

Meeting:	Audit and Governance Committee
Meeting date:	17/03/2025
Report of:	Head of Internal Audit (Veritau)
Portfolio of:	Cllrs Lomas and Baxter Executive Members for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion

Audit and Governance Committee Report: 2025-26 Counter Fraud Plan

Subject of Report

1. This report sets out counter fraud work planned for 2025/26. It contains an updated fraud risk assessment, an assessment of counter fraud work at the council against national counter fraud strategies, and an annual counter fraud development plan and work plan.

Policy Basis

2. The committee is responsible for the overview and effectiveness of counter fraud arrangements.

Recommendation and Reasons

3. The Audit and Governance Committee is asked to:
 - Note the 2025/26 fraud risk assessment
 - Note the counter fraud development and work plans.

Reason

To enable members to consider the current risk of fraud against the council, this forms part of the committee's responsibility for overseeing the effectiveness of counter fraud arrangements.

Background

4. Fraud is a significant risk to the public sector. Annual losses due to fraud and error are estimated as being as high as £81 billion in the United Kingdom. Veritau are engaged to deliver a counter fraud service for the council. The service helps mitigate fraud risk, investigate suspected fraud, and to take appropriate action when it is detected.
5. The council can reduce the impact of fraud by managing fraud risk through robust policy and procedure. It is considered best practice to regularly review fraud risk and strengthen counter fraud arrangements to meet it.
6. The 2025-26 Counter Fraud Plan, contained in Annex 1, updates the council's fraud risk assessment, evaluates the counter fraud policy framework, and sets priorities for the development of counter fraud work in the coming financial year.

Consultation Analysis

7. No consultation was required in the preparation of this report.

Risks and Mitigations

8. The risk of fraud is constantly evolving. If fraud risk is not regularly reviewed and action is not taken to address it, then the council's exposure to fraud will increase as will potential losses.

Contact details

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Date:	17/03/2025

Background papers

- None

Annexes

- Annex 1: 2025-26 Counter Fraud Plan