

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE

25 NOVEMBER 2024

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY 2024-25

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption arrangements for the period 2024-2025.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Audit Committee approves the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy (**Appendix A**).

DETAIL

1. Estimates suggests in excess of £300m is being lost to fraud in local government. With the pressures faced by our services it is imperative that we are able to ensure the funds we have are not being lost to fraudsters.
2. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) take the lead on providing advice and guidance to the sector on managing the fraud risk. They also co-ordinate annual surveys of fraudulent activity detected across local government.
3. A Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption was published by CIPFA in October 2014. The code has 5 distinct strands:
 - Acknowledge Responsibility
 - Identify Risks
 - Develop a Strategy
 - Provide Resources
 - Take Action
4. The attached strategy has been developed in line with the code of practice with each of the 5 themes addressed. The format of the strategy has been redefined from previous versions to improve the visual appeal of the strategy and make it more effective.

5. The strategy is endorsed by senior management with a foreword provided by the Director of Finance, Development and Regeneration as the responsible finance officer and the Chair of the Audit Committee reflecting the importance of tackling fraud within the authority.
6. At the core of the code is understanding our fraud risk and ensuring we provide adequate resources to address the areas of greatest risk.
7. Based on the results of local counter fraud activity and the national estimates of where fraud occurs it would appear the resources we have available and where they are deployed are commensurate with the current level of risk exposure. There are a number of emerging risk areas (specifically social care and procurement), work will be undertaken from existing resources to assess the risk posed and whether there is a need for additional controls in those areas.
8. There are a significant number of promotional materials available to support counter fraud efforts. Included in the strategy are a number of actions around raising awareness and ensuring everyone understands the risk of fraud therefore helping to prevent fraud occurring and where it does to ensure it is reported and appropriate action is taken.
9. The audit plan supports the fraud risk assessment process providing advice and guidance where controls need to be improved. Good practice suggests continuous monitoring is an effective process for detecting fraud early. Much of the work within the audit plan is moving towards continuous monitoring not only to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the audit service but also to support the early detection of fraud reducing its impact.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly

RISK ASSESSMENT

None.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATION

N/A

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