



Policy & Resources Committee

30 September 2021

Title	Assurance Group Update
Report of	Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix A – Proposed new structure chart for the Assurance Group Appendix B – Draft Role Profile, Assistant Director - Assurance
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Summary

This paper gives an update on the recent changes to the strategic and operational expansion of the Assurance Group roles and responsibilities. This includes the adoption of the Barnet Plan through the strategic priority of 'Clean, Safe and Well Run' and associated Assurance Group objectives.

In addition, the paper seeks Committee approval to create, advertise and recruit to an Assistant Director in the Assurance Group.

Officers' Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. Note the recent changes to the strategic and operational expansion of the Assurance Group that supports the vision and purpose of the 'Clean, Safe and Well Run' corporate priority.
2. Note and comment on the planned changes within the Assurance Group that aim to support the corporate priority of Clean, Safe and Well Run which will include implementing the outcome of an organisation wide Enforcement review, restructure

of the Community Safety Team and look to improve governance, oversight, assurance and compliance arrangements.

3. Note that following a formal staff consultation, the new proposed structure of the Community Safety Team will be reported to Constitution and General Purposes Team for approval and implementation in January 2022
4. Note the prior recent change made to an existing post of Assistant Director of Community Safety and Regulatory Services to Assistant Director - Counter Fraud, Community Safety and Protection.
5. Approve the creation of a new Assistant Director - Assurance, as set out in this report; and give authority to recruit to that post on a permanent contract.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Barnet Plan vision is that: 'We care about the borough and want it to be a great place to live, work and visit. Listening to and working with residents and others, we want people to have opportunities to live healthy and fulfilling lives in safe and thriving communities. Providing good quality customer service in all that we do'.
- 1.2 The plan has been developed against the backdrop of COVID-19. This has been an unprecedented national challenge and has a profound impact on both the council organisationally and the Barnet community.
- 1.3 The long-term impacts of the crisis are emerging and will extend beyond the scope of this plan. People and organisations across the borough have had to adapt to new ways of working, living, and providing services in response to the crisis. We will continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the foundations of that work have been reflected in the plan.
- 1.4 The [Barnet Plan 2021-2025](#) outlines the key outcomes of the council and how it will work to achieve those outcomes. The council and its partners will focus on four priorities over the next four years to realise its' vision:
 - **Clean, safe and well run:** a place where our streets are clean and antisocial behaviour is dealt with so residents feel safe. Providing good quality, customer friendly services in all that we do
 - **Family Friendly:** creating a Family Friendly Barnet, enabling opportunities for our children and young people to achieve their best
 - **Healthy:** a place with fantastic facilities for all ages, enabling people to live happy and healthy lives
 - **Thriving:** a place fit for the future, where all residents, businesses and visitors benefit from improved sustainable infrastructure & opportunity.
- 1.5 Under the council's priority of 'Clean, safe and well run' the focus is on:
 - Improving Customer Service
 - Providing better environmental services and a cleaner borough
 - Address issues of anti-social behaviour such as frauds, fly-tipping, noise nuisance and parking
 - Ensure robust financial management
 - Unlocking and optimising the potential of Parks and Open Space

- 1.6 This report gives an overview of the Assurance Group responsibilities as well as the planned developments to ensure it supports the corporate priority of Clean, Safe and Well Run.
- 1.7 Our main vision for Clean, Safe and Well Run is: A place where our streets are clean and anti-social behaviour is dealt with so residents feel safe. Providing good quality, customer friendly services in all that we do.
- 1.8 To support this, the Executive Director of Assurance and the Executive Director of Environment are joint sponsors for the council's priority of Clean, Safe and Well Run. As such have commenced a programme of activities and projects that will to deliver corporate priority.
- 1.9 As an independent and objective department, the Assurance Group is responsible for the delivery and management of all assurance functions as well as providing oversight and assurance to the Council Management Team (CMT) and Members on governance procedures and business processes.
- 1.10 The Assurance Group has expanded its' remit to drive forward the corporate priority, taking responsibilities for additional enforcement, assurance and improvement responsibilities. These areas include:
- Maintaining an appropriate and effective Covid-19 response across the organisation whilst ensuring that a full response can be 'stood up' at any time dependent on national and local situation
 - Taking on the role of Strategic and Client lead for Re Regulatory Services including the upcoming strategic contract review.
 - Undertaking an Enforcement review which includes implementing new ways of working with a 'one team' approach, increase visibility and a place based presence, ensuring the best use of enforcement powers, intelligence handling and reporting.
 - Undertaking a CCTV review - including maintenance and update current CCTV network, project around planned move of the CCTV control room, contract re-procurement exercise including consultation on increasing CCTV coverage. The CCTV review will be reported to the [CLL Committee](#) in October 2021
 - Organisational improvements and assurance work - including implementing a range of corporate and ombudsman complaints developments that will drive business improvements, improve oversight of complaints and increase resident satisfaction with the Council
 - Compliance and Assurance review and associated improvements
 - LGBCE Ward Boundary Review - including associated pre- and post-implementation actions
 - Governance review - which includes implementing best practice recommendation from the Committee on Standards in Public Life and undertaking a self-assessment of the Council's Governance arrangements in accordance with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny framework.
 - Increased organisational focus on internal control environment and associated key improvement areas as set out within the Annual Governance statement
 - Progress organisational assurance improvements agenda, ensuring highest possible levels of service quality, assurance and governance.

