

Sunderland City Council

Anti Fraud and Corruption
Policy

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Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy Statement

Background

The United Kingdom public sector maintains high standards of probity and has a good reputation for protecting the public purse. Sunderland City Council shares these high standards and reputation and is committed to protecting the public funds entrusted to it so that the maximum amount of resources can be used for their intended purpose, that of providing services to the citizens of Sunderland.

Sunderland City Council currently spends approximately £400 million annually on the services it provides. As part of the Council's commitment to protecting public funds, and to make the most efficient and effective use of the resources it is responsible for, it is essential that the risk to the Council of financial losses due to fraud, corruption and financial impropriety are minimised. The size and nature of the Council's role and activities puts it at risk from losses due to fraudulent or corrupt activity.

Commitment

Sunderland City Council is committed to ensuring that the citizens of Sunderland have complete confidence that the affairs of the City Council are conducted in accordance with the highest standards of probity and accountability. As part of this commitment the City Council is committed to combating fraud, corruption and other financial impropriety (e.g. theft) wherever it may arise in relation to any of the Council's activities or services and, in achieving this aim, realises this involves any Councillor or Officer of the Council or member of the public or any other third party associated with the Council's activities.

Standards

The Council expects Councillors and its employees to demonstrate the highest standards of honesty, probity, openness and integrity in the discharge of their functions. This includes:

- a) compliance with appropriate legislation, Codes of Conduct, Rules of Procedure, Procurement and Financial Procedure Rules, Conditions of Service, standards of appropriate professional bodies, and any other standards, guidelines or instructions which are relevant to the particular service or activity,
- b) providing a corporate framework within which counter fraud arrangements will flourish, and
- c) promoting an anti-fraud and corruption culture across the whole of the Council.

Likewise, the Council expects that all external individuals and organisations that it deals with, e.g. suppliers, contractors, partners, bodies funded by the Council, agents for the Council, service providers, clients, customers, claimants and members of the public etc., will act with honesty and integrity and without thought or actions involving fraud, corruption or financial impropriety. In such relationships the principles outlined in this Policy must be applied. Where external third parties become aware of any fraud and corruption, they should report their concerns promptly to the Council.

Implementation

The Council is committed to establishing and maintaining effective arrangements to prevent fraud, corruption and financial impropriety. The Council recognises, however, that these cannot always be prevented, and so effective arrangements have been established to detect, report and investigate all incidents or situations where they are suspected.

The Council is committed to creating and maintaining an anti fraud and corruption culture which promotes the highest standards of conduct and which enables Councillors, its employees and other external parties to express concerns and suspicions without fear of repercussion or intimidation and in the knowledge that the information will be treated confidentially and will be investigated fully and rigorously. This includes established reporting arrangements through the Council's Whistle-blowing Policy.

The Council will not tolerate dishonesty on the part of any Councillor or its employees or any person or organisation involved in any way with the City Council. Where fraud or corruption is detected the City Council will rigorously pursue appropriate action against the persons concerned including legal and/or disciplinary action, and wherever possible and deemed appropriate, will take action to recover any losses suffered.

The Council is committed to working constructively with the police and other relevant agencies in relation to combating fraud, corruption and financial impropriety within the City Council or within the wider public sector.

The framework in place to ensure the aims of this Policy are met are set out in the 'Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy – Operation Arrangements' document.

Awareness

The Council will seek to ensure that its stance on anti fraud and corruption is widely publicised both internally and externally to the Council. All Councillors, employees and other associated bodies/persons with whom the Council conducts its business will be appropriately briefed as to this Policy and the supporting framework.