



Stevenage Borough Council

Audit Committee

**Anti-Fraud Report 2022/23**

## Purpose

1. This report provides details of the work undertaken by the council and the Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS) to protect the council against the threat of fraud and the delivery of the council's Anti-Fraud Action Plan for 2022/2023.

## Recommendations

2. **Members are RECOMMENDED to;**
  - I. **note the activity undertaken by the Shared Anti-Fraud Service to deliver the 2022/2023 Anti-Fraud Plan for the council.**
  - II. **note the other anti-fraud activity undertaken to protect the council.**

## Background

3. National reports and papers continue to be used by the Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS) to ensure that the Council is aware of new and emerging fraud threats as well as those established/known risks. This helps to mitigate or manage the Councils fraud risks through a programme of work including the Anti-Fraud Plan. Details of these reports, along with other suggested background reading for Members, can be found below and at **Section 56** of this report.

4. Some of the most significant recent reports include:

***Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally a Strategy for the 2020's.*** This strategy focuses on the governance and 'ownership' of anti-fraud and corruption arrangements. The Strategy also identifies areas of best practice and includes a 'Checklist' to compare against actions taken by the Council to deter/prevent/investigate fraud. The checklist is maintained and reviewed by SAFS and officers.

***Tackling Fraud in the Public Sector 2020.*** In 2019 CIPFA commissioned a survey and round table events for senior managers in local government to establish what local authorities were doing to tackling fraud. The survey was conducted by an independent body with the support of LGA and MHCLG.

***Lost Homes, Lost Hope.*** This paper, published by the Fraud Advisory Panel & Tenancy Fraud Forum in April 2023 uses previous data and research to estimate the current cost to local government of tenancy fraud along with the volume of fraud across the sector.

5. According to reports from CIPFA, National Audit Office (NAO), Cabinet Office, and the private sector fraud risk across local government in England exceeds £2 billion each year, but no detailed research in this area has been undertaken for a number of years.
6. The Public Sector Fraud Authority (Cabinet Office), Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), National Audit Office, and CIPFA all continue to issue advice, and best practice to support local councils in the fight

to combat fraud and prevent loss to the public purse. This includes the need for all councils to be vigilant in recognising their fraud risks and to invest sufficient resources in counter fraud activities that deliver tangible savings.

7. It is essential that the council has in place a robust framework to prevent and deter fraud, including effective strategies and policies and a response to deal with the investigation and prosecution of identified fraud.
8. Stevenage Borough Council is a founding member of the Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS). Members of this committee, and the Senior Leadership Team have received regular reports since then explaining how SAFS works with the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS), dealing with all aspects of fraud/corruption/money laundering from prevention & deterrence to investigation & prosecution, working with staff at all levels across the Council.

## Report

### SAFS Activity – Delivery of the 2022/2023 Anti-Fraud Plan

#### 2022/2023 Plan

9. In March 2022 this committee approved the Anti-Fraud Plan for 2022/2023 developed with council officers in partnership with SAFS. A copy of the Plan can be found at **Appendix 1**.
10. The Plan includes resources and costings for its delivery, and activity to protect the council from fraud. The plan includes a copy of the latest Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally Strategy and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for SAFS which were agreed with senior officers. KPI performance can be found in **Table 1** below.
11. The Anti-Fraud Plan for 2022/23 was designed to meet the recommendations of the Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally Strategy (FFCL) adopting the five 'pillars' of Protect, Govern, Acknowledge, Prevent and Pursue. The plan identifies officers and members who are charged with delivering it.
12. The Council adopted the FFCL checklist as a 'To-do' list to assist in identifying weaknesses in its anti-fraud defences and a method to provide assurance to senior leaders and elected Members about the effectiveness of the Councils anti-fraud activity. We continue to use the checklist to inform the Councils anti-fraud planning, adding new actions/objectives as they become relevant.
13. The plan identifies officers/members who will have a role in delivering it and SAFS will work with all concerned to ensure they fully understand their role in delivering the Plan.
14. Members will note this Committee has a continuing role in ensuring that the Council meets its objectives.

