Department
for Transport

DfT COUNTER FRAUD, BRIBERY & CORRUPTION STRATEGY

Protecting public funds.
Safeguarding transport for
the public good.

- PREVENT
- DETECT
- RESPOND
- ASSURE

Great Minister House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

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FOREWORD

Fraud, bribery and corruption pose a significant and evolving threat to public services and trust in government. The National Audit Office (NAO) and Public Sector Fraud Authority (PSFA) estimate that fraud and error cost UK taxpayers between £55 billion and £81 billion each year, highlighting the scale of the challenge. Driven by digital transformation and increasingly sophisticated criminal activity, these risks are growing in complexity. As a major delivery department, Department for Transport (DfT) faces challenges in managing fraud risks across its complex programmes, supply chains and arm's length bodies.

DfT is clear in its zero-tolerance approach to fraud, bribery and corruption. Any instance of fraud is unacceptable and will be addressed robustly through stronger controls, effective detection and decisive action. Protecting public money and maintaining the integrity of our operations is central to our role and responsibilities.

This Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy sets out how the department will strengthen its approach over the period 2026 to 2029. It reflects our commitment to understanding the risks we face, responding to an increasingly complex and digital fraud landscape, and embedding strong counter fraud practices while improving culture across DfT and its arm's length bodies (ALBs).

Success depends on collaboration at every level. Across the DfT Group, we will strengthen consistency of approach, share intelligence and build collective capability through the DfT Fraud, Error and Debt (FED) Forum and our network of senior counter fraud leads. We will also work closely with the PSFA, Government Internal Audit Agency and other government departments to share insight, adopt best practice and coordinate our response to emerging threats.

Our approach places strong emphasis on prevention, early detection and proactive risk management, recognising that counter fraud is not solely the responsibility of specialists, but a shared responsibility across the department, its ALBs and delivery partners.

By strengthening controls, harnessing data and technology, and improving a culture of integrity, transparency and accountability, this strategy will drive improvements in our ability to deter, detect and respond to fraud.

Barbara Bennett
Director General, Corporate Delivery Group
Department for Transport

MISSION

To protect public money and maintain public trust by understanding, preventing, detecting and responding to fraud, bribery and corruption through a proactive, intelligence-led and collaborative approach across the DfT.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a clear, consistent and forward-looking framework for strengthening the DfT's resilience to fraud, bribery and corruption between 2026 and 2029. It outlines the department's strategic direction, risk management principles and expectations, ensuring alignment with the DfT Strategic Plan, Grant Management Strategy and Government Functional Standard GovS 013: Counter Fraud and best practice.

The strategy is designed to strengthen DfT's ability to safeguard public funds by embedding effective fraud risk management across all areas of the organisation, promoting a culture of integrity and accountability, and harnessing data, technology and collaboration to proactively address current and emerging threats. The strategy is supported by DfT's Fraud Risk Assessment Policy, Counter Fraud Policy, Response Plan and the Enterprise Fraud Risk Assessment which focusses on strategic risks.

This is a dynamic strategy that will be continuously reviewed and refined to ensure it remains responsive to changing risks and supports the department's long-term objectives.

SCOPE

This strategy sets out DfT's counter fraud priorities for 2026–2029 and how the department will prevent, detect and respond to fraud, bribery and corruption. It supports continuous improvement in counter fraud capability and compliance with government standards. The strategy applies to everyone working for or on behalf of the DfT Group, including employees, contractors, consultants, agency workers and suppliers.

Managing fraud risk is a shared responsibility across the DfT Group. All staff and delivery partners have a role in preventing, identifying and responding to fraud, bribery and corruption, supported by clear accountability, effective governance, professional expertise and robust controls. Staff in DfT(c) and its Executive Agencies are expected to operate in accordance with the Civil Service Code, while ALB's must manage public resources in line with *Managing Public Money*, PSFA requirements and the DfT Control Framework.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Over the lifetime of this Strategy, DfT will focus on five strategic objectives that align with the Government Counter Fraud Functional Strategy and departmental priorities. Together, they will strengthen our ability to understand and manage fraud risk, improve prevention and detection, build counter fraud capability across the DfT Group, and ensure robust investigation, recovery and enforcement activity. This will help safeguard public money, strengthen organisational resilience and reinforce DfT's zero-tolerance approach to fraud, bribery and corruption.

