

10. COUNTER FRAUD INTERIM REPORT (APRIL 2022 TO DECEMBER 2022)

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud Manager informing of the performance and activities of the Counter Fraud Team for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022.

It was queried if West Lothian had been subject to fraudulent business grant applications during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, officers confirmed there had been attempts, previously reported to the Audit Committee, and West Lothian had experienced fraudulent attempts and some established fraud. The Counter Fraud team had worked with colleagues in Revenues to put processes in place for fraud prevention and had been successful in the retention of some established funds.

The discussion moved on to the summary of counter-fraud investigations, contained in Appendix 1 of the report, and in particular, whether there were any trends in the types of fraud. Members were informed that increased fraud awareness in Housing had led to a rise in tenancy frauds accounting for around 50% of the cases detailed. Other categories to note were Blue Badge and Crisis Grant application frauds. To assist prevention of these claims, the Counter Fraud team worked with services to ensure fraud awareness training was available and proper procedures were in place for staff members to follow.

It was recommended that the committee note the performance and activities undertaken by the Counter Fraud Team during the first nine months of financial year 2022/23.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.