

Audit Committee

10 September 2026

Counter Fraud Annual Report 2025-26

Report from: Phil Watts, Chief Operating Officer

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Summary

This report informs Members of the results of Counter Fraud work completed during 2025-26.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Committee is recommended to note the work undertaken by the Counter Fraud team for Medway during 2025-26 in providing an effective service to the Council.

2. Budget and policy framework

- 2.1. Council delegates responsibility for the oversight and monitoring the effectiveness of the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Shared Service to the Audit Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Counter Fraud Service reports periodically to senior management and the Audit Committee, providing updates on progress against agreed workplans and the results of any investigative activity.

4. Counter Fraud Annual Report 2025-26

- 4.1. The Head of Internal Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service provided update reports to Members at three meetings of the Audit Committee during 2025-26. This Annual Report reproduces the findings detailed in those update reports along with details of any work completed since the last update, to provide Members with a summary of all work delivered by the team in the year.
- 4.2. The annual report is intended to provide Members with sufficient details of the results of all the work of the team, which provides an additional form of assurance to support the opinion of the Chief Audit Executive on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's overall control environment.
- 4.3. The Counter Fraud Annual Report for 2025-26 can be found at Appendix 1.

5. Risk management

- 5.1. This report, summarising the work of the Counter Fraud Team, provides a key source of assurance for the council on the adequacy and effectiveness of its counter fraud arrangements.

6. Climate change implications

- 6.1. There are no climate change implications in this report.

7. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implications

- 7.1. There are no direct LGR implications linked to this report.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1. An adequate and effective Counter Fraud function helps to identify fraud and error that could have an adverse effect on the financial statements of the Council.
- 8.2. The outturn costs for 2025-26 for the Counter Fraud elements of the Shared Service are £398,694, with Medway's share of these costs being £289,959 (this includes resource costs for internal investigations). Savings resulting from investigative activity during 2025-26 total £671,640 providing good value for money.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1. The Section 151 Officer of a local authority is responsible for the proper administration of its financial affairs. The work of the Counter Fraud Team supports this responsibility by identifying and investigating alleged misuse of public money, applying sanctions, and seeking redress as appropriate.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Counter Fraud Annual Report 2025-26

Background papers

None