

9 June 2022

Agenda Item: 8

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR – FINANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE & IMPROVEMENT

ASSURANCE MAPPING ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

Purpose of the Report

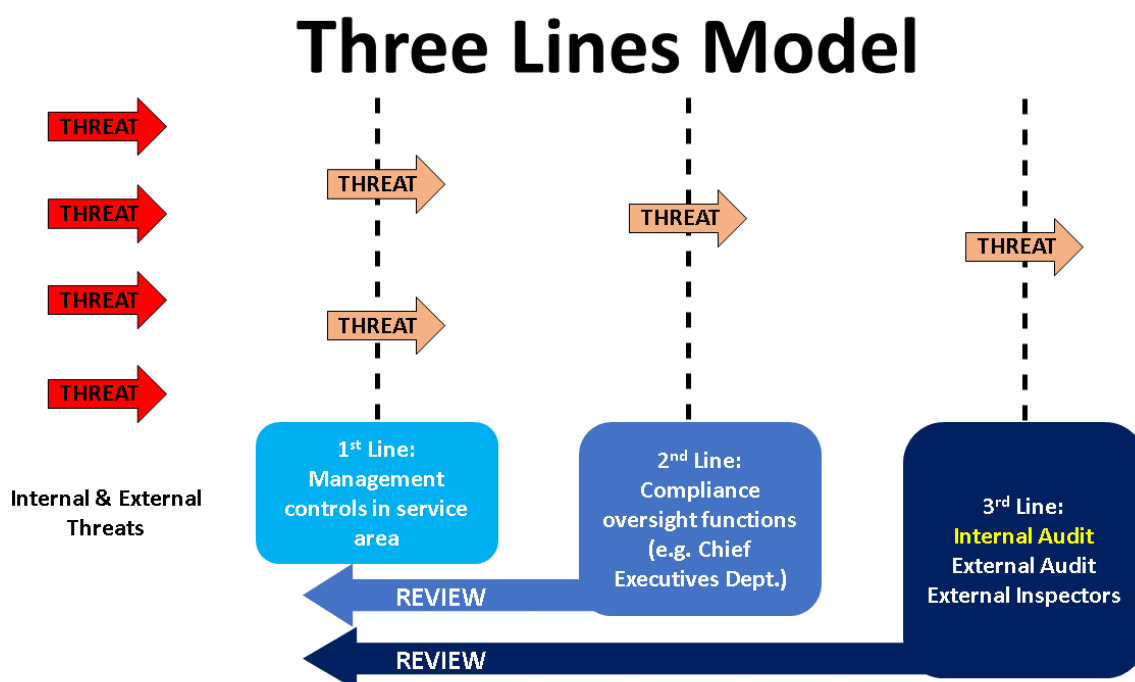
1. To present the outcomes from the assurance mapping work carried out during 2021-22, and to consider the approach for 2022-23.

Information

2. This is the fourth annual report following members' approval of the pilot undertaken in 2018-19. For the benefit of Members new to this process, the aims and benefits of assurance mapping are:
 - To provide annual assurance to the Council (both the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and the Governance & Ethics Committee) that effective governance arrangements are in place in the areas that matter most to the Council
 - To provide a sound and comprehensive basis for the Annual Governance Statement (AGS)
 - To identify any overlaps or gaps in assurance from all available sources, allowing improvements to be made in co-ordinating efforts in the coming year
 - To inform the Governance & Ethics Committee's work programme
 - To inform Internal Audit Plans.
3. The remit of the assurance map was expanded to include three new areas in 2020-21, since this time it now includes the following eight areas:

• Financial management	• Performance management
• Risk management	• Asset management
• People management	• Information governance (new in 2020/21)
• Commissioning and procurement (new in 2020/21)	• Transformation and change (new in 2020/21)

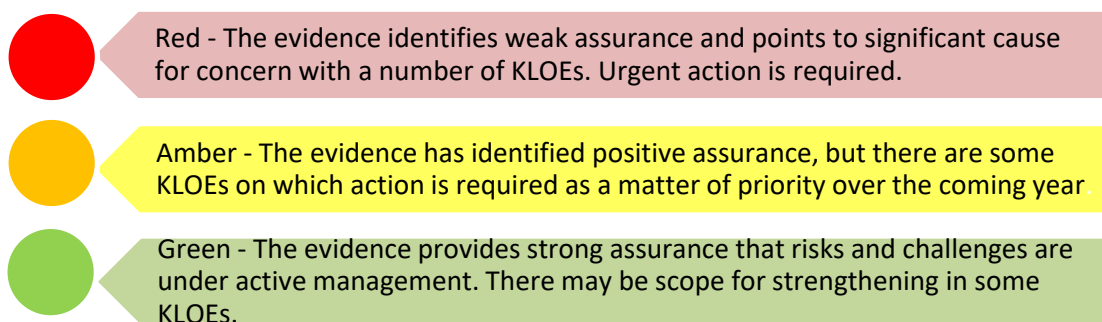
4. For each of these areas, Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) were determined and used to map the sources of assurance available to the Council across its Three Lines Model.



