

ANTI-FRAUD TEAM REPORT 2014/15

Audit Committee – 23 June 2014

Report of Chief Finance Officer

Status: For Consideration

Also considered by: Cabinet – 16 July 2015

Key Decision: No

This report supports the Key Aim of Effective Delivery of the Corporate Plan

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Searles

Contact Officer(s) Bami Cole, Ext.7236, Glen Moore Ext. 3240.

Recommendation to Audit Committee: That the Committee:

- a) note the content of the report and the work of the Anti-Fraud Team carried out in 2014/15 and the proposed re-structure of fraud investigation resources in February 2016; and
- b) recommend to Cabinet that the updated Anti-Fraud, Sanctions and Prosecution Policy be approved.

Recommendation to Cabinet: That the updated Anti-Fraud, Sanctions and Prosecution Policy be approved.

Reason for recommendation: The Audit Committee is required to review the work of the Anti-Fraud Team.

Introduction and Background

1. This report sets out details of the activities of the Anti-Fraud Team during 2014/15 and sets out details a proposed re-structure of the team in February 2016 caused by the creation of the Single Fraud Investigation Service (S-FIS). Also attached as Appendix B is an updated Anti-Fraud, Sanctions and Prosecution Policy, which has been updated to take account of a change in the Department for Work & Pensions sanctions policy.
2. This is the third report of the Anti-Fraud Team to the Audit Committee. The Anti-Fraud Team is part of the Audit, Risk and Anti-Fraud shared services working jointly with Dartford Borough Council. The team is responsible for carrying out benefit fraud investigations and assists both Councils in highlighting instances of fraud which could adversely affect the level of taxes/income they collect/receive.

Summary of Key Issues in the Report

3. Details of the activities of the team during the year 2014/15 are attached as Appendix A to this report. The team's performance is set out in section three of Appendix A and a proposed re-structure of Sevenoaks District Council's fraud investigation services in light of the creation of the Single Fraud Investigation Service is discussed in sections 4 & 5. Section 5 confirms the team's priorities for 2015/2016.
4. A key highlight for the year is the Anti-Fraud Team's achievement in discovering a record level of benefit fraud during the year and its continued success in assisting the Council's Revenue Departments in highlighting falsely claimed Council Tax discounts which have a direct effect the amount of tax revenue the local authorities can collect.

Key Implications

Financial

Not Applicable

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The Council is required to have effective anti-fraud arrangements in place in order to safeguard public funds and prevent the pursuance of crime. The anti-fraud team effectively contributes towards the council's fraud prevention initiatives. The DWP proposals may put at risk existing arrangements. Therefore the Council would need to assess the implications of the DWP proposals and its impact on existing arrangements.

Equality Impacts

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users

Conclusions

This report sets out the achievements of a successful year for the Anti-Fraud Team during 2014/15 and outlines a proposed re-structure of fraud investigation resources caused by the creation of the Single Fraud Investigation Service. Members are requested to note the report and approve the updated Anti-Fraud, Sanctions and Prosecution Policy.

Appendices

Appendix A – Anti-Fraud Team End of Year Report 2014/15.

Appendix B – Anti-Fraud, Sanctions and Prosecution Policy

Background Papers:

None.

Adrian Rowbotham
Chief Finance Officer