

Non-Executive Report of the: Audit Committee Tuesday, 23 rd April 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director, Resources	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
Annual Review of the Anti-Bribery Policy	

Originating Officer(s)	David Dobbs – Head of Internal Audit, Fraud & Risk
Wards affected	(All Wards)

Executive Summary

This report recommends that the Audit Committee notes and approves the updated Anti-Bribery policy. The Policy, which is reviewed annually, forms part of the Council's Fraud and Risk Management arrangements.

The Policy (refer Appendix A) set outs the statutory provisions on bribery (as part of the Bribery Act 2010) and the Council's respective arrangements to ensure compliance.

Recommendations:

The Audit Committee is recommended to:

1. Note and approve the Council's updated Anti-Bribery policy (Appendix A)

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Audit Committee's terms of reference include provisions for the oversight and review of the Council's counter-fraud arrangements and related risks. This includes the Council's Anti-Bribery arrangements and policy document.
- 1.2 The Anti-Bribery policy is reviewed annually in order to provide assurance that the Council's approach continues to comply with the relevant statutory provisions, best practice requirements and professional guidance and is approved by the Audit Committee.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

2.1 None.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

3.1 Since the Bribery Act 2010 was introduced, the Council has maintained an Anti-Bribery policy and supporting procedures. The Anti-Bribery policy is reviewed annually to ensure it remains up to date and fit for purpose. It is then submitted to the Audit Committee for approval. The previous review of this policy was reported to the Audit Committee at its January 2023 meeting.

3.2 The Anti-Bribery policy sets out the arrangements and processes so that all employees are clearly aware of their statutory duties and obligations in this regard and the potential legal consequences of a failure to comply with the law, as detailed in the policy narrative.

3.3 Since the introduction of the Policy, three specific allegations of bribery have been investigated - two regarding the provision of housing and one regarding procurement. Each case was investigated but none proceeded to criminal prosecutions or other sanctions.

3.4 Whilst legislation, regulations and other provisions are subject to ongoing change and update, review of the policy has confirmed that the substance of the policy can remain unchanged, though the officer contact details (refer page 9 of the policy) required updating.

3.5 Following approval, the amended policy will be republished on the Council's website and intranet (The Bridge) and communicated to all Council officers via all the all-staff weekly newsletter.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no specific statutory implications.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no other statutory implications to consider.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from the content of this report.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 This report is presented for the purpose of noting and approving the Council's proposed updated policy and guidance on Anti-Bribery and sets out the relevant law and procedures in place for employees to be able to address suspected cases of bribery in the course of their employment.
- 7.2 The proposed policy and guidance on Anti-Bribery correctly notes the current statutory provisions and is subject to annual review by Internal Audit to align the policy with the Council's current corporate risk profile.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix A – Updated Anti-Bribery Policy

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

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