

5.2 INTERNAL AUDIT

- 5.2.1 Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 the Council has a statutory obligation to have an adequate and effective system of internal audit. The Chief Internal Auditor has the delegated authority for providing and maintaining this service.
- 5.2.2 The Chief Internal Auditor is responsible for providing an internal audit function which meets the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). He / she is also responsible for providing an opinion, in support of the Annual Governance Statement, on how the Council's risk management processes identify, evaluate, monitor and report that controls are operating effectively within the Council. The Chief Internal Auditor helps the Chief Finance Officer discharge his/her responsibilities under section 151. Irrespective of the organisational position of internal audit, this officer should have the right to report on matters concerning internal audit and internal control directly to the Chief Executive and the Audit Committee.
- 5.2.3 Internal Audit is an assurance function that provides 'an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.'
- 5.2.4 Management are responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate risk management processes, control systems, accounting records and governance arrangements. Internal Audit plays a vital part in advising the organisation that these arrangements are in place and operating properly. The annual internal audit opinion, which informs the Annual Governance Statement, both emphasises and reflects the importance of this aspect of internal audit work. Management's response to internal audit activity should lead to the strengthening of the control environment and, therefore, contribute to the achievement of the organisation's objectives.
- 5.2.5 Internal Audit has unrestricted access to all information (including records, computer files, databases, systems, property and personnel) across any service and/or activities undertaken by the Council, or partners on the behalf of the Council where council information is held in order to review, appraise and report on:
- the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of financial, operational and management control and their operation in practice in relation to the business risks to be addressed;
 - the extent of compliance with, relevance of, and financial effect of, policies, standards, plans and procedures established by the Council and service management and the extent of compliance with legislation and regulations, including reporting requirements of regulatory bodies;
 - the extent to which the assets and interests are acquired economically, used efficiently, accounted for and safeguarded from losses of all kinds arising from waste, extravagance, inefficient administration, poor value for

money, fraud or other cause and that adequate business continuity and risk management strategies exist;

- the suitability, accuracy, reliability and integrity of financial and other management information and the means used to identify, measure, classify and report such information;
- the integrity of processes and systems, including those under development, to ensure that controls offer adequate protection against error, fraud and loss of all kinds; and that the process aligns with the Council's strategic goals;
- the suitability of the organisation of the units audited for carrying out their functions, to ensure that services are provided in a way which is economical, efficient and effective;
- the follow-up action taken to remedy weaknesses identified by Internal Audit review, ensuring that good practice is identified and communicated widely; and
- the operation of the Council's Governance arrangements.

5.2.6 Independence

Internal Audit should be independent of the activities that it audits to enable auditors to perform their duties in a way that allows them to make impartial and effective professional judgements and recommendations. Internal auditors should not have any operational responsibilities.

5.2.7 Audit advice and recommendations, including where Internal Audit has been consulted about significant changes to the internal control systems, are given without prejudice to the right of Internal Audit to review and make further recommendations on the relevant policies, procedures, controls and operations at a later date.

5.2.8 The status of Internal Audit should enable it to function effectively. The support of the organisation is essential and recognition of the independence of Internal Audit is fundamental to its effectiveness. The Chief Internal Auditor should have direct access to and freedom to report in his or her own name and without fear or favour to, all officers and members and particularly to those charged with governance.

5.2.9 The Chief Internal Auditor shall be able to meet the Chairman of the Audit Committee alone outside of the normal Audit Committee meetings.

5.2.10 Responsibility & Authority

Internal Audit is an integral part of the organisation and functions under the policies established by management and the Council.

5.2.11 The purpose, scope, authority and responsibility of the internal auditing service is defined in a formal charter. The charter makes clear the independence of the internal auditing service and emphasises that it must not be restricted when carrying out its responsibilities.

5.2.12 Chief Officers shall have regard to the principles of risk management, and to the Council's risk management policy. It is the responsibility of Internal Audit to

review the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's arrangements for risk management.

5.2.13 The Chief Internal Auditor shall report to the Chairman of the Audit Committee all significant concerns that he/she may have over the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls and risk management activities within the organisation.

~~5.2.14 Ethical Governance~~

~~The Chief Internal Auditor shall raise the profile and awareness of governance activities throughout the Council and set standards for modern, proactive and cost-effective governance in the Council.~~

5.3 CORPORATE ANTI-FRAUD TEAM (CAFT)

5.3.1 Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has a statutory obligation to ensure the protection of public funds and to have an effective system of prevention and detection of fraud and corruption. The Assurance ~~Assistant~~ Director has the delegated authority for providing and maintaining this service.

5.3.2 As part of these Regulations, Directors should ensure that there are arrangements to enable staff and the public to raise and report any issues of concern in accordance with the Council's Whistleblowing policy.

5.3.3 Objective & Scope

The CAFT is an independent, objective activity designed to add value and improve the Council's operations. It helps the Council achieve its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to investigation, evaluating and improving the effectiveness of fraud prevention and detection and the subsequent prosecution of individuals and organisations where appropriate. The Council has a zero tolerance approach to fraud and other irregularity.

5.3.4 The objective of the CAFT is to assist officers and Members in the effective discharge of their responsibilities. To this end, the CAFT furnishes them with assurance, analysis, appraisals, recommendations, counsel, and information concerning the activities it is required to become involved with. The objective includes promoting fraud awareness across the authority.

