

<b>Report title:</b> Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy	
<b>Report to:</b> Audit, Governance and Standards Committee	
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<b>Date:</b> 28 September 2020	<b>For:</b> Decision
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<b>County Divisions affected:</b> All Essex	

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report asks the Committee to adopt the new Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy which has been reviewed following the recent publication of a new national strategy called 'Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally'.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy is adopted in the form at appendix 1.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy is reviewed by the committee every two years. The last review was in January 2020 but it was agreed that the Strategy would be subject to further review once the revised national strategy 'Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally' had been published.
- 3.2 The national strategy has now been published and a new draft of the ECC Strategy has now been reviewed to align it with the national strategy. The revised draft, which the Committee are asked to adopt, is at appendix 1.

## **4. Summary of Changes**

- 4.1 The main changes resulting from the review are:
- (a) The approach and principles have been revised, adding two further 'pillars of activity', 'govern' and 'protect'
  - (b) A section has been added to reflect the monitoring and review responsibilities.
  - (c) The appendices have been removed and replaced with links to external facing documents where appropriate (eg the Fraud Act 2006, FFCL checklist)

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Fraud losses to Local Authorities can be significant if prevention and detection activity is not carried out appropriately.

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 Counter Fraud and Internal Audit is a key way in which councillors can be assured that the Council is using its resources effectively and that the Council is discharging its fiduciary duties concerning taxpayers' money. It helps services to design systems which have appropriate controls and also helps identify and respond to breaches if they occur.
- 6.2 The Council has a duty to consider the need to prevent and reduce crime in the exercise of its functions under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

## **7. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 7.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when ECC makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
  - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
  - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. Equality and diversity matters have been considered in the production of the progress report.

## **8. List of Appendices**

Appendix 1: Updated Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy.

## **9. List of Background Papers**

- Fighting Fraud and Corruption Strategy