

Regulatory and Other Committee

Open Report on behalf of Pete Moore, Executive Director Finance and Public Protection
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Report to:	Audit Committee
Date:	30 January 2017
Subject:	Combined Assurance Status Reports

Summary:

The aim of this report is to provide the Audit Committee with an insight on the assurances across all the Council's critical services, key risks and projects.

Recommendation(s):

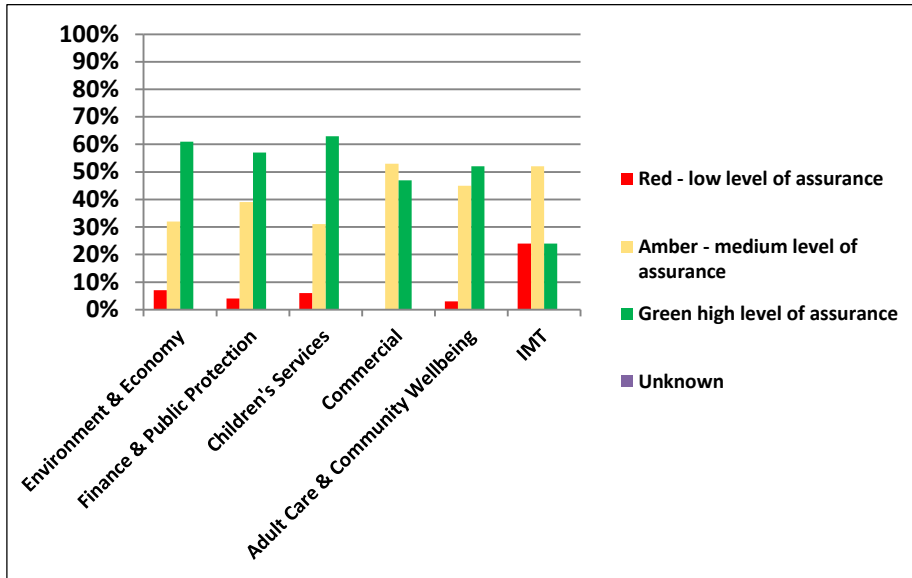
That the Committee review the combined assurance reports seeking assurance over the adequacy of the Council's governance, risk and control environment and makes recommendations on any further scrutiny requirements or actions

Background

1. With the help of Internal Audit, each Director has produced a Combined Assurance Report that has co-ordinated assurance information across:
 - Critical service delivery activities
 - Key risks
 - Key projects
 - Key partnerships
2. Internal Audit have co-ordinated the overall assurance information to help ensure that it 'stacks up' and applied some constructive challenge on the assurance opinions being given **but** as accountability rests with management, it is the senior management's views that has determined the overall assurance status. This is in line with a control environment that promotes a culture where we:
 - take what we have been told on trust
 - encourage accountability with those responsible for managing the service and associated risks
 - provide some independent challenge / oversight where it matters most.

3. Overall there continues to be a high level of positive assurance – see Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Overall Assurance Levels 2016/17



4. There are a number of areas where there is a low level of assurance shown on critical activities - these relate to:

Adult Care & Community Wellbeing (Appendix A)

- Increase in long-term care placements

Children's Services (Appendix B)

- Supported accommodation
- Inclusion for all – review of special educational needs offer
- Partners in practice
- SERCO HR / Payroll Transactional Service Delivery

Finance & Public Protection (Appendix C)

- Payroll (general ledger)

Environment & Economy (Appendix D)

The following areas show a low level of assurance:-

- Heritage
- Total Transport Project

- Waste Management Strategy
- Lincolnshire Waste Partnership

Commercial (Appendix E)

- No low assurance/unknown assurance identified

IMT (subject to a separate paper)

- Service Reviews and Improvement Plans
- IMT Led Projects
- Capacity management
- IT service continuity management/Disaster Recovery
- Service asset and configuration management
- Problem management

5. Executive Directors will be present to respond to any questions the Committee may have on their respective Combined Assurance Status Reports and the associated assurance framework.

Conclusion

6. The reports confirm that all key areas and risks have been subject to assurance procedures. Overall there continues to be a high level of assurance, however, it is a worsening position compared to last year – with more areas of low assurance.
7. That said, there are 'no surprises' and the assurance framework remains strong demonstrating appropriate management oversight and monitoring.
8. The combined assurance reports provide the Committee with a good level of understanding about the level of assurances in place – supporting its 'watchdog' role and remit. In reviewing the Combined Assurance Status Reports the Committee may wish to consider:
 - whether the assurances given are reliable and adequately evidence
 - seeking direct assurance from the Corporate Management Board on how they consider the results of the assurances given
 - if any specific issue / risk should be referred to the Governance Group for consideration in the Council's annual governance statement
 - whether the reports 'realistically' reflect the Audit Committee's knowledge and understanding of the Council's governance, risk and assurance arrangements.

9. The information obtained from the combined assurance model will:
- streamline and avoid duplication of effort where assurance can be drawn from a third party or other sources
 - inform the Internal Annual Audit Plan 2017/18 by identifying where more independent assurance is required based on significance and risk.
 - Help inform the Head of Audit annual audit opinion 2017.
 - Help inform the development of the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2017.

Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

N/A

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Combined Assurance Status Report - Adult Care & Community Wellbeing
Appendix B	Combined Assurance Status Report - Children's Services
Appendix C	Combined Assurance Status Report - Finance & Public Protection
Appendix D	Combined Assurance Status Report - Economy & Environment
Appendix E	Combined Assurance Status Report - Commercial

Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Lucy Pledge, who can be contacted on 01522 553692 or Lucy.Pledge@lincolnshire.gov.uk.