



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED

All

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS: Audit and Risk Committee

28 June 2017

Annual Report on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI)

Report of the Director of Finance

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Audit and Risk Committee on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) exercises currently underway.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 This report is for information only.

3. SUMMARY

- 3.1 There are two separate NFI exercises that the Authority participates in. One involves data matching with external organisations, including other Councils and the second involves matching data held within the Council.
- 3.2 Data for the 2016/17 external NFI exercise was submitted to the Cabinet Office in October 2016 and data was available for checking from 24th January 2017.

4. REPORT

- 4.1 The Council has participated in the National Fraud Initiative since it was introduced in 1996. The exercise has evolved over the years and is now web based. Since the abolition of the Audit Commission, the exercise is managed by the Cabinet Office. The project involves electronically matching data from a number of sources in order to identify possible fraud or irregularity.

The Cabinet Office identifies recommended matches and officers are expected to examine these first. There is no requirement to examine all of the remaining matches and officers are encouraged to select a sample where there are large volumes of data for checking.

- 4.2 Examples of the different matches include

- Housing Benefit Claimants who are not entitled to claim because they are in receipt of Student Loans
- Housing Benefit Claimants who are tenants at a different address
- Housing Benefit claimants who are also licensed taxi drivers or hold a personal alcohol licence
- Housing tenants who appear to be resident at two addresses
- Blue Badge Parking Permits, Concessionary Travel passes and Private Residential Care Home residents where the individual is recorded as deceased on the Disclosure of Death Registration Information (DDRI) or Department for Work and Pensions list of deceased persons
- Duplicate Creditors or duplicate payments to creditors
- Housing Benefit Claimants who also appear on a local authority payroll

4.3 With effect from 1st March 2016 all benefit fraud is investigated by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP, however the Cabinet Office still require the authority to undertake an initial check of the Housing Benefit claims before passing the matches to the DWP to investigate.

4.4 Work on the 2016/17 matches has continued and the latest results are as follows

Matches undertaken by 1st June 2017

Total Matches Processed	Frauds Identified	Errors Identified	Cleared no Fraud/Error	Identified overpayments	Still under Investigation
3066	0	238	2828	Nil	152

5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, the initiatives described in this report are intended to detect fraud (which is an offence of a financial nature) and error, which can cause significant financial loss to the Council.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance

5.2 Legal Implications

From 1 April 2015, responsibility for NFI passed from the Audit Commission to the Cabinet Office. NFI exercises use the powers given to the Minister for the Cabinet Office by Part 6 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The existing code of data matching practice will continue in effect until the Minister for the Cabinet Office issues a new code.

The code is subject to review following completion of each NFI exercise. Any changes proposed to the code will be consulted upon before a new code is finalised and laid before Parliament.

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister & Head of Standards

5.3 Climate Change Implications

This report does not contain any significant climate change implications.
Duncan Bell, Senior Environmental Consultant

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph references within the report
Equal Opportunities	No	
Policy	No	
Sustainable and Environmental	No	
Crime and Disorder	Yes	Whole report
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	No	
Corporate Parenting	No	
Health Inequalities Impact	No	
Risk Management	Yes	This report is concerned with the prevention, detection and sanctioning of fraud. Fraud is one of the risks faced by the Council

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None – Information on the National Fraud Initiative is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-fraud-initiative>

8. CONSULTATIONS

None

9. REPORT AUTHOR

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