### Staffing

15. The SAFS Team (in April 2022) was composed of 22 accredited counter fraud staff, based at the County Council's offices in Hertford.
16. Each SAFS Partner receives dedicated support and response and for 2022/23 this was achieved by allocating a number of staff to work exclusively for each Partner, whilst allowing officers within the Team to work with other Partners from time to time. Providing the Service in this way allows SAFS staff to develop good working relationships with council officers as well as improved resilience and flexibility across the whole Partnership. SAFS staff have access to council offices, officers, data and systems to undertake their work.
17. For 2022/23 SAFS deployed 1 FTE to work exclusively for the council supported by SAFS Management and Support Team based at Stevenage. The Council and SAFS also arranged for the continued secondment of the Councils Tenancy Fraud Officer to SAFS, providing an enhanced service for the Council in this key area. The SAFS Support Team includes specialists in data-analytics, financial investigations and open source investigations.
18. SAFS officers are all fully trained and accredited and members of, or working towards membership, of the Government Counter Fraud Profession. The Profession is divided into various streams including awareness training, fraud risk assessment, investigations, intelligence, data-analytics and fraud management.
19. As part of the Anti-Fraud Plan for the Council objectives and KPIs are agreed with senior managers across the Council. Progress against these KPI's are reviewed during the year.

**Table 1. SAFS KPIs for 2022/2023 and Performance**

KPI	Measure	Target 2022/23	Performance
1	Return on investment from SAFS Partnership.	Demonstrate, via SAFS Board, that the Council is receiving a financial return on investment from membership of SAFS and that this equates to its financial contribution.	Regular meetings take place with the Senior Manager to review the work of SAFS.  SAFS reports are provided to the SAFS Board, CGG and the Councils Audit Committee.  The Councils Strategic Director (CFO) and Assistant Director of Finance (Deputy 151 Officer) sit on SAFS Board.
2	Provide an investigation service.	A. 1 FTE on call at the Council. (Supported by SAFS Intel/AFI/Management). B. 3 Reports to Audit Committee. C. SAFS Attendance at Corporate Governance, Champion meetings, team management meetings.	A. 1 FTE in place for 2022/2023 & TFO seconded into SAFS. B. Reports to AC in Sep 22/ Nov 22 /March 23. C. SAFS works closely with Service Champions and senior leaders/managers across the Council.
3	Action on reported fraud.	A. All urgent/ high risk cases 1 Day. B. All other cases 2 Days on Average.	A & B. All referrals responded to within 24 hours on average.
4	Added value of SAFS membership.	A. Membership of NAFN & PNLD B. Membership of CIPFA Counter Fraud Centre C. NAFN Access/Training for relevant Council Staff D. 10 Training events for staff/Members in year.	A. SBC has membership of NAFN and SAFS provides PNLD licence. B. SAFS is a member of CIPFA via HCC. C. Training has been provided to staff by SAFS and via NAFN webinars. D. Thirteen formal training events were delivered in 2022/23 for officers and members.
5	Allegations of fraud received. & Success rates for cases investigated.	A. All reported fraud (referrals) will be logged and reported to the Council by type & source. B. All cases investigated will be recorded and the financial value, including loss/recovery/ savings of each, Reported. C. Achieving a 60% success rate of cases selected for investigation. D. Assist in the recovery of property, prevention of loss or fraudulent RTB applications – 12 properties/applications in total.	A. All referrals are logged onto the SAFS CMS. B. The outcomes of all cases are captured on the CMS and reported to Mgt and SAFS Board. C. <b>39 Investigations closed with 23 identifying fraud- 59% success rate.</b> D. 11 Properties were recovered in year and 1 RTB.
6	Making better use of data to prevent/identify fraud.	A. Support the NFI 2022/23 upload and output. B. Support the implementation of the Herts FraudHub. C. Consider other areas where the better use of data will benefit the Council financially.	A. NFI Exercise complete in full with work ongoing into 23/24 to resolve outcomes B. SBC were part of the Herts FraudHub in 22/23. C. <b>Other areas of data-analytics will be considered as part of our work in 2023/24.</b>

