

Combined Assurance Status Report 2022/23



**Lincolnshire County Council
February 2023**

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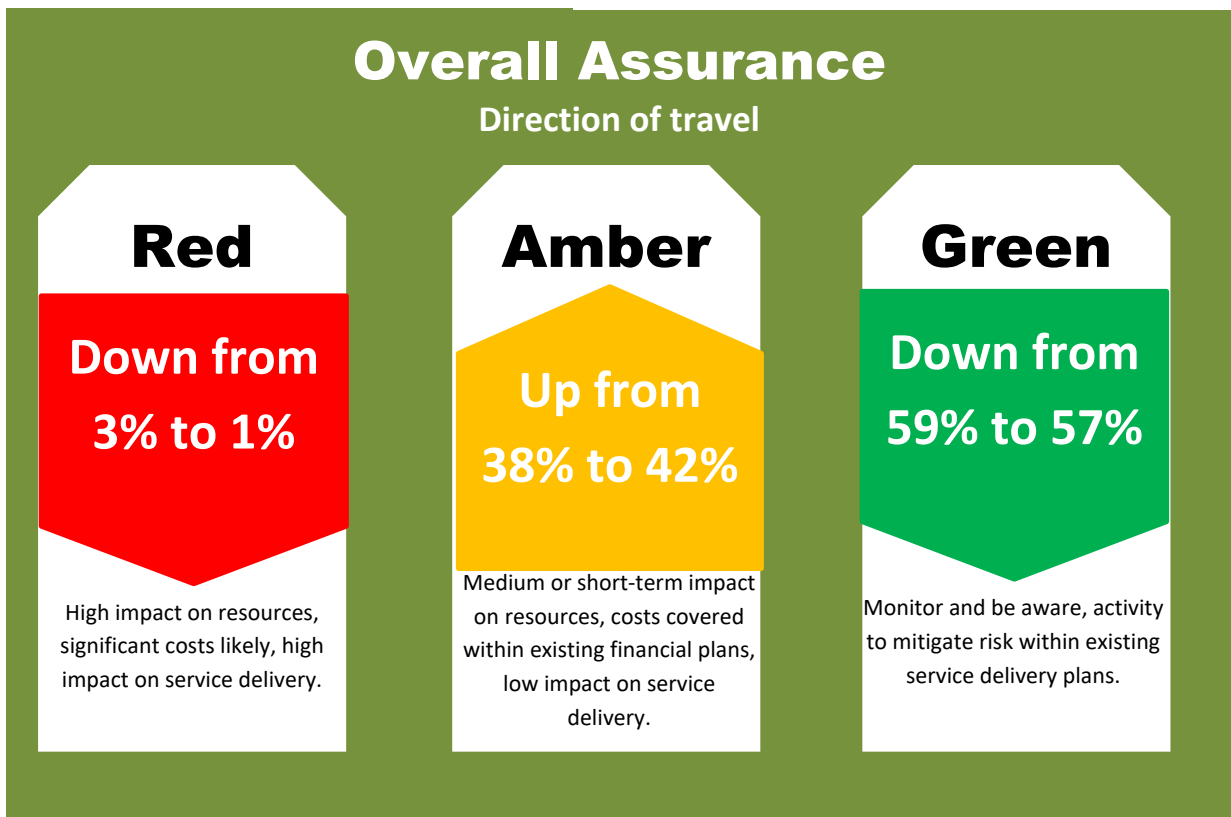
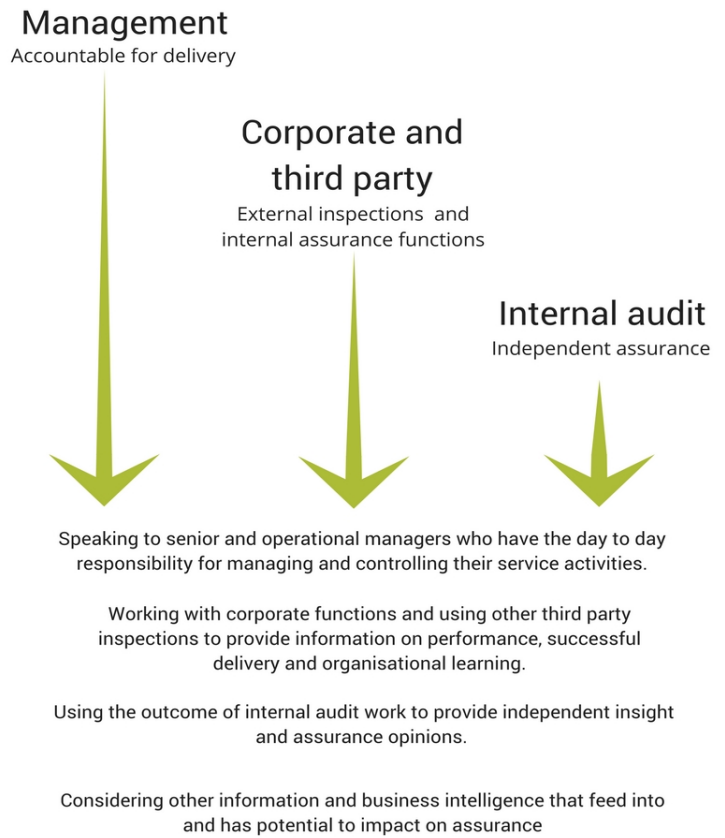
Overview of Assurance

Combined assurance is a structured means of identifying and mapping the main sources and types of assurance in the council and coordinating them to best effect.

It enhances risk management by providing an effective and efficient framework of sufficient, regular and reliable evidence of assurance on organisational stewardship and management of major risks to the Council's success.

We do this using the three lines of defence model.

How do we assure ourselves about how the council is run?



Note – Overall assurance status is inclusive of critical activities, key projects, key partnerships and key operational risks

Chief Executive's Summary

During the past 12 months, the Council has continued to face significant challenges in light of national and local labour shortages, increased demand for many services, the cost-of-living crisis, which has impacted on our communities and resulted in increased costs in some areas of the Council's business activities. Despite this, I am pleased to report that the Council's critical service delivery activities; key risks; projects and partnerships have continued to receive **substantial assurance** which confirms that the Council's governance, risk and control framework is robust and that controls are in place to mitigate risks. It was also pleasing to receive the external, independent, audit of our risk management processes which confirmed a level 4 assessment: 'Embedded and Integrated' with many areas receiving a level 5: 'Driving the organisation'.

