PORINGLAND PARISH COUNCIL

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Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Reference	PPC 35
Version Number	2
Associated Documents	• PPC8 Code of Conduct – Staff • PPC3 Code of Conduct – Councillors • PPC20 Disciplinary Policy • PPC15 Dignity at Work Policy inc Bullying and Harassment Statement • PPC11 Equality and Diversity Policy • PPC21 Capability Policy • PPC23 Performance Management and Appraisal Policy
Last Review Date	September 2025
Frequency of Review	Annually
Approved by	Full Council
Date for Next Review	September 2026

This is a non-contractual policy that does not require approval from employees before changes are made. Staff will remain bound by amended non-contractual policies.

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Introduction
This policy applies to all employees and officers of the Council. Other individuals performing functions in relation to the Council, such as agency workers and contractors, are encouraged to use it.

It is important to the Council that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by workers, Councillors or officers of the Council is reported and properly dealt with. The Council therefore encourages all individuals to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the business or the way in which the business is run. This policy sets out the way in which individuals may raise any concerns that they have and how those concerns will be dealt with.

Background
The law provides protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters. These are called "qualifying disclosures". A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest by a worker who has a reasonable belief that:

- a criminal offence
- a miscarriage of justice
- an act creating risk to health and safety
- an act causing damage to the environment
- a breach of any other legal obligation, or
- concealment of any of the above

is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed. It is not necessary for the worker to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient. The worker has no responsibility for investigating the matter - it is the Council's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

A worker who makes such a protected disclosure has the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised, because he/she has made a disclosure.

The Council encourages workers to raise their concerns under this procedure in the first instance. If a worker is not sure whether or not to raise a concern, he/she should discuss the issue with his/her line manager or the Parish Clerk.

Principles
Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work. Workers should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that they become aware of.

Any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the worker who raised the issue.

No worker will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training of the worker will not be prejudiced because he/she has raised a legitimate concern.

Victimisation of a worker for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.

If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure the Council's disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.

Maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.

An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, workers should not agree to remain silent. They should report the matter to the Parish Clerk.

This procedure is for disclosures about matters other than a breach of an employee's own contract of employment. If an employee is concerned that his/her own contract has been, or is likely to be, broken, he/she should use the Council's grievance procedure.

Procedure

1. In the first instance, and unless the worker reasonably believes his/her line manager to be involved in the wrongdoing, or if for any other reason the worker does not wish to approach his/her line manager, any concerns should be raised with the Chair of the Council. If he/she believes the Chair to be involved, or for any reason does not wish to approach the Chair, then the worker should proceed straight to stage 3.

2. The line manager will arrange an investigation into the matter (either by investigating the matter him/herself or immediately passing the issue to someone in a more senior position). The investigation may involve the worker and other individuals involved giving a written statement. Any investigation will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out above. The worker's statement will be taken into account, and he/she will be asked to comment on any additional evidence obtained. The line manager (or the person who carried out the investigation) will then report to the relevant Committee, which will take any necessary action, including reporting the matter to any appropriate government department or regulatory agency. If disciplinary action is required, the line manager (or the person who carried out the investigation) will report the matter to the human resources department and start the disciplinary procedure. On conclusion of any investigation, the worker will be told the outcome of the investigation and what the relevant Committee has done, or proposes to do, about it. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained.

3. If the worker is concerned that his/her line manager is involved in the wrongdoing, has failed to make a proper investigation or has failed to report the outcome of the investigations to the relevant Committee, he/she should inform the Chair of the HR Advisory Group who will arrange for another manager to review the investigation carried out, make any necessary enquiries and make his/her own report to committee as in stage 2 above. Any approach to the Chair of the HR Advisory Group will be treated with the strictest confidence and the worker's identity will not be disclosed without his/her prior consent.

4. If on conclusion of stages 1, 2 and 3 the worker reasonably believes that the appropriate action has not been taken, he/she should report the matter to the proper authority. The legislation sets out a number of bodies to which qualifying disclosures may be made. These include:

    - HM Revenue & Customs;
    - the Financial Conduct Authority (formerly the Financial Services Authority);
    - the Competition and Markets Authority;
    - the Health and Safety Executive;
    - the Environment Agency;
    - the Independent Police Complaints Commission; and the Serious Fraud Office.