports the Council's policies of equality and diversity. All appropriate concerns will be treated equally.
Environmental Impact	Any concerns raised of an environmental nature will be investigated to ensure that the Councils sustainability and environmental policies have not been breached.
Legal Implications	The policy, although not a legal requirement, reflects good practice. Paragraph 4.3 of the policy document confirms that the operation of the policy will be in accordance with all relevant legislation.
Links with Corporate Priorities/Community Ambitions	The Co-operative Council values of fairness, honesty, consistency and transparency means that high standards and practices should be followed. This policy allows concerns to be raised to ensure these values are maintained.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications arising from this policy as any costs associated with its implementation are contained within existing budgets.
Opportunities and Risks	This policy mitigates the reputation risk to the Council of adverse publicity by providing channels for concerns to be raised internally and addressed rather than publicised outside the Council prior to proper investigation
Ward Implications	None

## 7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Speak Up Policy 2011

Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy 2013

Information from other Local Authorities and Public Concern at Work

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