Objective 1: Strengthen the Counter Fraud Framework Across the DfT Group

- Improve compliance with Government Functional Standard GovS 013: Counter Fraud across DfT and its ALBs.
- Share good practice, build capability and strengthen governance to support a consistent and effective counter fraud approach across the Group using FED Forum to drive this agenda.

Objective 2: Improve Fraud Risk Management and Controls

- Embed Fraud Risk Assessments (FRAs) and Initial Fraud Impact Assessments (IFIAs) across departmental activities to improve understanding and management of fraud risks.
- Strengthen controls to reduce fraud and error and protect public funds.

Objective 3: Harness Data, Intelligence and Technology

- Increase the use of data, analytics and technology to identify fraud risks, detect anomalies and strengthen prevention through a more proactive, intelligence-led approach.
- Enhance due diligence and fraud detection capabilities using tools such as Spotlight, data sharing and emerging technologies, including AI where appropriate.

Objective 4: Strengthen Investigation, Enforcement and Recovery

- Improve the investigation and management of fraud allegations through effective triage, partnership working and proportionate enforcement action.
- Recover losses where possible and pursue appropriate sanctions to deter fraud, uphold accountability and protect public funds, ensuring DfT's zero-tolerance approach to fraud.

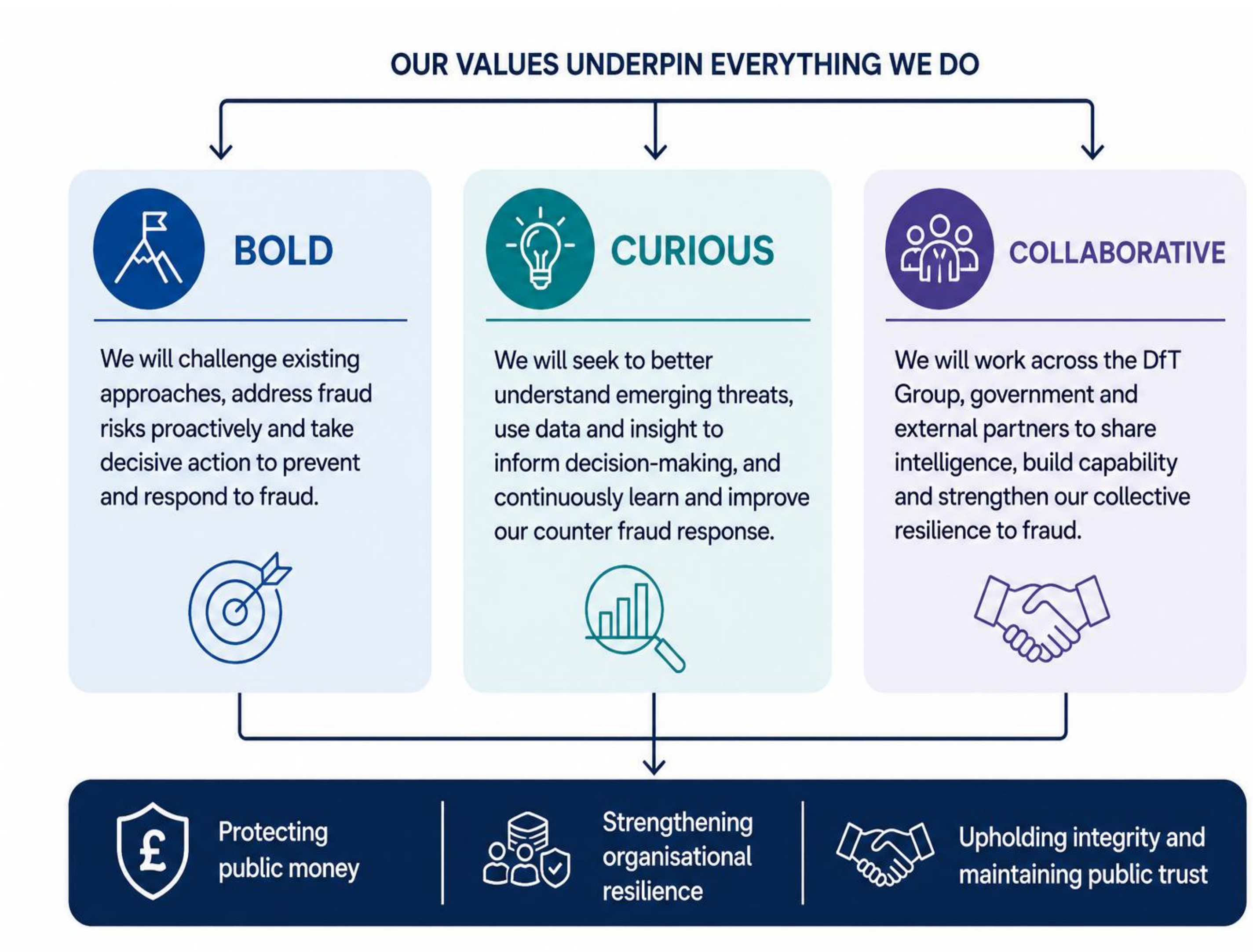
Objective 5: Build a Strong Counter Fraud Culture

