

**2010 Audit Commission report – Protecting the public purse: Local government fighting fraud.  
Checklist for those responsible for governance.**

	Yes	No	Current status	Action
<b>GENERAL</b>				
<p>7. Do we raise awareness of fraud risks with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- new staff (including agency staff);</li> <li>- existing staff;</li> <li>- elected members; and</li> <li>- <b>our contractors?</b></li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	<p>The questions of fraud, corruption and bribery are relevant to the tender process and the life of any contract as is general compliance with the council's policies but these relate solely to the council / contractor relationship.</p> <p>There is nothing in place, either as part of the contract procedures or in general terms, to alert contractors to possible indicators of fraud or circumstances that would warrant notification of any suspicions to the council nor has this ever been the case.</p>	<p>Consider the benefits to the council of raising fraud awareness with contractors with a view to producing some guidance as part of the 2012/2013 action plan.</p>
<p><b>13. Do we have effective whistleblowing arrangements?</b></p>	✓		<p>The council approved a Whistleblowing Policy in March 2000. It was publicised shortly afterwards and reminders of its existence have been issued on occasion. It has not been invoked very often. It is available for staff to refer to in the HR Handbook and on the WDC website. New starters are made aware of the policy as part of the corporate induction programme.</p>	<p>As part of the 2012/2013 action plan review and republicise the council's Whistleblowing Policy and evaluate the effectiveness and worth of the In Touch service.</p>

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			The council subscribes to a confidential telephone reporting service called In Touch. There has been only one call to the service in the last 5 years and that related to an employment issue.	
<b>14. Do we have effective fidelity insurance arrangements?</b>	✓		<p>The council has in place a fidelity insurance policy that covers all acts of fraud or dishonesty carried out by any employee up to a value of £5 million. Any such acts must be discovered within 24 months of taking place. The policy is very rarely called on.</p> <p>As for the arrangements being adequate (effective) the amount of cover is reviewed each time that tenders are invited for providing the council's insurances.</p> <p>The controls within the council's systems are evaluated regularly by both Internal and External Audit with any potential weaknesses being addressed. There is no complacency but there is confidence that significant fraudulent activity should not be possible without collusion and that if it does take place other controls and monitoring systems will identify it.</p>	No further action.

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PROCUREMENT				
20. <b>Are we satisfied procurement controls are working as intended?</b>	✓		<p>Some years ago the council recognised the changes taking place in procurement practices and the benefits that could be gained from adopting a more professional approach to procurement. Accordingly a Procurement Manager was appointed in 2007 followed in 2010 by a Procurement Officer. Following the appointments there have been major changes to the way that not only major contracts have been managed but also to routine revenue purchases.</p> <p>There is in place a Code of Procurement Practice governing the whole life cycle of procurement which sets out the procedures to be followed. Members, managers and officers are bound by the Code. There is also in place a Procurement Strategy and an annual update on the progress of the strategy is presented to this committee. Three members of the council are classified as Procurement Champions and they meet with officers to discuss progress on procurement action plans.</p>	No further action.

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			Although procurement is a devolved responsibility the central team act in an advisory and monitoring capacity and form part of the project teams for major and complex contracts.	
RECRUITMENT				
22. Are we satisfied that our recruitment procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- prevent the employment of people working under false identities;</li> <li>- validate employment references effectively;</li> <li>- ensure applicants are eligible to work in the UK; and</li> <li>- <b>ensure agencies supplying us with staff undertake the checks that we require?</b></li> </ul>	✓		<p>Although this part of the question wasn't included in previous versions of the checklist it was responded to as part of last year's equivalent of this report. The response now is as before which is –</p> <p>All agency staff are engaged through Comensura who ensure that all candidates are validated using similar procedures to those of the Council. They would do this by spot audits on each agency and recommend actions if procedures were not to the required standard. HR can provide samples of these cases and are satisfied that appropriate checks are in place for agency staff.</p>	No further action.