This report rightly recognises the hard work and dedication of the Council's Members and its workforce to respond to the challenges our communities, business and visitors have faced. There is no doubt that the labour shortages, inflation, and increased demand for many of the Council's services has tested the resilience and capacity of our workforce and our partners. However due to the Council's strong financial management, relationships with partners and dedicated staff, we have been able to mitigate many of these challenges. There is strong evidence that the Council has, with our partners, taken swift action to mitigate the emerging risks whilst continuing to meet and respond to the needs of our communities.

The Council has continued to work towards achieving the aspirations of the ten-year Corporate Plan. The Transformation Programme has continued to evolve, with progress towards achieving the ambitions of the plan being realised. The transformation work across adult social care, children in care and the support for children with special educational needs and a disability has meant that we are in a strong position to manage the increasing demand, meet expectations of our residents and improve the quality of interventions. The programmes aimed at enhancing our digital capability are starting to gain traction and are on track to reduce corporate calls to the Customer Services Centre by 30% with successes including:

- The Stopford system which has been implemented to enable customers to be digital first with 71% of transactions now being made online.
- Changes to the way customers can access highways services have seen a reduction in calls of 30%
- Emails to the customer service centre have reduced by an average of 40%, with further work planned to reduce volumes further.
- Work is now underway to explore opportunities to reduce calls for libraries, school transport and education admissions.

Re-procurement activity for delivery of our back office services is progressing as planned for all services except for IMT. Plans are in place to insource some teams and the market testing for services which will continue to be procured has been positive and on track with the project plan.

The combined assurance report outlines the Executive Directors' assurance opinions on the critical service delivery activities, key risks, projects and partnerships impacting on their service areas. Internal Audit have co-ordinated the overall assurance information and applied some constructive challenge on the assurance opinions. However, it is the senior management's views that have determined the overall assurance status which is in line with a control environment that promotes a culture of trust and accountability for those responsible for managing the service and associated risks. The framework remains fit for purpose and as leaders become more familiar with the approach, we are achieving greater consistency across how activities are risk rated.

Chief Executive's Summary

Most assurance opinions are high to medium with minimal areas rated to have low assurance. Where these exist and where it is possible, leaders have robust controls to mitigate risk through direct control or through exerting influence on others. However, due to labour shortages, increased demand, changes to the operational delivery of our services and increasing costs in some areas, the council has experienced some change to the critical areas of risk. These can be summarised as:

- **Inflation** – Continued high inflation has the potential to undermine the delivery of the capital programme, impacting on the aspirations and sustainability of the Council's finances. The budget settlement from national government (whilst only a one year settlement) and the ability to increase council tax and the adult care levy, means that we are able to set a sustainable budget, funding contract inflation pressures. We have also been able to create an inflation contingency budget for unknown inflationary costs to be funded through robust business cases.
- **IT infrastructure** – The assurance status has been changed to limited due to the delays in deployment of IT infrastructure, however as we move towards our cloud first strategy, the lower the risk so our position is improving all the time. Contributing to this risk is also the reduction in legacy systems which are generally unsupported. However, over the last quarter we have seen Norwell and Stamp closed down so we can demonstrate definite improvement but there is still work to do. Finally, the planned IMT kit refresh strategy which will also form an early part of the improvement plan in 2023 will mitigate the risk further.
- **Market Supply**- Although the assurance level in adequacy of supply to meet adult care to meet eligible needs as defined in the Care Act remains unchanged, some external factors have the potential to increase this risk. Nationally and locally, there are challenges within the health system which is negatively impacting on patient flow to support hospital discharge. The reality is that delayed hospital discharges are due a range of factors which are multi-faceted and complex. Unfortunately, the solution is increasingly to purchase additional community based support and unless this is done in an integrated way, could destabilise the market even more.
- **Outstanding Debt** – I am pleased to report that this assurance level has changed to substantial assurance and that the Council, with its business partner, has now secured efficient and effective end to end processes for the recovery of income owed to the Council. Whilst work is ongoing to streamline this process even further through automation which will reduce the time span of the process, we have significantly reduced outstanding debt over the past 12 months.
- **Recruitment and Staffing**- Although no change in the assurance level, capacity within the Council in some areas remains a risk, with demand increasing in those very areas which are experiencing workforce shortages. Our people strategy is having an impact and the position has stabilised in many areas due to the mitigations which we have implemented. The relevant sectors and local government at a national level continue to press for more radical changes.
- **Strategic Contracts** – The assurance level for how we manage contracts, and the market (other than adult care) has remained static although the position is improving. However, it is important to highlight some areas of risk. Many markets remain complex and are suffering from labour and skills shortages. We are seeing this especially in home to school transport, placements for children in care and with a special educational need or a disability. In addition, following our learning year of Smarter Working, we are exploring opportunities for rationalising our property portfolio and as we prepare for the re-commissioning of our corporate property function, we will need to re-align our new estate and requirement with our new arrangements.

Strategic Risks

Effective risk management is part of the way we work. It is about taking the right risks when making decisions, or where we need to encourage innovation in times of major change – balancing risk, quality, cost and affordability. This puts us in a stronger position to deliver our goals and provide excellent services.

Overall, the strategic risks continue to be managed pro-actively. We have undertaken our review of the effectiveness of the controls for each risk, focussing on those which can be measured, such as KPI's, external sources etc. This work is now continuing for directorate and service level risk registers.

During 2022, an audit of our risk management processes was completed by an external independent company. The overall result was Level 4: Embedded and Integrated, with many areas receiving a "Level 5: Driving the organisation". This demonstrates the success of risk management within the Council and highlights the commitment from the Council, in terms of executive leadership and support.

As part of our work to continuously improve the way we manage our risks, we are now utilising a new risk management software system, which enables us to have better risk data recording, analysis and trend identification. This system will also be rolled out across our directorate and service level risk management.

Our Strategic Risk Register is regularly reviewed by risk owners and our risks are being effectively managed.

Note: The Strategic Risk Register is currently being reviewed (January / February 2023) and therefore risk ratings may change.

