

Streethay Parish Council

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Whistle Blowing:

All Councils face the risk of things going wrong or unknowingly harbouring malpractice. The Council believes it has a duty to identify such situations and take the appropriate measures to remedy the situation. Encouraging a culture of openness within the Council, it is hoped that such problems can be prevented.

This policy applies to all Employees of the Council and other workers including temporary, subcontracted and agency workers.

By encouraging openness, the Council wants to encourage Employees and workers to raise issues which concern them at work. They may be concerned that by reporting such issues they may be exposing themselves to detrimental treatment or risking their job security. This is not the case. All staff have statutory protection if they raise appropriate concerns in the right way. This policy is designed to give employees that opportunity and protection. Providing they are acting in good faith; it does not matter if they are mistaken. There is no question of Employees having to prove anything about the allegation, but they must reasonably believe that the information they have implied falls under this policy.

If there is anything, which Employees think the Council should know about, they should use the procedure outlined in this policy. By knowing about appropriate issues at an early stage, the Council has a good chance of taking the necessary steps/action to safeguard the interests of all involved with and having a legitimate interest in its activities.

Issues which fall under this policy include:

- Criminal offences
- Miscarriages of justice.
- Dangers to health and safety
- Damage to the environment.
- Breaches of any legal and / or statutory obligations
- Deliberately concealing any of the above.

The Council's Guarantee

The Council is committed to this policy. If an Employee uses this policy to raise a concern in good faith, the Council gives its assurance that they will not suffer any form of retribution or detrimental treatment.

- The Council will treat their concern seriously and act according to this policy. They will not be asked to provide anything about the allegation they raise, but they must reasonably believe that the information they have, tends to show some malpractice. If an Employee asks for a matter to be treated in confidence, the Council will respect that request.
- Employees should raise their issues with their immediate Line Manager. There are no specific requirements to do this. They can inform their Line Manager verbally or in writing if they prefer.
- If they feel that they cannot deal with their Line Manager, for whatever reason, they should address their concerns to the Chair of the Council.

How the Council will respond

- Once a concern has been raised, the Council will decide how to respond in a responsible and appropriate way under this policy. Usually this will begin with internal enquiries but may progress to either a formal or informal investigation, depending upon the nature of the concern. The Council will endeavour to complete the investigation within a reasonable time scale.
- The investigation may be conducted by the Parish Clerk alone, or a team of two Councillors, selected by the Full Council, depending upon the nature of the concern.
- The Council will keep the Employee informed of the progress of the investigation. However, the Council will not be obliged to reveal information which would infringe the confidentiality of others, the Data Protection Act or any other statutory obligation.

Raising your concerns externally

- The purpose of this policy and procedure is to give Employees the opportunity and protection they need to raise concerns internally. The Council would expect that in almost all cases, raising concerns internally would be the most appropriate action to take.
- However, if for whatever reason Employees feel that they cannot raise their concerns internally and reasonably believe that the information and allegations are substantially true, they can consider raising the matter with the appropriate regulator, such as the Monitoring Officer, Association of Local Councils or the Police.
- Public Concern at Work is an independent charity whose main objective is to promote compliance with the law and good practice in the public, private and voluntary sectors. They can be contacted at www.pcaaw.co.uk
- If you have any questions regarding this policy and procedure, please feel free to discuss the matter with either the Clerk or the Chair of the Council.

Reviewed: May 2023

Next Review: September 2026