

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

14 October 2009

Report of the Director of Finance

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Council

1 ANTI-FRAUD POLICIES

Summary

This report informs Members of the latest review of the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy and Benefit Anti-Fraud Policy and requests that Cabinet recommends endorsement by Council.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Members of Cabinet will be aware that the Council has had an Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy and a Housing & Council Tax Benefit Anti-Fraud Policy for a number of years. These documents are regularly reviewed and are submitted for approval through the policy framework.
- 1.1.2 Earlier this year the council entered into a partnership arrangement with Gravesham Borough Council to provide Benefit Fraud Investigation management. One of the potential benefits of this arrangement is to adopt best practice from both authorities in order to maintain a consistent and effective approach.
- 1.1.3 As part of this arrangement the above policies have been reviewed in order to align them where it is desirable to do so. In addition the Benefits Prosecution Policy has been updated to ensure a consistent approach and this now forms part of the Housing & Council Tax Benefit Anti-Fraud Policy.
- 1.1.4 These documents have been submitted to the Policy Overview for consideration. In addition they will also have been considered by the Audit Committee meeting of 13 October 2009 as part of the governance responsibility of this committee. Members are asked to refer to the papers of the Audit Committee for the content of the policies.
- 1.1.5 Because of Committee timings the consideration of these policies has taken a slightly different route by being considered by Policy Overview before Audit Committee. The Policy Overview Committee endorsed the Policies at their meeting of 29 September 2009 subject to some minor alterations to annex 2.

- 1.1.6 Any comments made by the Audit Committee will be verbally reported upon at this meeting.

1.2 Legal Implications

- 1.2.1 The adoption of these policies enables the Council to demonstrate consistency in approach to dealing with fraud whilst enabling each case to be determined individually.
- 1.2.2 The Chief Solicitor has been consulted on the completion of these documents and has agreed with their format.

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.3.1 The existence of Anti-Fraud Policies that are regularly reviewed and circulated assists in promoting the anti-fraud culture of this Council.

1.4 Risk Assessment

- 1.4.1 The policies ensure that there is a consistent approach to tackling fraud and corruption. External inspections of the Council as part of the CAA process expect these policies to be in place and their inspection is part of the scoring process.
- 1.4.2 Having Anti-Fraud Policies demonstrates the Council's commitment to an honest and open culture. A regular review and circularisation assists in ensuring that they have a high profile within the Council. Inclusion on the Council website also gives a clear message to stakeholders on the Council's culture.

1.5 Policy Considerations

- 1.5.1 Crime & Disorder Reduction

1.6 Recommendations

- 1.6.1 Subject to consideration of any proposed changes by Cabinet, Members are asked to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council endorsement of the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy and the Housing & Council Tax Benefit Anti-Fraud Policy.

Background papers:

contact: David Buckley

Gravesham and Tonbridge & Malling Anti-Fraud Policies

Sharon Shelton
Director of Finance