



**Governance & Audit  
Committee**

**12 March 2019**

**Subject: Combined Assurance Report 2018/19**

Report by:

Executive Director of Resources

Contact Officer:

Corporate Policy Manager & Deputy Monitoring  
Officer

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Purpose / Summary:

To present the Council's Combined Assurance  
Report for 2018/19.

**RECOMMENDATION(S): The Committee are asked to approve the report and be assured that the findings illustrate that the Council's governance framework is operating effectively.**

## IMPLICATIONS

**Legal: None**

**Financial: FIN 211-19**

**Staffing: None**

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights: None**

**Risk Assessment: None**

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: None**

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

None.

### Call in and Urgency:

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

**Yes**

**No**

**n/a**

### Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

**Yes**

**No**

**x**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Combined Assurance Report is to produce a record of assurances against our critical activities and risks. It provides an overview of assurance across the Council making it possible to identify where assurances are present, their source and where there are potential assurance 'unknowns or gaps'. It offers a tri-angulated view of assurance with separate opinion provided by management; corporate and/or third party assurance and Internal Audit. The Combined Assurance Report is produced annually and this report covers the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

## **2 Combined Assurance Report**

- 2.1 This is the sixth Combined Assurance Report undertaken at West Lindsey District Council. It provides a view on assurance systems and services for the year ending March 2019. The report is available as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The report details the methodology that was used and the levels of assurance that we currently have. The assurance assessment, as explained in the report, is based on the 'three levels of assurance' model.
- 2.3 By conducting this work, we are in a position to be able to identify where we need to obtain further assurance and at what levels. The findings will be used to focus on areas for improvement and potentially form the issues to be addressed within the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19.

## **3 Findings**

- 3.1 The report, as presented, represents a realistic, yet positive picture of the levels of assurance in place across the Council and illustrates that our assurance framework is working well.
- 3.2 The findings shows that across the critical activities and emerging risks which were within the report's scope; 65% were assessed as performing well (green); 33% required some attention (amber) and 2% were in need of urgent attention (red). Last year's findings; using the same methodology, were green (71%) and amber (29%).
- 3.3 The 'field-work' identified a number of potential emerging risks which were discussed with the Management Team. Following deliberations a significant proportion of these were considered as operational in nature and deemed to be manageable at that level.
- 3.4 Those transactional, front-facing activities, categorised as 'red' or 'amber' in nature in this year's report are set out below with the reasons for their respective ratings. In all cases the issues identified were known to the Council and oversight/actions were already in situ:

Area	Reason for Rating
Gainsborough Market	Look for effective solution to long-term decline in markets.
Environmental Protection	Team is meeting its obligations but work needed to develop systems and performance.
External Health & Safety	Requires greater resilience and planned training to be implemented.
Street Cleaning	Recent drop in demand means review required to consider overall service offer.
Health & Wellbeing	A 10 year contract with resource, contract management, commercial and reputational risks all involved.
Homeless Prevention	Inability to obtain detailed level of management information from systems.
Planning Enforcement	High demand on service and best means of handling demand to be identified.
Food Safety	Resource issues and need to internally review the service.
Community Safety/ASB	Loss of experienced staff and effectiveness of service to be evaluated.
Strategic Property & Estate Management	Resource issues and links with Growth could be compromised due to high workloads across both teams.
Community Rights	Resource issues and no grant/income support available.

3.5 The content of the report and the thoughts of the Council's senior management have identified a number of key areas of focus for the year ahead. These are:

- Undertake a review of Strategic Risks and develop a means of ensuring that project related risks are consistently recorded and managed.
- Prepare for and hold a Peer Review to set improvement targets and seek third party accreditation against a nationally recognised framework.
- Work on the findings of the Governance Review undertaken by Internal Audit, to ensure the Council's culture and values are consistently understood and exhibited.
- Induct new and returning Councillors and implement the Member Development Training Plan.

3.6 Operating in an environment of constant change and uncertainty, service areas assess and monitor any emerging risks that may affect the delivery of their service. These have been captured within the report and all have been classified as medium (amber) in nature. These classifications have been fed into the overall green/amber/red ratings contained within the report.

3.7 The identification and management of risk are regarded as key disciplines. We are pleased that an appreciation and awareness of risk management was evident and captured during the collation of the report.

#### **4 Next Steps**

4.1 The report will be used as a basis for learning, improvements and service planning, focusing on the areas detailed at 3.5 above to enable the Council achieve key objectives for the 2019/20 period.

4.2 The findings of the report have also been used to inform Internal Audit's work plan for 2019/20 and the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19.