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**REPORT TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 22 April 2021**

**REPORT OF THE: SECTION 151 OFFICER (ANTON HODGE)**

**TITLE OF REPORT: COUNTER FRAUD PLAN 2021/22**

**WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The Council's counter fraud service is delivered by Veritau. The service aims to take action against any fraud directed against the Council, to provide a deterrent to those seeking to defraud the Council, and to prevent fraud by raising awareness of the issue both internally and with the public. Oversight of counter fraud activity is provided by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The purpose of this report is to present to the 2021/22 counter fraud plan to the committee for information.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 It is recommended that the counter fraud plan for 2021/22 be noted.

### **3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 To ensure that the committee is aware of the scope and extent of counter fraud work to be undertaken.

### **4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS**

4.1 None.

### **5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION**

5.1 Counter fraud work supports the Council by preventing, detecting and deterring fraud. Fraud committed against the Council can deprive it of funds which could otherwise be used to support its overall aims and objectives.

### **6.0 REPORT DETAILS**

6.1 The Council's counter fraud plan is produced annually. Annex A to this report sets out planned areas of work for the counter fraud team in 2021/22 as well as proposed targets for the team.

6.2 The plan includes a broad allocation of days for the main areas of counter fraud work expected to be undertaken during the year. However, this is intended to be flexible and will be updated as required during the year if priorities or risks change. For example, depending

on levels of suspected fraud cases referred to the team or any need to deliver fraud awareness training in areas of emerging risk. It is also likely that changes may be required to reflect Covid-19 related fraud risks, as the Council continues to recover from the pandemic.

- 6.3 Counter fraud team performance has been measured by two performance targets over the last three years, actual savings achieved and the percentage success rate for cases investigated. While the team has met and often exceeded these targets, they have had unintended consequences. For example by focussing the team's work towards reactive investigations, at the expense of other important activity such as proactive work and fraud awareness training. While the value of this type of work is more difficult to quantify, good practice guidance (and experience) suggests that it can provide greater benefit through helping to prevent and deter fraud from occurring. It is proposed to stop managing performance against the previous targets from 2021/22. This will ensure the counter fraud team can provide a more balanced service to the Council. As well as providing additional flexibility, for example to meet further anticipated work relating to Covid-19 grant funding.
- 6.4 The total planned days for counter fraud work in 2021/22 is 105, which is unchanged from the previous year.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The following implications have been identified:
- a) Financial  
None
  - b) Legal  
None
  - c) Other (Equalities, Staffing, Planning, Health & Safety, Environmental, Crime & Disorder)  
None

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**Background Papers:**  
RDC Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy Action Plan (January 2021)