

Directors' Assurance Statements - Questionnaires

Please complete the questionnaire and return it to Nick Hobbs (Head of Internal Audit, Wat Tyler West 3rd Floor)) by Monday 19th May 2008.

1.	Policy and Decision Making		
No.	Key area	Yes/No	Comment / Evidence
1.1	Have Corporate and Service policies been disseminated effectively to your staff?		
1.2	Have all decisions in your directorate been made through proper process in accordance with the Council's constitution?		
1.3	Have strategic or key decisions been properly documented and taken after fully considering risk and Resourcing implications?		
1.4	Have corporate priorities and policies been reflected in your Directorate Business Plan?		
1.5	Have your service policies been properly approved in accordance with the Council's constitution?		

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2. Service Delivery			
No.	Key area	Yes/No	Comment / Evidence
2.1	Have departmental priorities been identified and reflected in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service business plans?• Performance indicator targets?• Individual targets detailed in appraisals?• Budget/Medium term financial plan?		
2.2	Priorities are informed by appropriate consultation, including customers and the Corporate Plan.		
2.3	Have priorities been communicated within the department?		
2.4	Are Business Plans in place for all Business Units?		
2.5	Have critical and priority services been identified and business continuity plans been developed and approved for these?		If yes, please state your critical and priority services
2.6	Are the business continuity plans in the above areas regularly reviewed and tested?		
2.7	Are all statutory obligations been provided in your service area and has all legislation been complied with?		
2.8	Are delegated powers sufficient for the needs of the service?		

3.	Strategic and Operational Risk Management		
No.	Key area	Yes/No	Comment / Evidence
3.1	Do you liaise with your Group Director risk management representative who can feed issues into meetings of the Corporate Risk Management Group and report back on Corporate initiatives?		
3.2	Do you have Departmental and Business Units risk registers?		
3.3	Do the risk registers include consideration of all types of risk including fraud risks, partnership risks and opportunity risks?		If yes, please provide evidence of key fraud risks identified in your department.
3.4	Are the Departmental and Business Units risk registers reviewed and updated at least quarterly?		
3.5	Have risk owners been allocated to all key risks identified to ensure appropriate actions are taken to manage and monitor the risks?		
3.6	Have the risks for significant partnerships been considered, documented and monitored? (see also 5.5 below)		

4.	Performance Management		
No.	Key area	Yes/No	Comment / Evidence
4.1	Have key performance indicators have been established and is progress monitored and regularly reported to the Group's senior management team, Corporate Board and Executive Member?		
4.2	Have robust systems and clear responsibility for monitoring each PI have been established to provide accurate and timely performance information?		
4.3	Have any of the Department's BVPIs been reserved by the Council's External Auditor?		
4.4	Do the key or local indicators indicate significant performance issues?		If yes, please detail.
4.5	Are the number and type of complaint/comment received by the department monitored and regularly reviewed?		
4.6	Are issues arising from Ombudsman's investigations prioritised and regularly reviewed?		

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5.	Partnerships with other public bodies, voluntary and community organisations involving funding of over £50,000pa.		
No.	Key area	Yes/No	Comment / Evidence
5.1	List all said partnerships currently operated within your department?		
5.2	Do you have assurance that there are effective financial and governance arrangements in place for these partnerships?		
5.3	Do you have assurance that partners, staff and other stakeholders understand the respective partnership roles and responsibilities?		
5.4	Is an exit strategy in place for each significant partnership and has this been fully documented?		
5.5	Do you have assurance that Departmental / Business Risk Registers adequately record partnership risks and where appropriate that the partners are actively involved in the risk management process? (see also 3.6 above)		

6.	Finance and Asset Management		
No.	Key area	Yes/No	Comment / Evidence
6.1	Was a budget set for your Department that was aligned to your business plan?		
6.2	Has clear responsibility been assigned for all budgets within your Directorate?		
6.3	Have individual managers with the responsibility for budgets received appropriate financial training?		
6.4	Do you have assurance that all relevant staff in your Department are aware of and have access to the Council's Financial Regulations, Contract Standing Orders and other Departmental specific financial procedures/guidance?		
6.5	Do you have assurance that all relevant staff in your Department have received appropriate training in finance including how to use the Council's financial systems?		
6.6	Have any significant virements (budget variations) between budget heads been properly approved?		
6.7	Are all fees and charges regularly reviewed and are invoices raised promptly?		
6.8	Have estimated efficiency savings been identified and agreed with relevant managers to ensure that the required level of efficiency savings can be made?		
6.9	Is the progress towards achievement of these efficiency savings monitored and appropriately evidenced to support the delivery of your Department's budget and Council's Annual Efficiency Statement?		