- 1.11 In November 2019 responsibility for Community Safety transferred from the then Executive Director of Environment to the Director of Assurance on an interim basis.
- 1.12 From March 2020 to date the Community Safety Team, supported by CAFT and the Emergency Response Team, have been responding to new Covid-19 Business Enforcement requirements.
- 1.13 In May 2021, a further review took place and the following transfer of services have now been made on a permanent basis. The movement of services was essential to begin to lay the foundations for delivery of the objectives within Clean, Safe and Well-Run priority.
- 1.13.1 Responsibilities as outlined the Community Safety Accreditation scheme of Powers have been retaining within the Assurance Group - Community Safety Team, and include:
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
 - Environmental Crime
 - Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
 - Prevent Agenda (including Hate Crime)
 - CCTV
 - Covid-19 Enforcement
- 1.13.2 The move of some areas into Family Services strengthens transitional support for older adolescents and aligns the good work being undertaken in these areas, plus further maximises opportunities for whole family/system support. Family Services have therefore taken on new areas of responsibility, including
- Domestic violence
 - Violence Against Women and Girls
 - Reduced Offending
 - Integrated Offender Management
 - Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation
- 1.13.3 Following this review amendments, were made to the role profile of the vacant Assistant Director Community Safety and Head of Counter Fraud Operations merging into a revised role of Assistant Director - Counter Fraud, Community Safety and Protection. Changes to the post were re-evaluated by HR and remain at the same level of Assistant Director.
- 1.13.4 The incumbent post holder of Head of Counter Fraud (who had been covering the vacant Assistant Director post since the beginning of 2020) has been approved by HR for assimilation into this amended post, this change took effect on 1st July 2021. The change in the designation of the post was agreed by the Executive Director of Assurance under delegated powers.
- 1.13.5 We have commenced an organisational enforcement review which aims to increase the visible officer presence on the street alongside improved productivity and outcomes by exploring opportunities for different enforcement operational models, joint working/multi-tasking across the range of functions by creating a creating a specialist investigation and enforcement capability for the council.
- 1.13.6 As part of this review we have increased the size of the Community Safety Team on an interim basis and will be shortly commencing staff consultation a new proposed structure

alongside new way of working. The outcome of this review will be reported to Constitution and General Purposes Team for approval and implementation in January 2022.

