

Annex 5

Investigations, Prosecutions and Sanctions (Housing and Council Tax Benefits)

778 fraud referrals have been received in the first 9 months of the year, of which 425 have been accepted for investigation (54.6%) (840 referrals were received in total during 2005/06, of which 393 were accepted for investigation). The following table summarises performance to date;

| | 2006/07 Actual (to 31/12/06) | 2006/07 Target | 2005/06 Actual |
|--|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Number of fraud investigations completed | 363 | 520 | 509 |
| Prosecutions | 16 | 22 | 35 |
| Administrative Penalties | 13 | 18 | 11 |
| Cautions | 10 | 18 | 19 |

In addition to the above cases, an investigation into the fraudulent use of a blue badge resulted in the police giving an offender a caution.

The number of sanctions achieved (cautions and administrative penalties) is on course to exceed the total achieved in 2005/06. However, the number of prosecutions achieved to date is lower than in 2006/07. Although this is in part due to the Council adopting a new Prosecution Policy from 1 October 2006, the main difference has been caused by a large backlog of prosecution cases at the DWP (for cases arising from joint investigations).

Performance of the fraud team is also measured and reported through three statutory Best Value Performance Indicators. The projected outturn for 2006/07 (based on the performance of the team to 31 December 2006) is as follows;

| | 2006/07 Projected | 2006/07 Target | 2005/06 Actual | Comments |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| BVPI 76b – Number of investigators per 1000 caseload | 0.51 | 0.51 | 0.51 | This is expected to remain unchanged as there are no plans to change the overall fraud team establishment. |
| BVPI 76c – Number of investigations completed per 1000 caseload | 41.2 | 44 | 43.33 | The number of referrals received each month has increased compared to 2005/06. The number of cases accepted for investigation has also increased significantly compared to last year. This trend is causing pressures on the team and a backlog of work. As a result, the average case load has increased from 43 to 53 per investigator in the first 9 months of the year. The existing case load is currently being reviewed with a view to prioritising those cases most likely to result in a positive outcome. It is expected that the number of cases completed will therefore reach the target. |

| | 2006/07 Projected | 2006/07 Target | 2005/06 Actual | Comments |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| BVPI 76d – Number of sanctions/prosecutions per 1000 caseload | 4.43 | 4.9 | 5.53 | As noted above, the existing case load is currently being reviewed and as a consequence the number of sanctions/prosecutions is expected to reach the target. |