

Fraud Risk in Planning - Regional Response Protocol



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Derry Citty & Strabane
District Council



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agus an Dúin**
**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council



Comhairle Ceantair
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Mid Ulster**
District Council



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council



Fermanagh & Omagh
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Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí



Department for
Infrastructure
An Roinn
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Department for
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**Antrim and
Newtownabbey**
BOROUGH COUNCIL



**Lisburn &
Castlereagh**
City Council

This protocol has been developed in support of the Planning Fraud Regional Response Team.

Fraud Risk in Planning - Regional Response Protocol

- This protocol outlines the key strategic actions to be taken by Planning Authorities (including the Department) and other relevant public bodies, to detect, prevent and minimise the risk of fraud within the planning system and to put in place procedures to respond and manage any risk identified.
- This protocol does not replace the relevant governance/fraud documents or procedures already in place within individual organisations and should be used in conjunction with these.
- This protocol also identifies the mechanisms to use when the alleged fraud appears to have impacts of a regional nature across the planning system.
- This protocol includes references to the checks and balances already established in the planning system e.g. anti-fraud policies, fraud response plans.
- It is the responsibility of all public bodies impacted to consider and take appropriate action by following the steps set out in this protocol.

Stage 1 - Receipt of Information

- Be alert to all information received into the planning system and, where possible, conduct the necessary checks to ensure that information supporting planning applications is genuine.
- Conduct appropriate checks on the documentation which supports planning applications.

Where fraud is suspected/fraudulent documents are received

Stage 2 - Implement anti-fraud policy and procedures

- Evaluate the nature and extent of suspected/alleged fraudulent information and determine the appropriate response in accordance with the organisation's anti-fraud policy/fraud response plan - to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and to protect the integrity and confidentiality of sensitive data throughout the fraud response process.

- Implement individual organisations' fraud response plan.

- If the suspected fraud is regional or sub-regional e.g. falsified soil sample reports which were the subject of NIAO report in July 2024, and has the potential to affect multiple bodies or organisations' jurisdictions, it should be referred to the Planning Fraud Regional Response Team for consideration. See following e-mail contact addresses for SOLACE, Heads of Planning Group and the Department for Infrastructure Planning:-

Chair of SOLACE

contactsolace@solace.org.uk

Chair of the Heads of Planning Group

(see council e-mail addresses on page 5)

Chief Planner

planning@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Stage 3 - Planning Fraud Regional Response Team

In accordance with agreed terms of reference the Planning Fraud Regional Response Team should:

- Identify if the alleged fraud is regional, sub-regional or local and consider impacts on relevant public bodies.
- If considered to be regional or sub-regional notify:
SOLACE, Heads of Planning Group, relevant government departments/officials and any other relevant organisations.
- Identify course of action.
- Co-ordinate responses from affected planning authorities and any affected public bodies while respecting each organisation's autonomy and independence.
- Initiate preliminary investigation and develop a plan of action - agreeing and assigning responsibilities as appropriate.

Stage 4 - Review
Planning Fraud Regional Response Team should:
• Ensure that all relevant public bodies are aware of the plan of action and next steps.
• Identify options for future process changes or enhancement to existing control frameworks for consideration by planning authorities.
• Share lessons learned and any identified good practice ensuring that the outcome of any investigation is shared with all relevant planning authorities and any other applicable bodies.
• Follow up, monitor and review implementation of the plan of action.

Council	Email Address	Phone Number
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk	0300 123 6677
Ards and North Down Borough Council	planning@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk	028 9182 4006
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council	Planning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk	0300 200 7830
Belfast City Council	planning@belfastcity.gov.uk	028 9050 0510
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council	planning@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk	028 7034 7100
Derry City and Strabane District Council	planning@derrystrabane.com	028 71253 253
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council	planning@fermanaghomagh.com	0300 303 1777
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council	planning@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk	028 9244 7300
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	planning@midandeastantrim.gov.uk	028 2563 3500
Mid Ulster District Council	planning@midulstercouncil.org	0300 013 2132
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	Planning@nmandd.org	0330 137 4036
Department for Infrastructure (Planning)	planning@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk	0300 200 7830
SOLACE	contactsolace@solace.org.uk	0207 233 0081

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