



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Whistle Blowing Policy

Date	Version	Author	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, change in legislation	Changed by
April 2020	V1	Deputy Town Clerk		
19 th March 2026	V2	Director of Finance & Resources	Updated to include Employment Rights Act 2025 effective 6 th April 2026	Director of Finance & Resources

This policy applies to Weston-super-Mare Town Council

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1. Policy Statement

The Council is committed to maintaining the highest standards of openness, probity, and accountability in accordance with its statutory duties, Standing Orders, and Financial Regulations, and in line with recognised best practice within the local council sector. This policy reflects the principles set out in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and guidance issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

The Council encourages any person working for or on behalf of the authority to raise concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice at any level within the organisation. Wrongdoing in this context includes any breach of a legal obligation, risks to health and safety, criminal offences, miscarriages of justice, sexual harassment occurring or likely to occur, damage to the environment, misuse of public funds, or any attempt to conceal such matters.

Concerns raised in the public interest will be taken seriously and dealt with in accordance with the Council's adopted procedures. Any individual raising a concern in good faith will be protected from victimisation or detriment, provided they reasonably believe the information disclosed to be true. Protection will apply even where concerns are not substantiated following investigation. However, any deliberately false or malicious allegation may be treated as gross misconduct and dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedures.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, elected members, contractors, agency workers, and volunteers working for or on behalf of the Council. It applies to matters arising from the Council's statutory functions, services, governance arrangements, and compliance with its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

3. Legislative and Guidance Framework

This policy operates within the framework of relevant legislation and governance documents applicable to local councils, including the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Localism Act 2011, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and the Data Protection Act 2018 together with UK GDPR requirements. It should be read alongside the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and guidance issued by the National Association of Local Councils.

4. Definitions

Whistleblowing is defined as the disclosure of information in the public interest relating to suspected wrongdoing or dangers. Such wrongdoing may include criminal offences, failure to comply with legal obligations, financial mismanagement or fraud, breaches of Standing Orders or Financial Regulations, breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct, risks to health and safety, environmental damage, corruption, or the deliberate concealment of any such matters.

A whistleblower is any individual who raises such a concern under this policy.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Council, as a corporate body, is responsible for promoting a culture of openness and ensuring that this policy is implemented, monitored, and reviewed in accordance with its governance framework.

The CEO/Town Clerk to the Council, as Proper Officer, is responsible for receiving concerns, maintaining appropriate records, and ensuring that matters are dealt with in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and relevant procedures.

Where a concern relates to the CEO/Town Clerk, the matter should be referred to the Chair of the Personnel Committee or the Chair of the Council, who will ensure appropriate oversight and compliance with the Council's governance arrangements.

The Monitoring Officer of the principal authority is responsible for dealing with allegations relating to breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct.

All employees and members are expected to raise concerns in good faith and to cooperate fully with any investigation.

6. Reporting Concerns

Concerns should be raised at the earliest opportunity and in accordance with the Council's lines of management and governance structure. In the first instance, matters should normally be reported to the CEO / Town Clerk or the individual's line manager. Where this is not appropriate, concerns may be raised with the Chair of the Personnel Committee or the Chair of the Council, who will ensure that the matter is properly considered and addressed in accordance with Standing Orders.

Where the concern relates to councillor conduct, it may be referred to the Monitoring Officer of the principal authority in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing and should include sufficient detail to enable the matter to be properly understood and assessed.

7. Procedures

Upon receipt of a concern, the Council will acknowledge the matter and undertake an initial assessment in accordance with its governance procedures to determine the appropriate course of action. Where necessary, an investigation will be conducted in a fair, proportionate, and timely manner, having regard to the Council's Standing Orders and relevant employment procedures.

Any individual who is the subject of an allegation will be informed of the nature of the concern and provided with a full opportunity to respond. No disciplinary action will be taken unless and until a full investigation has been completed in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedures.

Following investigation, appropriate action may be taken, which may include internal disciplinary measures, referral to external agencies, reporting to the Council, or the implementation of improved procedures or controls.

The individual raising the concern will be kept informed of progress where this is appropriate and lawful. Where a whistleblower is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may escalate the matter to an appropriate external body.

8. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The Council will make every reasonable effort to protect the identity of any individual raising a concern. Information will only be disclosed where it is necessary for the purposes of investigation, to comply with the Council's statutory obligations, or where required by law. All information will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation and the Council's adopted policies.

9. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct for Members, Disciplinary and Grievance Policy, Complaints Policy and Data Protection Policy.

10. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed bi -annually by the Council, or sooner if required, to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation, Standing Orders, and recognised best practice.

Appendix 1 – Reporting Flow

