

## Audit Committee

14 April 2025

### Part 1 - Public

#### Matters for Information



Cabinet Member	Kim Tanner – Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing
Responsible Officer	Sharon Shelton – Director of Finance and Transformation
Report Author	Richard Benjamin – Chief Audit Executive

#### Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Progress Report

##### 1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report gives Members an update on the progress to date of the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Teams.

##### 2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- 2.2 The provision of Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Services provides assurance on council procedures and policies.

##### 3 Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations require the Council to *undertake an effective Internal Audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control, and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards and guidance.*
- 3.2 Internal Audit Standards require that periodic reports on the work of Internal Audit should be prepared and submitted to those charged with governance.

##### 4 Progress Report

- 4.1 Contained at **[Annex 1]** to this report is the Progress Report providing an accumulative summary view of the work undertaken by Internal Audit and Counter Fraud for the period January 2025 to March 2025, together with the resulting conclusions where appropriate.

## **5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 5.1 An adequate and effective Internal Audit function provides the Council with assurance on the proper, economic, efficient, and effective use of Council resources in the delivery of services, as well as helping to identify fraud and error that could have an adverse effect on the finances of the Council.
- 5.2 Fraud prevention and detection is an area subject to central government focus with initiatives such as the National Fraud Initiative and Local Government Counter Fraud and Corruption Initiative. The message coming from these initiatives is that effective fraud prevention and detection releases resources and minimises losses to the Council through fraud.

## **6 Risk Assessment**

- 6.1 This report, summarising the work of the Internal Audit function, provides a key source of assurance for the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of its framework for governance, risk management and control.
- 6.2 Failing to have an efficient and effective Counter Fraud function could lead to an increased level of fraud. This report, summarising the work of the Counter Fraud function, provides a key source of assurance for the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of its counter fraud arrangements.

## **7 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations place a statutory requirement on local authorities to undertake an adequate and effective Internal Audit of systems of risk management, governance, and control in line with Internal Audit Standards.
- 7.2 The Council has a legal duty under s151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations to ensure that there are appropriate systems in place to prevent and detect fraud.
- 7.3 The Local Government Act 1972 provides the Council with the ability to investigate and prosecute offences committed against them.

Background Papers	None
Annexes	Annex 1 - Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Progress Report