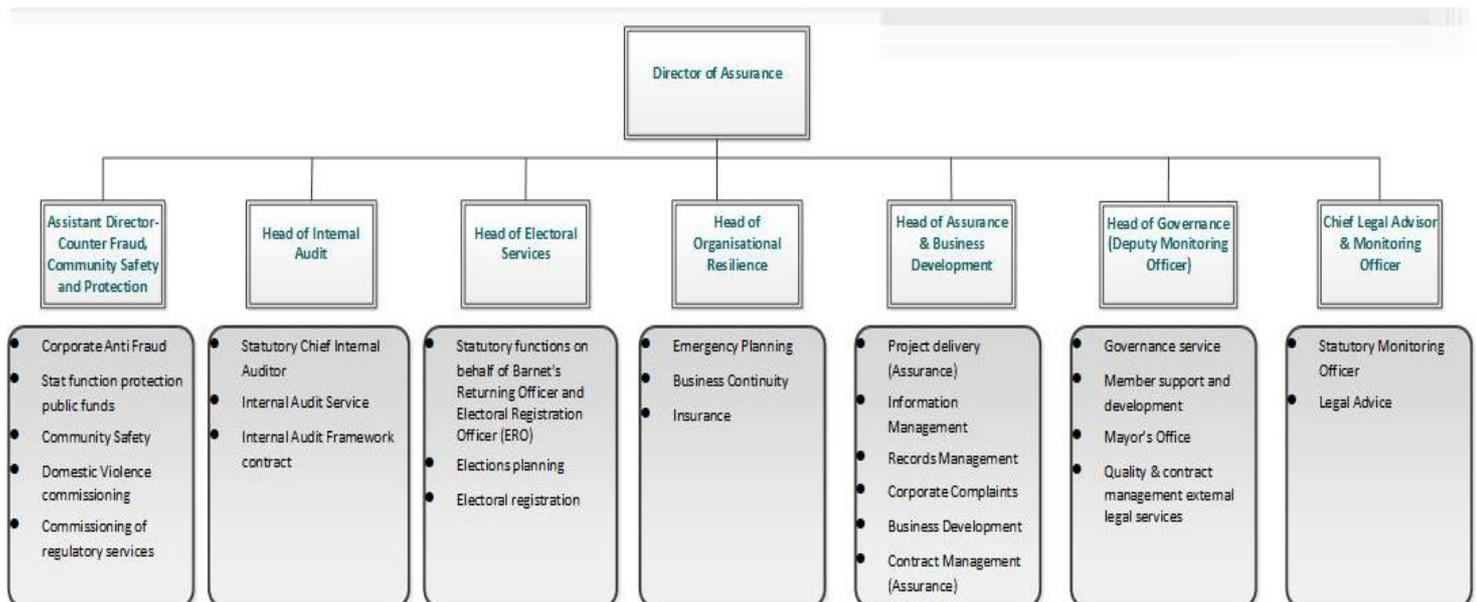
- 1.14 The paper also requests approval for the creation of a new Assistant Director – Assurance role within the Assurance Group and to give authority to recruit to that post on a permanent contract.
- 1.14.1 Over the last three years, many services and associated responsibilities have been subsumed into the Assurance Group, such as Community Safety but also Emergency Planning, Organisational Resilience, Corporate and Ombudsman Complaints and Records and Information Management, however the senior management team has remained flat with all Head of Service posts reporting directly to the Executive Director of Assurance. The creation of a new Assistant Director role will align the Assurance Group management structure more closely with the hierarchy and senior leadership capacity as seen to benefit other directorates.
- 1.14.2 This new post also aims to bring together several current Assurance Group services to provide clear strategic and dynamic leadership along with improvements to collaboration and opportunities for new ways of cross-service working. The proposed job description can be found in Appendix B.
- 1.14.3 By providing additional senior capacity into the Assurance Group, the new Assistant Director will support and deliver the range of workstreams (as set out at 1.10) to enable delivery of the corporate priority.
- 1.14.4 The Assistant Director - Assurance will give strategic direction to the effective delivery of any new and future requirements as set out in the Barnet Plan including driving progress to ensure a consistent organisational assurance continuous improvement agenda, ensuring highest possible levels of service quality, assurance and governance at all times.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

