

## Report for Information

**Report to** Audit Committee  
24 September 2009  
**Report of** Head of Legal, Regulatory and Democratic Services  
**Subject** Whistleblowing Summary 2008/09

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### Purpose

To consider allegations made in 2008/09 under the council's whistleblowing policy.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report.

### Financial Consequences

There are no direct financial consequences arising from this report.

### Risk Management

In conjunction with the council's enhanced anti-fraud strategies, the whistleblowing policy is intended to mitigate the risk of frauds against the council, by making it clear that all allegations of wrongdoing will be properly investigated.

### Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority "Aiming for excellence – ensuring the Council is efficient in its use of resources, is effective in delivering its plans, is a good employer and communicates effectively with its customers, staff and partners". The service plan priority is to ensure the proper administration of the council's financial affairs including reviewing, developing and reporting on the financial aspects of corporate governance.

### Contact Officers

Philip Hyde  
Steve Dowson

01603 212022  
01603 212575

### Background Documents

Audit Committee, 28 November 2008 – Revised Whistleblowing Policy

# Report

## Background

1. Audit Committee approved a revised whistleblowing policy in November 2008.
2. The policy essentially supports the council's strategy to help fight internal fraud and corruption but was expanded to include other types of "wrongdoing". It is intended to encourage and enable councillors, employees, contractors, suppliers, partners and members of the public to raise concerns with the council, irrespective of status, rather than overlooking an issue or reporting the matter elsewhere.
3. The policy also seeks to let everybody know that the council wants "wrongdoing" to be reported, providing the council with the opportunity to deal with potentially damaging situations, rather than give rise to the possibility of financial loss, regulatory breach or damaged reputation.
4. The policy is available on the council intranet and website, and has been publicised at a managers' briefing and in the Innercity newsletter. It has also been brought to the attention of the City of Norwich Partnership via their newsletter and is in the process of being publicised to other key partners, contractors and suppliers.
5. The other significant change in the updating of the policy was to incorporate arrangements for whistleblowing by persons other than employees, such as contractors or members of the public.
6. The policy commits the council to follow up all allegations and report the outcomes (in an anonymous format) to Audit Committee.

## Summary of allegations and outcomes

7. A log has been set up in a protected area of the shared folder system to record allegations received and the outcomes of investigations. This report summarises the position from the time the revised policy was approved to the end of March 2009.
8. An anonymous version of the log is shown at Annex 1. It can be seen that each allegation was investigated to the extent possible by the council. None of the allegations referred to council members or staff.
9. The log only includes allegations which have been passed or made to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Head of Finance and the Audit Manager (the three contacts specifically mentioned in the policy) in accordance with the policy.

## Conclusion

10. The revised whistleblowing policy appears to be working satisfactorily, with allegations being recorded and investigated. The council can take comfort from the fact that no allegations were made against members or staff, and that no

serious issues were uncovered as a result.

## **Reference**

Whistleblowing Policy

Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy

**Whistleblowing Register**

Date of Allegation	Case reference for whistleblower: YYMMNN, +A (Anon) or N (Name given)	Acknowledgment letter (within 10 days if address given)	How Received	Subject	Contacts	Outcome	Date Case Closed	Any Diversity Implications?	If whistleblower is an employee, date informed of outcome. (Informing non-staff is at our discretion)
24/09/2008	080900N	n/a	Phone call to John Jones	Potential sub-let of Council Flat and benefit fraud	Andy Rush, Sandra Franklin	Around the same time as the fraud referral, Mr X declared the presence of another person in the household. Benefits suspended his claim and wrote out for further information. When this was not supplied his claim was cancelled without creating any overpaid benefit. On the basis of the above the fraud investigation was closed (09/01/09).	09/01/2009	No	
19/11/2008	081101N	n/a	Phone call to Clive Mason - emailed S Dowson	Potential sub-let	Andy Rush; Julie Bromley	No problems - being looked after by friend while tenant absent. Housing and Legal aware	13/01/2009	No	13/01/2009
08/01/2009	090102A	n/a	Phone call to S Dowson	Potential sub-let	Phil Ashling or Donna Kitchen. Escalated to Ellie Jackman	Informed by Phil that property available for relet July 09.	15/07/2009	No	n/a
14/01/2009	090103A	n/a	Letter to the Leader of the Council	Contract manager at one of the council's contractors receiving gifts from sub-contractors who he has passed work to indirectly. Value for money not being delivered	Anton Bull	Contractor reviewed the case and did not find any evidence of impropriety. As it is an anonymous complaint there is insufficient evidence available to Norwich City Council to take further action.	19/02/2009	No	n/a
16/03/2009	090304N	n/a	Phone call to S Dowson	Problems with unauthorised people using council property	Ellie Jackman	No problems - delay in collecting keys from next of kin. Locks will be changed as part of void process. Property has been visited - no sign of anything untoward. Left ansaphone message for whistleblower 28/4/09 - phoned back 8/5/09 and seemed satisfied.	08/05/2009	No	28/04/2009