

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Executive

Audit & Performance Review Committee : 16 March 2011

Subject: Activity on Whistleblowing Hotline to 31st December 2010

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the level of activity on the whistleblowing hotline.

2. Background

- 2.1** West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) has had a Confidential Reporting Policy, or whistleblowing policy, since 2000.
- 2.2** A dedicated telephone hotline operated by Internal Audit to support the WDC Confidential Reporting Policy was launched on 6 March 2006 and was re-launched by way of a payslip message, global email and Intranet article on 29 July 2008.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Whistleblowing is taken to include contact with Internal Audit on specific cases through the use of the Council's whistleblowing telephone hotline, email, on-line form or traditional letter.
- 3.2** Since the launch of the whistleblowing hotline on 6 March 2006 there have been a total of 158 cases, covering a variety of subjects, as summarised below:

| <u>Quarter</u> | <u>2006/07</u> | <u>2007/08</u> | <u>2008/09</u> | <u>2009/10</u> | <u>2010/11</u> |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | 13 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 9 |
| 2 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 12 |
| 3 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| 4 | 6 | 16 | 11 | 9 | |
| | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- | ---- |
| | 31 | 31 | 31 | 35 | 30 |
| | === | === | === | === | === |

- 3.3** These cases have been initially assessed by Internal Audit and then investigated or passed to departmental management for attention as appropriate. A summary of 9 cases for the 3rd quarter of 2010/11 and details of the outcome are shown in Appendix A.

4. People Implications

- 4.1** This policy does have the potential to cause personnel issues, dependent on the circumstances or findings of any concern raised by an employee.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** There are no financial implications.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There are risks to the Council in financial, legal, operational and reputation terms of not operating a Whistleblowing service. In order to meet the Corporate objective of Improving Accountability to Stakeholders this Council takes all reports of wrongdoing seriously and seeks to investigate all complaints where possible.

7. Equalities Impact

- 7.1** No significant issues were identified in a screening for potential equality impact of this report.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1** Although usage remains relatively low, the Whistleblowing re-launch ensures all employees remain aware of ways to report concerns of wrongdoing within the Council.
- 8.2** The Committee is asked to note this report.

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David McMillan
Chief Executive
Date: 24 February 2011

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Appendix A: Summary of Activity on Whistleblowing Hotline from 1st October 2010 to 31st December 2010

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All