

# WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## Report by Chief Officer - Resources

Audit Committee: 15 September 2021

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**Subject: Public Interest Disclosures and other Internal Audit Investigations  
1 January to 18 August 2021**

### 1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the outcome of investigations into allegations and disclosures in line with public interest disclosure and business irregularities policies received by Internal Audit between 1 January to 18 August 2021.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of this report.

### 3. Background

3.1 A disclosure in the public interest is where a concern is raised by a Council employee about a danger or illegality that has a public interest aspect to it. A confidential reporting facility is managed by Internal Audit as part of the WDC Public Interest Disclosure Policy. Internal Audit maintains a central record of all concerns raised under the Public Interest Disclosure Policy. All such disclosures are investigated by Internal Audit, including liaising with Services and HR as appropriate.

3.2 Members of the public can also contact Internal Audit to raise issues of concern and such matters are investigated as appropriate, although they are not regarded as public interest disclosures in terms of legislation.

### 4. Main Issues

#### Public Interest Disclosure Cases

4.1 There were 4 outstanding cases reported in the previous report submitted to committee on 10 March 2021, now progressed as detailed below:

Ref	Date Received	Detail	Status
23/20	12/10/19	Allegation that materials are being misappropriated by a member of staff and sold on.	Investigation complete. Draft report prepared for management with recommendations for improvement.
30/20	5/2/20	Allegation that materials	Linked investigation – 23/20.

		are being misappropriated by a member of staff and sold on.	
04/21	31/8/20	Allegation that employees within service are using Council vehicles for personal use.	Ongoing investigation.
05/21	8/10/20	Allegation that a child is collected from school in a WDC vehicle.	Ongoing investigation.

**4.2** There were 15 disclosures received during the period 1 January to 18 August 2021 as follows:

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Date Received</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Status</b>
09/21	18/01/21	Complaint about who is getting priority for receiving Covid-19 vaccinations.	Referred to HR/HSCP. The Joint Committee on Vaccine and Immunisation (JCVI) priority has been followed. No further action required.
11/21	27/01/21	Education worker leaving work during work hours for personal matters without permission.	Full investigation undertaken by Education. No further action as allegation not proven.
12/21	01/02/21	Complaint against employee regarding use of work vehicle and time spent away from work.	Investigation complete. Draft report prepared for management with recommendations for improvement.
13/21	05/02/21	Allegations that 2 members of staff are carrying out "homers" in untracked vehicles using WDC materials stolen from other jobs.	Ongoing investigation.
14/21	04/03/21	Employee attended for vaccination at Louisa Jordan whilst self isolating.	Allegation upheld. Service proceeding to a formal investigation/disciplinary.
15/21	11/03/21	Allegations of workplace bullying at early years establishment.	Investigation by Education and HR with no evidence to support claims, however some operational matters will be addressed.
16/21	24/03/21	Allegations of poor management including intimidation at early years	Investigation by Education and HR with no evidence to support claims, however

		establishment.	some operational matters will be addressed.
01/22	01/04/21	A number of WDC workers seen using WDC vehicles at an address in Dumbarton with the intention of carrying out slabbing etc as a "homer".	Investigation complete. Allegation unfounded as work was part of a scheduled programme of work.
02/22	19/04/21	WDC operatives using a Council vehicle carrying out work at a private property.	Ongoing investigation.
03/22	01/07/21	Allegation that an individual is stealing fuel and removing rubbish from shops in Clydebank in return for cigarettes as payment using Council vehicle.	Due to lack of vehicle tracking information and CCTV we were unable to fully investigate the allegation. Report has been issued to management with recommendations for improvement which will be followed up in due course.
04/22	19/07/21	Allegation of theft of material and carrying out rubbish uplifts	Ongoing investigation.
05/22	25/07/21	Allegation that an employee working from home is going out for walks during working hours.	Enquiries made of management. Confirmed that staff have been actively encouraged to work flexibly during the pandemic period to try and maintain a healthy work/life balance. Management confirmed that there has been no downturn in the individual's workload or performance whilst working from home compared to office working and are satisfied that the allegation is unfounded.
06/22	09/08/21	Allegation of personal use of a council vehicle by employee.	Ongoing investigation.
07/22	12/08/21	Allegation of sectarianism against employee.	Enquiries made of management. Established there are no grounds to support the allegation which is therefore unfounded.

08/22	16/08/21	Allegation that employee leaves work early on a regular basis.	Ongoing investigation.
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4.3 Activity relating to public interest disclosure for recent reporting periods is as follows:

Period	No. of Cases
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2016 to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2016	4
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2016 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2016	6
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2017 to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	1
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2017 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2017	7
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2018 to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	2
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2018 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2018	3
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2019 to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2019	5
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2019 to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2020	8
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2020 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020	4
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 18th August 2021	15

Other investigations

4.4 There were 2 cases recorded as outstanding in the previous report, submitted to committee on 10 March 2021, which have been progressed as detailed below:

Ref	Date Received	Detail	Status
25/20	22/11/19	Allegation of theft of income.	Investigation complete. Due to impaired audit trail we were unable to fully investigate the allegation. Report issued to management with recommendations for improvement.
03/21	14/7/20	Banking irregularity highlighted by the relationship manager of WDC bank account.	Investigation complete. Linked to 25/20.

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4.5 A total of 1 case was received by Internal Audit during the period 1 January to 18 August 2021 as follows:

Ref	Date Received	Detail	Status
10/21	26/01/21	Complaint about the storage of combustible materials in flats.	Referred to Housing and actioned.

4.6 Activity relating to other investigation cases for recent reporting periods is as follows:

<b>Period</b>	<b>No. of Cases</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2017 to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	3
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2017 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2017	5
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2018 to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	5
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2018 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2018	4
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2019 to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2019	14
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2019 to 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2020	8
1 <sup>st</sup> July 2020 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020	2
1 <sup>st</sup> January to 18 <sup>th</sup> August 2021	1

## 5. People Implications

5.1 There are no personnel implications with this report.

## 6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 There are neither financial nor procurement implications with this report.

## 7. Risk Analysis

7.1 There are risks to the Council in financial, legal, operational and reputational terms of not providing a service to enable a disclosure in the public interest and to ensure that all public interest disclosure and other concerns raised with Internal Audit are properly investigated.

## 8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 There is no requirement to undertake an equality impact screening.

## 9. Consultation

9.1 This report has been subject to consultation with appropriate Chief Officers.

## 10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 The Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Business Irregularity Procedures contribute to the Council's strategic priorities by ensuring that early warnings of malpractice may mitigate the extent of financial losses to the Council, contribute to better asset management by utilising employees to manage risks to the organisation's reputation and support fit for purpose services through the continuation and promotion of robust employment practice.

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**Stephen West**  
**Chief Officer - Resources**  
**Date: 15 September 2021**

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**Appendix:** None

**Background Papers:** Public Interest Disclosure Policy agreed by the Corporate Services Committee on 13 August 2014; Business Irregularity Procedures

**Wards Affected:** All