



Meeting Date: April 3, 2024

Prepared By: Michael Di Lullo, CAO

Submitted by:

Report No: CAO-11-2024

Subject: Whistleblower Policy

Recommendation:

THAT Report CAO-11-2024, re: Whistleblower Policy be received;

AND THAT the Whistleblower Policy appended to Report CAO-11-2024 be adopted.

Purpose:

As part of our mission to deliver the highest standard in municipal services in a sustainable, professional and innovative manner, Middlesex Centre employees are committed to the value of “Integrity: We take accountability for our actions and deliver what we promise. We are truthful and honest in how we do our job. We inspire public confidence and trust in our municipal government.”

One way we demonstrate our commitment to integrity is to ensure we have a culture that encourages employees to report significant and serious matters they believe may be unlawful, dangerous or harmful to the public interest. While we have a number of existing codes of conduct and policies that support staff in reporting any concerns they may have, it is imperative to have a process in place that protects employees from reprisal if they are reporting potential cases of wrongdoing.

This report contains the details of a new Whistleblower Policy that provides a framework for protecting employees who report potential wrongdoing in the workplace. This policy ensures that employees can act to maintain the highest possible standards of honesty, openness and accountability.

Background:

The intent of a Whistleblower Policy is to protect and create a safe working environment for employees in the event they come forward to report potential wrongdoing in the workplace.

Public sector employees in Ontario are protected from whistleblowing-related retaliation under the Public Service of Ontario Act (PSA). Municipalities have the right to adopt similar policies.

Working with Middlesex Centre's Integrity Commissioner's Office, Aird & Berlis LLP, staff have finalized a Whistleblower Policy and process for the organization.

Analysis:

The Whistleblower Policy provides a framework for all municipal employees to come forward and report potential wrongdoing without fear of reprisal or retaliation.

The policy is not intended to be used for day-to-day concerns and complaints or those covered under existing Middlesex Centre codes of conducts or policies, such as the Workplace Violence & Harassment Policy and Program or Health and Safety Responsibilities. This policy is intended for serious and significant cases of potential wrongdoing.

The process to manage any complaints that come forward is outlined in the attached policy. In general, complaints will be addressed in a phased approach, first through an internal (staff) resolution process, and, should a more serious matter arise, through a second, formal resolution process. The formal process will be managed by Aird & Berlis LLP. The formal resolution process will be done at arm's length and properly investigated with a report summary provided to both the respondent and complainant.

At all times, confidentiality is central to ensuring that this policy is effective.

Financial Implications:

Costs associated with this policy will be based on the number of formal complaints that arise.

Strategic Plan:

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Responsive Municipal Government

The Whistleblower Policy is a new human resources policy. The policy is being added as part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring that the organization has effective processes and procedures in place.

Attachments:

Appendix – Whistleblower Policy