

Combined Assurance Status Report 2022/23



**East Lindsey District Council
January 2023**

Contents

Overview of Assurance	Page 1
Chief Executive's Summary	Page 2
Strategic Risk	Page 3
Deputy Chief Executive's Key Messages	
Communities	Page 6
Corporate Development	Page 8
Programme Delivery & SIRO	Page 9
Growth	Page 10
Strategic Partnership Working (PSPS Delivered services)	Page 11
Key Projects	Page 12
Key Partnerships	Page 13
Emerging Risks	Page 14

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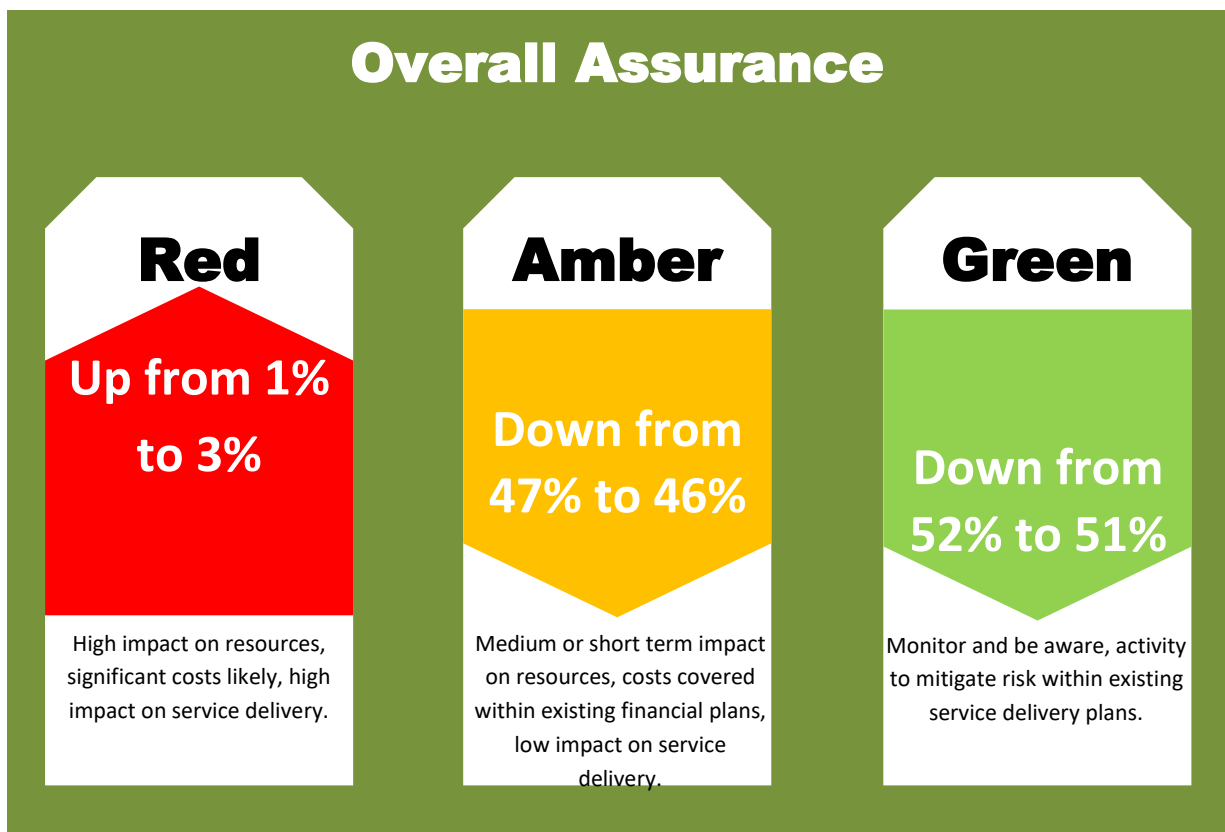
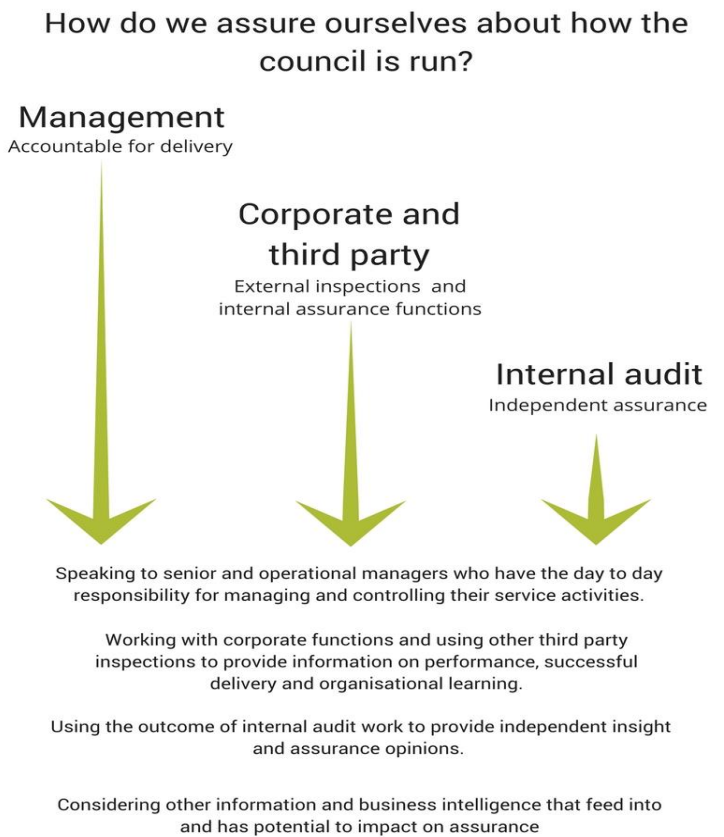
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Overview of Assurance

