

REPORT TO CABINET

Open		Would any decisions proposed :			
Any especially affected Wards	Operational	(a) Be entirely within cabinet's powers to decide YES /NO			
		(b) Need to be recommendations to Council YES/ NO			
		(c) Key Decision? – No			
Lead Member: Cllr Angie Dickinson E-mail: cllr.angie.dickinson@West-Norfolk.gov.uk			Other Cabinet Members consulted:		
			Other Members consulted: Audit Committee		
Lead Officer: Kathy Woodward / Michelle Drewery E-mail: Michelle.Drewery@West-Norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial:			Other Officers consulted: Management team, Monitoring Officer, Personnel and Trade union representative		
Financial Implications YES /NO	Policy/Personnel Implications YES/ NO	Statutory Implications YES /NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES/ NO If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications YES /NO	Environmental Implications NO

Date of meeting: 15 June 2021

ANTI-FRAUD AND ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICY

Summary

The 'Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy', 'and 'Fraud Response Plan' were last reviewed in 2016/17 and are therefore due for the 3-year review. The documents have been reviewed and the results have been presented to the Audit Committee. Audit Committee agreed to approve the new Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy at its meeting on 17 December 2020 and to recommend to Cabinet and Council for approval and adoption.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council:

- 1) To consider the changes made to the anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategy and recommend approval and adoption of the new Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy documents.

Reason for Decision

To bring the documents up-to-date with the Council's current requirements and ensure they are fit for purpose.

Background

1.1 The Council needs to remain vigilant in order to safeguard its resources and to protect its reputation. As a Council, we therefore need to raise awareness, deter and identify fraud. At the same time, it is

essential to provide the means by which employees, Members and anyone representing the Council, can raise legitimate concerns when they feel something has been done that is either illegal or improper.

- 1.2 The Council will always endeavor to promote a culture of honesty, integrity and openness. This is reflected in its policies and strategies to deter and prevent fraud and corruption. A comprehensive review was previously completed in 2014 to provide consistent, up-to-date and fit for purpose documents. A light review was carried out in 2017. Due to this and as a result of the new national strategy “Fighting Fraud & Corruption Locally 2020 Standards” being released in March 2020 an extensive review has been carried out to update and reflect new and emerging risks and working practices.

Proposal

- 2.1 The revised documents are attached. Since 2017 several changes have taken place, which need to be reflected in the anti-fraud suite of documents as outlined below.
- 2.2 The work of the Benefits Enquiry Unit (BEU) on fraud relating to Benefits has transferred to the Single Fraud Investigation Service within the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Capacity for investigating fraud relating to Council Tax and Business Rates, as well as dealing with the National Fraud Initiative work, has been retained within the Council in the form of a Fraud Investigations Officer/ Internal Auditor role. Reference to the investigation of Benefit fraud has been removed from the documents.
- 2.3 The Deputy Chief Executive has left the Council and his responsibilities in relation to anti-fraud and whistleblowing have been transferred to the Assistant Director (s151 Officer).
- 2.4 There has been a change in title for the Executive Director, Central Services to Executive Director, Central and Community Services.
- 2.5 There has been a change in the title of the Audit Committee form Audit and Risk Committee.

Policy Implications

The proposed Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy will replace the existing Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy and Fraud Response Plan.

Financial Implications

Financial implications will include the cost of any prosecution, which varies dependent upon the case. Prosecution costs are awarded by the Court. Monies will be recovered where any accounts are adjusted following investigation actions.

Staffing Implications

There is a requirement, under the Councils Facilities and Consultation Agreement – Code of Practice, to consult in full with Unions regarding this matter.

Statutory Considerations

None to be considered

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

The Pre-Screening EIA has been completed with the Equalities Working Group.

Risk Management

None, this policy is likely to enhance our internal controls to help protect our services from fraud and corruption.

Background Papers

Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally 2020
Audit Committee Review of Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy and Fraud Response Plan – Introduction of a new Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy. Approved 17 Dec 2020