



AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 FEBRUARY 2025

**REPORTING CONCERNS AT WORK - ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

Report by Monitoring Officer

**PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to inform the Comhairle of any concerns at work reported in the calendar year 2024.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Employees who report genuine and valid concerns relating to malpractice within their employer's organisation are afforded statutory protection from any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. Such reports are commonly referred to as whistleblowing.
- 2.2 At the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 8 December 2020, Internal Audit presented their final report dated 3 November 2020 on their review of the Comhairle's procedures relating to whistleblowing. The last recommendation in the report was that the Monitoring Officer provide the Committee with an annual account of any whistleblowing complaints received.
- 2.3 In the calendar year 2024, no whistleblowing complaints were received by the Monitoring Officer.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle note the Report.**

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Appendix: None  
Background Papers: Reporting Concerns at Work (Whistleblowing) Policy approved on 30 September 2020

## IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

<b>Resource Implications</b>	<b>Implications/None</b>
Financial	None
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	None
<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Implications/None</b>
Risk	None
Equalities	None
Corporate Strategy	Be a sustainable and inclusive council – ensure effective governance of the Comhairle.
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	None

## BACKGROUND

5.1 Employees who report genuine and valid concerns relating to malpractice within their employer's organisation are afforded statutory protection from any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. Such reports are, in terms of the Employment Rights Act 1996, properly called protected disclosures. However, they are more commonly referred to as whistleblowing. The aim of the protection is to encourage transparency and accountability in the operation of businesses.

## DETAIL

6.1 At the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 8 December 2020, Internal Audit presented their final report dated 3 November 2020 on their review of the Comhairle's procedures relating to whistleblowing. The recommendations in the report covered amendments to the Comhairle's policy and procedures, raising awareness amongst and the provision of training for staff, and the keeping by the Monitoring Officer of a register of whistleblowing complaints. All of those recommendations have been actioned. The final recommendation was that the Monitoring Officer provide the Committee with an annual account of any whistleblowing complaints received.

6.2 The Comhairle has a Reporting Concerns at Work Policy which explains how such concerns are to be reported and investigated. The Policy is available in the Employee Handbook. The Policy was last updated on 15 November 2022. It has been reviewed as part of this preparing this Report, but no further changes are considered to be necessary to it at present.

## CONCLUSION

7.1 In the calendar year 2024, no whistleblowing complaints were received by the Monitoring Officer.