

Report to	Cabinet
Date of meeting	21 September 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 Cabinet 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. Endorse the revised Strategy for the Prevention and Detection of Fraud, Corruption & Bribery and associated Fraud Response Plan and provide support to ensure that measures are embedded throughout the organisation.

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. It sets out the requirement to have robust arrangements and executive support to ensure anti-fraud, bribery and corruption measures are embedded throughout the organisation.
- 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. No decision required. 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. The Well-Being Impact Assessment highlights positive and neutral impacts; positives particularly in the area of "a globally responsible Denbighshire". The strategy's focus on prevention and detection of fraud, corruption and bribery as to protect public funds ensures that resources are used for the purpose for which they are intended. There is work to be done to engage with members, managers and employees as well as partners and contractors to raise their awareness of the strategy as a key element is to promote the zero-tolerance culture throughout the organisation. All documentation and awareness raising or engagement will be conducted bilingually to promote the Welsh Language where ever possible.

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

8.1. Agreed by SLT and Trade Unions have been informed. It was formally discussed at Governance & Audit Committee on 28 July 2021 who recommended the strategy go to Cabinet for adoption.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. As set out in Section 6 there are no direct financial implications of this report. However, as part of the Section 151 role, it is part of the responsibility of the role to help ensure that the Council's resources are properly protected in order

that they can be directed to delivering Council services. This strategy forms a key part of helping to deliver that aim.

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 the 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. Power to make the decision is s112 Local Government Act 1972.