5. This fourth annual report covers the following elements:
- Reporting the evidence gathered from the assurance sources across the three lines model and assessing what assurance can be taken from it about the Council's arrangements for the eight areas of governance.
 - Proposing actions to be taken in 2022/23 to address any concerns identified.
 - Considering the progress made and consolidation of assurance areas for 2022/23.

Assurance mapping outcomes in 2021/22

6. **Appendix 1** presents details of the evidence gathered for each of the eight areas. The evidence for each KLOE is presented across the three lines model. A simple 'Red-Amber-Green (RAG)' rating has been applied, based around the following principles:



7. Key findings as shown in the appendix result in the following key conclusions that may be drawn from the evidence presented:

Appendix 1 shows the key evidence to support the three lines model and identifies the current status based on the above RAG rating, along with any developments and actions. The key conclusions that may be drawn from this evidence is presented below:

- The Council is fully aware of the financial challenges and continues to take appropriate and effective action to meet them.
- Remodelling the approach to transformation has been completed and will bring a different approach to both transformation and performance management.
- The approach to corporate risk management has been revised which will further strengthen our insights and preparedness for future challenges.
- The Council continue to have strong arrangements in place for the effective management of our people which was evident through the pandemic.
- The Council have sound arrangements in place in relation to information management and information governance but remain vigilant to cyber-attack.

Use of the outcomes from Assurance Mapping

8. One of the primary aims of assurance mapping is to provide annual assurance to the Council that effective governance arrangements are in place in the areas that matter most to the Council
9. Beyond this, the assurance assembled through this process can be put to effective use to inform and direct wider governance activity in the Council. The outcomes of this report have been used as set out below:
- a) The Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2021/22 – the findings from this year's assurance mapping process have been used as a source of assurance for the statutory AGS.
 - b) Governance & Ethics Committee's work programme – this assurance mapping report provides an important steer for the Committee regarding the areas in which it may wish to seek further assurance in 2022/23.
 - c) Internal Audit Plans – assurance mapping has delivered a clear view of the relative areas of strength and weakness in the governance processes covered by the map. The Team has updated its approach to audit planning and incorporates intelligence gathered from assurance mapping to identify priority needs. The intelligence gathered from this assurance mapping exercise to inform future plans include:
 - considering performance monitoring in relation to the new Council Plan
 - development of the workforce models across all departments
 - delivery of action plans to ensure information management accreditation
 - delivery of objectives for transformation projects.

Proposals for assurance mapping in 2022/23

10. This report represents the fourth year of the assurance mapping exercise and during 2021/22, we have consolidated work on the eight assurance areas by gathering further evidence and representations to support the assurance mapping exercise. The 2021/22 exercise focused on continuing to gather evidence to support the assurance exercise, using the eight assurance areas previously agreed with members.
11. During 2022/23 we will consider how existing and potentially additional assurance areas can be updated and reviewed. This review will take into account the current governance opinion requirements and build on the insight and assurance provided from the newly implemented and developed continuous assurance and risk management processes. We will consult with members and senior officers and bring back proposals for change to this committee during the autumn.

Other Options Considered

12. The assurance mapping process might be discontinued. This would deny the Council the benefits of the approach highlighted in this report. The scope of the assurance map might be retained to cover the eight aspects of governance covered in 2021/22. This would preclude the measured widening of the scope to allow extended benefits to accrue.

Reasons for Recommendations

13. To recognise the benefits that the assurance mapping approach has brought to the Council, along with the improvements that may be made to it. Further, to consolidate the benefits of the approach to the current scope for the 2022/23 assessment.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.
15. The assurance map aims to deliver a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk and control framework. This will provide assurance relating to many of the considerations listed above.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) The assurance mapping process is retained in 2022/23.
- 2) The scope of the assurance map for 2022/23 is consolidated to focus on the existing eight assurance areas.
- 3) Progress against proposed actions to address the issues identified be reported to Committee as part of quarterly update reports on the AGS.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (CEH 12/05/2022)

16. The recommendations fall within the remit of Governance and Ethics Committee under its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SES 11/05/2022)

17. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All