

Council Constitution

Part 5(c) – Anti Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy: Statement of Intent

The consequences of fraud, bribery and corruption affect all employees, service users and council tax payers as every pound lost results in fewer jobs, reduced services and higher council tax bills and can impact upon the Council's reputation and its ability to achieve its corporate objectives.

The Council's aim is to foster a culture where fraud, bribery and corruption within our organisation is never acceptable, therefore it has formally decided that:

1. We will not tolerate malpractice or wrongdoing. We are determined that all instances of malpractice will be fully investigated and will ensure that appropriate action is taken against all those concerned.
2. We believe that members of the public, Councillors, employees, contractors or any other interested party should feel able to report any cases of malpractice or wrongdoing without fear of recrimination.
3. All Councillors and employees are asked to exercise proper stewardship of public money, carry out all business fairly, honestly and openly, and put in place appropriate systems and procedures, incorporating efficient and effective internal controls, to prevent and detect fraud, bribery and corruption.

Definitions of Fraud, Bribery and Corruption

- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) defines Fraud as the "intentional distortion of financial statements or other records by persons internal or external to the organisation, which is carried out to conceal the misappropriation of assets or otherwise for gain"
- CIPFA defines Corruption as the "offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of any inducement or reward which may properly influence the action of any person"
- The Theft Act 1968 defines Theft as "a person shall be guilty of theft if he dishonestly appropriates property belonging to another with the intention of permanently depriving the other of it"
- CIPFA defines Bribery as "an inducement or reward offered, promised or provided to gain personal, commercial regulatory or contractual advantage"

The internal controls to assist in the prevention of Fraud, Bribery and Corruption include:-

1. Detailed policy and guidance documents

These include:

- The Audit and Accounts Regulations
- The Constitution
 - Code of Conduct for Councillors
 - Procurement Standing Orders
 - Terms of Reference of Committees
 - Scheme of delegation

- Protocol on accepting Gifts and Hospitality
- Standards of Conduct and Ethics (incorporating Code of Conduct for Tameside MBC Employees)
- Corporate Information Technology and Email Security Policy.
- Whistle Blowing policy
- Each Service Unit's procedural manuals

2. Training

We will ensure that employees are informed and trained on policies and procedures which apply to their role.

3. Recruitment

We will take steps to establish the previous record of potential employees to ensure that we minimise the risk of employing those who are likely to engage in fraud or corrupt practices. Particular due diligence will be applied to positions that are considered to be of a high risk nature.

4. Culture

We will promote an anti-fraud culture by promotion and publicity on anti-fraud issues that is led and supported by all Senior Managers of the organisation. However, we expect all managers to be responsible for promoting an anti-fraud culture in their service. Whilst being led by the Senior Management Team, maintenance of a zero tolerance approach to fraud, bribery and corruption requires the efforts of every member and officer of the Council.

5. Contractors/Associated Parties

We will ensure that contractors and any parties associated with the Council are informed about the policies and procedures and take rigorous action against any fraud, bribery or corruption identified by contractors/associated parties.

6. Partnership working

We will work in partnership with others to prevent and detect fraud. Tameside is at the forefront of this by hosting the National Anti-Fraud Network. We will also continue to work with our partner councils across Greater Manchester, with the Department of Work and Pensions and the Audit Commission.

7. Deterring Fraudulent Activity

There are a number of ways to deter potential fraudsters from committing or attempting fraudulent or corrupt acts, whether they are inside and/or outside of the Council, and these include: -

- Publicising the fact that the Council is firmly set against fraud, bribery and corruption and states this at every appropriate opportunity.
- Including appropriate anti-corruption/bribery clauses in contracts.
- Acting robustly and decisively when fraud, bribery and corruption are suspected and proven.
- Taking action to effect the maximum recoveries for the Council.
- Having sound internal control systems, that still allow for innovation, but at the same time do not provide the opportunity for fraud, bribery and corruption.
- The operation and advertising of a fraud hotline in the Housing Benefits Unit and a dedicated internal audit email address for reporting any suspected incidents of fraud, bribery and corruption.