

## Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

**REPORT TO:** Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

**DATE:** 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Whistleblowing update

**LOCATION:** Hybrid

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:** Information

### **TITLE OF REPORT:**

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Reports are provided to Committee by way of an update on the developments and arrangements with regards to whistleblowing within the Council.

E-learning training is mandatory for all staff and Councillors. Re-training will be required every three years. New members of staff are required to undertake the training.

Mandatory training is in place. Further training for Managers, staff and Members will be arranged as necessary.

Committee last considered this matter on October 2019: Overview and Scrutiny Committee October 2019 .

The policy was last reviewed in the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2023 and Cabinet on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2023 Cabinet Minutes - 4.4.23 .

#### **CURRENT SITUATION:**

- 1) The Leadership Group periodically monitors the take-up of the e-learning module. This shows satisfactory take-up.
- 2) Since October 2019 to date there have been 2495 officers who have undertaken the training.
- 3) The Whistleblowing Policy was reviewed in March 2023 by the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee Report for DESH Scrutiny – 17th December 2008 (ceredigion.gov.uk) & Minute 4 Overview and Scrutiny committee minutes - March 2023 and by Cabinet in April 2023 Minute 191 Cabinet Minutes - 4.4.23.

The link to the amended policy is here: Policies and Procedures | Cerinet (ceredigion.gov.uk)

The key changes were:

- addition of:- The Investigatory Powers Commissioner (IPCO) has stated that: where appropriate, this policy should be considered first when • raising a concern in relation to the Authority’s use of investigatory powers, and • any disclosures concerning any matters which fall within the IPCO’s oversight on page 4
- addition of:- Safeguarding concerns may be reported initially as whistleblowing concerns. However, these may in appropriate circumstances be referred to the Council’s Safeguarding or Professional Concerns Strategy procedure. Employees are advised to refer to the ‘Policy and Guidelines for Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk’ for further information on reporting safeguarding concerns on page 4
- addition of: - There may be circumstances where information divulged relating to safeguarding matters may be passed onto appropriate Officers (eg Director of Social Services) or regulatory authorities on page 5.

#### 4) Whistleblowing Referrals

Between April 2019 and December 2023 there were 6 whistleblowing disclosure referrals to the Monitoring Officer.

As at 20/12/23:

5 x are concluded,

Of these: no formal investigation. Resolved by:

- internal actions
- training
- other investigative processes

1 x subject to ongoing investigation.

**Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why not required**

**Summary:**

**Long term:** Short term amendments will be made as required.

**Integration:**

Amendments take into account recent legislation.

**Collaboration:**

**WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:** Trade Unions are

routinely consulted  
on the policy.

**Involvement:**

**Prevention:** To ensure that access to the procedure is afforded to all employees, and to facilitate transparency and openness within the organisation

**RECOMMENDATION (S):**

1. To note the contents of the report

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):**

Ensure strengthening and improvement of the whistleblowing regime.

**Appendices:** none

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**Designation:** Corporate Lead Officer: Legal & Governance (& Monitoring Officer)

**Date of Report:** 06.02.2024

**Acronyms:** N/A