



## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 23 JUNE 2025

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

#### ANNUAL COUNTER FRAUD REPORT 2024-25

##### Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Corporate Governance Committee (the Committee) of the counter fraud activities that took place across the Council during the 2024-25 financial year.

##### Background

2. Within its terms of reference, the Committee has a responsibility to monitor the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for combating fraud and corruption and approve relevant policies. The Council does not have a dedicated counter fraud investigation team. Responsibility for co-ordinating the Council's approach to counter fraud lies with the Internal Audit and Assurance Service, Corporate Resources department. As an upper-tier local authority, the Council does not have exposure to some of the high-volume, high-risk, fraud areas that typical district and unitary councils do, such as Council Tax, Housing Tenancy or Right to Buy.
3. Although the Council does not provide many of the services that have traditionally been at high risk of fraud that is no reason for the Council to become complacent regarding the risk of fraud and its effect on the public purse. A strong commitment to countering the risk of fraud and other financial irregularity is key in protecting the Council's assets, monetary and otherwise. The Council fully recognises its responsibility for spending public money and holding public assets. The prevention, and if necessary, the investigation, of fraud is therefore an important aspect of its duties.
4. The Council advocates strict adherence to its anti-fraud framework and associated policies. The Council has a publicised **zero-tolerance** approach to fraud, corruption and other financial irregularities in all its forms. The Council will take all necessary steps to identify, investigate and disrupt instances of fraud and take appropriate action against any individuals or organisations involved in fraud or corruption.

5. Historically, a counter fraud update has been provided to each meeting of this Committee under the auspices of the wider Risk Management Update report. For the first time, an annual report is being presented and the intention, moving forward, is to continue to do so. This follows a specific recommendation to develop an annual fraud report contained within the external peer review of the Council's Assessment against the CIPFA Code of Practice – Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption (2023) and a similar recommendation by Grant Thornton LLP in the External Auditor's Annual Report (2023-24).
6. The Annual Counter Fraud Report 2024-25 is attached as Appendix A.

### **Recommendations**

7. The Committee is recommended to:
  - (i) note the contents of this report;
  - (ii) agree to receive further reports on an annual basis;
  - (iii) agree that unless a major issue arises or there is a government requirement for more regular reporting, dispense with in-year counter fraud updates which currently form part of the wider Risk Management Update reports presented at each meeting of this Committee.

### **Resource Implications**

8. The Council takes its responsibilities to protect the public purse seriously and is fully committed to the highest ethical standards, to ensure the proper use and protection of public funds and assets. To achieve the objectives set out within the Council's Strategic Plan 2022-26, the Council needs to maximise the financial resources available to it. To do this, the Council has an ongoing commitment to continue to improve its resilience to fraud, corruption and other forms of financial irregularity.

### **Equality and Human Rights Implications**

There are no specific equality and/or equal rights implications arising from this report.

### **Background Papers**

None.

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedures**

None.

### **Officers to Contact**

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### **List of Appendices**

Appendix A: Annual Counter Fraud Report 2024-25

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