



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Audit Committee

17 January 2024

Wards affected:

All wards

2022/23 Report on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI)

Report of Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer)

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To inform the Audit Committee of the results of the 2022/23 Report on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI)

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee note the results of the 2022/23 Report on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI).

3. Background to the report

3.1 The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is an exercise that matches electronic data within and between public and private sector bodies to prevent and detect fraud completed on behalf of the Cabinet Office. Data for the NFI is provided by some 1,100 participating organisations from across the public and private sectors to prevent and detect fraud. By integrating thousands of data sets encompassing hundreds of millions of records, every check is thorough.

3.2 The NFI data matching plays an important role in protecting the public purse against fraud risks. However, the NFI is only one element of an effective anti-fraud strategy. It must be supported by strong anti-fraud cultures and effective counter-fraud policies and procedures that emphasise that fraud is unacceptable. Since 2020 there has been a significant recovery of loss caused by fraud due to the NFI approach as noted in the table below.

Money Recovered, From April 2020 to March 2022	£443 Million
Participating Authorities (Data Provided by Public and Private Sectors)	1,100+
Total Money Recovered From 1996 To 2022	£2.4 billion
Incorrect Claims for Council Tax Single Person Discount, In England for 2020 To 2022	32,669

3.3 HBBC are required by law to protect the public funds it administers. It may share information provided to it with other bodies responsible for; auditing, or administering public funds, or where undertaking a public function, in order to prevent and detect fraud.

3.2 Data matching involves comparing computer records held by one body against other computer records held by the same or another body to see how far they match. This is usually personal information. Computerised data matching allows potentially fraudulent claims and payments to be identified. Where a match is found it may indicate that there is an inconsistency which requires further investigation. No assumption can be made as to whether there is fraud, error, or other explanation until an investigation is carried out.

3.3 The Table below has a very high level overview of the results of the 2022/23 NFI exercise completed by the Council after investigation were completed.

Area of review	Frauds/Errors	Cases reviewed	Value of Errors/Frauds found.
Council Tax	1	92	£1,652.90
Creditors	0	1667	£0.00
Duplicate records	0	59	£0.00
Housing Benefit	0	23	£0.00
Housing Tenants	0	40	£0.00
Payroll	0	10	£0.00
Procurement	0	10	£0.00
Right to Buy	0	12	£0.00
State Benefits	0	10	£0.00
VAT	0	22	£0.00
Waiting List	0	388	£0.00
Grand Total	1	2333	£1,652.90

3.4 The one instance of error/fraud was due to earnings not being declared whilst obtaining support for council tax. The overpayment will be recovered.

4. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

4.1 Report is to be taken in open session.

5. Financial implications [AW]

5.1 Set out in the report.

6. Legal implications MR

6.1 Set out in the report.

7. Corporate Plan implications

7.1 Anti-fraud controls are required to ensure that resources are effectively allocated to ensure delivery of all the aims, outcomes and targets included in the Council's Corporate Plan.

8. Consultation

8.1 All members of the Strategic Leadership Team have been consulted in preparing this Strategy.

9. Risk implications

9.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

9.3 There are no significant risks associated with these report / decisions were identified from this assessment.

10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

10.1 The budget process will impact on all areas of the Borough and all groups within the population.

11. Climate implications

11.1 The stewardship of the financial resources of the council underpins all policy actions to address the council's objectives in ensuring it manages its resources to ensure climate considerations are achieved in accordance with the corporate plan.

12. Corporate implications

12.1 there are no corporate implications arising for this report.

Background papers:None.

Contact officer: Ashley Wilson

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Appendix A