



**AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**29<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2017**

**AGENDA ITEM (11)**

**COUNTER-FRAUD UNIT - UPDATE**

<b>Accountable Members</b>	Audit Committee
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Jenny Poole Group Manager GO Shared Services 01285 623313 <a href="mailto:jenny.poole@cotswold.gov.uk">jenny.poole@cotswold.gov.uk</a>  Emma Cathcart Counter Fraud Manager 01285 623356 <a href="mailto:emma.cathcart@cotswold.gov.uk">emma.cathcart@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To provide the Committee with assurances in relation to the Council's counter fraud activities  To present the Counter Fraud Work Plan 2017/18 and to provide an update thereon
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>That the report be noted.</b>
<b>Reason(s) for Recommendation(s)</b>	The Audit Committee oversees the Council's counter fraud arrangements and it is therefore appropriate for the Committee to be updated in relation to counter fraud activity.  The Work Plans for 2017/18 have been agreed with the Chief Finance Officers and Corporate Leadership/Management Teams and work is now underway. As the body charged with governance in this area, the Committee is asked to consider and comment on the Work Plan for this Council
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All, indirectly
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Recommendation to Council</b>	No
<b>Financial Implications</b>	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report but the report to the Cabinet on 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2017 relating to a shared Counter Fraud service detailed the financial rationale for the Council's participation in a Counter Fraud Unit serving the region
<b>Legal and Human Rights Implications</b>	The Counter Fraud Unit adheres to the appropriate legislation when conducting work on behalf of the Council and other partners

<b>Environmental and Sustainability Implications</b>	None arise directly from this report
<b>Human Resource Implications</b>	None arise directly from this report. The promotion of effective counter fraud controls and a zero tolerance approach to internal misconduct promotes a positive work environment
<b>Key Risks</b>	The Council is required to proactively tackle fraudulent activity in relation to the abuse of public funds. The Counter Fraud Unit provides assurance in this area.  Failure to undertake such activity would accordingly not be compliant and expose the authority to greater risk of fraud and/or corruption
<b>Equalities Analysis</b>	No effect on protected groups identified

<b>Related Decisions</b>	Audit Committee - 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2016 - Draft Business Case Audit Committee 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2017 - Counter Fraud Unit Business Case Cabinet - 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2017 - Counter Fraud Unit Business Case
<b>Background Documents</b>	None
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>Appendix 'A'</b> - Cotswold District Council Work Plan 2017/18

<b>Performance Management Follow Up</b>	Regular updates are provided by the Counter Fraud Manager to Corporate Team and bi-annual reports in relation to counter fraud work will be submitted to the Audit Committee.  Policy documentation will also be submitted to the Committee when required
<b>Options for Joint Working</b>	This Council is the lead authority for the Gloucestershire Counter Fraud Unit. The Unit works directly on behalf of all the Gloucestershire local authorities, West Oxfordshire District Council and some other public sector bodies, such as Housing Associations.  The Unit is also developing joint working practices with other public sector partners including Trading Standards, the Police and NHS Services

<b>Background Information</b>	
1.	<u>Work Plan 2017/18</u>
1.1	The Work Plan for 2017/18 has been agreed with the Chief Finance Officer and senior management. A copy of the Work Plan 2017/18 is attached at <b>Appendix 'A'</b> .
1.2	The team will be concentrating on adding value in areas associated with risk.
1.3	The Audit Committee is asked to consider and comment on the Work Plan, as necessary.
2.	Since the start of the year, the team has supported the Council in the following areas:-

- assisting with two investigations into alleged fraudulent activity by Council Officers;
- identifying improvements to internal controls in respect of pooled cars through a robust review;
- providing advice to the team working on the establishment of Publica;
- drafting corporate policies - a general corporate Enforcement policy, RIPA and the Use of Social Media policy;
- National Fraud Initiative - co-ordination to be transferred to the CFU;
- assistance with Planning enforcement - the Water Park review and an extraordinary case;
- debtor tracing (aged debt specifically, prior to write-off).

3. The Counter Fraud Unit will continue to provide this Committee with direct updates on a bi-annual basis, at the April and September/October Meetings.

(END)