### Fraud Awareness and Reported Fraud

20. A key objective for the Council is to improve its existing anti-fraud culture; ensuring senior managers and members consider the risk of fraud when developing policies or processes; helping to prevent fraud occurring; deterring potential fraud through external communication; encouraging all officers to report fraud where it is suspected; and providing public confidence in the Councils stance on fraud and corruption.
21. The council's website has links for the public to report fraud by email, telephone or using the SAFS online reporting tool. As well as encouraging the public to report any suspected fraud to the Council:  
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/benefits/reporting-fraud>  
  
[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/fraud](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/fraud)  
Both the Council and SAFS webpages include the various frauds that affect the Council and reports of cases that have been prosecuted, including those by Stevenage Borough Council.
22. Council staff can use the same methods to report fraud or if they work within housing services or revenues & benefits they can report fraud directly to SAFS staff working at the council offices.
23. SAFS delivered training to staff and Members via both face-to-face/virtual means during 2022/2023 including general fraud awareness, use of the services provided by National Anti-Fraud Service, Anti-Money Laundering and new services provided by the Cabinet Office as part of the National Fraud Initiative.
24. The mandatory e-training modules on anti-fraud/ bribery/ money laundering was available for staff and the HR Team can report on completion of this training.
25. Following the pandemic SAFS increased its work around fraud prevention as a priority for the service. We made a decision to resolve most low-level fraud through the use of warning letters, advisory notices or compliance letters to customers. More serious allegations of fraud or those needing immediate attention would be prioritised.
26. SAFS continues to provide guidance to Council services and share fraud alerts and best practice provided by National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN), National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), National Intelligence Service (NATIS), City of London Police & National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB-national lead on fraud and cyber-crime for policing and part of Action Fraud), London Fraud Forum (LFF), Credit Industry Fraud Avoidance Service (CIFAS), CIPFA, Bedfordshire Police, Trading Standards, and the Public Sector Fraud Authority (PSFA).

**Case 1: CIFAS Alert.** SAFS receives monthly threat alerts of emerging frauds experienced by members in the previous month. This is an example of the 'Insider Threat' which was one of several areas listed in September 2022. Across SAFS Partners, we have experienced many of the frauds listed below.

## 2. The Insider Threat

This section focuses on the threat from within the workplace



Members this month have reported on the following fraud threats:

- Increase in staff members benefiting from fraud that has taken place such as withdrawal of funds from customer accounts to their own. This has occurred in relation to both staff working in branches and contact centres.
- Suspected insider fraud relating to vehicle finance. With staff members contacting the customers via their personal mobiles so the calls and messages are not recorded, there have been staff moving between two brokers for job opportunities.
- Increase in staff members who are also customers with the bank submitting false payment dispute claims. In these situations, the member can see the staff member has entered their overdraft prior to the claims being made.
- Instances of work avoidance whereby the staff member had a second job. Although this position was declared to the organisation, the employee had used their social media account to advertise appointments with clients during their primary work hours.
- Staff have been using corporate cards for personal expenses such as coffee and lunches. Larger fraudulent expenses have been circa thousands of pounds to the card. In some cases employees have requested refunds which have not been returned to the account, instead the staff member has kept the money

27. SAFS maintains an excellent working relationship with the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) and the Shared Legal Service including work on civil recovery of council homes, criminal litigation, and policy review.

### Reactive and Proactive Fraud Investigation

28. In 2022/2023 SAFS issued fraud alerts on more than 15 occasions to Council officers/departments. These alerts covered areas such as the vulnerability to cybercrime for home working staff, new and emerging scams and spams, 'impersonation' or CEO frauds.

**Case 2:** In late 2022 SAFS shared the alert below from Hertfordshire Owl Networks.

*"We have been alerted to reports of a criminal group who are mimicking the email domains of reputable law firms, attorneys, and debt collecting agencies to send emails asking for overdue payments. They are indiscriminate as to which industry they target. The emails are designed to look very similar to those of the reputable organisations they are mimicking. They use "social engineering" to convince the recipient to carry out a particular action, such as to pay an outstanding invoice. Invoices are sent as a PDF file and appear the same as a legitimate invoice but the banking details have been replaced with those of the criminal group.*

*Indicators of "spear phishing" emails:*

*Suspiciously spelt email addresses.*

*Use of language prompting urgency or risk such as: "Urgent!" "Overdue!"*

*Unexpected change of payment details.*

*Threats that the "problem" will be raised to a manager or executive."*

29. During 2022/2023 SAFS received 132 allegations of fraud (referrals) affecting Council services (112 2021/2022). Referrals increased slightly on the previous two years but are still below pre-pandemic levels, which is very positive.