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 3 lines of defence model.



Chief Executive's Summary

The Combined Assurance reporting is now embedded within each Authority and continues to be a key piece of our annual governance framework.

It is noticeable that the traffic light scores remain broadly consistent with previous years, which is impressive given the external factors we face, such as recruitment and retention of skilled employees.

The areas identified as requiring additional assurance will help our staff develop plans to bring forward further measures as we seek to learn and develop as a provider of public services to our communities.

Finally, the largest proportion of our services sit in the amber zone, and we fully recognise the ongoing requirement to work hard and give governance and assurance a place of importance to ensure we remain aware a well-run organisation.

Key Messages

Strategic Risks










Good 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 put us in a stronger position to deliver our goals and provide excellent services.


Our Strategic Risk Register is regularly reviewed, and our risks are being effectively managed.

Risk	Mitigating actions	Risk rating	Direction Of Travel
Reduction in government funding to deliver Council services and local priorities	Due to Covid19 the budget is currently being monitored very closely and a number of mitigating measures have been introduced. There will be regular reviews to ensure that the council is managing any shortfalls and/or costs.	Medium	↔
Reduction in council income	The s151 Officer is looking in detail at the impact of loss of income on the budget and will continue to monitor the Council’s finances very closely over the coming months and will make recommendations for carefully managing expenditure.	High	↔
Supporting recovery from Covid19 for the local economy – people and businesses	ELDC is fully engaged with partners and have already put measures in place to enable the local economy to support them during recovery as example using the welcome back funding. ELDC will work with partners to help tackle the expected social and health impacts of the pandemic.	High	↔
Uncertainty of future Lincshire flood defence scheme	The Council will continue to work with partners, local MPs, and the government to identify a solution to the future funding needs of the Lincshire scheme. The Council is also undertaking a number of activities including its Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to support and inform the Local Plan moving forward.	Medium	↓
Business continuity and recovery in the event of a major incident or event	All three councils are members of the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum, enabling access to expertise held by LCC whilst retaining staff, resources, and expertise in each sovereign council within an EP&BC structure across the Partnership. Each authority has an Emergency Plan & Business Continuity Plan in place in order that service delivery can be prioritised and maintained at such times. Public Sector Partnership Services (PSPS) and Magna Vitae have Business Continuity Plans in place.	High	↔

