

To:
All members of the
Council

Please reply to:
Contact: Gill Scott
Service: Committee Services
Direct line: 01784 446240
E-mail: g.scott@spelthorne.gov.uk
Date: 25 April 2019

Supplementary Agenda

Council - Thursday, 25 April 2019

Dear Councillor

I enclose the following items which were marked 'to follow' on the agenda for the Council meeting to be held on Thursday, 25 April 2019:

9. Recommendations of the Cabinet

a) Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy **3 - 10**

11. Report from the Leader of the Council **11 - 12**

To receive the report from the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet at its meeting held on 24 April 2019.

16. Report from the Chairman of the Planning Committee **13 - 14**

To receive the report from the Chairman of the Planning Committee on the work of his Committee.

Yours sincerely

Gill Scott
Committee Services

Spelthorne Borough Council, Council Offices, Knowle Green

Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB

www.spelthorne.gov.uk customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk telephone 01784 451499

To the members of the Council

Councillors:

M.M. Attewell
C. Barnard
R.O. Barratt
I.J. Beardsmore
J.R. Boughtflower
S.J. Burkmar
S. Capes
R. Chandler
C.A. Davis
S.M. Doran
S.A. Dunn
P.C. Edgington
Q.R. Edgington

T.J.M. Evans
M.P.C. Francis
A.E. Friday
N.J. Gething
A.L. Griffiths
A.C. Harman
I.T.E. Harvey
N. Islam
A.T. Jones
J.G. Kavanagh
V.J. Leighton (Mayor)
M.J. Madams
A.J. Mitchell

S.C. Mooney
D. Patel
J.M. Pinkerton OBE
O. Rybinski
D. Saliagopoulos
A. Sapunovas
J.R. Sexton
R.W. Sider BEM
R.A. Smith-Ainsley
B.B. Spoor
H.A. Thomson
H.R.D. Williams

Recommendations of the Cabinet

Cabinet meeting held on 24 April 2019

1. Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy

- 1.1. We considered a recommendation from the Audit Committee to approve the changes to the Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy following its annual review.
- 1.2. The Strategy forms part of the Council's Constitution and is in line with best practice. The Strategy continues to underpin the Council's commitment to prevent all forms of fraud, bribery and corruption, demonstrating the important role it plays in the overall Corporate Governance framework.
- 1.3. **Cabinet recommends that Council** approves the amendments to the Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy, as attached at Appendix 1.

Councillor Ian Harvey
Leader of the Council

25 April 2019

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APPENDIX 1 - ANTI FRAUD, BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY

Introduction

1. This strategy is applicable to Members and staff. The Borough of Spelthorne is committed to providing a high standard of service and accountability. An important aspect of this is a strategy which protects against fraud, bribery and corruption within the Council itself and from external sources.

In this context

Fraud means - the illicit gaining of cash or other benefit by deception;

Corruption means - the dishonest influencing of actions and decisions.

Bribery means – the offering, giving or soliciting of an inducement or reward which may influence a person to perform a function or activity improperly.

2. The Council recognises that it is already subject to a high degree of external scrutiny of its affairs by a variety of parties. This includes the general public, Council Tax / Business Rates payers, service users, The European Institute for combatting corruption and fraud (TEICCAF), the Local Government Ombudsman, Central Government, in particular, HM Revenue and Customs, the **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government** and the Department for Work and Pensions.
3. It also has external auditors who advise whether the Council has in place adequate arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud, bribery and corruption.
4. While this external scrutiny assists in protecting against fraud, bribery and corruption the Council believes a clear statement of its own strategy is needed.
5. The key elements of the Council's strategy to combat fraud, bribery and corruption are:
 - An open and honest culture
 - Adequate preventative measures
 - Systems for detection and investigation
 - Understanding and awareness within the Council and the adoption of a "whistleblowing" policy

Culture

6. The Council expects Members and staff at all levels to behave with integrity and propriety and to act within the law and the regulations, procedures and

practices laid down in relation to the conduct of the Council's business. The Council believes this is achieved best through the promotion of an atmosphere of honesty and openness.

