

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE
17th MARCH 2008

UPDATES OF PROSECUTION POLICY
& POLICY AND STRATEGY ON THEFT, FRAUD & CORRUPTION

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	Internal Organisational Theme
CORPORATE THEME:	Improving Corporacy & Performance
KEY PRIORITY:	Financial and Asset Management
STRATEGY:	Anti-Theft, Fraud & Corruption
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor John Champion
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Financial Services
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APPENDICES	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of the results of a review of the Council's current Prosecution Policy; Policy on Theft, Fraud & Corruption; Strategy on Theft, Fraud & Corruption, the Fraud Response plan, Policy & strategy on Fraud for housing benefit and council tax benefit.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Audit Committee is asked:

- 2.1 To **NOTE** that the current review has not identified any omissions in best practice within the current suite of documents as listed in 2.2.
- 2.2 To **NOTE** that the suite of documents comprising a Prosecution Policy, a Policy on Theft, Fraud & Corruption, a Strategy for dealing with Theft, Fraud & Corruption, a Fraud Response plan, a Policy & Strategy on Fraud for housing benefit and council tax benefit are being updated; and
- 2.3 To **AGREE** that the documents as listed in 2.2 be further reviewed following the recent issue of guidance from CIPFA Better Governance Forum and that they are reported back to the committee in accordance with due process.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 It is best practice that all organisations including local authorities have in place formal policies which uphold and strengthen the Council's culture of honest and open dealings. The council has approved policies and strategies in place.

3.2 These documents build on the premise that fraud and corruption undermine standards of public service and reduce the resources available for the good of the whole community. They are designed to encourage prevention, promote detection, act as a deterrent and identify a clear pathway for investigation. Further all individuals and organisations associated with the Council are required to act with integrity.

3.3 Employees are an important element in the Council's stance against fraud and corruption as they are best placed to identify any examples of impropriety. It is paramount that these documents are available to them to ensure any appropriate action can be taken should the need arise.

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 The Council have in place approved policies and strategies for its anti-theft, fraud and corruption arrangements. These have been subjected to a review. This review has not identified any major omissions from these documents but updates are required to take account of changes in procedures.

4.2 The CIPFA Better Governance Forum has recently issued further guidance in this area. Consequently to ensure that the updated documents attached are in line with this guidance members are asked to agree that a further review be undertaken.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Anti-theft, Fraud and Corruption arrangements are one element of the Council's corporate governance framework.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 To comply with good Corporate Governance the Council is required to ensure that its arrangements for Anti-theft, Fraud and corruption are periodically reviewed and in line with best practice.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The council's current documents are adequate. In light of recent guidance from the CIPFA – Better Governance Forum these amended documents are to be further reviewed prior to being reconsidered by the Committee.

9. CONSULTEES

9.1 Chief Executive
Head of Human Resources
Head of Legal & Democratic Services

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Executive – ED 220 - Prosecution Policy update; ED 221 – Policy & Strategy on Fraud – Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit - update – 8th January 2004
Policy & Implementation committee – Policy & strategy for dealing with Theft, Fraud & Corruption – 12th July 2001