



Halstead Town Council

Whistleblowing policy

Policy overview

Whistleblowing is the reporting by employees of suspected misconduct, illegal acts or failure to act within the Council.

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the Council. Whistleblowing is viewed by the Council as a positive act, that can make a valuable contribution to the Council's efficiency and long-term success.

Aims of the policy

This policy is designed to ensure that anyone can raise concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice within the Council without fear of victimisation, discrimination, disadvantage or dismissal. It is also intended to encourage and enable the raising of serious concerns within the Council rather than ignoring a problem or trying to deal with it externally.

The policy aims to :

- Encourage confidence in raising concerns at the earliest opportunity and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- Provide avenues for raising concerns and feedback on action taken
- Respond to concerns raised
- Provide reassurance if issues raised in good faith

The policy applies to :

- Employees of Halstead Town Council
- Employees of contractors working for the council
- Voluntary workers within the council
- Job applicants
- Former employees

Reporting

Concerns about service provision or conduct of officers should be reported if it is believed that they:

- Do not comply with HTC standards
- Are not in keeping with HTC policies
- Involve improper behaviour

These matters may relate to:

- Conduct which is an offence or breach of the law

- Racial, sexual, disability or other discrimination
- Health and safety of the public/other employees
- Damage to the environment
- Unauthorized use of public funds or assets
- Possible fraud and corruption
- Other unethical conduct
- Cover-up of any of the above

All concerns must be made in writing to the Town Clerk or the Chairman of the Council, explaining the nature of the concern, and giving relevant background and dates.

Protecting the Whistleblower

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects workers making disclosures about certain matters of concern, when they are in accordance with the Act, and in the public interest. Under the Act, it is unlawful for the Council to dismiss anyone or allow them to be victimised on the basis that they have made an appropriate lawful disclosure.

The Council will not tolerate any harassment or victimization of the whistleblower, and will protect anyone who raises a concern in good faith. They will fully support anyone who is an employee and provide advice to those who are not employees. Every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the whistleblower, but this may be impossible if there are disciplinary proceedings. There will be no repercussions if the allegations are made in good faith.

Action

The Council will respond to concerns as quickly as possible. If appropriate, an investigation will be carried out, by management, internal audit, through the disciplinary process, by the police, by the external auditor, or by those who protect children from abuse.

A response will be provided to any allegations within 10 working days, acknowledging that a concern has been raised, indicating how it will be dealt with, offering staff support, and explaining whether there will be a further investigation. The whistleblower will be kept informed of any progress on the investigation. The Council would expect any investigation to be completed within 3 months.

Further action

If the whistleblower feels that further action should be taken, they can contact SLCC, the police, or the Monitoring Officer at BDC.

12/24 Review 12/27

Recommendation; that HTC +approves the Whistleblowing policy



Sarah Greatorex Town Clerk