Key Messages

Risk	Mitigating actions	Risk rating	Direction Of Travel
Failure to comply with Health and Safety requirements	The establishment of the S&ELCP has increased the resilience and capability of the 3 partner councils. Resources can be more easily shared across the sub-region and procedures and policies are being joined up to provide a more efficient and effective approach towards H&S compliance.	Medium	
Local Plan not delivering economic growth and prosperity	The Council is at the present time meeting its 5-year supply of housing using the Government agreed methodology, this is monitored on an annual basis. Under-delivery will be identified, and its causes understood.	Medium	
Failure to deliver safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults responsibilities	The Safeguarding Policy and Procedures have been reviewed. The lead officer liaises regularly with other District Councils and external agencies. Team leaders identify relevant actions and staff training in their service plans.	Medium	
Failure to comply with Information Governance requirements	Arrangements are in place to ensure that the organisation is compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirement, including lead staff attending training. PSPS also have a lead officer overseeing compliance.	Medium	
Attainment of revenue through Treasury Management policies and commercially driven capital expenditure	A long-term strategy is in place, supported by strong internal awareness and governance and external professional advice.	Medium	
Resilience and quality of service delivery arrangements with third parties	Assessment of business plans for key partnerships. Regular performance reports and monitoring meetings with third parties.	Medium	
Delivery of office relocation project	The Office Relocation project has a separate risk register managed by the Assistant Director (Assets). A management project team meet regularly to ensure that all building and staffing aspects of the project are managed in an integrated way.	Medium	
Technology Infrastructure failure	The Council has a Disaster Recovery agreement with a 3rd party to supply equipment and has support agreements in place with suppliers to assist where necessary	High	
Cyber incident	Defence in depth in the form of firewalls, Mimecast and antivirus is deployed both at the perimeter and the internal Local Area Network. ICT is also a member of the CISP formed by the National Cyber Security Centre, this allows us early awareness from the central agency responsible for cyber threats across the UK as well as allowing them	High	

Key Messages

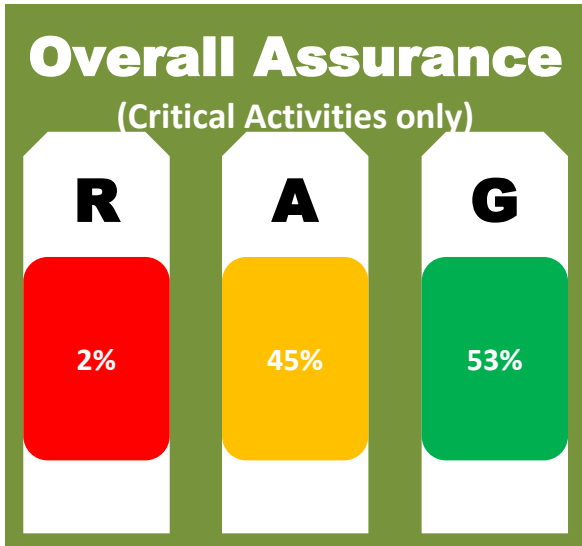
Risk	Mitigating actions	Risk rating	Direction Of Travel
	to monitor our environment to a degree. These mitigations afford ICT awareness of emerging threats.		
Key	Risk		
Very High /High	High impact on resources, significant costs likely, high impact on service delivery		
High/Medium	Medium or short-term impact on resources, cost covered within existing financial plans, low impact on service delivery		
Medium/Low	Monitor and be aware, activity to mitigate the risk within existing service delivery plans / management arrangements		

Key Messages

Deputy Chief Executive - Communities

Health & Safety, Ground Maintenance, Greens Management, Play areas, Street Cleansing, Arboriculture & Protection, Public Conveniences, Green Waste, Depot, Markets, Fleet Management, Safeguarding, PSPS, Wellbeing, Affordable Homes & Supported Housing Growth, Homelessness, Housing Standards, Rough Sleeping, Housing Advice Triage, Housing Register, Temporary Accommodation, Housing Strategy, Housing Assistance, Community Safety, CCTV, ASB, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, ELDC Age Friendly Work, Community and Voluntary sector, Citizens Advice Core Funding, NHS Engagement, Licensing, Emergency Planning, Business Continuity, Land Charges, Environmental Health – Food Safety, Environmental Protection, Building Control, Green Homes, Carbon Reduction, Climate Change, Cost of Living Crisis, MV.

Critical Activities
Play Areas
Street Cleansing
Public Conveniences
Safeguarding
PSPS Customer Service liaison
Homelessness
Housing Standards
Housing Advice Triage
Housing Strategy
Housing Assistance (DFG and other grants)
Business Continuity
Environmental Protection
Green Homes
Carbon reduction
Cost of Living Crisis
Affordable Homes and supported



Critical Activities	
Red	Amber
	Health & Safety
	Ground Maintenance
Building Control	Greens Management

During 2022/23 the Communities Directorate has been able to mobilise its resources effectively in order to meet the aims and objectives of East Lindsey District Council to achieve better outcomes for local people. As part of the infrastructure associated with the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership the Directorate has been able to deliver with greater resilience initiatives such as the new twin bin scheme, an approved vehicle testing centre, a new environmental crime contract, refurbishment of the gym at Meridian Leisure Centre, a Community Lottery and Crowd Funding platform. This is all alongside the production of key strategic pieces of work such as a Climate Change Strategy for South and East Lincolnshire and a Community Safety Strategy for the sub-region.