Risk	Mitigating Actions	Risk Rating	Level of Assurance	Direction of Travel
Budget - LCC Funding and maintaining financial resilience	No change in the assurance level since Feb 2022.	Amber	Substantial	Static
Cyber The risk of a successful cyber-attack against the council with significant / critical impact	No change in the assurance level since Feb 2022.	Red	Limited	Improving
Inflation Continued high inflation undermines capital programme impacting aspirations and threatens the sustainability of revenue budgets.	New Risk - Regular monitoring, impact assessments for key projects & contracts. Government settlement announced.	Red	Limited	Static
IT Infrastructure IT Infrastructure - ability to implement transformational aspirations and deliver BAU	Assurance status changed to limited, reflecting the delays in deployment of infrastructure.	Amber	Limited	Improving

Strategic Risks

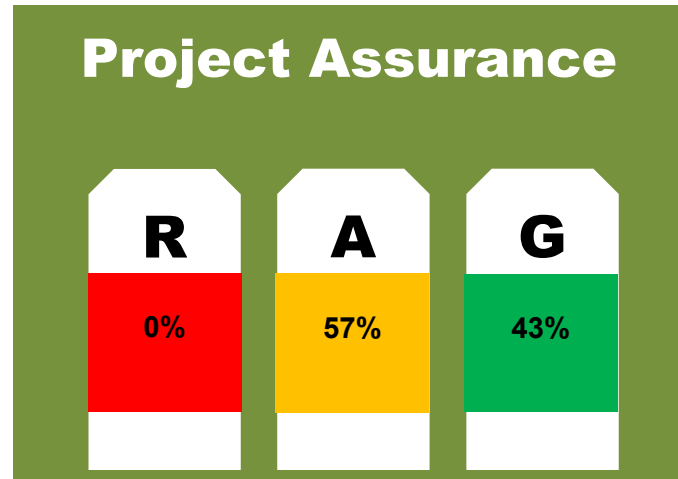
Market Supply Adequacy of Social Care market supply to meet eligible needs as defined in the Care Act	No change in assurance level since Feb 2022. This is in line with the national picture.	Amber	Limited	Static
Outstanding Debt Securing efficient and effective end-to-end processes for the recovery of income due to the Council	Assurance level changed to substantial, due to the ongoing work to improve processes.	Amber	Substantial	Improving
Projects Ability to deliver our Transformation programme	No change in assurance level since Feb 2022.	Amber	Substantial	Improving
Recruitment & Staffing Ability to recruit & retain staff in high-risk areas	No change in assurance level since Feb 2022.	Amber	Limited	Static
Resilience (Business Continuity) Capacity and resilience to respond to, and recover from, wider area and prolonged emergencies and business disruption (e.g., coastal flooding / pandemic flu) impacting on public safety, continuity of critical functions and normal service delivery	No change in assurance level since Feb 2022.	Amber	Substantial	Static
Safeguarding Adults	No change in assurance level since Feb 2022.	Amber	Substantial	Improving
Safeguarding Children	No change in assurance level since Feb 2022.	Amber	Substantial	Improving
Serco Contract Exit of Serco contract ending and transition into the new arrangements	No change in assurance level since Feb 2022.	Amber	Substantial	Static
Strategic Contracts Ensuring contracts and markets (other than adult care) are fit for purpose & are managed effectively	No change in assurance level since Feb 2022.	Amber	Limited	Improving

Strategic Risks

Risk Rating	Level of Assurance	DoT
Red - High impact on resources, significant costs likely, high impact on service delivery	High - A High level of confidence on delivery arrangements, controls and management of the risk.	Improving
Amber - Medium- or short-term impact on resources, cost covered within existing financial plans, low impact on service delivery	Substantial - A Substantial level of confidence on delivery arrangements, controls and management of the risk.	Static
Green - Monitor and be aware, activity to mitigate the risk within existing service delivery plans / management arrangements	Limited - A Limited level of confidence on delivery arrangements, controls and management of the risk.	Deteriorating
	Low - A Low level of confidence on delivery arrangements, controls and management of the risk.	

Transformation Programme

Overall Assurance - Amber	
Programme Governance Assurance	Green
Programme Delivery Assurance	Amber



Red	Amber	Green
	People Strategy, Policy & Structure	Educational Travel
	Business World Redesign	Business Support Review Phase 2
	CSS (Serco) Implementation	Financial Services Review
	Smarter Working Programme	Devolution
	Efficient Systems – Business Analytics & Visualisation	Process Optimisation & Automation (POA)
	BI Strategy Implementation	Children in Care
	Customer Strategy & Customer Digital Delivery	
	Telephony	

The Corporate Plan sets out the goals and ambitions the Council wishes to achieve for its residents over the coming year. Effective delivery of the Plan is supported by the Transformation

Programme – a dedicated programme to monitor, expedite and ensure that transformational change is implemented effectively and realises intended benefits. The Transformation Programme provides LCC with the opportunity to promote learning from each other and work collaboratively to identify new and improved ways to support wider Council objectives. We have for many years been excellent at service led transformation; enabling us to become a strong Council with nationally recognised services. We now want to build on this success for all parts of the Council.

The Transformation Programme brings some of our most high-profile projects together to give far greater visibility, corporate oversight and accountability of key activity, assurance of funding being spent on Council priorities and confidence that benefits are being realised.

Following the review of the Transformation Programme focus, model for delivery, and projects, along with other major projects and programmes across the council, the focus of the last year has been development and delivery of projects to deliver efficiencies and savings.

Due to the need to further focus the work of the transformation programme to manage priorities, the scope was reviewed, and a revised version agreed:

- The Transformation Programme is made up of **highly complex** programmes of change which require a new way of working; the consideration of **optimisation** and **digitalisation**; and the development of a different skillset.
- These projects and programmes will help drive **financial savings** and maximise independence and resilience, in order to **minimise future demand**.
- All with the aim of helping to **protect frontline services** through delivering good value, whilst considering the environmental benefits, demonstrating a **return on investment**, and delivering better outcomes for all.

