

**SUBJECT: SIX MONTHLY FRAUD AND ERROR REPORT**

**DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK**

**REPORT AUTHOR: AMANDA STANISLAWSKI, AUDIT MANAGER**

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report informs Committee of performance against the 2023/24 Counter Fraud Work Plan and the outcomes of pro-active fraud work and investigations carried out to date.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The responsibility for fraud prevention, monitoring and reporting is spread throughout the Council with Internal Audit collating the data and reporting to Committee.
- 2.2 The attached report summarises the activity which has taken place during the last 6 months including both proactive and reactive responses.

## **3. Six Monthly Update**

- 3.1 The Audit Committee receive a six-monthly Fraud and Error update report (Counter Fraud Report). This is linked to its terms of reference covering monitoring of the Counter Fraud Strategy and contributes to the overall governance arrangements of the authority and the annual governance statement.
- 3.2 The report summarises the number of cases so far for 2023/24 comparing them with the previous year.
- 3.3 Progress made against completing the actions within the Counter Fraud Action Plan is detailed within the report. There are 5 items on the plan for 2023/24, 4 of which are not due until quarter four. Work is in progress for 1, 2 remain as not started and 1 is delayed until quarter two of 2024/25. The remaining item due for quarter two is in progress.
- 3.4 Whistleblowing referrals have reduced from 17 to 5. Allegations are similar being mainly in respect of housing tenancy and single persons discount. Action has been taken in all of these cases, 2 have been cleared with no issues, action was taken to remove the discount for 1 and the other remains under review.
- 3.5 Work is continuing to review the matches identified as part of the National Fraud Initiative, so far savings of £23k have been identified in respect of Housing Benefit.
- 3.6 There have not been any frauds identified in other areas of the Council.

#### **4. Organisational Impacts**

##### **4.1 Finance**

There are no direct financial implications.

##### **4.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules**

There are no direct legal implications.

##### **4.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

Due to the nature of the report, no specific Equality Impact Analysis is required.

#### **5. Recommendation**

- 5.1 The Audit Committee consider and comment on the contents of the report and appendix.

**Is this a key decision?** Yes/No

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** Yes/No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** Yes/No

**How many appendices does the report contain?** One

**List of Background Papers:** None

**Lead Officer:**

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