7. The Council encourages Members and staff to raise any concerns they have about fraud, bribery and corruption immediately as they occur. It will treat all concerns raised, seriously and in confidence.
8. The Council has three senior officers who have particular responsibility for regulating the conduct of the Council and its activities. These are:

Chief Finance Officer (currently Terry Collier)

Responsible for the financial management, audit and financial probity of the Council and also for its proper personnel policies and practices.

Monitoring Officer (currently Michael Graham)

Responsible for the legal probity and avoidance of maladministration or injustice by the Council.

Chief Executive (currently Daniel Mouawad)

Responsible as Head of Paid Service for the overall management and direction of the Council and for ensuring adequate staff resources for services.

9. In addition each Group Head and senior manager have responsibility for the proper organisation and conduct of their service area. It is important that Managers and officers at all levels do not become complacent about the risk of fraud as this may have an impact in terms of the robustness of controls applied in practice. Please refer to the section on systems below.
10. Concerns should be raised with any of the above officers under section 8 or with the Council's Internal Audit Manager (Punita Talwar).
11. More detailed guidance and advice on how to raise any concerns is contained in the Council's Confidential Reporting Code (whistleblowing policy).
12. If anyone feels they are unable to raise their concerns through any of the above routes they may contact 'Protect' ((0203 1172520 – advice line), a registered charity whose services are free and strictly confidential.

Prevention

13. The adoption of proper and adequate measures to prevent fraud, bribery and corruption is the responsibility of Members, Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives, Group Heads and other managers. Preventative measures can be classified under two broad headings - Codes/Procedures and Systems.

1. Codes/Procedures

All Members and staff need to be aware of, and have ready access to, the Council's agreed policies and procedures eg. Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, Codes of Conduct, Code of Corporate Governance and any relevant practice and procedure documents. A planned review of the Council's Constitution is scheduled for 2019, being led by the Head of Corporate Governance. The Governance Framework has been developed and enhanced to reflect the increasing commercial asset acquisitions and investments.

In particular staff must observe the Council's Code of Conduct for Staff (a copy of which is made available to all staff) and any relevant professional codes.

References will be taken up for all permanent and temporary staff to verify their suitability, honesty and integrity.

Members will in particular observe the Spelthorne code of conduct adopted on the 27 June 2012 and subsequently revised on 25 June 2013 any other local Spelthorne code. The Members Code of conduct is kept under review by the Members Code of Conduct Committee. Members will be supplied with a copy of any relevant code, policy and procedure and advised of their responsibilities.

Spelthorne have signed up to a Benchmark package with 'Protect' (December 2018) to assess the effectiveness of its whistleblowing arrangements against best practice. This is being led by the Head of Corporate Governance.

2. Systems

The Council has and will maintain in place systems and procedures which incorporate internal controls, including adequate separation of duties to ensure that, as far as possible, errors, fraud, bribery and corruption are prevented.

The Chief Finance Officer has a statutory responsibility under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to ensure the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs. Financial procedures detail key financial systems and provide guidance which underpins the Council's Financial Regulations.

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executives, Group Heads and managers are responsible for ensuring that appropriate internal controls are properly maintained to minimise the risk of errors, fraud, bribery and corruption.

A detailed analysis of the risks associated with any service should be carried out by managers (with assistance from Audit Services as necessary) to ensure that fraud, bribery and corruption is minimised.

Detection and investigation

14. Concerns should be reported to one of the individuals referred to in paragraphs 8 and 10 above or in accordance with the Council's whistleblowing policy.

A detailed investigation of any concerns raised will be undertaken with the assistance of the Council's Internal Audit Service. The Head of Corporate Governance holds responsibility for responding to allegations of bribery and corruption. The Council will deal with any instances of fraud, bribery or corruption swiftly. Disciplinary action will be taken if appropriate after the police have been informed/involved, and the relevant Cabinet Member informed where necessary. Where the Council has adopted a prosecution policy for any business area (eg Housing Benefit Fraud or Housing register) this will be followed. Any lessons learnt from Investigations undertaken relating to systematic weaknesses will be highlighted and should feed back into improving fraud prevention/detection measures.