Transformation Programme

The following projects have been stood up in the last year: Digital Strategy Implementation, Customer Strategy Implementation, Business Intelligence Strategy Implementation and Corporate Support Optimisation, and along with the recent inclusion of Devolution into the Programme, make up the 9 areas of work, containing multiple projects, of the Transformation Programme

Regular updates are in place to ensure staff are kept up to date with developments, with specific targeted communication in place based on individual project requirements. To assist with the implementation and realisation of the changes that the programme will bring, our network of change influencers has grown to 150, to support and help embed, approaches to new ways of working.

Project Assurance

To ensure there is the appropriate oversight and governance in place, a member of the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) has been identified as Executive Director sponsor for each project and the following reporting and governance arrangements are in place:

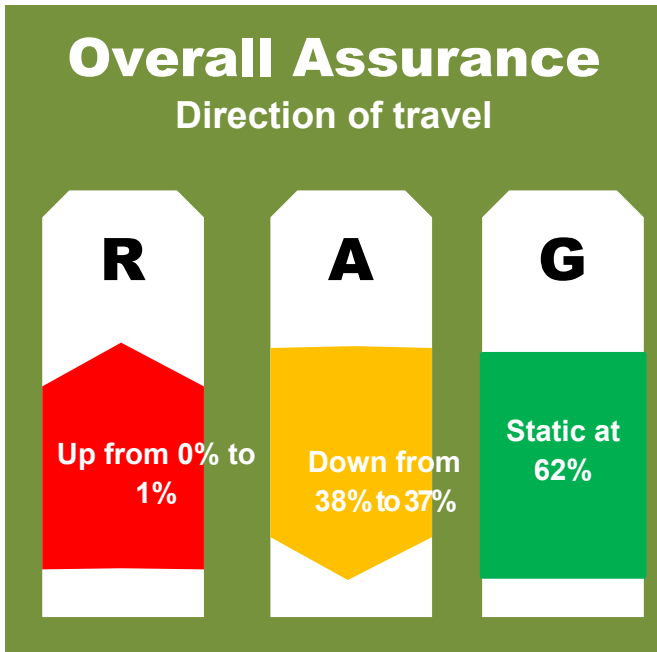
- Regular project progress updates to the project lead and CLT sponsor.
- Weekly programme management office meetings to share information on each project, lessons learnt, progress, and to identify risks, issues, and interdependencies.
- Regular project boards (minimum monthly) to drive the delivery of each project.
- Bi-monthly Transformation Programme steering group which brings together leads for our corporate functions such as HR, Finance, Audit and Business Support to ensure the overall direction of the programme is maintained
- The Transformation Programme is the focus of the CLT performance board meetings on a quarterly basis, to report on progress,

address issues, agree future projects to come into the programme and to provide strategic decision making.

- An Executive Portfolio Member is identified for each project, and regular political reporting takes place for progress monitoring, engagement and decision making as required.

Director's Key Messages

Adult Care and Community Wellbeing



Critical Activities	
Red	Amber
Hospitals	Specialist Adult Services: Directly provided services
	Specialist adult services: Mental Health 18-64
	Adult Frailty and Long-Term Conditions
	Adult Care Finance (Serco)
	One You Lincolnshire
	Digital Roadmap including Connect to Support Lincolnshire

Red Risks
No red risks identified at this time

When I last produced an Adult Care and Community Wellbeing (AC&CW) narrative for the annual assurance report at the end of 2021 the prospects of significant (and much needed) reform in Health and Social Care seemed within reach given a busy legislative program. Who could have guessed that political turbulence in government of historical proportions would affect that program so very much. Whilst the Health and Social Care Act was secured in statute (primarily aimed at the NHS structures) the reforms to social care were delayed, notably those affecting charging for care, new models, long term financial sustainability and the viability of the social care market. Both the Social Care Reform and Integration White Papers have been either delayed or frankly shelved.

At the same time conflict in Ukraine and consequential economic challenges, combined with the longer-term impact of Covid have had a direct bearing on the directorate. Rising costs of fuel, energy and insurance have driven a fragile social care market nationally to a parlous state. Locally we have been fortunate that the directorate was able to provide a Hardship Fund to support social care providers struggling with a significant growth in overheads. The conflict in Ukraine has also meant the directorate took a corporate lead and developed an entirely new specialism in managing a program that has, to date, supported hosts and guests, found homes, schools and, increasingly employment for over a 1,000 Ukrainian guests. This program is set to continue for at least the next two years.

In April, Public Protection was transferred from the Resources directorate to AC&CW. This incorporates Trading Standards, Coroners and Registrars, Emergency Planning, Community Safety and Domestic Abuse. At the same time a new Assistant Director took responsibility for the Division on secondment from the police: Martyn Parker, Chief Superintendent. Accordingly, a number of topic areas have been added to the overall risk register. Many of the services are undergoing significant change – driven by either national policy or legislation e.g., Coroners or, the Domestic Abuse Services.

Director's Key Messages

Previous annual reports have described concerns over hospital pressures (almost synonymous with Winter now) and are repeated here though within a more challenging environment. Hospitals nationally and locally are repeatedly reporting 'internal' or 'major' incidents and the level of concern has grown alongside a high political and media profile. There are many elements to this overall analysis. The long-term effects of Covid on society, a seasonal increase in viral infections and Covid on both the public and the workforce, long term workforce shortages in both health and care and short-term funding responses will mean a continuation of ongoing and substantial pressures and incidents at our acute sites further reflecting a system badly in need of reform.

Less well known was a significant backlog nationally in social care for assessments and reviews which has reached over 540,000. In Lincolnshire I am pleased to say that there are no backlogs in the carers service or adult specialisms and in adult frailty the OT backlog will be removed within a few months. Backlogs have also been evident in the Coronial service as a result of national changes and excessive deaths and, following additional investment these also are beginning to reduce.

Despite the very evident national challenges, in Lincolnshire there are a number of developments (new models) reflecting new approaches and forms of service that are being progressed as a result of finding common purpose with partners (think system not service!). The delegation of tasks to care workers from NHS staff is growing apace and suggests great promise given the challenges of capacity across Lincolnshire. Additionally, a pooled budget, joint strategy and governance has been secured with Lincolnshire police to better tackle serious violence (40% of such cases are Domestic Abuse). We have also seen further growth in pooled funds with NHS colleagues for Complex Cases and S117 (Mental Health). Other priority areas such as the digital program continues to grow, providing services that are more readily accessible to people in need of support. Also, at the end of 2021 the first joint

development involving the County Council of a 70-unit Extra Care Scheme in Lincoln was completed providing substantial benefit to people in helping them remain independent and connected with friends and families – more are planned across the County in the next 18 months helping both older people and those of a working age find better housing options.

