

**Hertfordshire County Council
Anti-Fraud Plan
in partnership with
Hertfordshire Shared Anti-Fraud Service
2017/2018**

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Introduction

This plan supports the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy by ensuring that the Council, working in partnership with the Hertfordshire Shared Anti-Fraud Service, has in place effective resources and controls to prevent and deter fraud as well as investigate those matters that do arise.

The Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy states:

*The Primary aim of this Strategy is to make it absolutely clear to the Citizens and stakeholders of Hertfordshire County Council that, as an organisation and individuals, we are committed to honesty, openness, and propriety, in all of our dealings. Simply put, **fraud and corruption will not be tolerated.***

We will do our utmost to foster a culture in which fraud and corruption can find no foothold, and any attempt to conduct illegal activity, either internal or external, against the Council will be met with a united and resolute front.

This plan includes objectives and key performance indicators to measure the Council's effectiveness against its Strategy and meet the best practice guidance/directives from central government department such as Department for Communities and Local Government and other bodies such as National Audit Office, the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy and The European Institute for Combatting Corruption and Fraud.

National Context.

In its 2015 publication '**Code of practice on managing the risk of fraud and corruption**' CIPFA highlights five principles outlining public bodies' responsibility to embed effective standards for countering fraud and corruption in their organisations. This supports good governance and demonstrates effective financial stewardship and strong public financial management

The five key principles of the code are to:

- Acknowledge the responsibility of the governing body for countering fraud and corruption
- Identify the fraud and corruption risks
- Develop an appropriate counter fraud and corruption strategy
- Provide resources to implement the strategy
- Take action in response to fraud and corruption.

The Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) **Local Government Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy (2016-2019)** included a summary of fraud losses across councils in England.

- Actual fraud losses reported by local government in 2013 totalled £207m (this excludes housing benefit)
- Hidden fraud loss for local government was estimated at £1.9bn.
- As admitted previously by the National Fraud Authority in 2013 the scale of fraud against local government is large, but difficult to quantify with precision.
- The strategic response to fraud threats contains three main principles 'Acknowledge/ Prevent/ Pursue'.

The Anti-Fraud Action plan for Hertfordshire County Council adheres to these three principles

Appendix A

SAFS/ HCC Anti-Fraud Action Plan 2017 2018					
Mission	Objectives	Goals	Strategies	Measures/Success Criteria	Responsibility
ACKNOWLEDGE	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT The risk of fraud and the Councils responsibility to prevent and investigate fraud	Show the Councils Willingness to Combat Fraud	Anti- Fraud Strategy Membership of SAFS Internal Audit Member Support	Have in place an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy & Develop and Fraud Risk Assessment Tool for HCC and individual services Retaining Board Membership of SAFS Have in place an effective IA Plan and Audit Committee Policies to deal with Money Laundering/ Bribery/ Whistleblowing/ Sanctions	Head of Assurance S.151 Officer Audit Manager Head of Legal
	FRAUD AWARENESS Promote an effective anti fraud culture within the Council	Enhance the level of fraud awareness internally and externally	Local News Media Promote Fraud Team Fraud Awareness Training Internal Awareness	Issue a press release for every successful prosecution in 2017/2018 Promotion of internet fraud pages (SAFS) and local media exposure Deliver ten fraud training awareness training sessions to Council Staff, or tailored training as requested by services Conduct an E-Survey of fraud awareness across officers	SAFS/Comms SAFS/Comms SAFS SAFS
PREVENT	CUSTOMER SERVICE Service performance is managed to the highest standards so that agreed levels of service are met	Ensure customers and staff are informed about counter fraud work	Customer Service Work across all Services SAFS and SIAS Reports to Audit Comms	Issue customers with information leaflets when attending interviews HCC S.151 and Head of Assurance Review SAFS Activity SAFS and SIAS Mgrs Meetings and SAFS Mgr with Head of Assurance 2 Reports to Audit Committee	SAFS s.151/ Head of Assurance SAFS/Audit Managers SAFS
	PERFORMANCE Maximize performance through robust risk assessment and quality investigation work.	Be recognised as a high performing and successful fraud team.	Quality Fraud Referrals Individual Targets Data Matching Fraud Referrals Performance Report	100% risk assessment on all fraud referrals received SAFS CFO- Set PMDS Targets to match HCC KPIs NFI Data Matches 2017 to be reviewed in year Monitor source of fraud referrals each quarter Issue a performance report in April 2018	SAFS SAFS SAFS SAFS SAFS
PURSUE	QUALITY INVESTIGATIONS Undertake high quality investigations maximizing all investigative resources and achieving value for money	Ensure that investigations comply with the law and are beyond reproach	Interview Under Caution Sanction Files Witness Statements Legal Services	SAFS management checks on all sanctions issued File management checks on live caseload 100% check on witness statements used in prosecution cases Develop relationship with HCC Legal and High Street Solicitors for best service to SAFS and HCC	SAFS SAFS SAFS SAFS/ Head of Legal
	SANCTIONS/PROSECUTIONS Instigate legal sanctions to counter criminal behaviour	Ensure the 'prosecution' of fraud and dishonesty in appropriate cases	Prosecutions/ Sanctions Disciplinary/Professional Civil Recovery Legal Service Liaison	Ensure all cases suitable for sanction are reviewed in line with Policy Ensure that where fraud/corruption/bribery involves HCC staff this is dealt with in line with all relevant Policies Ensure that where HCC suffers a loss this is recorded and services encouraged to recover this from the debtor Continue to work with Legal and maximise recovery of costs and compensation to HCC	SAFS SAFS/Head of HR SAFS/S.151 SAFS/ Head of Legal

Appendix B

SAFS Resources 2017/2018

Budget

In December 2016 the SAFS Board accepted a report from the SAFS Manager to restructure and reorganise the Service from April 2017/2018. This restructure would result in an increase in fees for all Partners. The Board agreed that the annual fee for Hertfordshire County Council, would be fixed to £110,000 +VAT. The Board also received assurance from financial modelling that the service would be sustainable, in its current form for 5 years with an increase in fees each year at 1% from 2019 onwards.