In the event that fraud is suspected on the part of contractors' employees or internally, by staff involved in agency or contract work on behalf of other bodies, procedures and responsibilities for reporting and initial investigation are the same as for staff. The Council will inform and involve employing contractors or agencies when appropriate.

Counter Fraud measures - Given the significance of corporate fraud in national and local statistics and the cost to the taxpayer, the Council recognises the continued importance of collaborative working arrangements with other Councils/Partners to help deter, detect and investigate fraud, providing access to specialist skills and greater capacity to investigate fraud. The strategy to target areas which are likely to generate greater financial payback (Business Rates and Housing) will continue and is led by the Internal Audit Manager. Such initiatives have demonstrated positive financial fraud returns for Spelthorne (notional and cashable savings) in the areas of Housing, Business Rates and Council Tax and continue to do so. These savings could be enhanced further through the use of Financial Investigator Resource to recover losses/assets (where appropriate). Counter fraud measures also contribute to the delivery of wider social benefits, enabling more social housing to be available to those people who are genuinely in need of a home, leading to a reduction in housing applicant waiting times, reduced temporary accommodation costs and ultimately the need for fewer houses to be built. Positive results are publicised periodically to serve as a deterrent.

External groups are attended with Surrey Partners including the Surrey Counter Fraud Board (SCFB). This enables the sharing of best practice and approaches in tackling public fraud, and provides opportunities to pursue joint counter fraud initiatives such as data matching. The importance of engaging with members of the public to join the fight against fraud is recognised. Spelthorne's fraud returns are collated quarterly and reported to the Surrey Counter Fraud Board, which enables some benchmarking and comparison across Surrey Partners.

Awareness The Council recognises the continuing effectiveness of the Anti Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy depends largely on the awareness and

responsiveness of Members and staff. It is essential that both Members and staff are made aware of the strategy when they join the Council and receive a copy for inclusion in their personal records and, in addition, have ready access to all other relevant documents, policies and procedures which regulate the Council's activities. Action will be taken on a regular basis to remind both Members and staff of the importance the Council places on preventing fraud and corruption and investigating irregularities. Effective methods for mandatory training and raising awareness including face to face and online shall be periodically explored and delivered.

In accordance with the Government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy, local Police representatives have provided two awareness raising sessions for staff and Members during 2018 to identify areas where Spelthorne is at most risk of being targeted by serious and organised crime and highlight known vulnerabilities. During these sessions the importance of sharing intelligence with Law Enforcement Partners has been encouraged. Organised crime includes drug trafficking, human trafficking, child sexual exploitation, high value fraud and cyber-crime. Further consultation with the local police is ongoing and red flags /known risks will continue to be highlighted. Group Heads and Managers are responsible for assessing governance arrangements in place to combat risks in this area for their respective functions.

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Report from the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet

Meeting held on 24 April 2019

This is my report as the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet. It is an overview of the business considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 24 April 2019.

One further report was considered at this meeting in relation to the review of the anti-fraud, bribery and corruption strategy, which was a recommendation to Council and therefore has been dealt with earlier on this agenda.

- 1. Recommendation from Audit Committee on Corporate Risk Register**
 - 1.1 We approved the Corporate Risk Register as recommended by the Audit Committee.
- 2. Making Surrey Safer – consultation response**
 - 2.1 We agreed a draft response to Surrey County Council's consultation on the future of the Fire and Rescue Service and gave delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Lee O'Neil) in consultation with myself, to finalise the response for submission by 26th May 2019.

Councillor Ian Harvey
Leader of the Council

25 April 2019

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Report of the Chairman on the work of the Planning Committee

The Planning Committee has met on one further occasion since the previous report was prepared for the Council meeting. This report therefore gives an overview of the items considered by the Committee at its meeting on 23 April 2019.

1. Planning Committee – 23 April 2019

- 1.1. The Committee considered two applications for Tree Preservation Orders at Leacroft Close, adjacent to 51 Leacroft, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 4PB and The Old Vicarage, Church Street, Sunbury-on-Thames, TW16 6RA
- 1.2. The Committee approved the applications.

Councillor Richard Smith-Ainsley

25 April 2019

Chairman of Planning Committee

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