

Audit Committee

24th June 2021



Report of: Chief Internal Auditor

Title: Counter Fraud and Investigation - Annual Report 2020/21

Ward: N/A

Officer Presenting Report: Simba Muzarurwi – Chief Internal Auditor

Recommendation

The Audit Committee note the Fraud Annual Report of the Counter Fraud and Investigation Team for 2020/21.

Summary

This Report provides the Committee with a summary of the work undertaken by the Internal Audit – Counter Fraud team during the year including outcomes of investigation work and Whistleblowing referrals received in the year.

The significant issues in the report are:

- Counter fraud work within the Council continued to generate significant savings, despite the impact of the pandemic.
- Whilst the pandemic did have some impact on tenancy fraud work, the team continued to provide a tenancy fraud service throughout and delivered 19 regains or other positive outcomes against a target of 30.
- The team delivers a wide range of counter fraud and investigation work aligned to the government's strategy 'Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally'.
- The team won a national award for its holistic approach to tenancy fraud work.
- There is improved confidence in Whistleblowing arrangements and 7 referrals were received in the year.

Policy

Audit Committee Terms of Reference

Consultation

1. Internal

Internal – Statutory Policy Board including S151 Officer, Cabinet Member for Governance, Resources and Finance and Monitoring Officer.

2. External – N/A

Context

This is the Annual Report outlining the Counter fraud work that has taken place in Bristol City Council. The report is provided to:

- Give an overview of the work of the Internal Audit – Counter Fraud and Investigations team and other anti-fraud work which has taken place within the Council;
- Present details of the savings identified through counter fraud and investigation work.
- Demonstrate the variety of investigation work that the Counter Fraud team undertakes and the competing priorities.
- Update members on Whistleblowing referrals managed within the Internal Audit team and improvements being made to the Whistleblowing process.
- Outline the main causes of investigations from analysis work undertaken.
- Give an outline of the work being undertaken in the team in response to Covid-19.

The full report can be found at Appendix A

Proposal

- 3.** The Audit Committee note the work of the Counter Fraud and Investigations team.

Other Options Considered

- 4.** N/A

Risk Assessment

- 5.** The work of Internal Audit Counter Fraud team reduces the financial loss from fraud and increases the potential for prevention and detection of fraud.

Summary of Equalities Impact of the Proposed Decision

Equality impact assessments have been undertaken for new fraud initiatives planned or implemented in the year.

No direct equality impact is anticipated from this report.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal – N/A

Financial – N/A

Land – N/A

Personnel – N/A

Appendices:

Appendix A – Annual Counter Fraud Report 2020/21

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None