A key risk during the year relates to Building Control where there is a need to recruit to key posts and an active recruitment campaign is underway. This is further supported by some additional external agency resource in the interim.

Key Messages

Some key pressures during 2022/23 continue to be tackled such as the cost-of-living crisis, increases in utility bills (including fuel) and homelessness. The Well-Being and Community Leadership Division has distributed £3.1 million of Household Support Funding across South and East Lincolnshire and last year ELDC agreed/signed up to a new Homelessness Strategy for Lincolnshire. During 2023/24 the Division is also looking to develop a Housing Strategy whilst ensuring other key pieces of housing related work continue to progress such as the distribution of disabled facilities grants and work within the private rented sector.

The Directorate has further helped people to convert their homes to be more environmentally friendly and having initially secured £7.2 million for green homes grant funding for the sub-region a further £15.4 million has been recently secured. To help ensure that this funding is appropriately managed the Climate Change and Environment Team is ensuring it has adequate resources and a sufficiently qualified team to deliver what is required.

Community Safety remains a priority area and during 2022/23 £400,000 of Safer Streets Round 4 Funding was secured. This funding pot is enhancing CCTV infrastructure in Skegness and elsewhere in the sub-region (Boston and Spalding).

Finally, whilst ensuring the day job of cleansing and collecting waste for recycling/disposal continues the Neighbourhood Services Division is making preparations for the requirements associated with the Environment Act 2021 and from a leisure and culture perspective the Communities Directorate is the sponsor for a number of key projects such as the Leisure and Learning Hub which is currently being built in Mablethorpe.

Key Messages

Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development

Transformation including digital, Data Protection & Corporate Compliance, Procurement, Finance skills and knowledge, Contract Management, Constitution, Training Plans and Budgets Workforce Strategy and Culture Communications, Risk Management – Strategic, operational and Fraud, Consultation, Corporate Plan delivery monitoring, Performance, Legal Services, Information Management (previously governance), Complaints, Members Expenses & Community Grants, Police and Crime Panel, Electoral Registration, Elections, Member Training, Committee Services, Scrutiny Function.

This year has seen a significant programme of activity embedding new governance arrangements across the three organisations supporting the new partnership way of working that is still developing. One of the most notable outcomes being the Partnership Peer Review in respect of which a detailed action plan was developed and is being regularly reviewed and reported upon.

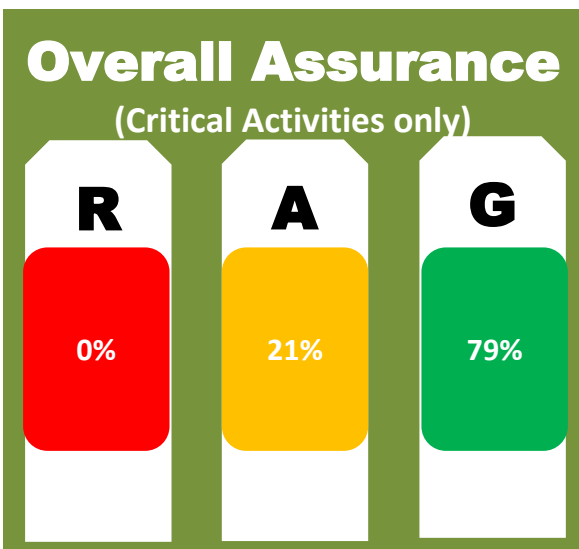
The Transformation agenda has also seen significant activity with the development of the Partnership IT strategy which will assist services and also the provision of resources to support service changes through the Workforce Development Strategy and service review proforma.

The key areas of Risk Management and Procurement have seen renewed focus and enhanced resources with a complete review of all Risks and the establishment of a new team within PSPS to provide procurement advice a considerable step change from previous resource levels. A new performance management system has also been implemented to support the partnerships performance reporting processes.

