

Report of the Treasurer

National Fraud Initiative 2024-25

Purpose of report

1. To update Members on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI).
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Recommendation

The Treasurer recommends that the Committee notes that the process of examining all National Fraud Initiative matches is now complete and no fraud has been detected.

Introduction and Background

2. The NFI is a biennial exercise carried out since 2006/07 for local government and other public bodies and currently undertaken by the Cabinet Office.
3. Authorities are required to provide certain mandatory datasets for the Fire Authority: the mandatory datasets comprised of creditors, payroll and pensions payroll. Payroll and pensions payroll data is subject to a series of data matches against data provided by other public bodies including payroll, pensions, housing benefit, Home Office (removed and failed asylum seekers), UK visas and Department for Work and Pensions deceased persons. Creditor payments are matched only within Authorities.
4. The data provided is processed by a specialist contractor on behalf of the Cabinet Office. Data matches are notified to Authorities for examination to eliminate the possibility of fraud and/or error. The existence of a match in an NFI report does not mean that there is a fraud, only that there is a need to investigate further to eliminate the possibility of fraud or error.
5. The initial NFI reports were received in early February 2025 and, as usual, the very low overall number of matches means that each one continues to be examined in detail, and this process is now complete. A summary list of matches is shown at Appendix 1.
6. At the date of the previous report to this Committee (16 April 2025) a review had been undertaken for all, except the one following report. This has now been completed.

Report 708 – Duplicate records by invoice amount and creditor reference

7. There were 148 matches and, as in previous years the matches were annual monthly payments to the same supplier, or the same type of goods/services at different periods, or multiple purchases made separately e.g. software licenses.

Conclusion

8. Every NFI match has been reviewed and no fraud has been detected.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	No direct implications
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (Identify how proposals link with current priorities & policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics)	Helping to demonstrate Integrity in our actions
Productivity & Efficiency (Identify how proposal improves productivity or efficiency)	N/A
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	N/A
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	N/A relevant Privacy Notices issued
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	Data is processed in accordance with the Code of Data Matching Practice 2018, produced by the Cabinet Office under paragraph 7, Schedule 9 of the Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014. The Act provides the statutory basis for the whole exercise.