

10. **Counter Fraud Policy/ Strategy**

John Scott, Audit Manager

- a. presented the revised Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption policy/ strategy for comment prior to referral to Executive.
- b. advised that the Council's counter Fraud Policy/Strategy was updated in 2018. The 2021 version took into account the latest best practice guidance and updated the fraud action plan.
- c. explained that in the main, the Council's updated policy/strategy was similar to the previous one. This version recognised the increased risks to victims and the local community. There was more emphasis on tackling cross-boundary and organised fraud and corruption attempts, as well as addressing new risks such as social care fraud and cyber issues.
- d. advised that the new approach highlighted the key strands as detailed at paragraph 4.4 of the report:
 - i. Govern
 - ii. Acknowledge
 - iii. Prevent
 - iv. Pursue
 - v. Protect
- e. explained that there was a greater emphasis on economic crime – referred to as “a broad category of activity involving money, finance, assets the purpose of which was to unlawfully obtain a profit or advantage for the perpetrator or cause loss to others”
- f. advised that local authorities could ensure that their counter fraud response was comprehensive and effective by considering their performance against each of the six themes as detailed at paragraph 4 of the report.
- g. referred to the work programme at Appendix B of the report and advised how the policy/strategy would be implemented.
- h. invited members comments and questions

Question: Referred to table 11.2 of Appendix A of the report and asked for details regarding the Small Business Rates Relief?

Response: A third party was used to cross check with other authorities to identify small businesses that were claiming Small Business Rate Relief. This was a way to identify businesses that were not entitled to the relief before it was granted.

Question: Referred to table 12.3 of Appendix A of the report and asked what Audit would look at to combat Housing Tenancy Fraud?

Response: There were different ways to review possible tenancy fraud including Tenancy Verification which uses a third party to undertake data matching and identify any anomalies (such as possible sub-letting) for the Council to review. There is also the National Fraud Initiative. Matches are currently being reviewed. In the past this had not identified any significant levels of fraud or error. Housing investigate cases of suspected sub-letting or non-occupation.

RESOLVED that the revised Counter Fraud Policy/ Strategy be referred to Executive for approval.