A key area of work was the alignment of the Contract Procedure Rules across the partnership and the constitution will continue to be a key area for future review.

Finance continues to be an area of substantial focus with three budgets being set in challenging and unprecedented circumstances with impacts from Covid, international events and high inflation affecting this year and future years. In addition, the resourcing in this area continues to be incredibly challenging and we are working with PSPSL closely in order to seek to address this and support the development of home-grown talent.

Data protection and cyber security continue to be significant areas of focus for the Council.

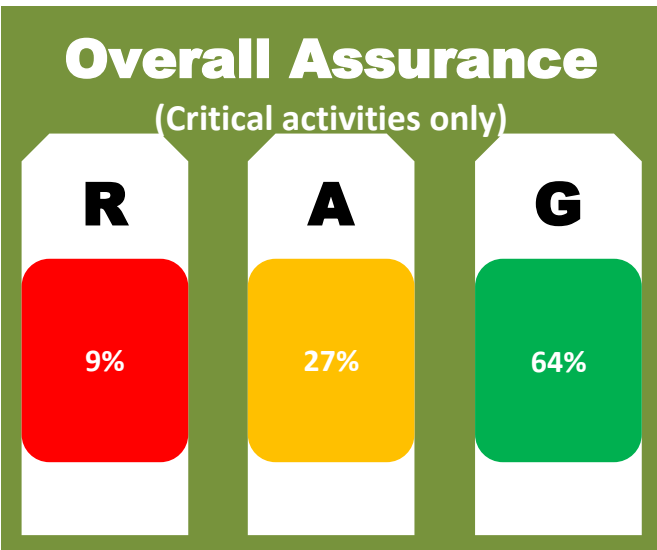


Critical Activities	
Red	Amber
None	Transformation (inc. Digital)
	Data Protection & Corporate Compliance
	Procurement
	Finance skills and knowledge
	Contract Management
	Constitution

Key Messages

Deputy Chief Executive – Programme Delivery & SIRO

Invest EL Company, New Homes, Capital Programme ELDC, Invest EL Housing, King Fisher Caravan Park, Towns Fund Delivery, SIRO, Asset Management, Commercial Rents, Repairs and Maintenance, Car Parking and Enforcement, Councils Business Centres



Critical Activities	
Red	Amber
Invest EL Company	New Homes, Capital Programme ELDC.
	Invest EL Housing
	King Fisher Caravan Park

It is pleasing to note that 64% of our critical activities are rated as green. All critical activities are actively monitored, and we have measures in place to address the small number of critical activities rated as red or amber.

Invest East Lindsey/Kingfisher Caravan Park

Whilst the Housing Development Schemes have been slower to progress due to the economic climate, they are expected to be back on track in the 2023/24 financial year.

The Park has been subject to strategically directed change in order to reduce the age of the stock. This change has created opportunity but has had a significant impact on the occupancy rate of the Park.

There is a plan in place that targets a phased increase in occupancy – and this is monitored regularly. Mitigation of low occupancy rates includes marketing and acquiring new stock (fifty new vans have recently been acquired). We have Counsel engaged in respect of the legal dispute with caravan owners.

Capital Programme/Towns Fund

The amber assurance is due to the transition from business case to delivery of large scale, large value Towns Fund projects. We have brought together capacity through the S&ELCP, creating a core of internal expertise to progress project development, maintain stakeholder engagement (particularly with match funders), and regular board and corporate monitoring meetings.

As the delivery work continues, we also buy in specialist external support in areas such as quantity surveying and project supervision. Progress is being monitored internally by officers on a monthly basis and quarterly at both Overview and Scrutiny, Audit and Governance and Executive Board.

Key Messages

Deputy Chief Executive - Growth

Towns Fund #2 Internal Governance, Towns Fund #3 LA as Accountable Body, Towns Fund Inception to stage 4 delivery, Competitive Funding, Levelling Up and Cultural, Towns Fund #1 External Governance with Central Government Strategic contracts, Investment & Growth, Vital and Viable, Rural Lincolnshire Enterprise Hub, UK Shared Prosperity Funding, S106, Planning Policy (Local Plan), Heritage, Planning Enforcement, Development Management Control, South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee.

Our Planning performance indicators continue to perform strongly and there is strong satisfaction with the planning function from inward investment through economic development activity.

The performance and monitoring relating to Town Deal projects is on target and meeting DLUCH deadlines.