**Table 2. Types of fraud being reported (in year):**

Housing Benefit/CTax Fraud	Tenancy/Housing	Blue Badge	Right to Buy	Other *	Total
60	56	5	6	5	132

\*Other includes Payroll/Mandate, but in the main fraud not affecting the Council.

**Table 3. Who is reporting fraud:**

Fraud Reported by Staff	Reports from Public	Data-Matching/Proactive	Other Agencies	Total
52	71	8	1	132

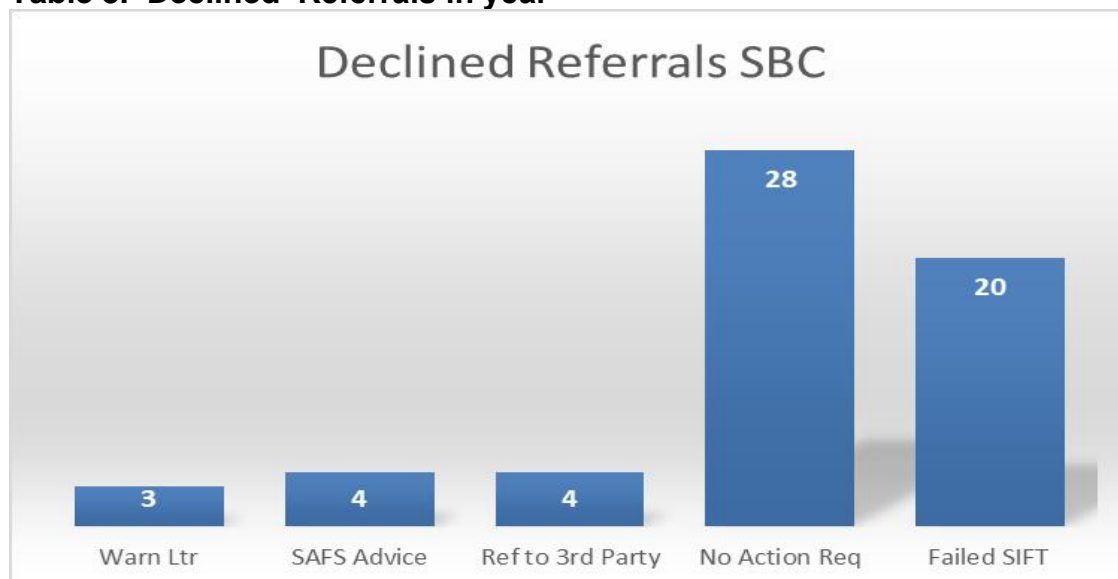
**Table 4. Historic Fraud Referrals (SBC)**



30. It should be emphasised that not every referral/allegation will need to be investigated and some can also be false, misleading or incorrect. Every referral received is risk assessed and sifted by the SAFS Intelligence Team to determine what further action should be taken. In total 59 allegations received in 2022/23 were not selected for further investigation.



**Table 5. 'Declined' Referrals in year**



31. 'Failed SIFT' is used where the allegation cannot be attributed to any service provided by the Council. 'No Action Required' are referrals where the subject can be identified but no error/fraud is apparent, or the Council is already aware of the facts reported in the allegation. Referrals that are passed to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties occurs where another agency needs to investigate the referral such as DWP/HMRC. 'SAFS Advice' is where some guidance/support has been provided to Council officers, but a full investigation is not required. 'Warning Letters' are used to advise residents that they may be coming an offence if their actions continue.
32. In addition to the referrals that did not require an investigation 10 'low risk' cases involving alleged council tax fraud were resolved through compliance activity or review. This resulted in the identification of £11k in additional council tax revenue.
33. We continue to work with the Councils Communication Team to issue publicity encouraging the public to report fraud and help protect public funds, as well as press releases of cases investigated/prosecuted by the Council. The Council also takes part in the International Fraud Awareness Week each November.