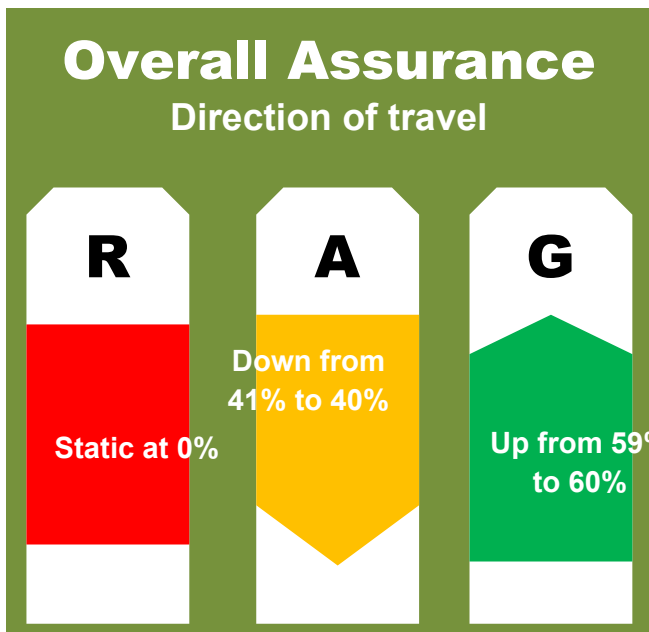
The Improvement Program (a behavioural model seeking to change front line practice towards strengths-based practice) which commenced in early 2021 has proven timely given the extra demand on social care that took place during 2022. An additional 10% growth in people seeking advice and support – over 36,000, would ordinarily have led to significant pressure on assessments and, the budget. A different approach has actually reduced the number of assessments and long-term care packages despite a rising trend because people have been supported to use existing community facilities and/or to find their own solutions: building resilience, helping people to remain independent and connected.

Finally, the Directorate expects, again, to balance its budget at the end of 2022/23 – an eleventh year in succession.

Director's Key Messages

Children's Services

The Children's Services directorate brings together our children's social care, education, and health provision to deliver integrated services for the benefit of Children and Families across Lincolnshire.



Lincolnshire's Children's Services is judged Outstanding by Ofsted and a strong and stable leadership team is in place. We are a Sector Led Improvement Partner with the Department for Education (DfE) which has meant we have been able to develop new innovative services for Lincolnshire and support other local authorities on their improvement journey.

Our recovery from the Covid pandemic has been strong and our services have returned to full delivery. Children's Services have responded to the changing needs of children's and families and redesigned services to provide support effectively. The legacy of the pandemic on the directorate has been felt primarily across our workforce capacity and the capacity of placements to support children and young people.

The demand on our safeguarding services has increased which, when combined with our recruitment and retention challenges has created pressure. We are beginning to see this level off following a series of interventions to support front line practitioners.

Demand for residential social care placements is high nationally and in Lincolnshire, at a time when the sufficiency of those placements is limited. We are delivering two new children's homes and have implemented a transformation programme working with providers to secure the right placements for Children in Care at the right time.

In line with national pressures, our Public Health Nursing service has experienced challenges in health visitor recruitment and increasing demand. Despite this, the service has restored delivery of face-to-face contacts with families and performance is above national indicators. CQC monitoring activity has provided assurance that the service is performing well.

The education sector has returned to national assessments which has allowed effective monitoring of standards to be in place. The performance of Lincolnshire's pupils is broadly in line with pupils nationally at the end of secondary school with more work needed to achieve this at

Critical Activities	
Red	Amber
None	Safeguarding Regulated
	Safeguarding Locality
	Children's Public Health Nursing
	Occupational Therapy Team
	Closing the Attainment Gap

Red Risks
No red risks identified at this time

Director's Key Messages

the primary phase. The role and funding of the Council in school improvement has changed and the Department for Education is now delivering improvement programmes through national programmes and local Teaching School Hubs. Locally, the Council is fully engaged with these programmes and providers, linking schools in need of development with programmes that can support them. The attainment gap for pupil's eligible for free school meals continues to be a priority and the directorate has supported schools and academies to implement the government funded catch up programmes to mitigate concerns in this area.

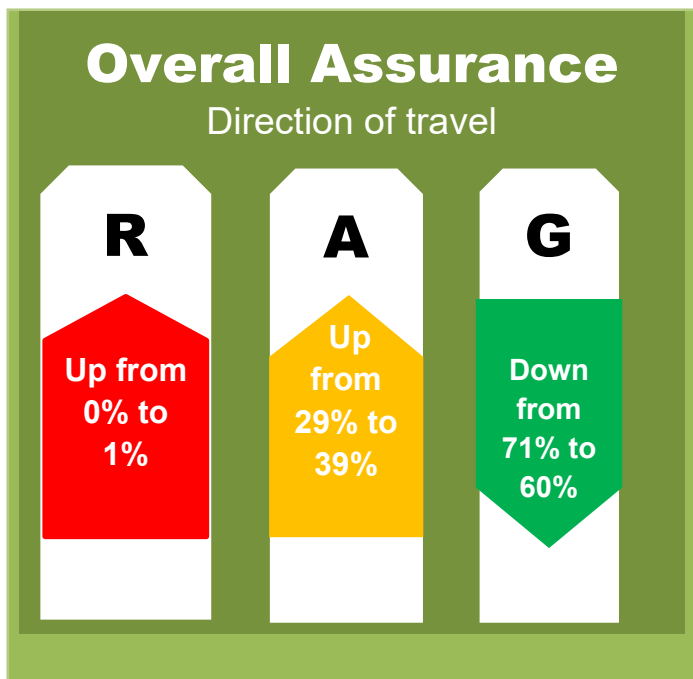
The Occupational Therapy team has also encountered recruitment and retention challenges, as seen nationally, and whilst the team is working well, the waiting times for assessment need to be improved. All cases are triaged, and urgent need is prioritised.

