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Dear Councillor

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE - THURSDAY 6 JUNE 2024

Please find attached the following:

Supplementary Information Sheet (Pages 1 - 10)

Yours sincerely

John Armstrong,
Democratic Services and Elections Manager
01483 444102

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CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

6 JUNE 2024

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

AGENDA ITEM 10: ANNUAL WHISTLEBLOWING REPORT 2023-24

This report had been marked 'To follow' when the agenda for this meeting was published. It was subsequently included on the published agenda and a copy is attached.

Update:

In relation to two of the ongoing investigations referred to in the table in Appendix 1, the summary of action in the second item "Fleet" (Page 75) should read "Investigation ongoing". The summary of action in the sixth item "Housing Maintenance" (Page 76), should read that "Investigation ongoing. Initial discussions have taken place with internal audit. Data is being sought by service area to enable the investigation to progress".

AGENDA ITEM 11: REVIEW OF TASK GROUPS REPORTING TO THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Update on nominations for appointment to the Councillor Development Steering Group and Joint Constitutions Review Group:

In addition to the nominations already made as set out in paragraph 7.8 of the report, the following nominations (shown in red below) have been received since the publication of the agenda for this meeting:

Councillor Development Steering Group: (one councillor from each of the five political groups)

Nominations received to date:

Cllr Bob Hughes

Cllr Patrick Oven

Cllr Katie Steel

Cllr James Walsh

Cllr Catherine Young

Joint Constitutions Review Group: (2 x Lib Dems, 1 x Conservative, 1 x R4GV)

Nominations received to date:

Cllr Joss Bigmore

Cllr Catherine Houston

Cllr James Jones

Cllr Richard Mills OBE

Revised Recommendations to Committee:

- (1) That the work of the Councillor Development Steering Group over the past 12 months be noted and that the Steering Group continues its work in accordance with its agreed terms of reference.
- (2) That the numerical allocation of seats on the Steering Group to each political group shall be one member per group, and that the following appointments be approved for the 2024-25 municipal year:
 - Cllr Bob Hughes
 - Cllr Patrick Oven
 - Cllr Katie Steel
 - Cllr James Walsh
 - Cllr Catherine Young
- (3) That the work of the Joint Constitutions Review Group over the past 12 months be noted and that, subject to similar approval of Waverley Borough Council's Standards & General Purposes Committee, the Review Group continues its work in accordance with its agreed terms of reference.
- (4) That the numerical allocation of seats on the Review Group to political groups shall continue as follows:

2 x Liberal Democrats
1 x Conservative
1 x R4GV

and that the following appointments be approved for the 2024-25 municipal year:
 - Cllr Joss Bigmore
 - Cllr Catherine Houston
 - Cllr James Jones
 - Cllr Richard Mills OBE
- (5) That, from among those councillors appointed to the Joint Constitutions Review Group, the Committee appoints a co-chairman for 2024-25.

Guildford Borough Council

Report to: Corporate Governance & Standards Committee

Date: 6 June 2024

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of: Monitoring Officer

Author: Susan Sale, Strategic Director of Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer

Email: susan.sale@guildford.gov.uk

Executive Portfolio Holder/ Lead Councillor responsible: Merel Rehorst-Smith

Email: merel.rehorst-smith@guildford.gov.uk

Report Status: Open

Annual Whistleblowing Report 2023-24

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the annual Whistleblowing Report of the Council to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee to improve transparency and accountability. The report summarises the whistleblowing activity over the last year and analyses the effectiveness of the Council's system.
- 1.2 The annual Whistleblowing Register has been redacted and is attached as **Appendix 1**.

2.0 Recommendation to Committee

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Review the contents of the annual Whistleblowing Report to satisfy itself that the governance arrangements are operating effectively.
- 2.2 Make any recommendations for improvement.

3.0 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1 This Committee is a key component of the authority's corporate governance regime. The Committee provides an independent and high-level focus on the assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance.
- 3.2 The Committee has, within its terms of reference in Part 3 of the Constitution: 'To consider an annual report of the operation of the Whistleblowing Policy, including incidents reported' (para 14).

4.0 Purpose of the Report

- 4.1 The Monitoring Officer is obliged to provide an annual report of all whistleblowing matters received. The purpose of this report is to satisfy such reporting requirements and appraise the Committee of the whistleblowing disclosures, the outcomes of any investigations, the recommendations and the actions taken during 2023-24.

5.0 Strategic Priorities

- 5.1 To demonstrate our commitment to listening to and acting upon complaints; and
- 5.2 To demonstrate commitment to transparency and accountability.

