

Service Directors' Assurance 2020/21

Area of Assurance	Number That Agree / Disagree That Effective Controls Are In Place
1. Mechanisms are in place to ensure employees are aware of and comply with relevant legal requirements, the Council's Constitution and corporate policies.	22 managers agreed that effective controls are in place, one agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement.
2. Financial Regulations are understood and complied with by all employees.	22 managers agreed that effective controls are in place, one agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement
3. A clear up to date business plan is in place which is completed in accordance with Corporate guidance and aligned to the Council's strategic priorities.	<p>14 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>Seven managers agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement including updating the Service's plan following COVID delays, in response to changing government guidance and ongoing restructures.</p> <p>Two managers disagreed and identified actions for improvement including updating the Service's plan to accommodate new areas of responsibility.</p>
4. There are effective data quality and performance management processes with relevant, accurate and adequate performance information generated with clear links to the Council's five Strategic Priorities and Health and Wellbeing Strategy. These are reported on a timely basis, with appropriate action taken to address performance issues.	<p>19 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>Four managers agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement including reviewing operational processes, restarting project paused due to COVID and establishing key performance indicators.</p>
5. There are well defined reporting arrangements to Councillors and senior management, including a clear reporting structure with adequate, accurate and timely information being provided, to ensure that decisions, including key decisions, are taken with reference to relevant consultation, information and data	All 23 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.
6. Management and staffing structures are clearly defined and responsibilities including job descriptions are clearly established. There is a competent and adequately trained workforce to deliver the objectives	<p>20 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>Three managers agreed partial</p>

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<p>and priorities of the Service, including up to date A&D reviews for all employees, effective management of succession planning and retention / recruitment of appropriate skills.</p>	<p>compliance and identified actions for improvement including reviewing training requirements and updating skills matrices.</p>
<p>7. All Partnership Arrangements are included in the Council's Corporate Partnership Register and have been established in compliance with the Council's Guide to Partnership Working Strategy.</p>	<p>19 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>One manager agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement including raising awareness of the Councils corporate partnership procedures.</p> <p>Three managers stated this question was not applicable to their Service.</p>
<p>8. Standards of conduct within the Service are in accordance with corporate codes and policies.</p> <p>Controls are in place to deter, prevent, detect, and reduce the risk of fraud and corruption (including bribery), such as employee training/awareness sessions.</p> <p>Controls are in place to ensure employees are fully aware of the Council's Counter-Fraud Arrangements and Whistleblowing Policy and all suspected frauds and financial irregularities are referred to Internal Audit.</p> <p>All employees promote the values of the Council and uphold high standards of conduct and behaviour.</p>	<p>All 23 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p>
<p>9. There are effective financial planning and budgetary control procedures in place.</p> <p>Budgetary decisions are linked to planned outcomes and the Service objectives which support the Council's Strategic Priorities Plan.</p>	<p>20 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>Three managers agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement including reviewing Service budget structures and financial performance reporting.</p>
<p>10. The Service can evidence that it has clear and effective plans in place to deliver the Service's savings targets, and risks around achievement are identified.</p>	<p>18 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>Four managers agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement including service development, reviewing budget structures, business plans, savings</p>

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	<p>targets and risk.</p> <p>One manager stated this question was not applicable to their Service.</p>
<p>11. Where applicable, the Service can demonstrate that the effective application of the Council's Commissioning Framework has resulted in the delivery of improved outcomes, the achievement of value for money and that, where this has been delivered via a procurement process, compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules can be evidenced.</p>	<p>22 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>One manager stated this question was not applicable to their Service.</p>
<p>12. Trading opportunities have been considered in accordance with the Governance Framework for Decision Making on Traded Activities.</p>	<p>19 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>Four managers stated this question was not applicable to their Service.</p>
<p>13. IT systems used by the Service are secure and operate satisfactorily for their purpose.</p> <p>Mechanisms are in place to ensure employees are fully aware of the ICT Security Policy and their responsibilities including how to minimise exposure to risk of a cyber-attack by taking necessary anti-virus precautions and adhere to the Policy.</p>	<p>22 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>One manager agreed partial compliance to reflect planned reviews in the Service's IT environment.</p>
<p>14. There are effective business continuity arrangements in place which are reviewed and tested on a regular basis.</p> <p>There are effective plans in place to manage change and ensure business continuity during any transition period.</p>	<p>20 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>Three managers agreed partial compliance to reflect planned reviews following restructures and planned IT changes.</p>
<p>15. Recommendations from relevant external Inspectorates and Internal Audit reports are monitored by management and are implemented by the agreed date.</p>	<p>21 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>Two managers agreed partial compliance to outstanding internal audit recommendations for areas expected to be decommissioned.</p>

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<p>16. Effective mechanisms are in place to ensure compliance with relevant statutory requirements such as Health and Safety and Safeguarding.</p>	<p>21 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>Two manager agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement including a review of compliance requirements across Council owned buildings and related training matrices.</p>
<p>17. There is effective management of Operational Risk within the Service including the effective identification, recording, control and ongoing monitoring of risks associated with the achievement of Service objectives, with appropriate oversight by Group Management Teams.</p> <p>Strategic Risks are also regularly reviewed to ensure they remain valid and support the achievement of the Council's Priorities Plan.</p>	<p>22 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>One manager agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement.</p>
<p>18. The Service has identified its sources and flows of information including rights of access.</p> <p>Threats and risks to information assets owned by the Service have been assessed and recorded with corresponding action plans for reducing risks where appropriate.</p> <p>All staff have received appropriate training in relation to data security and GDPR. Any data breaches are formally reported and where a data breach has occurred a review of the incident is carried out and, where appropriate, additional training is provided and systems and procedures assessed to identify any improvements to the controls to prevent future data breaches.</p>	<p>22 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>One manager agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement.</p>
<p>19. Relevant assessments have been completed and necessary arrangements put in place to ensure that the Council's activities during the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for by way of for example: review of Business Impact Assessments, Business Continuity Plans and Risk Registers.</p>	<p>22 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>One manager agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement.</p>