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6.	Finance and Asset Management cont.		
No.	Key area	Yes/No	Comment / Evidence
6.10	Have service area asset management plans been prepared and are they reviewed regularly?		
6.11	Are asset registers and inventories maintained in compliance with guidance?		

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7. Staff.			
No.	Key area	Yes/No	Comment / Evidence
7.1	Do you have assurance that the expected standards of behaviour of staff and of Councillors (e.g. Employees Code of Conduct and Member/Officer Protocol) have been communicated to all staff?		
7.2	Do all staff have up-to-date Job Descriptions and agreed development plans (using the Council's appraisal system)?		
7.3	Are all individuals working for your department remunerated through the Council's payroll system, or the Council's creditor system (following an assessment of the individual's employment status)?		
7.4	Do recruitment procedures include pre-employment checks to assess suitability for the job include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRB checks for posts involving children or vulnerable adults? • Required qualifications are retained? • Previous employment references? • Work permit/right to work in the UK checks? 		
7.5	Is all staff sickness reported in accordance with Council Policy i.e. through HR First Response?		
7.6	Are you and your staff aware of the Council's rules relating to declaration of interests, and acceptance of gifts and hospitality?		
7.7	Do you have significant concerns that your Department is unable to recruit/retain staff with the required skills to provide services?		
7.8	Have all staff been properly inducted?		

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8. Information Governance.			
No.	Key area	Yes/No	Comment / Evidence
8.1	Do have confidence that robust arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation?		
8.2	Have all staff been trained in use of relevant IT systems?		
8.3	Do all staff have unique access to IT systems and that their access is commensurate with their duties?		
8.4	Are you satisfied that all staff and consultants (that you were responsible for) that have left the employment of your Department during 2007/08 have been removed from accessing Council IT systems?		
8.5	Are staff in your Department aware of policies in relation to the use of Council equipment and systems (e.g. IT Security Policy, internet and e-mail policy, phone usage)?		

9.	Control Environment.		
No.	Key area	Yes/No	Comment / Evidence
9.1	In 2007/08, within your Directorate, have there been any breaches of security or fraud resulting in loss of Council assets or injury to staff?		
9.2	Have all agreed Internal Audit recommendations relating to your Department been implemented, or will be by the agreed implementation date?		
9.3	Have all key systems and operations within your Directorate been documented?		
9.4	Have all frauds and financial irregularities identified been referred to Internal Audit in accordance with the Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy and Fraud Response Plan?		
9.5	Have all breaches of in Standing Orders been reported to the Council's Monitoring Officer?		
9.6	Has the annual audit plan been considered by the Group Directorate SMT?		
9.7	Please provide details of all external inspection reports carried out in your Department during 2007/08 and details of any significant weaknesses identified.		

10.	Significant Control and Governance Issues.
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Please identify here any issues that you feel represent a significant control item or governance issue. Guidance issued by CIPFA in relation to what should be considered 'significant', for inclusion in the Council's Annual Governance Statement, may be those which:

- Have seriously prejudiced or prevented achievement of a principle objective
- Has resulted in the need to seek additional funding to allow it to be resolved
- Required a significant diversion of resources
- Has had a material impact on the accounts
- The Audit Committee has advised that it should be considered as significant
- Has resulted in significant public interest or has seriously damaged reputation
- Has resulted in formal actions being taken by the Chief Financial Officer or Monitoring Officer
- Received significant adverse commentary in external; inspection reports that has not been able to be addressed in a timely manner

The above is only guidance and not an exhaustive list.

I confirm that this document provides a fair reflection of the system of internal control and governance arrangements operating within my Directorate since 1st April 2007.

Name of Group Director / Director:

Signature:.....

Date:.....