

Cheltenham Borough Council
Audit Committee – 18th June 2013
Counter Fraud Report 2013-14

Accountable member	Cabinet member corporate services
Accountable officer	Head of Audit Cotswolds – Robert Milford
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	No
Executive summary	<p>The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) published a paper “<i>Delivering good governance in Local Government; Addendum, December 2012</i>”. In this paper there is a table of elements that are recognised as key in an authority’s governance framework. One of these elements is:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“ensuring effective counter-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are developed and maintained.”</i></p> <p>This report sets out the Counter Fraud work conducted through 2013 / 14.</p>
Recommendations	That the Committee considers the report and makes comments as necessary.

Financial implications	<p><i>The activity highlighted in this report demonstrates our actions to protect the public purse.</i></p> <p>Contact officer: Mark Sheldon, Chief Finance Officer mark.sheldon@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264123</p>
Legal implications	<p><i>None specific arising from the report recommendation.</i></p> <p>Contact officer: Vikki Fennell, vikki.fennell@teWKesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272015</p>

HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	<p><i>No direct additional HR implications arising from the content of this report.</i></p> <p>Contact officer: Julie McCarthy, HR Manager</p> <p>julie.mccarthy@cheltenham.gov.uk,</p> <p>01242 26 4355</p>
Key risks	<p>That the authority is susceptible to fraud, corruption and bribery due to insufficient controls in place to Acknowledge, Prevent and or Pursue counter fraud activity.</p>
Corporate and community plan Implications	<p>In administering its responsibilities; this Council has a duty to prevent fraud and corruption, whether it is attempted by someone outside or within the Council such as another organisation, a resident, an employee or Councillor. The Council is committed to an effective Counter Fraud and Corruption culture, by promoting high ethical standards and encouraging the prevention and detection of fraudulent activities. Thus supporting corporate and community plans.</p>

1. Background

1.1 In 2011 the Local Government Fraud Strategy “Fighting Fraud Locally” was published that sets out the approach to fraud that is now expected of Local Government. The stated vision is that “*by 2015 Local Government will be better able to protect itself from fraud and have in place a more effective fraud response.*” It goes on to indicate three areas of focus:

1. Acknowledge
2. Prevent
3. Pursue

1.2 The Audit Commission published their document “Protecting the Public Purse 2012” which sets out a series of recommendations that Councils should inter alia “*maintain a capability to investigate non-housing benefit related fraud, proportionate to the risk*” and “*assess the potential benefits and cost savings of greater joint working with other Councils.*”

1.3 This is the annual Counter Fraud Report for this authority and the report sets out the counter-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements in this authority and the results of activity for 2013~14 set out in terms of:

- Acknowledgement,
- Prevent and
- Pursue.

2. Reasons for recommendations

2.1 The Audit Committee is the group charged with governance responsibilities at this authority and as such should receive reports on the governance framework.

3. Annual Counter Fraud Report

3.1 A report highlighting the areas reviewed is shown in Appendix 1

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Appendices	1. Counter Fraud Report 2013~14
Background information	None