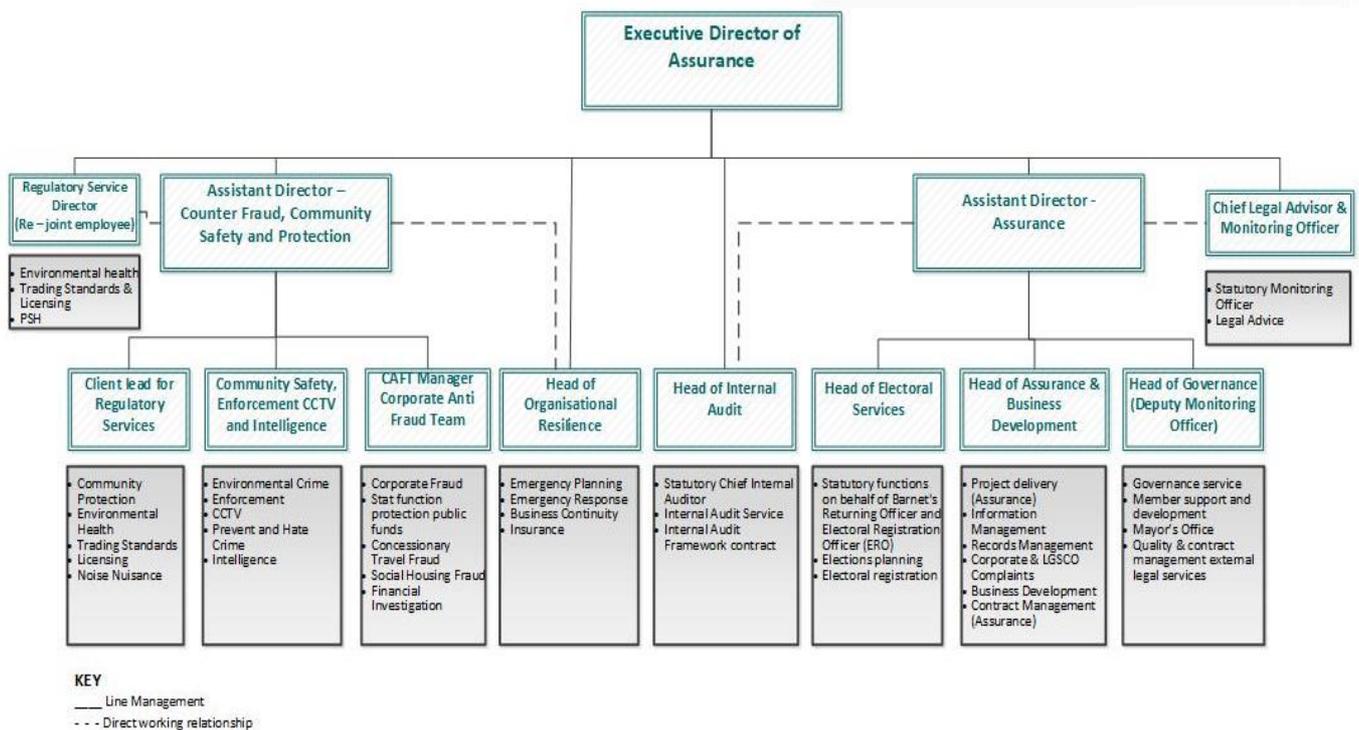
- 2.1 The proposal to create the Assistant Director, Assurance position arises in the wake of significant change and expansion of the remit of the Assurance Group as set out in 1.10.
- 2.2 The service finds itself under significant operational pressure due to current workloads, challenges and projects as set out within the report, as well as the increase in workload following from responding to, and recovering from, Covid-19.
- 2.3 The new post of Assistant Director - Assurance will provide additional capacity and will bring together several current Assurance services to provide clear strategic and operational dynamic leadership to those assurance services along with developing improved collaboration and opportunities for new ways of cross service working.
- 2.4 Reporting to the Executive Director of Assurance, the Assistant Director - Assurance will take lead responsibility for the following:
- Assurance and Business Development - includes, Corporate Complaints, Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Complaints, Information Governance, Business Improvement, Project and Contract Management (Assurance)

- Electoral Services - includes statutory functions on behalf of Barnet's Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) including elections planning, electoral registration, polling place and polling district reviews
- Governance - includes Committee System Administration (also known as Democratic Services), Mayors Office and Civic Events
- Act as the Strategic lead for liaison for HBPL (Harrow and Barnet Public Law)
- Act as a key point of liaison and support for the councils 'Monitoring Officer' especially in terms of delivering improvement relating to Governance and constitutional matters
- Act as a key point of liaison and support for the Councils Head of Internal Audit especially in terms of co-ordinating key areas of improvement as set out in the council's Annual Governance Statement
- Lead on relevant associated Assurance Group Barnet Plan priorities, including but not limited to:
 - Organisational improvements and assurance work - including implementing a range of corporate and ombudsman complaints developments that will drive business improvements, improve oversight of complaints and increase resident satisfaction with the Council
 - Compliance and Assurance review and associated improvements
 - LGBCE Ward Boundary Review - including associated pre- and post-implementation actions
 - Governance review - which includes implementing best practice recommendation from the Committee on Standards in Public Life and undertaking a self-assessment of the Council's Governance arrangements in accordance with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny framework.
 - Increased organisational focus on internal control environment and associated key improvement areas as set out within the Annual Governance statement
 - Progress organisational assurance improvements agenda, ensuring highest possible levels of service quality, assurance and governance at all times

2.5 The current Senior Management structure for the Assurance Group is:



The proposed Assurance Group Structure Chart is as detailed below (also Appendix A):



3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 **Do nothing:** The Policy and Resources Committee could choose to maintain the status quo in respect of the management structure within the Assurance services and not approved the new proposed Assistant Director post. However, this would result in a lack of sufficient leadership capacity to implement the agreed Barnet Plan and associated Assurance priorities. It would also hinder the Assurance service from being able to effectively deal or respond to current workloads, challenges and projects as set out within the report, as well as the increase in workload following from responding to, and recovering from, Covid-19.
- 3.2 In addition, if the Policy and Resources Committee choose not to support the organisation wide Enforcement review, including the restructure of the Community Safety Team and look to improve governance, oversight, assurance, and compliance arrangements this will impact the delivery of the Barnet Plan priority of 'Clean, Safe and Well Run' and associated Assurance Group Objectives.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Should the Policy and Resources Committee approve the proposed creation of the new Assistant Director (Assurance) post, the role profile will be finalised, advertised, and a

recruitment exercise will be undertaken. The post is expected to be offered based on a permanent contract.