- Increase awareness, capability and accountability by engaging leaders, governance forums such as DfT FED Forum, Controls Network Group, Group Audit Risk and Assurance Committee, and staff across the DfT Group.
- Promote a culture where fraud prevention, reporting and protecting public money are recognised as everyone's responsibility.

ENABLING VALUES

Delivery of this strategy is underpinned by DfT’s core values, which shape how we work and how we respond to fraud, bribery and corruption.

Our values guide the decisions we make, the behaviours we demonstrate and the actions we take to protect public money. They support a culture of integrity, accountability and continuous improvement, enabling us to identify and manage fraud risks effectively, work collaboratively across organisational boundaries and strengthen resilience across the department.



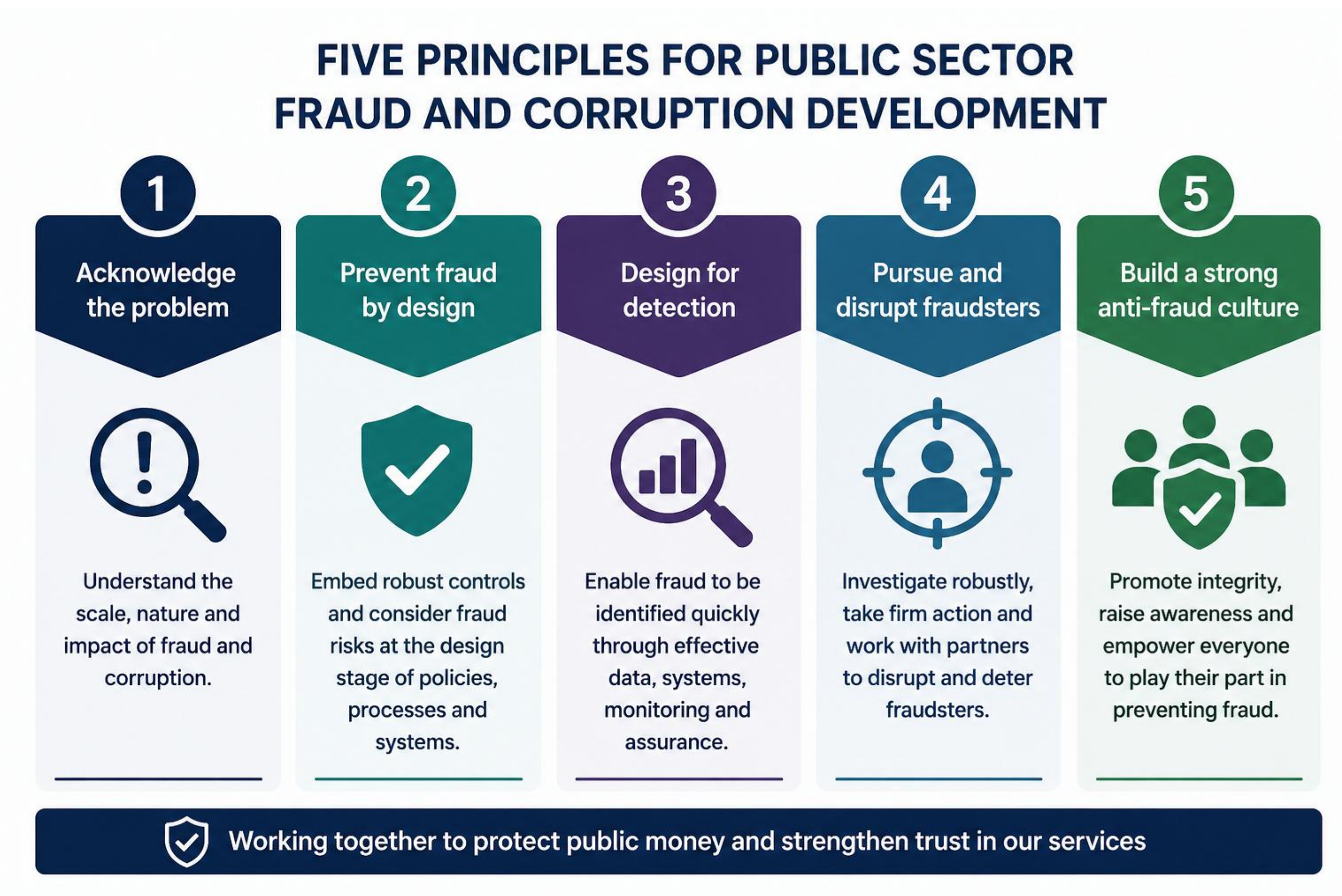
OUR APPROACH

DfT's approach to countering fraud, bribery and corruption aligns with the Government Counter Fraud Functional Strategy 2024–2027 and supports the government's ambition to lead globally in tackling fraud against the public sector.

We recognise that fraud risks are continually evolving and that effective counter fraud activity requires a coordinated response across the department, its ALBs and wider government partners. We take a proactive, intelligence-led approach that prioritises prevention, strengthens detection, embeds effective fraud risk management and controls, and ensures a robust response where fraud occurs.

Our approach is focused on understanding where fraud risks exist, using data and insight to identify emerging threats, and building the capability and culture needed to safeguard public money. Through collaboration, continuous improvement and proportionate action, we will strengthen organisational resilience and reinforce DfT's zero-tolerance approach to fraud, bribery and corruption.

