

Meeting Date: February 18, 2025
Department: Human Resources
Report No.: HR-2025-05
Submitted by: Doug Payne – Director of Human Resources
Approved by: Trisha McKibbin – Chief Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: **Whistleblower Policy – Referred from Strategic Priorities**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT: Report HR-2025-05 “Whistleblower Policy” be received for information, and further;

THAT: Council forward the Whistleblower Policy, inclusive of changes discussed at the February 18, 2025 Regular Council meeting, to a future Regular Council meeting for final approval.

BACKGROUND:

At the June 17, 2024 Council Meeting, direction was provided to Human Resources to prepare a new “Whistleblower Policy” to be brought to Council for consideration.

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. Municipalities in Ontario have the right to adopt such policies. The Whistleblower Policy provides a framework for all municipal employees to come forward and report potential wrongdoing without fear of reprisal or retaliation.

COMMENTS:

Part of the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc’s mission is to deliver the highest standard in municipal services in a sustainable, professional, and innovative manner. While there are a number of existing codes of conduct and policies that support employees 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.

Working with Strathroy-Caradoc's Integrity Commissioner's Office, Aird & Berlis LLP, Human Resources finalized a Whistleblower Policy and process for the organization. The policy is not intended to be used for day-to-day concerns and complaints, nor those covered under existing Strathroy-Caradoc codes of conduct or policies, such as the Workplace Violence Harassment and Discrimination Policy and / 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 resolution process will be done at arm's length and properly investigated with a report summary provided to both the respondent and complainant. This formal process will be managed by Aird & Berlis LLP. At all times, confidentiality is central to ensuring that this policy is effective.

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.

CONSULTATION:

Human Resources Generalist
Senior Management Team

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Costs associated with this policy will be based on the number of formal complaints that arise. A Service Contract will be arranged with Aird & Berlis LLP upon Council's final approval.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This matter is in accord with the following strategic priorities:

Managing the Challenges of Growth for the Municipal Organization: Strathroy-Caradoc will be an inclusive community where growth is managed to accommodate a range of needs and optimize municipal resources.

ATTACHMENTS:

Draft Whistleblower Policy