

Area of Assurance	Assurance Request	ALEO Response and Hub Commentary	Hub Risk Rating
<b>Governance</b>	Assurance on the on-going training and development of Board members including any changes to Board structure, rationale for any structure changes, and training plans for Board members.	The Hub noted that a review of the ASV Board had been completed at the beginning of 2023 and had made 5 recommendations which were presented to the April 2023 Board meeting. The recommendations covered the following areas (1) ASV Policies; (2) Board training; (3) Board and Board member appraisal; (4) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); and (5) other. The Hub noted the presentation which had been delivered to the Board and agreed that this provided a good level of assurance, however there were a lot of actions and work required on the back of the review and the Hub agreed to request an update on progress at its next meeting.	<b>Very Low</b>
	Assurance that the board has clear policies and procedures for its members to ensure that potential conflicts of interests are identified, declared and acted upon.	The Hub noted that declarations of interest was a standing agenda item at the start of every ASV Board meeting and that there was no distinct ASV policy or procedure on declarations of interest or conflicts of interest but the question was asked of Board members at each meeting.	<b>Very Low</b>
	Assurance that ALEOs articles of association are clear, remain up-to-date, and reflective of how the ALEO functions and operates.	<p>The Hub noted the Financial Regulations which had been provided, however it appeared they had not been updated since 2015 and the document itself indicated it had been approved in March 2014. The Hub requested further clarity as to whether the document was subject to regular review and was advised that it is fit for purpose and has not not required any radical changes. With changes to financial systems and processes currently underway there will be a full review and upgrade to the document in the coming months to reflect these changes.</p> <p>With regard to data protection, the Hub noted that ASV had experienced difficulties with the recruitment of a DPO and had only recently managed to source a dedicated remote working DPO. The Hub noted that ASV were now in the process of reviewing their data protection action plan as well as the work that had been done internally reviewing policies and procedures. The Hub was assured that the internal review did not highlight any areas of high risk, and previous work ensured that GDPR was considered by design rather than retrospectively. The Hub noted that a DPIA log was maintained which was reviewed regularly. ASV are currently creating an IT strategy, in which GDPR, data protection and cyber security would play a major part and a draft data protection governance arrangements document. The Hub agreed to request an update on this work for its next meeting.</p>	<b>Low</b>

<b>Risk Management</b>	<p>Assurance that risks are being regularly reviewed in accordance with the organisation's agreed risk management policy. The assurance will be provided through a short written summary of ALEOs current risk environment, including risks that been added, escalated or de-escalated rather than through provision of the risk register. This will also include an overview of activity and controls in place across the three lines of defence.</p>	<p>ASV provided a copy of the risk register that was reviewed in September 2022. The risk register provides a full overview of the ASV risk environment through risk group by category. The Hub noted that new risks were added to the risk register around cost of living impacts to customers with associated risk of loss of income to ASV and risk around inadequate planning and delivery of ASV projects.</p> <p>The risk register provides a summary of the controls (mitigations and response) and this also captures ASV risk response. The controls detailed within the risk register cover the span of the Three Lines of Defence including; internal training, strategy development, business continuity plans and internal/external audit.</p> <p>ASV confirmed that the Risk Assessment Policy review was completed, the updated policy was approved by the Director of Service in October 2022.</p> <p>ASV provided a copy of the Critical Incident Plan which was last reviewed in September 2022. The plan is comprehensive and includes roles/responsibilities, checklists and guidance. This plan is reviewed annually or after a serious incident. ASV have continued to enhance existing risk/resilience arrangements as key staff have undertaken on line training on Counter Terrorism and PREVENT training.</p> <p>In future cycles, it would be useful to see evidence that risk appetite is considered in decision making.</p>	<b>Very Low</b>
	<p>Assurance that ALEOs have risk-based internal and external audit plans in place and a process to address and close out audit recommendations to completion.</p> <p>Assurance that there have been no internal control failures or that any failures have been addressed and/or notified if they are of significance to the Council.</p>	<p>ASV confirmed that in addition to the existing external audit arrangements, internal audits shall be conducted and provided a copy of the 2023/24 plan. In addition a copy of the improvement plan resulting from Quest audit in January 2023 was provided. The Hub will continue to monitor progression in these areas including the Quest improvement plan.</p> <p>ASV confirmed that there have not been any internal control failures in the previous 12 months.</p>	<b>Very Low</b>
<b>Finance</b>	<p>Assurance that accounts are being managed within budget, that the level of financial risk to the Council is low and that there is compliance with the Following the Public Pound Code of Practice.</p>	<p>The April 2023 Board papers confirm that detailed budget monitoring and forecast data continue to be part of the regular Board agendas, along with papers referring to particular financial aspects linked to forecasts and Business Planning.</p>	<b>Very Low</b>

	<p>Assurance that ALEOs undertake medium-term financial planning or have incorporated medium term planning into a Business Plan to provide assurance that ALEOs are prepared for core funding pressures. Again this ensures compliance with the Following the Public Pound Code of Practice.</p>	<p>The Hub has confirmed that a 3 Year Business Plan covering the period July 2023 onwards has been submitted to the Board for discussion and comment. Board and Funding partners continue to be updated on potential financial challenges, with regular meetings between funding partners and the organisation taking place. The organisation continues to operate within a challenging financial environment and continues to examine possible mitigation both in the short and longer term. It should be noted that reductions in contribution towards the Property Lifecycle reserves were reduced during the Covid epidemic in order to mitigate cost pressures. Whilst the Business Plan expects these to return to normal levels, a failure to return in full to the lifecycle reserve presents the risk that ASV will be unable to reinvest at the levels required when necessary. ASV have proposed that any additional surpluses would be set against the Lifecycle Reserve as additional contributions.</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p>
	<p>Assurance that accounts are being managed within budget, are in line with statutory requirements and Following the Public Pound Code of Practice, and that the level of financial risk to the Council is low.</p>	<p>The Hub confirmed that the 2021-22 annual accounts were submitted to Companies House and OSCR by the required deadline and in accordance with the appropriate regulations. The auditors' report identified no matters of concern and concluded that the organisation's use of the Going Concern basis of accounting was appropriate. The 2023-24 accounts are still subject to audit and will be reviewed when that is complete.</p>	<p><b>Low</b></p>