

10. COUNTER FRAUD INVESTIGATION: COMMUNITY PAYBACK ORDERS

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud Manager describing the outcome of an investigation into an allegation relating to the administration of community payback orders by the Community Payback team, within Criminal and Youth Justice, Social Policy.

The report indicated that in February 2018, the Counter Fraud team had been advised of concerns raised by an individual relating to falsification of community payback orders documentation, breach of confidentiality and misuse of council property by the Community Payback team. Investigation into the allegations ensued, which involved interviews with witnesses and review of Community Payback team practices, and it was concluded that the concerns raised had been partially substantiated. Details of the investigation were shown in Appendix 1 of the covering report and included details of the allegations, the findings of the investigation and grading of their importance and an action plan containing agreed management actions intended to rectify the deficiencies identified and improve control.

During the discussion that followed the committee was assured that the problems reported had not been found to be widespread and that actions had been designed to ensure that did not happen. The timescales were confirmed to be challenging but achievable, especially since actions were already in progress. Officers also confirmed that the result of the investigation had been passed on to the original whistle-blower in accordance with the council's policy and procedure.

It was recommended that the Audit Committee:

1. Note the findings of the investigation; and
2. Note the agreed actions which were set out in the investigation report's action plan to improve internal control.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.