



Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham - Executive Director - Resources

Report to:	Audit Committee
Date:	15 November 2021
Subject:	Counter Fraud Progress Report 2021/2022

Summary:

This report provides information on the overall effectiveness of the Authority's arrangements to counter fraud and corruption and reviews the delivery of the 2021/22 counter fraud work plan during the year to date.

Recommendation(s):

To assess the overall effectiveness of the Council's arrangements to counter fraud and corruption and the progress made to implement policy.

Background

The Counter Fraud Annual Report provides an overview of the investigation and proactive counter fraud work completed during the period April to September 2021.

This summary provides information to enable the Committee to review performance and the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements. The annual and progress reports are the key sources of assurance for the Committee on the adequacy of Council's counter fraud activities.

The report supports the Committee in discharging its duties around:

- To review the assessment of fraud risks and the potential harm to the council from the risk of fraud
- To monitor the counter fraud strategy, actions and resources.

Details included within Appendix A include information on:

- Fraud referrals received and subsequent investigations made
- Investigation outcomes

- Proactive work to detect and prevent fraud (including fraud awareness work and response to Covid-19 related fraud activity)
- Lincolnshire Counter Fraud Partnership and its delivery of work

Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect working arrangements and this also applies to counter fraud. Fraud risks remain high and fraudsters can be highly adaptable so a robust and proactive response is key in preventing and detecting fraud. We have identified several cases related to Covid-19 in recent months and continue to investigate these.

The level of fraud referrals made continues to show a downward trend – this is a pattern noted on a national basis so not exclusive to Lincolnshire. However, the cases we are currently dealing with tend to be more complex and higher value – therefore requiring more time and resource to collate evidence for potential sanctions to be taken.

The Lincolnshire Counter Fraud Partnership has continued its successful collaboration with its partner authorities across the county. Key areas being:

- Improving fraud intelligence
- Raising fraud awareness
- Sharing intelligence and best practice
- A single point of contact for Whistleblowing

To ensure that a high level of awareness is maintained across Lincolnshire County Council, we have been working on refreshed methods of delivery. Our in house e-learning provision has been revamped and we are developing key fraud messages for International Fraud Awareness Week in November 2021. We have also updated our fraud policies so are involved in producing communications to coincide with the policy release.

Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Counter Fraud Annual Report

Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Lucy Pledge, Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management,, who can be contacted on 01522 553692 or lucy.pledge@lincolnshire.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank