

Anti-Fraud Policy And Corruption Policy

Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council is responsible for ensuring effective safeguarding of the public money and all other assets and resources for which it is responsible. The prevention, detection and investigation of all forms of fraud, corruption and theft which could threaten the security of its assets or its reputation.

Definition:

Fraud:

The intentional distortion of financial statements of other records by persons internal or external to the Council, carried out to conceal the misappropriation of assets or otherwise gain. Fraud is the deliberate act by an individual or group of individuals, and is therefore always intentional and dishonest.

Corruption:

The offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward which may influence a person's actions.

Theft:

The dishonest appropriation of property belonging to another with the intention of permanently depriving the other of that property.

Raising Concerns:

Concerns must be raised when Councillors or employees reasonably believe that one or more of the following has occurred, is in the process of occurring or is likely to occur:

1. A criminal offence
2. A failure to comply with a statutory or legal obligation
3. Improper unauthorised use of public or other funds
4. Misconduct or malpractice
5. Endangering of an individual's health and safety
6. Deliberate concealment of any of the above

Culture of Openness and Honesty

1. Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council promotes a culture of openness and honesty in all Council activities. We are committed to the prevention, detection and investigation of all forms of fraud, corruption and theft

2. Council employees are key to creating, maintaining and promoting this culture. The Parish Clerk is encouraged to raise any serious concerns they have about any aspect of the Council's activities.

3. Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council has adopted the Code of Conduct for Members which requires high standards of integrity, openness and honesty from Councillors and which lays out stringent requirements regarding transparency in public life.

Prevention:

1. All Councillors, as elected representatives, have a duty to ensure that the Council uses its resources prudently and legally. As such, they must operate and adhere to the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

2. Members sign to the effect that they have read and understood the Code of Conduct when they take office. This includes the declaration and registration of interests.

3. The Council recognises that a key preventative measure in dealing with fraud and corruption is to take effective steps at the recruitment stage to establish, as far as possible, the honesty and integrity of potential employees, whether for permanent, temporary or casual posts.

4. The Council maintains IT security measures to protect against known cyber threats that could result in fraud or data theft.

Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

1. The Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer has a key role in providing advice to all Councillors of the proper administration of the Council's affairs, including financial, policy framework and budgetary issues.

2. The Parish Clerk is responsible for the successful implementation of controls designed to prevent and detect fraud within the Council, and for the security and effective use of all the assets and resources for which it is responsible.

Internal and External Audit

1. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the Council to maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit. An independent internal auditor is appointed by the Council with terms of reference. The internal auditor plays a vital preventative role in ensuring that systems and procedures are in place to prevent and detect fraud and corruption.

2. Independent external audit is a further safeguard of the stewardship of public money. All external auditors are required, under the Local Government Finance Act 1982, to carry out their audits in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice. This code emphasises management's role in preventing and detecting fraud and

corruption. External auditors are always alert to the possibility of fraud and irregularity, and will act without undue delay if grounds of suspicion come to their notice.

Detection and Investigation

1. The preventative measures put in place by the Council, especially the implementation of robust control systems, have been designed to deter fraud and provide indicators of fraudulent activity. Internal audit plays an important role in the detection of fraud and corruption.
2. Councillors and employees will face appropriate action under this policy if they have been involved in theft, fraud or corruption against the Council. Action will be taken in addition to, or instead of, criminal proceedings, depending on the circumstances of each individual case, but in a consistent manner.

Conflicts of Interest

1. Both members and employees must ensure that they avoid situations where there is a potential for a conflict of interest. Such situations can arise with externalisation of services, tendering, planning and land issues, etc.
2. Effective role separation will ensure decisions made are clearly based upon impartial advice and avoid questions about improper disclosure of confidential information.

Conclusion

Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council has always prided itself on setting and maintaining high standards and a culture of openness, with core values of fairness, trust and value. The Council has in place a clear network of systems and procedures to assist in the fight against fraud and corruption. It is determined that this arrangement will keep pace with any future development, in both preventative and detection techniques regarding fraudulent or corrupt activities that may affect its operation or related responsibilities.