### *The* **COMET**

Former Stevenage Borough Council employee sentenced for fraud offence

34. At this time many cases raised for investigation are still in the early stages. However, of the 39 cases (a decrease from 42 in 2021/2022) investigated and closed in the year, 23 identified fraud - with recoverable losses of £273k, and fraud savings (through prevention) of £250k reported. The volume and value of fraud identified/prevented had both remained comparable to previous years. The decline in cases investigated, from its peak 2019/20, is due to majority of low value housing benefit fraud cases now falling under the remit of DWP and migration of much of the housing benefit caseload to Universal Credit.

35. At year end of March 2023 19 cases remained under investigation with an estimated fraud loss of just over £231k.

**Table 6. Fraud Investigations Closed Each Year (SBC)**



36. As well as the financial values identified SAFS assisted in the recovery of 11 council properties that were subject to some form of tenancy fraud. SAFS conducted 60 anti-money laundering reviews of 'right to buy' applications and uncovered one fraudulent 'right to buy' application, preventing a property being lost from the councils housing stock.

**Case 3:** *A Right-to-Buy (RTB) application was prevented and a property recovered due to the checks that are conducted during the review process.*

*A financial report showed a tenant applying for a RTB for a council property at Holly Copse, Stevenage held a mortgage for a property elsewhere. Further enquiries revealed that the tenant had owned the second property since 2005.*

*On reviewing the tenants housing documents an application for housing completed in 2010 showed they failed to declare ownership of the property. Then in 2017, when a change occurred within the family, and a sole tenancy was obtained by the remaining tenant again the tenant failed to declare they owned another property.*

*The tenant was interviewed by officers from SAFS and later withdrew the RTB application. The keys for the Holly Copse property were returned without the need for enforcement action and the tenancy terminated.*

*This successful outcome ensured that a property remained as part of the Councils housing stock and enabled a family, previously living in temporary accommodation, to be housed.*

37. SAFS had also identified, by the end of March 2023, that a further 5 council properties were being sub-let, or misused, in contravention of the tenancy agreements. These matters had all been reported to the council's housing and legal services.

38. In April 2023 the Fraud Advisory Panel (FAP) published a report 'Lost Homes-Lost Hope' following up from a paper published in 2021 by the Tenancy Fraud Forum 'Calculating Losses from Housing Tenancy Fraud', both papers were supported by CIPFA, CIFAS, the Cabinet Office and the Chartered Institute of Housing.
39. The 2021 report calculated the losses of an average housing fraud, per case, to the public purse to be in the region of £41k, of which £36k is attributable to the cost for local authorities through the provision of temporary accommodation as a result of the fraud.

**Case 4: Tenancy Fraud and associated fraud**

*In 2022 an anonymous referral was received from a member of the public stating a tenant of Scarborough Avenue had abandoned their property and moved abroad. The tenant had allowed other people to live in the property who were causing Anti-social behaviour.*

*The tenant had continued to receive financial assistance (welfare benefits and universal credit) and had not disclosed they were no longer resident in the UK.*

*Evidence obtained by SAFS corroborated the allegation and showed the tenant had moved to Cyprus during August 2020 and had not returned to the UK since then. This included financial records that showed spending in the UK until August 2020 and thereafter spending was outside the UK. The claim for benefit in the UK were all suspended when SAFS notified the appropriate agencies.*

*Although the tenant was invited to attend interviews to explain the evidence obtained and support the investigation they declined to respond.*

*Notices were served and an application was made to court to recover the property. The Council obtained an order, a warrant was issued, and the property was brought back into stock. The property was a family home with a garden and has been let to a family in need who had been in temporary accommodation for some time.*

40. The vast majority of fraud referrals received from the public relate to housing benefit or council tax reductions/discounts. SAFS and the Councils Shared Revenue and Benefit services work closely with each other and, on occasion, with the DWP Fraud and Error Service (FES), to investigate allegations of this nature.