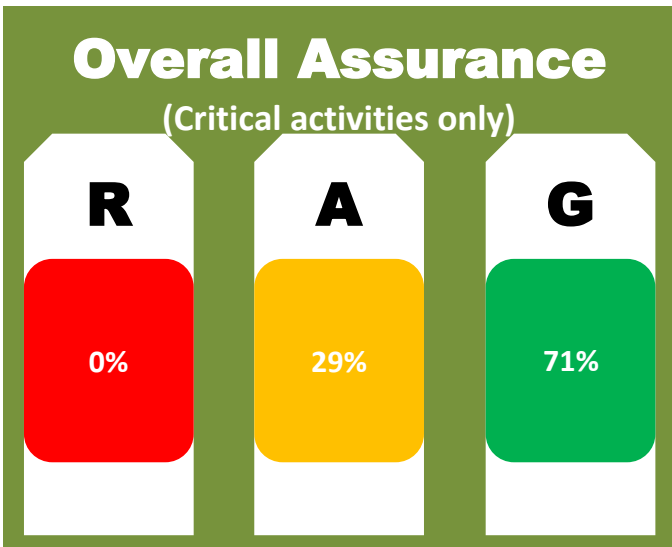
We are in dialogue with DLUCH on the monitoring and profile of the LUF submission.

UKSPF and Rural Prosperity - the first wave of funding has been committed and we have received positive feedback from DLUCH in relation to delivery of these funds.

We continue to work with partners to identify any emerging challenges and finding solutions.

Inward investment approaches have improved for East Lindsey due to increased marketing exposure - such as attendance at UKREiiF which has generated over 300 new contacts across the sub-region.

We continue to develop the skills agenda with schools/colleges/universities and businesses.



Critical Activities	
Red	Amber
None	Towns Fund#2 – Internal Governance
	Towns Fund#3 – LA as Accountable Body
	Towns Fund Inception to stage 4 delivery.
	Competitive Funding, Levelling Up and Cultural.

Key Messages

Strategic Partnership Working

Recruitment, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, General Ledger, Budget Management, Budget Preparation, Control Account Reconciliations, Financial Staff Resilience, Close down of accounts, New Income Management System, Recovery, Housing Benefits, Council Tax Support, Governance, ICT Projects, Applications, Compliance, Health and Safety, HR Strategy, Officers and Members Expenses, Payroll, Equality and Diversity, Employee Relations, Systems and Reporting, Pension Scheme, Customer Services, Income, VAT, Procurement Cards, Treasury Management, Insurance, Working with External Audit, Council Tax, CTS Fraud, Business Rates.

Critical Activities
Control Account Reconciliations
Financial Staff Resilience
Close down of accounts
New Income Management System
Recovery
Housing Benefits
Council Tax Support
Governance
ICT Projects
Applications
Compliance

A significant amount of effort is being into the Partnership working with PSPSL to address some key areas of focus. The recruitment difficulties in the Finance team and the use of interims to support its work are a continued area of concern for both the company and the Council.

The new finance systems and processes still need further organisational embedding, and this work is underway and continues into 2023/24.

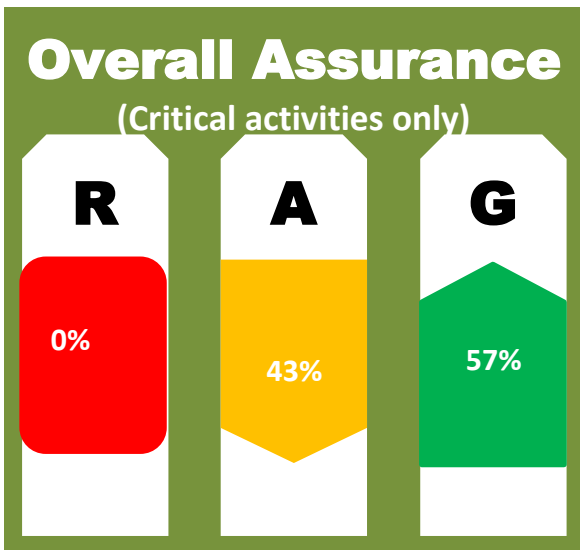
Significant focus has been needed to ensure the attainment of key deadlines for budgeting/year end and this continues.

The specialist areas of the service continue to be under high demand particularly in respect of Capital, Treasury and VAT due to the complex nature of the Towns Fund projects and changes to the prudential and treasury framework.

