

Executive Summary – Whistleblowing – Annual Review of Arrangements

ASSURANCE ASSESSMENT					KEY FINDINGS AND MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
	No	Limited	Reasonable	Substantial	
Adequacy of the Whistleblowing arrangements					<p>The Council has whistleblowing arrangements in place and these are broadly in line with best practice. The number of ‘whistleblows’ received by the City Council in 2019 was 5, the same as in 2018. Whilst the number received is broadly in line with other local authorities identified in national reports, the reported data has limitations in its use for valid comparison.</p> <p>Improvements to processes have been made in the following areas over the last 12 months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleagues leaving the City Council are now given the option to report matters of concern. • HR and Internal Audit have shared access to the Whistleblowing register. • Details of outside organisations to which colleagues can ‘whistleblow’ have been added to the Whistleblowing Procedure. <p>Two actions agreed at the last review are to be progressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular communication from the Senior Leadership Team promoting the whistleblowing procedure. • Creation of a whistleblowing hotline <p>In addition, to further enhance confidence in whistleblowing procedures, corporate management have agreed to put the following arrangements in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning of the management of the whistleblowing process with the City Council’s independent Internal Audit Team. Internal Audit will take responsibility for ensuring that the correct person conducts the investigation and will, with HR, act as a ‘champion’ on whistleblowing matters. • A programme of awareness training. This will include raising awareness of prescribed bodies external to the Council to whom colleagues can report concerns. • Oversight and regular reporting, including to Audit Committee, to ensure effectiveness of the new arrangements.
Confidence in the Whistleblowing arrangements					
Overall					
SCOPE SUMMARY					
<p>The objective of the review was to provide an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the City Council’s Whistleblowing arrangements.</p> <p>The Chartered Institute of Fraud confirm that 42% of internal fraud is identified through whistleblowing. It remains important, therefore, that strong whistleblowing arrangements are in place.</p> <p>Specifically, the review included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the findings of a July 2019 All Party Parliamentary Report entitled ‘The Personal Cost of doing the Right Thing and the Cost to Society of Ignoring it’ against which the City Council’s arrangements were benchmarked. Whilst not mandatory, the report provides insight to the most current thinking on whistleblowing best practice. • A ‘follow up’ to the 2018/2019 Whistleblowing Review to establish progress made with the agreed management actions. <p>The review has not included re-performing a wider survey of Council staff regarding confidence staff in the whistleblowing process. This was done as part of a wider staff survey during 2019. However, some staff who had made whistleblowing reports were contacted to discuss their experience of the process.</p>					