
Review of Whistleblowing Policy

Report of the City Barrister & Head of Standards
(Monitoring Officer)

Governance and Audit Committee

Date of meeting: 16 September 2026

Lead director/officer: Kamal Adatia

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Kamal Adatia
- Author contact details: kamal.adatia@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

The Whistleblowing Policy has been reviewed jointly by Legal Services, Human Resources and the Council's external assurance provider, Veritau. The policy remains founded upon the protections available under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The purpose of the report is to present the Whistleblowing Policy for comment; to highlight the principal changes made since the previous version of the policy and to inform the Committee of planned training and awareness activities to support implementation of the revised policy

2. Recommended actions/decision

The Governance and Audit Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the revised policy attached at Appendix A, subject to the necessary consultations with the Unions.
2. Note the proposed programme of staff and manager training to support implementation of the revised policy

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

4.1 Background

Whistleblowing arrangements are an important component of the Council's governance framework. They enable employees and other workers to raise concerns regarding suspected wrongdoing, malpractice or misconduct in the public interest and provide assurance that such concerns will be considered appropriately and without fear of reprisal.

As part of a periodic review of governance policies, the Whistleblowing Policy has been updated to ensure it remains fit for purpose, reflects current organisational arrangements and accords with emerging good practice.

4.2 Key Points

There are not many changes in the Policy since 2022.

4.2.1 Introduction of Veritau as an Independent Reporting Route

The policy now expressly identifies Veritau as an independent (parallel) reporting route for whistleblowing concerns where an employee does not feel able to report concerns through management channels or directly to the Monitoring Officer. Contact details for Veritau have been incorporated within both the reporting section and contact appendix. This amendment strengthens confidence in the process by providing an additional independent route through which concerns may be raised.

4.2.2 Clarification of scope

The definition of a "protected disclosure" now explicitly includes disclosures about sexual harassment. This means that any worker who reports past, ongoing, or likely future sexual harassment will be covered by whistleblowing protections. Previously, disclosures about sexual harassment could potentially be protected if they fell under existing categories, which include criminal offences, breaches of legal obligations, or endangering health and safety, but this could be ambiguous.

With this legal change any ambiguity has been removed by specifically listing sexual harassment as a protected category.

4.2.3 Training and Awareness

The Committee should note that the effectiveness of any whistleblowing policy depends not only upon the policy itself but also upon staff awareness and confidence in the reporting arrangements available.

Veritau has developed dedicated whistleblowing e-learning packages for employees and managers and has offered to work with the Council to roll out a bespoke training package based upon the revised July 2026 Whistleblowing Policy.

The training programme will seek to:

- increase staff awareness of what constitutes whistleblowing;
- distinguish whistleblowing concerns from grievances and other complaints procedures;
- explain the protections available to genuine whistleblowers;
- promote confidence in the Council's reporting arrangements;
- raise awareness of the parallel reporting route available through Veritau

4.2.4 Whistleblowing Disclosures

The Council's HR system is capable of recording disclosures, and the policy directs managers to HR when disclosures are received. The new relationship with Veritau affords an opportunity to create another reporting-in route for whistleblowers and we will use this opportunity to ensure that disclosures from each route are captured in a coordinated manner.

4.2.5 Assurance Regarding Compliance and Good Practice

The revised policy has been reviewed against relevant legislative requirements and recognised good practice principles.

The policy:

- reflects the protections afforded by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998;
- promotes a culture of openness, accountability and ethical conduct;
- provides multiple routes for reporting concerns;
- includes access to an independent reporting channel through Veritau;
- provides appropriate assurances regarding confidentiality and protection from detriment;
- recognises the importance of independent advice through Protect;
- includes arrangements for recording, monitoring and oversight of disclosures; and
- provides flexibility to appoint independent investigators where circumstances warrant this.

The Monitoring Officer is therefore satisfied that the revised policy is consistent with current legal requirements and aligns with recognised national good practice in the management of whistleblowing concerns.

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report

Signed: Stuart McAvoy - Head of Finance

Dated: 7th September 2026

5.2 Legal implications

The Term of Reference for the Governance & Audit Committee state that it shall:

review and approve, on a triennial basis (unless significant changes in legislation or circumstances dictate otherwise), the Council's policy and procedures for:

- *Anti-Fraud (including Bribery and Corruption)*
- *Disclosure (whistleblowing)*
- *Money Laundering*

The policy has been reviewed by Legal Services. The revised arrangements support compliance with the Council's obligations under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and contribute to the Council's wider governance and assurance framework.

Signed: K Adatia

Dated: 07.09.2026

5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between individuals who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Whistleblowing Policy applies equally to all council employees, casual staff, agency workers, and consultants, regardless of protected characteristics.

No adverse equalities implications have been identified arising from the proposed revisions. To ensure equitable access, training and guidance materials should be provided in accessible formats

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

Dated: 7 September 2026

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated with this report.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246

Dated: 7th September 2026

5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6. Background information and other papers:

N/A

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A – Revised Whistleblowing Policy

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

N/A