**Case 5: Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) Fraud**

*Referral made to SAFS in April 2022 as a result of a wider investigation showed that the resident of a property at Fallowfield in Stevenage may have deprived themselves of capital to claim a number of benefits/allowances.*

*As investigation revealed that the person liable for Council Tax at the Fallowfield address had been claiming council tax support (CTS) as the resident owner, due to their low income/savings, for some years.*

*Further enquires revealed that the resident claiming CTS had sold the Fallowfield property the previous year and had not declared this fact to the Council, or that the new owners had occupied the address from the same date. The resident had also moved from the Fallowfield address and claimed to be paying rent for a second property, for which a claim for housing benefit had been made.*

*SAFS made a number of enquiries including interviews with a the subjects and this revealed that the original resident of Fallowfield had failed to declare the equity received from the sale of that property on their claims for housing benefit and CTS for the new address.*

*As a result claims for Council Tax Reduction were removed from the Fallowfield address from the date of sale in 2021, as at that point the resident had 'excess capital', and the claims for support and housing benefit at the new address were declined for the same reasons.*

41. SAFS have worked closely with the council's HR and Legal teams on allegations involving staff misconduct. In one case this resulted in the dismissal of the employee for gross misconduct and subsequent prosecution for fraud and theft committed against the Council.

**Case 6: Payroll Fraud – Press Release 2023.**

*On Wednesday 15 February 2023, Sean GIULIANO (38) from Baldock, Hertfordshire, appeared before St Albans Magistrates Court and entered a guilty plea to one charge under the Fraud Act 2006.*

*On Wednesday 24 May 2023 at St Albans Crown Court, GIULIANO was sentenced to a 14-month custodial sentence, suspended for 18 months, he was also ordered to complete 250 hours of unpaid work and 20 rehabilitation activity days and pay £1,000.00 in compensation to Stevenage Borough Council.*

*GIULIANO was formerly employed by Stevenage Borough Council as a roofer. The investigation by the Hertfordshire Shared Anti-Fraud Service identified that GIULIANO was selling building materials belonging to the council including lead flashing, for personal gain between 2017 and 2021.*

*The court heard that GIULIANO had abused his position and taken advantage of the trust placed in him to safeguard the financial interests of the council. His actions caused a loss to Stevenage Borough Council of £26,000. The council will be seeking full recovery of the public money that GIULIANO stole alongside the compensation he will pay via the court.*

**Councillor Joan Lloyd, Executive Member for Resources and Transformation said:**

*"This is not acceptable, and this case highlights that we take any cases of fraudulent behaviour very seriously. I am pleased that through our work with our Shared Anti-Fraud Service, we are able to identify and prosecute fraud.*

*"Our council delivers over 120 services to 87,500 Stevenage residents. We can't allow anyone including staff to take advantage and illegally profit from council materials and services. We hope that this case will act as a deterrent to not take risks or jeopardise their future with a possible criminal record."*

#### Data Matching and Analytics

42. The Council is required to submit data every two years as part of the Cabinet Office mandated [National Fraud Initiative - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk). This national data collection exercise occurs in October and for Stevenage Borough Council datasets such as payroll, housing tenants, housing register, creditors, housing benefit and council tax are required. The data collected from Councils, NHS and others is then analysed and matched to identify discrepancies including potential fraud. The data analytics also introduces data from sources such as Operation Amberhill, HMRC, DWP and General Register Office.
43. The output, or matches, from NFI comes back to Councils between February and March following the October data upload. These matches are shared in various formats for Councils to review and action. For Stevenage Borough Council, SAFS administers access to and reporting for those service areas that are required to provide a response.
44. The Council received 1,310 matches to review in a number of reports. Many of these matches require administrative review only and will not identify fraud, error, or savings, but it is essential that all are actioned and reported to avoid any fraud being missed and ensure that the Councils data is edited /amended/updated.
45. Of the 260 high priority matches reviewed and closed (or still under investigation) by the end of July 2023, 19 instances of fraud/error identified £33k in fraud loss/savings for the Council. SAFS continues to work with officers across the Council to resolve the outstanding matches by the end of the summer 2023.
46. Working with the Cabinet Office and its IT Provider for NFI, Synectic Solutions Ltd, SAFS have developed a FraudHub for all SAFS Partners that follows the same process for the two-yearly national exercise, but allows the data collected to be matched more frequently through the year. Rather than waiting for 2 years to identify a fraud we can find these much sooner and prevent ongoing loss.
47. SAFS manages the Hertfordshire Council Tax Framework for all Councils across the County. This framework is funded by the County Council and provides a fully managed service to review discounts claimed by residents against their Council Tax liability.
48. A review of discounts and exemptions for SBC in 2022/23 identified 62 properties registered as long-term empty that were actually occupied- raising a potential income of £55k in New Homes Bonus. And from a review of more than 13,000 properties where a single person discount was in place, 439 of these were removed raising £110k in additional council tax revenue for 2022/23.

