

**PE1488/E**

COSLA Email of 3 December 2013

Dear Stuart

Please see below response from COSLA:

**PE1488 petition on whistleblowing in local government**

COSLA is grateful for the opportunity to comment on petition PE1488 which suggests that there should be an introduction of specific “whistleblowing” hotlines for staff to use across Scottish Local Government.

COSLA contacted all councils in relation to this matter. We can confirm that local authorities in Scotland are committed to ensuring that they carry out their role as responsible and responsive employers and, as a result, have at minimum policies which reflect the legislative requirements placed upon them in relation to this matter. In addition to the policies in place, about a third of responding councils noted they had a hotline or helpline in place with nearly a third providing access to dedicated and trained officers who could provide our employees with this support. This is a clear recognition of the importance of allowing employees the opportunity to raise concerns in a safe environment.

The variety of approach which exists reflects the demographic and geographic variety of our communities in Scotland. The policy and practice in this area is a matter for local determination by locally elected politicians who have a vital link to their local area and workforce. Although several councils have a hotline or dedicated staff, there is no evidence to suggest that where councils do not have this provision, the level of whistleblowing is suppressed or quality of investigation is adversely affected.

Regards,

Donna Wallace