

Central Bedfordshire Council

AUDIT COMMITTEE

9 April 2018

Counter Fraud & Corruption Strategy

Report of Charles Warboys, Director of Resources

Contact Officer: Clint Horne, Head of Internal Audit and Risk

Purpose of this report:

The purpose of this report is to set out the revised corporate strategy for countering fraud and corruption.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

- 1 Consider and approve the revised Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy.
- 2 Delegate Authority to the Director of Resources to make minor amendments to the Strategy as necessary.

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. This report is not scheduled to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny, as it is the responsibility of the Audit Committee to approve the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and monitor the operation thereof;

Background

2. The present Strategy was approved in January 2012 and therefore an update to it is required, this is an action point on the Annual Governance Statement.
3. The new Strategy adheres to the CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption 2014 (the Code). The Code requires leaders of public sector organisations to have a responsibility to embed effective standards for countering fraud and corruption in their organisations in order to support good governance and demonstrate effective financial stewardship and strong public financial management.
4. Every pound taken by theft or fraud reduces our ability to provide services to the people who need them the most. To maintain public confidence in our Authority, it is important that

CBC maintains a clear 'zero tolerance' approach towards fraud and corruption and demonstrate that we will use the full range of sanctions available against any individual or organisation found to be committing fraud.

5. It is also important for anyone supporting delivery of CBC services to have a good general awareness of the possibility of fraud in their area, what action the Council takes to try to prevent fraud and corruption generally where possible; what to do if they have any concerns and how we will investigate any concerns that are notified to us.

Key Change:

6. The most significant change will involve Internal Audit taking on new responsibility to undertake financial crime investigations to a criminal standard in order to potentially pursue prosecutions without requirement to involve the Police or CPS. The specific approach taken will be decided on a case-by-case basis as appropriate.
8. Once approved, the new Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy will be published on both the Council's intranet and internet sites and will be promoted as part of an internal campaign about raising fraud awareness.

Council Priorities

9. The implementation of a robust anti fraud culture supports all the Council's key priorities by encouraging probity and accountability across the Council.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

10. The Constitution references the Counter Fraud Policy (Strategy) within the Code of Financial Governance and it is a requirement of the Code that all Members and officers comply with it.

Legal advice is 'the terms of the policy have been reviewed and appear fit for purpose but should be revisited if any practical issues arise with it's implementation.'

Financial Implications

11. None directly from this report.

Equalities Implications

12. None directly from this report.

Conclusion and next Steps

13. Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. The Counter Fraud & Corruption Strategy contributes to promoting a robust but fair anti fraud culture.

Appendices

Appendix A – Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy

Background Papers

None.