As this report emphasises, we have faced recruitment and retention challenges across several our frontline services, which are also being seen nationally. Teams across Children's Services have responded with resilience and dedication to ensure we have maintained a strong performance across all our key indicators whilst the council has introduced measures locally to address these national issues as best possible. It is worth noting that Lincolnshire appears to have experience these challenges to lesser extent than many other authorities. Our services have put children and young people at the heart of decision making and this has mitigated adverse service delivery. We have continued to innovate and transform services, and this will place us in a strong position moving forward.

Director's Key Messages

Resources

1 April 2022 saw the creation of a new larger Resources directorate, bringing together the old Resources and Commercial directorates following the retirement of James Drury in March 2022. The directorate now covers the majority of the corporate functions across the broad themes of money, governance, people, buildings, technology, change and commerciality.



Critical Activities	
Red	Amber
None	ICT Governance & Operations
	Capital Programme
	Records Management
	People Strategy & Corporate Landlord
	HR Services
	Business World Rebuild and Business World Governance
	Staffing Capacity (Legal, Business Support, HR, Audit, Counter Fraud, Commercial, IT)

Red Risks		
Risk identified	Risk Rating	Assurance Level
Failure to Maximise Apprenticeship Levy	Red	Limited

IMT

The function is currently undergoing change as it moves from technical focussed provision to a more customer and business focussed service. Following the recent decision to pause the 2024 re-procurement exercise, work is now underway to increase the maturity of the function and develop the service offering. The service area has experienced relatively acute recruitment challenges, particularly around technical roles, however the direction of travel is positive with successful recent recruits. Work continues around improving the corporate starters, movers and leavers process and maximising our use and benefits of the corporate Office 365 functionality. A new senior interim has been appointed to lead an improvement programme to increase the function's maturity and the initial discovery phase may give rise to further issues that require attention

Close monitoring of our relationship with our WAN/LAN provider EMPSN continues given recent market changes and further council decision making in this space may be required later in 2023.

Property

The Corporate Property team is under recent new Assistant Director leadership. Current priorities are developing a new Property strategy, making refinements to the corporate landlord initiative, and commencing delivery of the property rationalisation programme arising from Smarter Working, bringing together key threads in the strategic management of our estate. Whilst not a risk at this stage, major work will also commence around the 2025 re-procurement of our outsourced provision.

Transformation

Director's Key Messages

Major project in this area, supported heavily by the rest of the directorate and impacting on everyone associated with the Council, April 2023 is anticipated to see the go live of the Hoople ERP solution for Business World. A major milestone passed with the sign off of parallel payroll runs, with focus now on the latter stages of the delivery plan. The team are also responsible for ensuring smooth delivery of the corporate transformation programme which remains an amber critical activity by the nature of the breadth and depth of the activities undertaken and the constant pull-on resources from different projects and parts of the organisation.

Commercial

This team supports Adult Care and Community Wellbeing (see separate section for related risks) with commissioning including contract management and market supply and wider corporate procurement. Across the function, recruitment and retention of professional staff is a challenge in keeping with previous years. Coupled with a significant Covid related backlog of work, this creates significant pressure to deliver, and the function leadership remain creative in meeting these challenges. Positive developments in the area include the development of category management practice, social value, the wider work of raising awareness via the Corporate Commissioning Hub and working with Health to redesign intermediate care- a range of integrated services to maximise independent living and prevent unnecessary admission to hospital and premature admission to long term residential care

The function is also lead on a major project to re-procure various elements of the existing Serco contract which ends in 2024. The Customer Service Centre is intended to remain outsourced; Payroll is intended to be provided by our partner Hoople and Financial Transactional Services are due to be brought in house and in totality is a dedicated project of the Transformation Programme.

Finance

The past year has seen a number of positive improvements, particularly around our approach to debt management which has featured in previous versions of this report. The committee recently received a report on our compliance with the new CIPFA Financial Management code and progress is positive. The Finance team will be heavily impacted the new ERP system and risks will need to be managed to ensure continued strong service delivery.

The Internal Audit and Risk teams received very positive feedback in their recent external assessments which demonstrates the strong foundation underpinning process such as this. Recruitment has been a challenge at times for the function however a raft of recent appointments mitigates this.

The Pensions function remains very well run and alongside the Serco re-procurement, a project is underway to re-procure our Pensions Administration which is currently provided by the West Yorkshire Pension Fund.

HR and Organisational Support

Other areas of this report highlight the challenges the council has around recruitment and retention and whilst we are now seeing positive actions in mitigating these challenges, the HR team are a key support function in helping managers advertise, recruit and then onboard which itself creates capacity challenges for the team. The People Strategy which underpins developments in our HR offer is now well progressed in a number of areas with a review of effectiveness to be undertaken during the year. Our ability to maximise the apprenticeship levy remains a challenge given the numerical impact of the size of the council budget; however, the roll count is at a high point.

Legal and Governance

Recruitment of permanent skilled childcare lawyers remains challenging as in previous years, however steps to "grow our own" are bearing fruit and will continue to be pursued. The proposed 2023/24 budget reflects challenges in this area

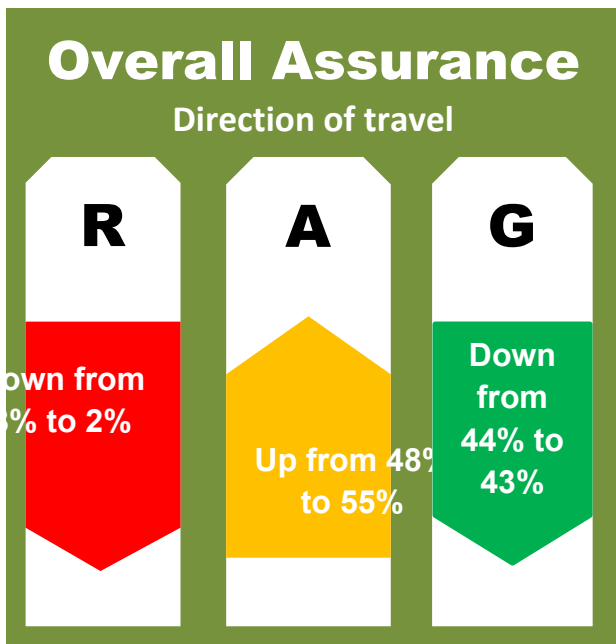
Director's Key Messages

related to the increased cost of external locums and the related increase in childcare cases. The Legal alternative business structure goes live in 2023, which will allow us to work with other council companies in line with Solicitor Regulation Authority requirements.

