

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

ITEM 7A

TITLE OF REPORT: ITEM REFERRED FROM FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE: 16 SEPTEMBER 2019 – FRAUD POLICY REVIEW

The Service Director – Resources presented the report entitled Fraud Prevention Policy. He informed the Committee that the Fraud Prevention Policy attached as at appendix A had been written to replace the existing policies and guidance that covered fraud, corruption, money laundering and bribery.

The Service Director – Resources directed Members to Paragraph 8.1, on page 56 of the report and highlighted that the new policy would not change the fundamental content but sought to simplify. The reference to Legislation had been removed as it was not required. He informed that it was the responsibility of the Policy Author to ensure that the policy was updated if and when legalisation changed.

The Service Director – Resources stated that the new policy was on page 61 of the report and it was hoped that as it was now shorter in length, it would be easier to read and understand.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Sam North
- Councillor Michael Weeks
- Councillor Kate Aspinwall

In response The Service Director – Resources provided the following information:

- The £3,000 limit set on cash payments to the Council was a practical figure and would not prevent money being owed to the Council;
- If the cash payment limit was reduced to £1,000, there was a risk that those who were paying Council Tax or Business Rates legitimately may be affected;
- Fraud and bribery E-learning was mandatory for staff;
- There was currently no reason for the Council to accept foreign currency payments, however, if the Council were to ever accept foreign currency transactions, the policy would be amended accordingly.

Councillor Kate Aspinwall complimented the Policy Author as she felt the policy was indeed easy to understand and used plain English.

It was recommended by Councillor Sam North that:

‘that are reported’ be removed from the sentence ‘the Council will investigate all suspicions that are reported’ on page 63 of the Fraud Prevention Policy.

RESOLVED:

That the FAR Committee note the report entitled Fraud Prevention Policy.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

That the Fraud Prevention Policy attached at Appendix A be approved with the following amendment:

The first line of Paragraph 6 in Section 2 entitled Reporting, 'that are reported' be removed from the Fraud Prevention Policy so that it read:

"The Council will investigate all suspicions, and where deemed appropriate the matter raised may be:"

REASON FOR DECISION:

The new policy provides all the information in relation to fraud and similar offences. This makes it more accessible, especially as the total length of documentation is shorter. By making it easier to read and understand policies, it should aid compliance.

(TO BE CONSIDERED WITH ITEM 9)