



**WHISTLE BLOWING  
POLICY  
July 2018**

**Introduction**

Cramlington Town Council recognises that those that it employs and provides services to are often in the best position to know when the interests of the public are being put at risk. They can act as an early warning system on matters of health and safety or help to uncover fraud and mismanagement.

The Council also recognises that these people may not wish to express their concerns for a number of reasons. They may think it is disloyal to do so or they may fear reprisals, or they may not expect any action to be taken, or they may not know the best way to proceed. They may therefore find it easier to ignore their own concerns, or to “blow the whistle” to someone outside the Council.

The Council wants to build an environment of trust and openness so that people are prepared to whistleblow knowing that their concern will be treated confidentially and investigated appropriately. This Policy has been prepared in response to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

**Policy Statement**

The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and to dealing with all fraud and other forms of malpractice reported.

Any employee, contractor, member of the public or any other organisation with serious or sensitive concerns about any aspect of the Council’s work shall be encouraged to come forward and voice those concerns at an early stage without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. These concerns may relate to issues that are occurring now, took place in the past, or are likely to happen in the future.

All concerns received will be treated in confidence, examined and investigated in accordance with this policy.

**Concerns covered by the Policy**

The policy is intended to deal with serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings in the following areas:-

- fraud and corruption or any unauthorised use of council money
- damage to the environment
- an unlawful act
- any danger to Health and Safety
- discrimination of any kind
- the deliberate breaching of a Council policy or official code or regulation

This list is indicative, not exhaustive.

## **Implementing the Policy**

The Council shall take appropriate action to publicise the policy so that all potential whistleblowers:

- feel confident that they are able to contact the Council and raise their concerns about Council practices
  - realise that concerns should be raised about any employee, councillor, supplier or anyone who provides services to the public on the Council's behalf
  - are aware of the different ways they can inform the Council of their concerns
  - understand that concerns will be received in good faith and taken seriously
  - are aware that anonymous concerns may not be investigated
  - understand that they will receive a response to their concerns and are aware of how to pursue them further if they are not satisfied with the response
  - are reassured that they will be protected from victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage
- Investigating Officer

All whistleblowing concerns received under this policy shall be reported immediately to the Town Clerk or where this is not appropriate to the Chair or Vice Chair of the Council. They will be responsible for reviewing the concern, deciding upon the action to take, leading and directing investigations, preparing any subsequent reports and liaising with the person raising the concern.

## **Safeguards**

The identity of the person raising the concern will remain confidential. If disclosure is required for any reason then this will be discussed with the person concerned.

The Council will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) of any person who has raised a concern. The Council's disciplinary procedures will be used against any employee who is found to be harassing or victimising the person raising the concern or who has disclosed the name of a whistleblower to any person other than as part of the investigation.

## **Concerns not covered by the policy**

The Council wants all serious or sensitive concerns to be raised. Any concern that falls under another Council policy or procedure will be investigated in accordance with that policy, for example the grievance or complaints procedure. Concerns involving Councillors will be referred to the Standards Board.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The Town Clerk will be responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the Policy. This will include an annual review, and a report to The Annual Meeting of the Town Council.