

**Annex 4  
Counter Fraud Activity**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Work Completed or in Progress</b>
Training	The source and type of fraud referrals received has continued to be monitored through the year. This has influenced the fraud awareness training delivered to Benefits and Housing staff, including new starters. A new desktop e-learning training programme has also been made available to all staff in Revenues, Benefits and ARM. The programme was originally developed by the DWP and covers fraud related issues but has been tailored to meet the Council's specific training needs. The programme is designed to be user friendly and takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. To date 65 staff have completed the course. The programme will now be made available to other relevant staff groups in the Council.
Public and Internal Fraud Awareness	A programme of staff and public awareness was delivered in March 2006. The programme included a series of radio and press advertisements and articles, together with publicity for the new facility to report fraud by e-mail. In conjunction with this a programme of fraud awareness measures within the Council was delivered. The programme included articles in staff newsletters and publications and greater web-site presence. The campaign generated a 56% increase in fraud referrals from the public during the following 3 months. A similar staff and public awareness campaign is planned for March 2007. A facility to receive referrals by SMS text message is also being considered.
Advice and Guidance	Advice and guidance has been provided on the design and implementation of measures to prevent and detect fraud and other financial irregularities. Examples include changes to the design of benefit claim forms and the implementation of security measures in Council establishments and offices. Feedback is now given to relevant staff on all cases investigated. This feedback is intended to encourage more referrals but, where necessary, will include recommendations to change or improve systems and procedures so as to prevent or detect fraud

	in the future. Procedures are also being developed to strengthen the arrangements across the Council to prevent and detect money laundering.
Data Matching	Work during the year has been concentrated on coordinating the collection and despatch of data for the Audit Commission's National Fraud Initiative. The results from this exercise are expected to be received in early February 2007, and preparations are ongoing to enable the different matches to be investigated. In addition, the Fraud team has continued to investigate potential benefit fraud cases identified each month by the DWP through the HBMS data match process. An exercise has also commenced, using data interrogation software, to identify potential high risk groups of benefit claimants so as to inform the future work of both the Fraud and Interventions teams.
Targeted Visits	Unannounced visits have continued to be undertaken, targeting specific properties and claimants suspected of committing residency related fraud.
Joint Working with Other Agencies	The Fraud Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the DWP which encourages and facilitates joint working on relevant cases is now fully operational and is proving to be very successful. Both agencies are cooperating on individual investigations and sharing information to identify further possible fraud. Where appropriate the Fraud team has also continued taken part in specific joint exercises with other agencies. For example, the Fraud team recently took part in a joint exercise with the DWP, police and trading standards to identify counterfeit traders at a car boot sale.
Other	The Council's Fraud and Prosecution Policy has been reviewed and a revised Policy was approved at Corporate Services EMAP on 12 September 2006. The new Policy became effective from 1 October 2006.