



Ned Sharratt
Assistant Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

1st April 2014

Dear Ned

Further Consideration of petition PE1488 on whistleblowing in local government

Thank you for your letter dated 19th March 2014. Unfortunately, COSLA do not hold this level of detailed information in relation to whistleblowing policies. I note that you will be contacting local authorities directly in relation to this matter and I am sure that they will respond to you as requested. In the meantime, I have noted below the summary information we were able to provide to the Committee in November 2013 for your information.

“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.”

Yours sincerely

Rory Mair CBE
Chief Executive

WHEN CALLING PLEASE ASK FOR: Donna Wallace - 0131 474 9203, donnaw@cosla.gov.uk.