Elsewhere in the function, the records management project led by Information Assurance is a sizeable challenge given the historical backlog of physical records, however resource is in place and successful strides are being made. For the wider directorate and council, a similar exercise will be undertaken around our digital records as we seek to maximise other elements of Office 365.

Director's Key Messages

Place



Critical Activities	
Red	Amber
Regeneration funding	Business Growth Hub
	Economic Development portfolio
	Employment Skills and Adult Learning
	Tourism
	NM - Civil Parking Enforcement
	Highways 2020
	Design Services
	Waste Management (strategy)
	Public Rights of Way
	Educational Travel (Inc - School, College, Social Care) (Corporate Transformation Programme)
	Lincolnshire Public Transport Network (including Community Transport)
	Archives

Red Risks
No red risks identified at this time

The overall picture across the Place based services reflects a high level of demand for access to services but generally a re-assuring picture of how the risks associated with delivering those services are being managed. This does result in a reasonably high percentage of amber risks but reflects the impact of measures that are outside of our direct control in some instances.

Of particular note is how the underlying pressures of inflation are impacting on the costs of service delivery, costs of capital programme activity and the cost-of-living impact on our service users and our contractors. These risks are being managed but the underlying trend is that this is resulting in increased costs to deliver services with the potential for a consequent impact on the level of service that can be provided. Contract costs in waste, highways and public transport for example have all increased but in year measures have been taken to address these impacts e.g., revised rates agreed within the highways term maintenance contract. Should the inflationary costs remain high there is a risk that in future years this will impact on the amount of work that can be delivered with the risk of needing to reduce our service delivery standards. Collaborative working with our partners continues to maximise efficiencies, introduce innovative working practices and manage service demands.

One particular area of risk is the access to regeneration-based funding. Lincolnshire had previously benefited from significant levels of European funding and the post Brexit funding landscape has resulted in funds being allocated and provided in different ways through a range of pots. In summary it could be concluded that this has resulted in less long-term strategic funding being available for management through programmes with more localised bidding arrangements with some of that funding being targeted towards local activity e.g., Town Deal funding. The opportunities provided through a devolution deal could create an ability for long term strategic programmes to be established based on the principles of an investment pot that has been integral to other devolution deals

Director's Key Messages

Despite the wider economic challenges being experienced it is positive to note both the increases in inward investment activity and the enhanced role of our Development Management teams on influencing the type of new development being permitted by our District Planning authorities. Long term investment priorities are being encapsulated through the Countywide work to develop a strategic infrastructure framework and again this work will provide the basis for future investment decisions if a devolution deal is secured.

Across our highway services we have a high level of assurance that we are managing the demands for service pro-actively. Whilst there will always been a demand for us to deliver more in response to customer enquiries to address defects on the network, our systems and workloads are under control and continue to be monitored effectively to continue to improve the service. Inflationary pressures do remain a risk though in respect of wage costs, material costs and transport costs e.g., fuel rises. A future review of intervention levels and policy requirements cannot be ruled out, but this will be addressed through our asset management plan.

Our public facing services such as our heritage sites continue to show an increase in visitor numbers, and we have received national awards reflecting our commitment to the visitors of these sites over the last 12 months. This provides a positive impact on the wider local economy and makes Lincoln and the wider area including our countryside and coast a destination of choice.

Our public transport services have been subject to inflationary pressures of fuel cost rises, wage inflation and the pressures on the availability of drivers to our contractors to fulfil contracts. This has resulted in some significant uplift in costs but the transformation activity being delivered in respect of Home to School transport demonstrates our ability to tackle these risks. Continued cost pressures will not, however, be absorbed without either significant changes in service standards or budget levels. This position is being seen nationally so is not local to Lincolnshire.

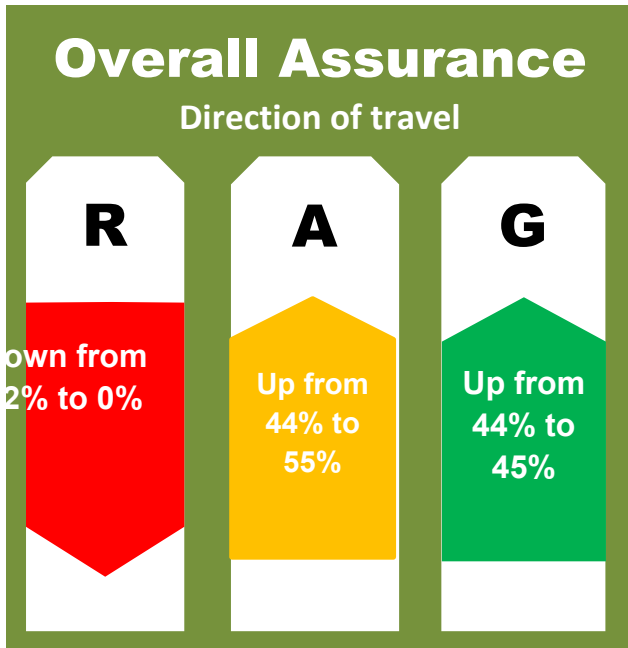
Our key projects are all largely identified as amber given the scale and complexity attached to most of the delivery activity. There are risks attached to all projects, but they are all part and parcel of our project board and governance arrangements with mitigation measures in place and being managed. These projects though are significant in addressing wider community or business needs or to facilitate the growth in our economy and therefore remain important aspects of our corporate plan delivery activity

Much of our wider activity is delivered in partnership and the positive interaction and collaboration with our partners ensures we continue to work for the greater good of Lincolnshire. The establishment of the Bus Service Enhanced Partnership Board has improved the working relationship with our public transport providers and there are joint initiatives underway to improve the public transport experience across Lincolnshire although our ambitions have been stifled due to no funding being allocated from Government to deliver our Bus Service Improvement Plan.

We have identified a range of operational and emerging risks which reflect a range of challenges largely related to the state of the economy and these will continue to be monitored at a service, project and strategic level with the likely outcome being the need to re-allocate resources at some point in the future or reduce our service delivery or contractual commitments.

