

EXTRACT FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 31 MARCH 2009

Subject:	Counter Fraud Strategy		
Date of Meeting:	28 April 2009		
	Audit Committee 31 March 2009		
	Council 30 April 2009		
Report of:	Director of Strategy and Governance		
Key Decision:	No		
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Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE
4.00pm 31 MARCH 2009

COMMITTEE ROOM 1, HOVE TOWN HALL **MINUTES**

Present: Councillors Hamilton (Chairman), Alford, Kitcat, Oxley, Pidgeon, Randall, Simpson, Smith, Watkins (Deputy Chairman) and Wells

PART ONE

95. COUNTER FRAUD STRATEGY UPDATE

95.1 The Head of Audit and Business Risk presented an update to the Committee on the Counter Fraud Strategy and stated that this was part of the key arrangements which laid out the Council's response to potential high risks (for copy see minute book).

There had been no evidence so far that fraud had been a major problem within the Council but vigilance was needed as instances of fraud commonly rise during times of recession. An update to the fraud loss measurement was being carried out to assess potential losses.

- 95.2 The Chairman asked if Brighton & Hove City Council had many 'whistleblowers' over the years, and the Head of Audit and Business Risk stated that they had received a fair number of referrals of investigation over the hotline and about 20% were passed on to the Police for criminal investigation.
- 95.3 Councillor Oxley asked whether the protocols on publicity for fraud cases had been changed and the Head of Audit and Business Risk stated that the Council would seek to publicise any positive results from investigation cases. He noted that most had been due to housing benefit fraud and the department would work closely with the communications department to any fraud case.
- 95.4 Councillor Watkins asked whether the Council had many instances of corruption. The Head of Audit and Business Risk stated that potential instances of corruption had been investigated but no actual findings identified at the Council. There was training available on fraud awareness for staff and members.
- 95.5 Councillor Smith raised concern that unintentional corruption could take place for members if the circumstances had occurred several years ago. The Head of Audit and Business Risk stated that all interests should be declared of the register of interests which was available for the entire time the member served.
- 95.6 **RESOLVED** – That the content of the Counter Fraud Strategy be noted and recommended to the Governance Committee for approval.