- 4.2 Following staff consultation on the restructure of Community Safety team the final proposed structure will be presented to the Constitution and General Purpose Committee in January 2022 for final approval and implementation.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The Barnet Plan outlines the council's strategic approach how we will keep Barnet green, the streets clean, and every person in the borough feeling safe and secure - delivering better services while ensuring value for money for all our residents and businesses to approach to provide a fair deal for our residents and a commitment to delivering services that matter most by making decisions to prioritise our limited resources. The aims of this proposal and Assurance Group structure changes support the key aims outlined in the Plan in line with the agreed priority outcomes.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 The grading of the new Assistant Director post to be at Grade 6, within a salary band of £90,866 - £111,178. It is proposed that the post is funded in-year from contingency budgets. The post is expected to be appointed to in December 2021 and be graded at the mid-point of the band (c. £140,000 with on costs). The part year allocation required in 2021/22 will be c.£35,000. It is recommended that the CFO has delegated authority to approve the one-off contingency funding allocation (which will come back to P&R at a later meeting).
- 5.2.2 The longer-term funding for the new Assistant Director - Assurance post is already committed to be funded from on-going Corporate contingency from 2022/23.
- 5.2.3 The current interim structure for Community Safety Team is already funded in-year and the longer-term proposals are included within the 2022/23 budget planning process.

5.3 Social Value

- 5.3.1 N/A

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.4.1 In accordance with Appendix A to the Responsibility for Functions sections of the Council's Constitution, the Constitution and General Purposes Committee has responsibilities for staffing matters other than those within the remit of the Chief Officer Appointment Panel.
- 5.4.2 The HR Regulations in the Council's Constitution (Section 2.1) require all new posts at Assistant Director level or above shall be created by Committee decision (the Constitution and General Purposes Committee, Policy and Resources Committee or Urgency Committee) and not by delegated powers.

5.4.3 A decision on the creation of the post of Assistant Director of Assurance was previously included on the agenda for the Policy & Resources Committee on 20 July 2021 but was withdrawn from the agenda. The Leader has requested that the Assurance Group Update report, which includes the creation of that post, be reported back to the Policy & Resources Committee for review and approval. Members of the Constitution & General Purposes Committee will be informed of decisions as required.

5.4.4 Executive Directors only have delegated authority to undertake service restructures affecting less than 20 employees. As these decisions affect all employees in the Assurance Directorate, committee approval is required.

5.4.5 Council Constitution, Article 7, Section 7.5 states that “If any report appears to come within the remit of more than one committee, to avoid the report being discussed at several committees, the report will be presented and determined at the most appropriate committee. If this is not clear, then the report will be discussed and determined by the Policy and Resources Committee.”

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 The long-term funding for both the Assistant Director post and Community Safety structure are subject to approval within the 202/23 Budget planning process. It should be considered that making permanent appointments in an uncertain fiscal environment could add to the Council’s revenue pressures.

5.5.2 If the Policy and Resources Committee choose not to support the recommendations within this paper it could impact on the delivery of the Barnet Plan priority of ‘Clean, Safe and Well Run’ and associated Assurance Group Objectives.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provision of the public-sector equalities duty which requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act (2010)
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

5.6.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality and day to day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

5.6.3 The job description for the Assistant Director role will be evaluated within normal HR practice.

5.6.4 As per any staff restructure, an Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed to assess any possible impact of the Community Safety Team staffing changes.

5.7 Corporate Parenting

5.7.1 The changes have no direct impact on looked after children or care leavers.

5.8 **Consultation and Engagement**

5.8.1 Following the Managing Organisational Change policy, there will be a 30-day staff consultation for the restructure of the Community Safety Team.

5.9 **Insight**

5.9.1 N/A

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

6.1 [Community Leadership and Libraries Committee - Wednesday 9th June - Community Safety Governance Review](#)