Audit and Corporate Governance Committee Report

South Oxfordshire District Council

Listening Learning Leading

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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To: AUDIT AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

DATE: 29 September 2009

AGENDA ITEM NO 8

Draft whistleblowing policy and the draft anti fraud and corruption policy with associated response plan

Recommendation

That the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee approves the draft whistleblowing policy and the draft anti fraud and corruption policy with its associated response plan for consultation; and recommends that Cabinet approves the policies and response plan once each document, as attached, has been subject to a six-week consultation with the staff of South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council.

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to ask the committee to comment upon the adequacy of the council's proposed arrangements in relation to whistleblowing and anti fraud and corruption, as set out in the draft whistleblowing policy and the draft anti fraud and corruption policy with its associated response plan, as attached to this report. These documents have been developed jointly with Vale of White Horse District Council. The committee is then asked to agree the documents for consultation and to recommend these documents to Cabinet for approval in December 2009 once each has been subject to a six-week consultation with the staff of South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council.

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Strategic Objectives

2. The whistleblowing policy and the anti fraud and corruption policy with its associated anti fraud and corruption response plan form a key part of the council's governance arrangements.

Background

3. In March 2009, the committee considered an internal audit report on the council's anti-fraud and corruption arrangements. The audit recommendations included:

   - The council's anti-fraud and corruption strategy should be reviewed and updated.

   - The council's anti-fraud and corruption response plan should be reviewed and updated.

   - The council's whistleblowing policy should be reviewed and updated.

4. Legal and democratic services became responsible for these policies.

5. The audit report recommended that the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee should formally approve the documents with an implementation date of September 2009. In developing these policies, it became apparent that a six-week consultation period was necessary to finalise them. Consequently, the chairman agreed to defer the policies for consideration at the committee's December meeting.

6. In further developing the policies, it has become apparent that Cabinet should agree these policies as key decisions.

7. To get these policies implemented in December, Cabinet will agree them at its December meeting. However, this meeting takes place before the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee meeting on 15 December. To defer a Cabinet decision until after the December meeting of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee would mean that the council could not implement the policies until February 2010.

8. Presenting these draft documents to the committee in this way will enable appropriate input from the relevant parties and also enable the council to meet the December date for implementation of the policies.

Financial Implications

9. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Legal Implications

10. There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendation to consult on these draft documents.

Conclusion

11. The committee is asked to consider and agreed the draft whistleblowing policy and the anti fraud and corruption policy with its associated anti fraud and corruption response plan as attached to this report. The committee is asked to recommend these documents to Cabinet for approval once each has been subject to a six-week consultation with the staff of South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council.

Background papers

• None

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