Director's Key Messages

Fire and Rescue



Critical Activities	
Red	Amber
None	Prevention
	Protection

Red Risks
 No red risks identified at this time

During 2022 there has been a clear focus on the outcomes of the previous year's HMICFRS inspection. With a cause of concern found within how we delivered our risk-based inspection programme and how we prioritised equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the service. This cemented the direction of travel that was initiated in 2021 to continue the good work that was already being delivered to address these issues.

During this year we were re-inspected by HMICFRS, and they confirmed that good progress has been made against how we prioritise EDI within the Service. The face-to-face training and engagement across the service has been well

received and HMICFRS were satisfied that they no longer need to have updates on progress in this area.

Following a re-inspection by HMICFRS of how we deliver our risk-based inspection programme within our Protection strategy they recognised significant improvements against all recommendations and have confirmed that they no longer view Protection as being a cause of concern and this has now been lifted.

Our Prevention activities have seen an improvement in how we target and deliver home fire safety visits to our most vulnerable people in our communities. There has been improved data that has enabled crews and advocates to target the most at risk. The aspirational target of 10,000 visits has delivered the outcome that was intended in that it has required crews to be more innovative in how they access our most at risk. Although we do not expect to reach the target of 10,000, we will have seen a marked increase in visits and interventions. The delivery of these visits was hampered over the summer period from our crews due to the unprecedented weather conditions that resulted in higher levels of operational activity that would normally be expected.

Our On Call availability remains an area of focus to ensure we have appropriate levels of appliance availability across the County. We have taken a more risk-based approach to appliance availability which enables our recruitment team and Divisional teams to ensure we have availability guaranteed at our higher risk areas within the County. We recognise that it is not possible to have all 38 fire stations to be available 24/7, and therefore we have focused on areas that have the highest risk and ensure we have sufficient resources to maintain cover and capabilities that reflect our risk. This 'resource to risk' concept is a recognised approach to ensure the most effective use is made of resources available.

To measure the impact of the 'resource to risk' model for our appliance availability we have updated our performance measures to show the

Director's Key Messages

public what our response times are to dwelling fires and other emergencies. These are also presented to Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Board to monitor progress and it has showed that we are delivering against all targets for response times.

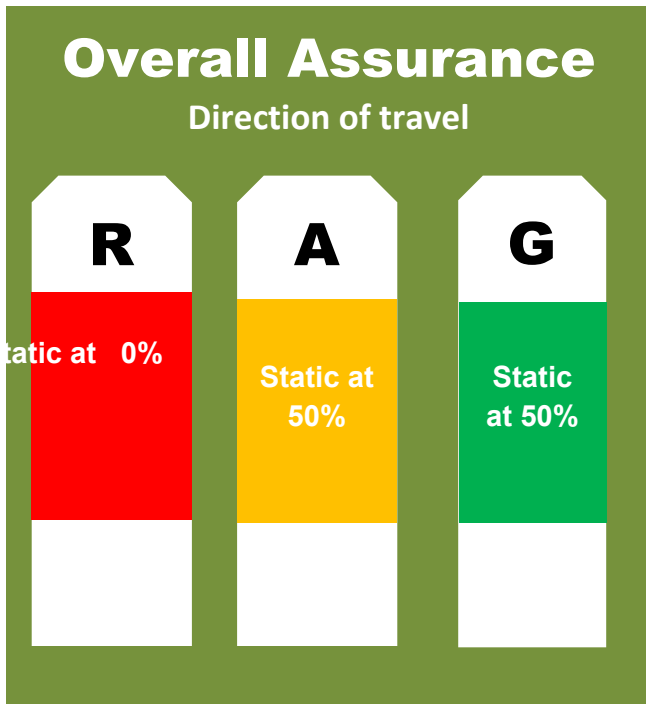
The recruitment and workforce planning that has been undertaken this year has resulted in appointing at several key areas within senior and middle leadership roles. The continued recruitment and training programme within our Protection Team has seen an increase in team membership and upskilling of capabilities to deliver in these areas. A talent management programme has been introduced, and although this is still in development it is offering avenues for development for aspiring leaders at all levels within the Service.

As mentioned earlier, the summer of 2022 presented the service with a level of demand for operational response that has not been experienced before. The severe weather conditions that the summer witnessed stretched our response teams and all areas across the service to its limits. Although at some points all available assets were committed, we were able to respond to all calls and support neighboring services who were experiencing similar demands. This showed the strength of our response teams and especially how our On Call crews made themselves available during major incidents.

At the end of 2022 on a national scale there were a couple of significant reports that were released that related to the Manchester Arena Inquiry and London Fire Brigade Cultural review. LFR has committed to review our service against recommendations that have been identified in these reports, and although an initial view is that LFR is able to demonstrate good assurance against these recommendations, there will be a deeper review during 2023 in these areas to identify further learning.

Director's Key Messages

Corporate



Critical Activities	
Red	Amber
	Media Management
	Internal Communications
	Corporate Communications
	Strategic Partnerships

Red Risks
No red risks identified at this time

The corporate area covers responsibility for the strategy communications and digital team, along with the Council’s policy function. The area has responsibility for:

- Development of devolution proposals – responding to the governments levelling up agenda
- Policy development – including management of the corporate plan

- Media Relations – issuing press releases and dealing with enquiries from the media
- County News
- Digital Communications – the website and other social media platforms
- Events – assisting other sections to find locations for events / conferences etc and managing the Council's involvement in major events such as the Lincolnshire Show
- Internal – communications to staff such as News Lincs & CLT Brief
- Design & Print – managing the Council's design & print requirements

The teams within Corporate have continued to respond to changes in government policy and ambitions to bring additional powers and investment into the Greater Lincolnshire economic area. This has seen a focus on strategic partnerships as the Council continues to work closely with public, private, and voluntary sector partners. Extensive partnership working has taken place with North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council, along with the seven district councils in Lincolnshire to develop a series of proposals for the area.

Media Management - continues to see a proactive approach being taken. This remains amber as the Council must react to potential reputational issues and how the council is represented cannot be controlled.

Internal Communications - This remains amber as there is only a single officer responsible for this activity and therefore less resilience within the team.