Revenues, Business Rates and Benefits have supported further distributions of reliefs and resources following the award of financial support although the service is now moving toward a more pre-covid level is it still very challenging due to the economic circumstances currently being experienced.

ICT continues to be critical to our new way of working and further investments continue to be planned particularly to ensure that our data stays secure and within a modern and robust operating framework.

From a HR perspective the service continues to see high levels of activity across all services.



Critical Activities	
Red	Amber
None	Recruitment
	Accounts Receivable
	Accounts Payable
	General Ledger
	Budget Management
	Budget Preparation

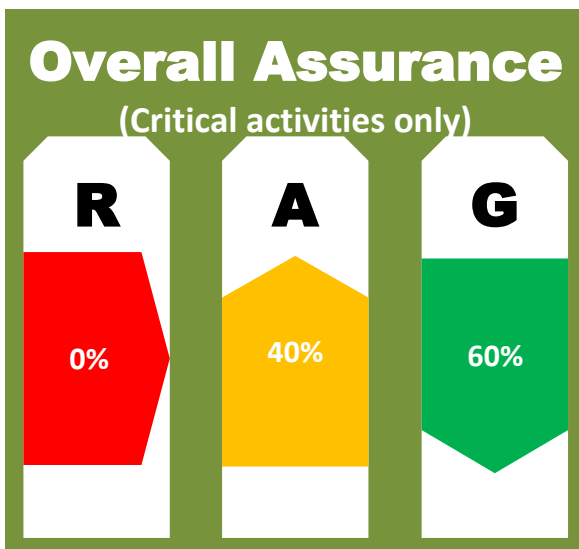
Key Messages

Key Projects

Lincolnshire Healthy and Accessible Homes, Good Home Agency Projects, Implementation of Uniform 2023, Business rates, Crowd Funded Scheme, Community Lottery, Local Plan Review Number of specific applications/development projects – e.g., Towns Fund projects, Skegness Gateway – private proposition for a Local Development Order, System support.

During 2022/23 the Communities Directorate delivered a number of key projects within East Lindsey. These included developing and launching a community lottery, a crowdfunding platform, schemes to help our most vulnerable citizens during the “cost of living crisis” such as the Household Support Fund, a twin bin scheme to improve the Council’s recycling service, an approved vehicle testing centre, an enviro-crime contract and an out of hours emergency planning rota.

Effective project management arrangements have ensured these schemes have been delivered as required.



Critical Activities	
Red	Amber
None	Lincolnshire Healthy and Accessible Homes
	Good Home Agency Projects
	Implementation of Uniform 2023
	Business rates

Key Messages

Key Partnerships

The Council recognises that effective partnership working is key to the achievement of many of its goals and desired outcomes. In that regard it is essential that any partnerships entered into, or are currently in operation, deliver and their on-going relevance and effectiveness are continually evaluated.

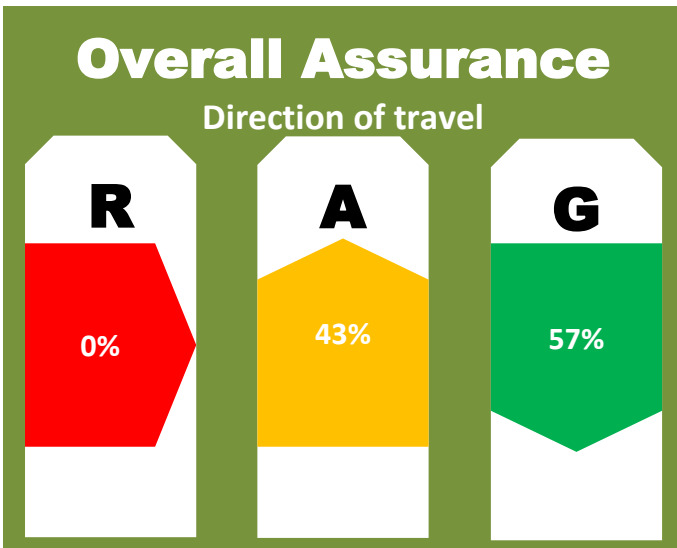
Historic England, Arts Council England, Destination Lincs, LCC, Environment Agency, NHS, CAB.

A key theme across all Council directorates is delivery through collaboration and this incorporates not just internal cross team partnership but also an extensive external partnership network.

