

Report of	Meeting	Date
Head of Audit and Risk/Head of Legal and Procurement	Governance Committee	Wednesday, 27 November 2024

Annual Review of Counter Fraud Policies

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Purpose of the Report

- For Members to note the revised Council’s Counter Fraud Policies, namely:
 - Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Statement and Strategy
 - Fraud Response Plan
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Anti-Money Laundering Policy

Recommendations

- Members are asked to note the policies as set out in Appendices A, B, C and D.

Reasons for recommendations

- The ability to demonstrate that the council has arrangements in place that are designed to promote and ensure probity and propriety in the conduct of its business.

Other options considered and rejected

- Not applicable.

Corporate priorities

- The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

6. In administering its responsibilities, the Council has a duty to protect public funds and to raise awareness in relation to any potential threats that may affect the financial and/or reputational position of the organisation. The suite of counter fraud policies reinforces the Council's commitment to the prevention and detection of fraudulent activity. They also support the Local Code of Governance in promoting values for the Council and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
7. Internal Audit undertake a regular review of the probity policies to ensure that they are in accordance with best practice and contains up to date information and contact details.
8. Legal Services undertake a regular review of the Anti-Money Laundering Policy to ensure that it is in accordance with legislation and contains up to date information and contact details.

Counter Fraud Policies

9. The general aim of all the Council's counter fraud policies is to reduce the occurrence and impact of fraud, corruption and bribery on the organisation and provide an effective channel of communication for anyone who has concerns or suspicions of malpractice.
10. These documents follow best practice, particularly the guidance from CIPFA Code of Practice – Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption and the four key themes of the Local Government Fraud Strategy – Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally (2020).
11. The themes comprise the following:
 - Acknowledge the responsibility of the governing body for countering fraud and corruption
 - Identify the fraud and corruption risks
 - Develop an appropriate counter fraud and corruption strategy
 - Provide resources to implement the strategy
 - Take action in response to fraud and corruption.

Fraud Response Plan

12. This document reflects the Council's current arrangements when a fraud is reported and sets out the responsibilities for those involved.

Whistleblowing Policy

13. The Whistleblowing Policy has been updated to ensure that all officer contact details are up to date.

Anti-Money Laundering Policy

14. The changes to the Anti-Money Laundering Policy are minor in nature, amendments having been made to reflect the change in leadership and a table inserted to Appendix B to allow for staff to consider possible signs of money laundering.

- The Director of Finance's contact details will be updated in January 2025 following the appointment of the new post-holder.

Training and Awareness

- Awareness of the policies is maintained by the completion of mandatory e-learning by officers. The policies will also be available on the Council's intranet and website.

Climate change and air quality

- The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place.

Equality and diversity

- The material presented and discussed in this report has no direct implications on equality and diversity.

Risk

- By having a range of probity policies in place the Council seeks to mitigate against the risk of fraud by encouraging the highest principles of honesty and integrity.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

- These policies form a vital part in informing the Councils financial controls and ensuring that staff feel enabled to report issues.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

- The suite of Counter Fraud Policies demonstrate that the Council is committed to ensuring it upholds the values of good governance and tackling fraudulent activity.

Background documents

There are no background papers to this report

Appendices

Appendix A – Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Statement Strategy

Appendix B – Fraud Response Plan

Appendix C – Whistleblowing Policy

Appendix D – Anti-Money Laundering Policy

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