

**Report for: GOVERNANCE, AUDIT,
RISK MANAGEMENT &
STANDARDS
COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	15 July 2024
Subject:	Corporate Anti-Fraud Plan 2024/25
Responsible Officer:	Sharon Daniels – Strategic Director of Finance
Exempt:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1: Corporate Anti-Fraud Plan 2024-25

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report sets out the 2024-25 Corporate Anti-Fraud Plan.

Recommendations:

1.2 The Committee is requested to: Review and approve the Corporate Anti-Fraud Plan 2024-25.

1.3 The Committee is also asked to note the annual plan process, the plan development process and the resources available to complete the plan.

Section 2 – Report

Corporate Anti-Fraud Team Plan 2024-25 (Appendix 1)

Background

- 2.1 Fraud remains the most common crime in England and Wales costing the UK economy in the region of £137bn annually. According to the Office for National Statistics in England and Wales Crime Survey (year ending December 2022), fraud accounted for 3.7 million offences, more than 1 million offences than the next most common offence; that of theft at 2.7 million offences. Fraud is not a victimless crime; it causes untold harm to individuals, businesses and communities.
- 2.2 Public Sector fraud accounted for £40.4 billion. Harrow Council is not immune to fraud and corruption and to mitigate against these risks, an annual risk-based fraud plan is developed in addition to the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 so that fraud risks are managed effectively.

Annual Fraud Plan Process

- 2.3 The 2024-25 plan has been developed taking into consideration both internal and external factors that assess fraud risks according to their likelihood and impact. Careful consideration has also been given to incidents of fraud and corruption identified in 2023-24 which have been fed into the plan development. Externally, a number of national reports and trends have been reviewed and high-risk fraud areas across the sector assessed accordingly and feature in the plan.

Development of the Draft Fraud Plan

- 2.4 The draft plan has been developed by drawing on a number of sources of data:-
 - Alignment to the Local Government Fraud Strategy, Fighting Fraud & Corruption Locally Strategy (FFCL) 2020
 - Consideration of the authorities' recently refreshed Corporate Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy
 - Discussions with the Head of Internal Audit and Interim Risk Manager to co-ordinate common interest work where possible;
 - Local knowledge about known fraud risks the authority faces and fraud instances identified in 2023-24;
 - Review of fraud and corruption trends and patterns across the UK and more specifically London.
 - A review of the Credit Industry Fraud Avoidance System (Cifas) Fraudscape 2024 Report
 - The ONS England and Wales Crime Survey (year ending December 2023)

2.5 Fraud and corruption threats not only remove resources from critical services but can cause immeasurable social harm to individuals and communities and create poor morale amongst employees. Having a robust risk based annual plan in place to mitigate fraud and corruption risks ensures that the authority knows what threats are faced where practicably possible, is able to prevent and disrupt criminals from perpetrating fraud.

Resources

2.6 The plan is delivered by an in house Corporate Anti-Fraud Team of 5 FTE's including the Service Manager. All officers in the team are Accredited Counter Fraud Officers and the Service Manager is a qualified Accredited Counter Fraud Manager. Resources are such that it is vital that the plan developed is risk based so as to direct resources at areas where financial losses and their impact are greatest.

Legal Implications

The terms of reference for the Committee include the follow requirements:

- to review and approve the annual Corporate Anti-Fraud Team Plan.

Financial Implications

The functions of the Corporate Anti-Fraud service are delivered within the budget available.

Risk Management Implications

The risk of fraud has been taken into consideration in the development of the plan.

Equalities implications/Public Sector Equality Duty

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No (N/A)

Council Priorities

The Corporate Anti-Fraud Team contributes to all the corporate priorities by enhancing the robustness of the control environment and governance mechanisms that directly or indirectly support the priorities.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Statutory Officer: Sharon Daniels

Signed by the Strategic Director of Finance

Date: 5 July 2024

Statutory Officer: Caroline Eccles

Signed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer, Jessica Farmer

Date: 5 July 2024

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: NO, as it impacts on all Wards

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Justin Phillips, Corporate Anti-Fraud Manager, 0208 424 1609

Background Papers: None.

If appropriate, does the report include the following considerations?

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| 1. Consultation | NO |
| 2. Priorities | NO |