This includes the Connected Coast Board which has continued to evolve since its inception in January 2020 to include a broader skill range to support delivery of the Town Deal projects. In line with DLUCH requirements the Terms of Reference have also been revised to include a consultee status for Levelling Up Fund and UKSPF. The Board includes strategic partners, such as health, education, third sector, transportation, and a range of private sector business.

The Communities Directorate has undertaken some significant partnership work during 2022/23. During this period, the Directorate developed the Healthy Living Board with responsibility for matters relating to health and well-being and the South and East Lincolnshire Climate Action Network (SELCAN) which has responsibility for leading delivery against the Climate Change Strategy which the Council agreed during this year.

In addition to this the Directorate also led on reaffirming the role of the South and East Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership through the development of the South and East Lincolnshire Community Safety Strategy, thus helping meet the Council’s responsibilities in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.



Partnership Assurance	
Red	Amber
None	Historic England
	LCC
	Environment Agency

Key Messages

Emerging Risks

It is impingent on all managers to undertake effective risk management and attempt to minimise the impact of any risks should they materialise. Looking ahead and horizon scanning to identify any emerging risks is a pre-requisite and it is encouraging that this activity is being completed.

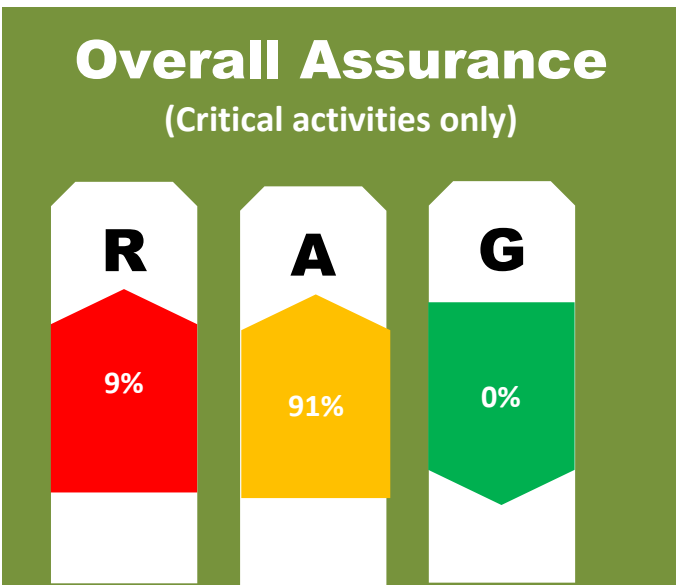
PSPS, Alignment, Financial resilience, ELDC Depot, Fleet Management, Recycling and Refuse, PSPS ability to support Community Teams, Staff capacity, recruitment, and retention, ASB, Licensing, Elections, Licensing Committee, Land Charges, Environmental Protection, Finance, Asset Repairs, Crematorium and Cemeteries, H&S Events, Close down of accounts, Financial staffing, Partnership Alignment, Alignment, Payroll, Alignment Constitutions, CRM, HB CT Team, Cost of Living Crisis, Transformation including digital, Apprenticeships, S106, Uniform system.

Critical Activities
Licensing
Elections
Licensing Committee
Land Charges
Environmental Protection
Finance
Asset Repairs
Crematorium and Cemeteries
H&S Events
Close down of accounts
Financial staffing
Partnership Alignment
Alignment
Payroll
Alignment Constitutions
CRM
HB CT Team
Cost of Living Crisis
Transformation including digital
Apprenticeships
S106
Uniform system

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) recognises the importance of risk management, with a standing agenda item at the monthly SLT Governance meetings. Risks are also reviewed and debated by Assistant Directors at the quarterly Performance and Governance clinics. The Executive Board and Audit & Governance Committee receive a quarterly risk management report detailing the Council’s Strategic Risks.

Work is continuing to embed a Partnership approach to risk management. The outcome of the internal audit of risk management will be incorporated into the draft Risk Management Framework and then presented to SLT for recommendation to Audit & Governance Committee. Plans are also in place to refresh the Council’s risk appetite in 2023/24.

The emerging risks identified as part of the combined assurance work have been shared with the Insights and Transformation team to feed in to the Q1 review of risks for 2023/24.



Critical Activities	
Red	Amber
PSPS	ELDC Depot
Alignment	Fleet Management
Financial resilience	Recycling and Refuse
	PSPS ability to support Community Teams
	Staff capacity, recruitment, and retention
	ASB