

Agenda Item	8
Report No	AS/24/22

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Audit & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 30th November 2022

Report Title: Whistleblowing Annual Report 2021/22

Report By: Strategic Lead (Corporate Audit & Performance)

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 A revised Staff Whistleblowing Policy was approved by Council on 29/10/20. The revisions included responsibility for investigating whistleblowing concerns moving to the Corporate Fraud Team and the requirement to provide an annual report to Committee outlining the number of whistleblowing concerns received and their outcomes.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is invited to:
- (i) scrutinise the information at section 4.1 including the low number of whistleblowing concerns received;
 - (ii) note that where a whistleblowing investigation identifies any control weakness, fraudulent activity or areas for improvement this will be addressed through an Internal Audit report which will be provided to Committee to scrutinise.

3. Implications

- 3.1 There are no Resource, Risk, Legal, Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island), Climate Change / Carbon Clever or Gaelic implications arising from this report.

4. Annual Report 2021/22

- 4.1 During the year 2021/22 a total of 6 concerns were reported through whistleblowing. As detailed in the table, 4 of these were investigated by the Corporate Fraud Team. For completeness all concerns received are listed including those outside the scope of whistleblowing. The "Category" used is one of the six categories of malpractice/wrongdoing set out in section 1.1 of the [Whistleblowing policy](#).

Category	Outcome	Comments
N/A	Not investigated	Allegation concerning private water supply – passed to Scottish Water for their consideration.
Health & Safety danger	Investigated	Employee had failed to declare secondary employment. This was addressed by line manager who obtained signed declaration for this which included confirmation of understanding of relevant legislation and need for compliance as well as complying with the Code of Conduct for employees.
Health & Safety danger of individuals	Investigated	Investigation completed and draft report with Service. Once finalised this will be provided to Committee for scrutiny.
Health & Safety danger of individuals	Investigated	Linked to previous concern.
Criminal offences	Investigated	Investigation ongoing
N/A	Not investigated	Concerns raised related to grievance raised. Employee informed that this is an HR matter and outside the scope of whistleblowing.

Designation: Strategic Lead (Corporate Audit & Performance)

Date: 16th November 2022

Author: Donna Sutherland