

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Audit and Governance Committee	Date:	11th September 2023
Subject:	Internal Audit Activity Progress Report 2023/24		
Report Of:	Head of Audit Risk Assurance (ARA)		
Wards Affected:	Not applicable		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	A: Internal Audit Activity Progress Report 2023/24		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an annual report on counter fraud activity in the Council, led by the Audit Risk Assurance (ARA) Counter Fraud Team.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- i. Assess, from the report's high level workstreams and the progress against the 2022/23 Action Plan, whether it can take reasonable assurance that the Counter Fraud Team is operating effectively;
 - ii. Note that £3,444 was recovered in-year. This includes monies relating to prior years' fraud investigations; and
 - iii. Note the Council's compliance with local government 'Annual Fraud Transparency Data' 2022-23 reporting.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 An effective Counter Fraud Team is a key part of the governance, risk management and internal control framework established by the Council. It provides independent investigation, counter fraud risk management, and fraud awareness (including training and resources) which underpins delivery of the Council's objectives and safeguards its limited resources.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

- 4.1 There are no Social Value implications as a result of the recommendations made in this report.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 There are no Environmental implications as a result of the recommendations made in this report.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 No other options have been considered. The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the counter fraud work undertaken to date.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 The role of the ARA Shared Service is to examine, evaluate and provide an independent, objective opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment, comprising risk management, control and governance. Where weaknesses have been identified, recommendations have been made to improve the control environment.
- 7.2 The PSIAS state the Head of ARA should report on the outcomes of Internal Audit work, in sufficient detail to enable the Committee to understand what assurance it can take from that work and what unresolved risks or issues it needs to address.
- 7.3 Consideration of reports from the Head of ARA on Internal Audit's work and performance during the year is also a requirement of the Audit and Governance Committee's terms of reference (part of the Council Constitution).

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 8.1 The Counter Fraud Team will provide updates on the Counter Fraud Team activities, including the number of closed cases and /or new cases, within the Internal Audit Activity Progress Reports.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 There are no Financial implications as a result of the recommendations made in this report.

Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 The Counter Fraud Team's activity supports the best use of finance, ICT, human resources and property resources.
- 10.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. (The Monitoring Officer has been consulted in the preparation this report).

11.0 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications

- 11.1 Failure to deliver an effective counter fraud service will prevent an independent, objective assurance opinion from being provided to those charged with governance. That the key risks associated with the achievement of the Council's objectives are being adequately controlled.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

- 12.1 The Internal Audit service is delivered by ARA which is an Internal Audit and Risk Management Shared Service between Gloucester City Council, Stroud District Council and Gloucestershire County Council. Equality in service delivery is demonstrated by the team being subject to, and complying with, the Council's equality policies.
- 12.2 A PIA is not necessary.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

- 13.1 There are no Community Safety implications as a result of the recommendations made in this report.

14.0 Staffing and Trade Union Implications

- 14.1 There are no Staffing and Trade Union implications as a result of the recommendations made in this report.

Background Documents:

[PSIAS](#) CIPFA Local Government Application Note for the UK PSIAS