

Report to	Governance & Audit Committee
Date of meeting	28 July 2021
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Julian Thompson Hill Gary Williams – Head of Legal, HR & Democratic Services Steve Gadd – Head of Finance & Property Services
Report author	Lisa Lovegrove – Chief Internal Auditor
Title	Strategy for the Prevention & Detection of Fraud, Corruption & Bribery and the Fraud Response Plan

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. The Council takes its responsibilities to protect the public purse very seriously and is committed to protecting the public funds that it administers. This Strategy and framework set out the Council's commitment to preventing, detecting and deterring fraud and corruption.
- 1.2. To inform the committee about changes to the Strategy for the Prevention and Detection of Fraud, Corruption & Bribery and the fully revised Fraud Response Plan.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. Minimising any losses to fraud and corruption is an essential part of ensuring that all of the council's resources are used for the purposes for which they are intended.
- 2.2. It is important that anti-fraud strategies and plans are kept up to date to support and guide Council staff, ensuring compliance with laws and regulations, giving guidance to decision making and streamlining internal processes.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. Comment on the revised Strategy for the Prevention and Detection of Fraud, Corruption & Bribery and the Fraud Response Plan and refer it to Cabinet for approval.

4. Report details

- 4.1. The Strategy for the Prevention and Detection of Fraud, Corruption and Bribery and Fraud Response Plan form part of the Council's counter fraud framework, a collection of interrelated policies and procedures including the Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations and Whistle Blowing Policy. It also includes policies and procedures that are specifically targeted at countering fraud and corruption
- 4.2. The purpose of the Strategy and Fraud Response Plan is to provide management with a tool to ensure progress and transparency with regards to counter-fraud activities. It is designed to heighten the Council's fraud resilience and demonstrate its protection and stewardship of public funds.
- 4.3. In developing this Strategy, the Council has adopted the guiding principles included in "Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally 2020" (FFCL2020) which is the counter fraud and corruption strategy for local government. It provides a blueprint for a coordinated response to fraud and corruption perpetrated against local authorities with the support of those at the top.
- 4.4. The Strategy is not just concerned with operational activity to detect and investigate fraud and corruption, but also sets out objectives for pro-active actions to deter and prevent fraud and corruption through the continual development of an anti-fraud and corruption culture.
- 4.5. The Fraud Response Plan has been revised to reflect existing processes and to strengthen arrangements to ensure that all relevant parties are involved at key points and to include greater alignment with HR policies, particularly, the disciplinary policy.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

5.1. The application of the Strategy and Fraud Response Plan is intended to protect the Council against loss through fraud and corruption so that resources are used for the purposes for which they are intended.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The application of the counter fraud strategy and response plan is intended to protect the Council against loss through fraud and corruption

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. Not applicable

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1. Consulted with Head of Legal, Head of Finance, HR, SLT. Trade Unions also informed.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. Not applicable – there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. Strategy and Fraud Response Plan to mitigate and address risk of fraud. The strategy includes an action plan setting out intended actions to reduce the risk of fraud, corruption and bribery.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Not applicable.