It has been agreed that the service would be allowed to build up a small operating reserve but should this be exhausted all Partners agree to meet any shortfall in Budgets equally.

Staffing

The full complement of SAFS now stands at 14.5 FTE's; 1 Manager, 2 Assistant Managers, 8 Investigators and 2 Intelligence Officers. The Team is also supported by 1 FTE Data-Analyst and 0.5 FTE Business Support who are funded from SAFS Budgets.

For staffing – Hertfordshire County Council will have exclusive access to 1 FTE Investigator, access to intelligence functions of the service, all data-matching services being offered through the local data-warehouse and call on the SAFS Manager & Assistant Manager for quarterly liaison meetings, management meetings and two Audit Committees reports per annum. SAFS also have access to an Accredited Financial Investigator (AFI) and criminal litigation services. SAFS will also work alongside specialist teams such as HR, Comms, Litigation and Commercial Law and Trading Standards.

Appendix C

SAFS

KPIs for HCC 2017/2018

KPI	Measure	2017/2018 Target	Quarterly Target	SAFS Project Aims
1	Provide an Investigation Service	1 FTE on call at the Council (supported by SAFS Intelligence/ Management). Membership of NAFN Membership of CIPFA Counter Fraud Centre Access to Case Management System (CMS) Local Data Hub Fraud training events for staff	100% of all	Ensure ongoing effectiveness and resilience of anti-fraud. Deliver a return on investment for the Council's financial contribution to SAFS.
2	Identified Value of Fraud prevented/detected. Based on the Methodology agreed by SAFS Board	£200k From fraud identified and savings/prevention	£50k	Deliver financial benefits in terms of cost savings or increased revenue.
3	Allegations of fraud Received. From all sources.	100 Fraud referrals from all sources to SAFS	25	Improve the reach into the areas of non-benefit and corporate fraud within the county.
4	Success rates for cases investigated. This will ensure that quality investigations are undertaken.	50%	50%	Create a recognised centre of excellence able to disseminate alerts and share best practice nationally.
5	Conduct Data-Matching using the local data-hub, NFI and other data-matching/mining.	Data-Hub for local data matching. Access to NFI output. County wide Council Tax Review Framework.	100%	Create a data hub for Hertfordshire.

Appendix D

SAFS - Standards of Service.

SAFS will provide Hertfordshire County Council with the following fraud prevention and investigation services as part of the contracted anti-fraud function.

1. Access to a managed fraud hotline and webpage for public reporting.
2. Process and document for SAFS Partner staff to report suspected fraud to SAFS.
3. Assistance in the design of Council policies processes and documents to deter/prevent fraud.
4. SAFS will design shared/common anti-fraud strategies and policies or templates to be adopted by the Council.
5. SAFS will provide a proactive data-matching solution (data-warehouse) to identify fraud and prevent fraud occurring.
 - The data-warehouse will be funded by SAFS and located in accordance with Data Protection Act requirements.
 - The data-warehouse will be secure and accessible only by named SAFS Staff. Data will be collected and loaded in a secure manner.
 - SAFS will design and maintain a data-sharing protocol for SAFS Partners to review and agree to as they choose. The protocol will clearly outline security provisions and include a Privacy Impact Assessment.
 - SAFS will work with nominated officers in the SAFS Partners to access data-sets to load into the data-warehouse and determine the frequency of these.
 - SAFS will work with Partners to determine the most appropriate data-matching for each of them and the frequency of such data-matching.
6. All SAFS Staff will be qualified, fully trained and/or accredited to undertake their duties lawfully, or be working towards such qualifications.
7. All SAFS investigations will comply with legislation including DPA, PACE, CPIA, HRA, RIPA* and all relevant policies of the Council.
8. Reactive fraud investigations.
 - All reported fraud will be actioned by SAFS within 10 days.
 - The Council will be informed of all reported fraud and how SAFS are going to deal with this.
 - SAFS will allocate an officer to each investigation.
 - SAFS officers will liaise with nominated officers at the Council to access data/systems/accommodation required to undertake their investigations.
 - SAFS Officers will provide updates on cases and a report with summary of facts and supporting evidence on conclusion of the investigation for the Council to review and make any decisions.
 - Where a decision indicates an offence SAFS Officers will draft a report for the nominated officers of the Council to make a decision on any further sanctions/prosecutions.
9. Where sanctions, penalties or prosecutions are sought SAFS will work with the Council to determine the appropriate disposal based on the Code for Crown Prosecutors and the Council's published policies. Decisions on imposition of any sanction will lay with the Council but the issue of any penalty will be resolved locally on a case by case basis.
10. SAFS will provide reports through the SAFS Board on progress and to the Council's Audit Committee.

11. SAFS will provide Alerts to Hertfordshire County Council, of suspected fraud trends or reports/guidance from government and public organisations to assist in the prevention of fraud.

**Data Protection Act, Police and Criminal Evidence Act, Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act, Human Rights Act, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.*