This strategy is underpinned by the five principles for public sector fraud and corruption developed by the International Public Sector Fraud Forum:



IMPLEMENTATION, DELIVERY AND SUCCESS

This Strategy will be delivered through an annual Counter Fraud Action Plan, setting out clear priorities, actions, milestones and accountable owners for each strategic objective.

> "Through effective implementation, strong governance and continuous improvement, this strategy will strengthen DfT's resilience to fraud, bribery and corruption and enhance the protection of public money."

Progress will be monitored through DfT's governance framework, including regular reporting to the Fraud, Error and Debt Forum and Group Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Progress will be reviewed regularly to manage risks, track delivery and respond to emerging threats. Quarterly updates will also be provided to PSFA.

Success will be measured by both delivery of planned activities and their impact on DfT's resilience to fraud, bribery and corruption. Key indicators will include compliance with GovS 013, fraud risk assessment coverage, financial impact measures, awareness activity, investigation outcomes and recovery of losses. We will also assess success through improvements in counter fraud maturity, stronger fraud risk management, increased use of data and intelligence to inform decision-making, enhanced staff awareness and capability, and more effective prevention, detection and response activity. Together, these will demonstrate improvements in risk management, control effectiveness, organisational capability and protection of public money.

Performance monitoring and reporting will support accountability, continuous improvement and measurable outcomes in protecting public money.