

Service Directors' Assurance 2023/24

Area of Assurance	Number That Agree / Disagree That Effective Controls Are In Place
1. Effective mechanisms are in place to ensure employees are aware of and comply with Council requirements such as the Council's Constitution and corporate policies, along with relevant statutory requirements such as Health & Safety and Safeguarding.	23 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.
2. Financial Regulations are understood and complied with by all employees.	22 managers agreed that effective controls are in place. One manager agreed partial compliance and identified training requirements for some staff.
3. A clear up to date business plan is in place which is completed which demonstrates alignment to the Council's strategic priorities.	20 managers agreed that effective controls are in place. Three managers agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement including updating the Service's plans.
4. There are effective data quality and performance management processes for the Service with relevant, accurate and adequate performance information generated with demonstrable links to contribution to delivery of Thrive and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. These are reported on a timely basis, with appropriate action taken to address performance issues.	21 managers agreed that effective controls are in place. Two managers agreed partial compliance and identified actions for relating to reviewing the performance metrics currently used and how data links to related systems.
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	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 and priorities of the Service, including evidence of employee development appraisals for all employees, effective management of succession planning and retention / recruitment of appropriate skills.	18 managers agreed that effective controls are in place. Five manager agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement in relation to training, ongoing structure reviews and adapting to legislative changes.

Area of Assurance	Number That Agree / Disagree That Effective Controls Are In Place
<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>21 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>Two 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>22 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>One manager agreed partial compliance and highlighted an ongoing review.</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 Thrive and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.</p>	<p>22 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>One manager agreed partial compliance highlighting ongoing development work.</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>23 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</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 agreed partial compliance highlighting ongoing development work.</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>

Area of Assurance	Number That Agree / Disagree That Effective Controls Are In Place
<p>13. IT systems owned 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 IT 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>23 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</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>22 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>One manager agreed partial compliance referencing ongoing reviews.</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>23 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p>
<p>16. 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>23 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p>
<p>17. 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>21 managers agreed that effective controls are in place.</p> <p>Two managers agreed partial compliance and identified actions for improvement around annual training and record maintenance.</p>