#### Executive Reports

49. Where the work of SAFS identifies a system/process weakness that has allowed or failed to prevent a fraud occurring an Executive Report (ER) is provided to the Head of Service/Assistant Director with responsibility for that service area. The ER will detail how the weakness failed to prevent or allowed the fraud to occur with recommendations for management to consider, preventing reoccurrence.

50. SAFS advanced its plans to deliver detailed Fraud Risk Assessments (FRA) for our Partners. This included a complete FRA for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in 2022, and plans for similar work around fraud risks in procurement and recruitment/use of agency staff in 2023/24

## Transparency Code – Fraud Data

51. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published a revised Transparency Code in February 2015, which specifies what open data local authorities must publish.

52. The Code also recommends that local authorities follow guidance provided in the following reports/documents:

The National Fraud Strategy: *Fighting Fraud Together*

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nfa-fighting-fraud-together>)

CIPFA Red Book 2 – *Managing the Risk of Fraud – Actions to Counter Fraud and Corruption*

([http://www.cipfa.org//media/files/topics/fraud/cipfa\\_corporate\\_antifraud\\_briefing.pdf](http://www.cipfa.org//media/files/topics/fraud/cipfa_corporate_antifraud_briefing.pdf))

53. The Code requires that Local Authorities publish the following data in relation to Fraud. The response for Stevenage Borough Council for 2022/23 is in **Bold**:

- Number of occasions they use powers under the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud (Power to Require Information) (England) Regulations 2014, or similar powers.

**Nil. (The Council is a Partner to the Hertfordshire Shared Anti-Fraud Service and use the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN) to conduct such enquiries on their behalf).**

- Total number (absolute and full time equivalent) of employees undertaking investigations and prosecutions of fraud.

**2.5 FTE**

- Total number (absolute and full time equivalent) of professionally accredited counter fraud specialists.

**2.5 FTE**

- Total amount spent by the authority on the investigation and prosecution of fraud.

**£107,707 (SAFS fee) + NFI national exercise & Fraud-Hub fee.**

- Total number of fraud cases investigated.

### **39 Cases investigated and closed in year**

54. In addition, the Code recommends that local authorities publish the following (*for Stevenage Borough Council Fraud/Irregularity are recorded together and not separated*):

- Total number of cases of irregularity investigated-

**See above**

- Total number of occasions on which a) fraud and b) irregularity was identified.

### **23 Occasions where fraud/irregularity identified**

- Total monetary value of a) the fraud and b) the irregularity that was detected.

**Reactive - £273k fraud losses reported, £250k fraud prevented.**

**Proactive- £62k of fraud was identified through NFI**

**Compliance- £11k from low level reviews**

**Council Tax Review Framework- £55k NHB/ £110K CTax**

**Total - £761k of fraud and irregularity identified.**

- Total monetary value of a) the fraud and b) the irregularity that was recovered.

**Not recorded separately**

## **Appendices**

55. The following appendices are attached to this report:-

Appendix 1 - SAFS/Stevenage Borough Council Anti-Fraud Plan 2022/23 and associated papers.

Appendix 2 - SAFS Annual Report 2022/23

## **List of Background Papers - Local Government Act 1972, Section 100D**

56. (a) **Councillors Workbook on Bribery & Fraud Prevention (LGA 2017)**  
 (b) **Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally- A Strategy for the 2020's (CIPFA/CIFAS/LGA)**  
 (c) **Tackling Fraud in the Public Sector (CIPFA 2020)**  
 (d) **Guide to Understanding the Total Impact of Fraud (International Public Sector Fraud Forum 2020)**  
 (e) **Fraud and Corruption Tracker 2020 (CIPFA)**  
 (f) **Running on Empty (Fraud Advisory Panel 2022)**  
 (g) **Code of Practice – Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption (CIPFA 2014)**  
 (h) **Lost Homes, Lost Hope (Fraud Advisory Panel 2023)**