

AUDIT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 8
29 JULY 2021	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Peter Carpenter, Corporate Director of Resources	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Coles, Cabinet Member for Finance	
Contact Officer(s):	Steve Crabtree, Chief Internal Auditor	Tel. 384 557

ANNUAL REPORT: INVESTIGATING FRAUD 2020 / 2021

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM : Steve Crabtree, Chief Internal Auditor	Deadline date : N / A
<p>It is recommended that Audit Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receive, consider and endorse the attached annual report on the investigation of fraud during 2020 / 2021. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to Audit Committee as a scheduled report on fraud and irregularity in accordance with the established Work Programme.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee (agreed at Full Council) set out the key roles of the Committee including the following

2.2.1.15: To monitor council policies on “raising concern at work” and the anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategy and the Council’s complaints process.

2.2 The purpose of this report is to present the work carried out during the past year to minimise the risk of fraud, bribery and corruption occurring in the Council.

3. TIMESCALE

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet	-
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 The public is entitled to expect the Council to conduct its affairs with integrity, honesty and openness and demand the highest standards of conduct from those working for it. In addressing this expectation, the Council has shown its commitment with a dedicated Investigations team which is tasked with reviewing and investigating allegations of fraud and impropriety, breaches in codes of conduct and high level corporate complaints.

4.2 Audit Committee in March 2018 received an update on the strategic approach adopted by the Council in relation to tackling fraud, together with a review of a number of the policies. Best practice checklists and a report from the accountancy professional body, CIPFA, was also attached in relation to fraud. The policies adopted have been regularly refreshed and were last submitted to this Committee in March 2021.

4.3 Throughout the year, works have been undertaken to tackle frauds on Peterborough City Council. These have covered such areas as:

- National Fraud Initiative
- Council Tax single person discounts
- Council Tax support
- Joint working with Department for Works and Pensions
- Blue badge misuse
- Staffing related issues

Many activities have been undertaken during the year to tackle frauds on Peterborough City Council. **Appendix A** provides an overview of the work undertaken during the year, demonstrates the successes in investigating fraud and irregularity across the Council and provides an insight into how the Council will continue to operate, including the latest developments in relation to the National Fraud Initiative.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 This report has been issued to the Director of Resources for consideration.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 That the Audit Committee is informed of the measures taken across the organisation to tackle and prevent fraudulent activity. Furthermore, this will assist in the development of future policies and procedures and allow the Committee to support this important function.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 To enable the Audit Committee to continue to monitor the Council's approach to the areas dealt with by the team

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 The option is not to present a report into fraud and the activities undertaken. This could result in a lack of awareness.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 The Council will become more fraud aware and will continue to consider the risks and consequences. Fraud is unacceptable and requires a well thought through approach. The presumption must be about preventing fraud by designing systems to stop it happening in the first place but where it occurs, there should be an equal presumption that its perpetrators will face tough action. This can only serve to increase the standards of conduct across the Council.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A: Annual Fraud Report 2020 / 2021

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