5.3.5 The scope of the CAFT encompasses both the investigation and examination of the effectiveness of the council's systems of fraud control when subject to breach. In carrying out assigned responsibilities, Investigation Officers:-

- review the reliability and integrity of financial and operating information and the means used to identify, measure, classify, and report such information;
- ensure there are appropriate policies (Counter Fraud Framework) and procedures in place as well as effective systems for accurate reporting of any such fraud (including "Whistleblowing" and a "Fraud Hotline")
- ~~• create and promote policies, plans, procedures, law, regulations and guidance which have a significant impact on the organisation;~~
- provide an effective, efficient and value for money investigation service;

- Where appropriate provide the organisation, its employees and business partners with a comprehensive guide/advice –in relevant areas such as fraud, corruption, bribery and anti money laundering and other legislation relating to the proceeds of crime.

5.3.6 Independence

CAFT officers are independent when they carry out their work so act freely and objectively. Independence permits Investigators to render the impartial and unbiased judgements essential to the proper investigation and conclusion of fraud. Irrespective of the organisational position of CAFT, the Assurance Director should report on matters concerning internal audit and internal control directly to the Leader, the Chief Executive and the Audit Committee.

5.3.7 Responsibility & Authority

The primary responsibility for the awareness, prevention, detection and deterrence of fraud, corruption, bribery or money laundering activity lies with the Chief Officers. This responsibility includes ensuring that staff and partners are aware of both the implications of fraud and money laundering and the risks of fraud and money laundering across their service area. The primary responsibility for the investigation of any suspected fraud, corruption, bribery or money laundering activity found in a service area lies with the CAFT. All details must be immediately forwarded to the CAFT, to preserve the chain of evidence linked to such investigations within the law.

5.3.8 All Council Members and employees are personally responsible for ensuring they (and any subordinates) are aware of the Council's Counter Fraud Framework and the procedures and policies within it. All suspected breaches must be reported to the Assurance ~~Assistan~~ Director, the Chief Internal Auditor or any member of the CAFT.

5.3.9 The Assurance Director will maintain a scheme of delegation that will set out duties and responsibilities in relation to counter fraud activities. Assistant Director will nominate an officer to undertake the duties of the Council's Money Laundering Reporting Officer as detailed within the Council's Anti Money Laundering Policy Statement and procedure.

~~5.3.10 The Assurance Assistant Director is the designated Whistleblowing officer for the London Borough of Barnet and shall undertake the responsibilities of the role as described within the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.~~

~~5.3.11 The CAFT Counter Fraud Manager – Benefit Fraud is the officer designated by the Secretary of State under the provisions of the Social Security & Administration Act 2001 to act as the Authorised Officer in the obtaining of data prescribed within the Act which may otherwise be protected, in connection with the prevention and/or detection of a crime.~~

~~5.3.12 The Assurance Assistant Director is designated as the London Borough of Barnet's 'Senior Appropriate Officer' for the authorisation of production orders, restraint orders, customer information orders and account monitoring orders as described within the Proceeds of Crime Act 2000.~~

~~5.3.13 The Assurance Assistant Director and/or the CAFT Counter Fraud Managers are the London Borough of Barnet's responsible officers for the authorisation of arrest and prosecution of offenders including deciding on any appropriate sanction action available within the law. Those officers are responsible for ensuring that all CAFT investigations are conducted in accordance with the Criminal Procedures & Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA) the Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and the Human Rights Act 2000.~~

~~5.3.14 The Council's Senior Responsible Officer in relation to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) has been designated as the Monitoring Officer. The Assurance Assistant Director and the CAFT Counter-Fraud Managers are the designated officers for the authorisation of directed surveillance and use of Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS) as defined within the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). All investigating officers granted authorisation to carry out directed surveillance or use of a covert human intelligence source by a designated officer of the Council are authorised to appear before the Magistrates Court on behalf of the Council to apply for judicial approval in accordance with the requirements of sections 37 and 38 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.~~

~~5.3.15 That the Assurance Assistant Director and CAFT are authorised to act as 'Enforcement Officers' as defined and set out within the requirements of the Disabled Persons Parking Badges Act' 2013.~~

~~5.3.16 That the Assurance Assistant Director and CAFT are authorised to request and share information obtained under the 'Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act' 2013 for the purposes of housing fraud investigation.~~

5.3.10 CAFT have unrestricted access to all council held information and records (including computer files, databases, systems, property and personnel) across any service and/or activities undertaken by the Council, or partners on the behalf of the Council, in order to effectively carry out their duties:

~~5.3.171 CAFT or The Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer), or other authorised representative, representative such as the Monitoring Officer, the Assurance Assistant Director, the Chief Internal Auditor and all CAFT Investigation Officers shall have authority to:~~

- Enter or visit any land, premises, offices or establishments of the Council; and carry out any necessary searches of the aforementioned.
- have unrestricted access to, [access, view,](#) search, and remove any and all records, documents and correspondence, including electronically held correspondence, documents and records, and property and assets of the Council;
- where requested by CAFT view only access to specific databases/systems which hold council data
- receive such explanations as are necessary concerning any matter under examination, and / or fraud investigation;
- in conjunction with the relevant Chief Officer, suspend any employee of the Council under CAFT investigation from duty: acting in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedures; and, in cases concerning illegal working,

employees may be exited from the organisation and/or may be suspended without pay pending investigation.

- require any employee of the Council to produce and surrender any cash, stores, equipment or any other Council property under his or her control
- interview any and all employees and individuals in connection with investigations including where necessary interviews in accordance with the Police & Criminal Evidence Act (on tape).