

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Audit and Governance Committee

Date **25 November 2013**

Report of: **Director of Finance and Resources**

Subject: **CORPORATE ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY**

SUMMARY

This report brings an updated and simplified version of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy to the Committee for comment.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends to the Council that the revised Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, as set out in [Appendix A](#); be adopted.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Council has adopted a Corporate Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy which forms part of the Council's Constitution.
2. The policy was last updated in 2009 and so is now due to be refreshed. This report brings the latest version (8.6) to the Committee for comment.

CHANGES MADE TO THE POLICY

3. The previous policy was 21 pages long and much of the content was stipulated by the Use of Resources Assessment regime of Councils that was in place then.
4. A review has now been carried out, in line with other key policies, with a view to slimming the policy down and making it more inviting to users. In particular sections have been removed where they duplicate other policies such as:
 - (a) The Housing Benefit Anti Fraud Policy
 - (b) The Irregularity Response Plan
 - (c) The Council's Whistle Blowing Policy
5. The content has also been updated for the following key changes that have been made to our counter fraud arrangements in the last 4 years:
 - (a) The adoption of an Anti-Bribery Policy in response to the Bribery Act 2010.
 - (b) The abolishment of the Standards Board for England.
 - (c) The merging of the Standards and Audit Committees to become the Audit and Governance Committee which now handles complaints against members.
 - (d) The revisions made to the Member Misconduct Complaints Procedure.
 - (e) The decision to no longer produce a written Counter Fraud Strategy but to move to a theme based system of fraud risk assessments.
 - (f) The introduction of the new 'report-it' channels for members of the public.
 - (g) The setting up of the Hampshire Tenancy Fraud Forum.
 - (h) The abolishment of policy compliance surveys and directors control assurances.
 - (i) The introduction of fines for council tax fraud.
 - (j) The National Fraud Initiative moving from the Audit Commission to the Cabinet Office.
 - (k) The re-introduction of the Annual Fraud Survey of Councils and the use of this information by the external auditors.
6. There has also been a change in emphasis in the policy away from zero tolerance, to carrying out actions in proportion to the perceived risks we face and to considering the impact that anti-fraud measures may have on the service we provide.
7. New sections have been added to stress the importance of training and awareness and monitoring arrangements in our framework. A requirement has also been added that all incidents of fraud should be reported to the Head of Audit and Assurance or the Head of Revenues and Benefit so that accurate data on cases can be compiled.

RISK ASSESSMENT

8. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

9. The revised policy will continue to be a key part of the Council's framework in place to tackle the risk of fraud and corruption.

Appendices: [Appendix A – Revised Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy v 8.6](#) (Separate Attachment)

Background Papers: None

Reference Papers: Report to Audit Committee on 01/12/2009 – Annual Counter Fraud Policy and Strategy Update

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Elaine Hammell. (Ext 4344)