6.0 Background

- 6.1 The Council is required to have an effective Whistleblowing Policy and arrangements in place. It is considered good governance to present an annual Whistleblowing Report and Register to Councillors.

7.0 Consultations

- 7.1 Consultation has taken place with the Council's Corporate Management Board.
- 7.2 Consultation has taken place with the Leader of the Council and the relevant Portfolio Holder.

8.0 Key Risks

- 8.1 The purpose of the Whistleblowing Register is to ensure resilience and robust service delivery in accordance with good practice. The progress

made towards openness, transparency and good governance has mitigated any risks to service failure or non-compliance and should now provide confidence to the Council.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 There are no direct financial consequences arising from this report.

10.0 Human Resource Implications

10.1 There are no direct human resource implications arising from this report. Any action taken in respect of any employees has been taken in compliance with the Council's relevant Human Resources Policies.

11.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

11.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

12.0 Legal and Governance Implications

12.1 The current Whistleblowing Policy provides that the Monitoring Officer is responsible for the operation of the policy and is obliged to receive and record any whistleblowing disclosures and promptly investigate them as appropriate.

13.0 Conclusions

13.1 All allegations and disclosures made under the Whistleblowing Policy are taken very seriously and robust investigations were undertaken.

13.2 Following consideration of the findings of the investigations, recommendations were made and action was implemented.

13.3 The Corporate Governance and Standards Committee should satisfy itself that the governance arrangements are operating effectively.

14. Background Papers

None

15. Appendices

Appendix 1: Guildford Borough Council Whistleblowing Register 2023-24

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GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL WHISTLEBLOWING REGISTER 2023-24

Service Area & Officer	Summary of Disclosure	Received	Summary of action	Outcome	Reporting
Housing Maintenance Services SD Housing & Environment	Allegations concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> unnecessary housing maintenance works ordered; and excessive charges. 	June 2023	Referred to external investigators and Police. Internal Project Group and Board established.	No further action re whistleblowing. Criminal investigation ongoing. Corporate governance improvement work ongoing.	All Councillors verbally briefed in September 2023 and regularly thereafter.
Fleet AD Environment	Allegation of officers having private works done to vehicle e.g. MOTs and failing to pay.	October 2023	Investigation ongoing Internal Audit supporting	Investigation Ongoing	To be reported to CMB and CG&S when concluded.
Environmental Services SD Housing, Community & Wellbeing	Allegations of an officer bringing a firearm into the office, using covert CCTV in the office, and non-compliance with procurement rules.	October 2023	Investigation, carried out by Strategic Director, completed January 2024	Recommendations: All staff email re safeguarding; referral to ICO; and referral to Police. Completed	Considered by CMB April 2024 Reported to Corporate Governance & Standards Committee April 2024
Corporate & Building Control	Allegations of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> involvement in fraud; and Undisclosed personal relationship 	January 2024	Allegation of fraudulent behaviour referred to Police. Policy re disclosure of personal relationships at work refreshed and communications provided to all staff. Personal relationship now disclosed in compliance with policy.	Completed	Reported to CMB April 2024 Reported to Corporate Governance & Standards Committee April 2024

Service Area & Officer	Summary of Disclosure	Received	Summary of action	Outcome	Reporting
Housing maintenance AD Environment	Allegations of non compliant third party waste disposal.	March 2024	Investigation ongoing	Investigation ongoing	Will be reported to CMB and CG&S when concluded.
Housing Maintenance AD Environment	Allegation of mis use of Council time and resources.	October 2023	Investigation ongoing Internal audit supporting	Investigation ongoing	Will be reported to CMB and CG&S when concluded.
Fleet AD Environment	Allegation of scrap metal being sold by an officer for personal gain	TBC	Investigation completed. Recommendation: The Council should provide Waste Management Guidance for all Building Responsible Persons.	Recommendation in progress by AD Environment	To be reported to CMB and CG&S by AD Environment shortly
Parks AD Environment	Allegations of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrap metal being sold to fund staff parties; and failure to keep legal records ie waste transfer notes 	TBC	Investigation completed Recommendation: The Council should provide Waste Management Guidance for all Building Responsible Persons.	Recommendation completed	To be reported to CMB and CG&S by AD Environment shortly
Street Scene AD Environment	Disclosure made concerning alleged defects of Council vehicles	TBC	Investigated Disciplinary action taken in respect of officers, vehicle checks undertaken, Fleet Improvement Plan reported to Corporate H&S Group and Joint Management Team.	Investigation completed Fleet improvement Plan being implemented	To be reported to CMB and CG&S by AD Environment shortly

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