Audit Report – Democratic Services

1. Recommendations to the Member Development Steering Group

That consideration is given to the key findings and Action Plan below.
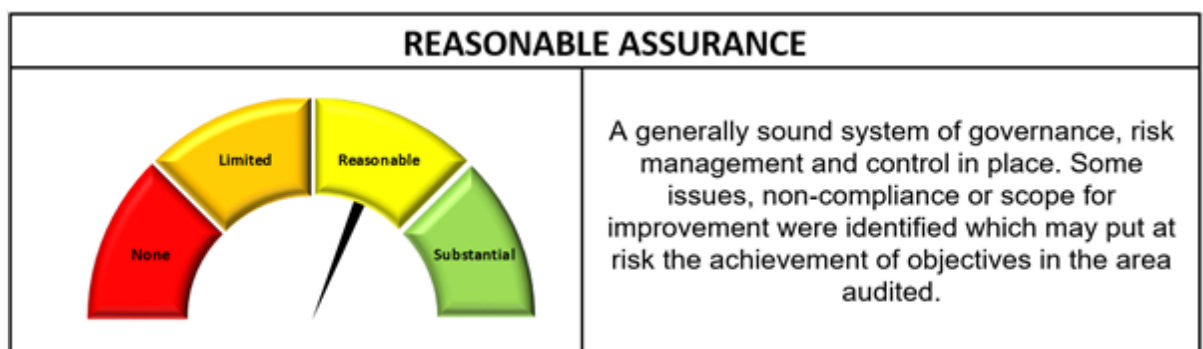
2. Key findings:

Areas of positive assurance identified during the audit:

1. Key policies and procedures are in place, up to date and available to all relevant staff.
2. Planning training has been completed by all relevant members in accordance with the Planning Code of Good Practice.
3. The Member Development Strategy and Programme was approved as required and is periodically reviewed.
4. Member feedback is sought and acted upon where required.

The main areas identified for improvement are:

- The completion and monitoring of mandatory training

3. Assurance

REASONABLE ASSURANCE

A generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.

4. Action Plan

Recommendation	Priority	Response/Agreed Action	Officer Responsible	Implementation Date
1. Completion rates for the mandatory training modules continue to be referred to the relevant Leader and reported to the Member Development Steering Group on a regular basis.	High	Agreed	Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	31.03.24 and ongoing
2. Consideration is given to alternative methods of delivery for GDPR and Safeguarding training going forward e.g. adding them to a mandatory face-to-face event to improve compliance.	Medium	Agreed	Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer	31.05.24
3. A revised version of each mandatory iLearn module is provided for every new induction cycle in order to effectively monitor compliance.	Medium	Agreed	Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer (in conjunction with HR)	30.06.24

5. Definitions

Opinion	Definition
Substantial	A sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited
Reasonable	There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited
Limited	Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified. Improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
No Assurance	Immediate action is required to address fundamental gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance identified. The system of governance, risk management and control is inadequate to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited

Recommendations Priority

Level	Definition
Critical	Recommendations which are of a very serious nature and could have a critical impact on the Council, for example to address a breach in law or regulation that could result in material fines/consequences.
High	Recommendations which are fundamental to the system and require urgent attention to avoid exposure to significant risks.
Medium	Recommendations which, although not fundamental to the system, provide scope for improvements to be made,
Low	Recommendations concerning issues which are considered to be of a minor nature, but which nevertheless need to be addressed or potential opportunities for management to improve the operational efficiency and/ or effectiveness of the system.