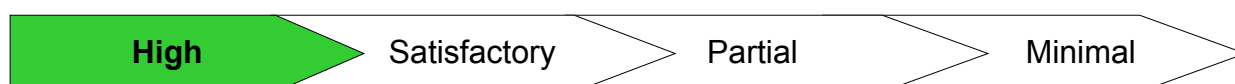


Appendix 1a: Audit Opinion and Themes

Assurance



Key Financial System

Objective

To assess whether the key controls in the Business Rates system effectively prevent or detect material financial errors, on a timely basis, so that this information can be relied upon when producing the Council's statement of accounts.

Scope and Control Opinions

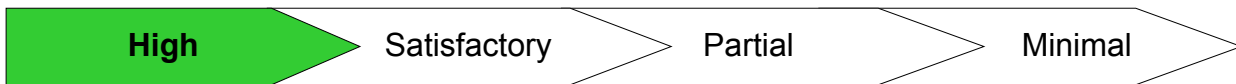
The audit evaluated the adequacy and effectiveness of the design and operation of the key controls listed in the table below, which also shows the assessed strength of each control.

Business Rates

Key Controls Audited	Strength of control
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The list of business properties in the Business Rates system and on the Local Land and Property Gazetteer is complete, accurate and regularly reconciled to the Valuation Office Agency valuations. 	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total amount of Business Rates to be collected from all businesses is set up accurately and on a timely basis. 	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discounts for small businesses, empty properties, charity reliefs and exemptions are accurately calculated, authorised and supported by appropriate evidence to confirm their validity, annually. 	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-year adjustments to Business Rates accounts are accurate, applied promptly and supported by appropriate evidence to confirm their validity (e.g. change of occupancy, change of business use, addition and removal of properties). 	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correct direct debits are raised and payments received are accurate, complete and allocated to the correct Business Rates account, in a timely manner. 	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconciliations between the Business Rates and the General Ledger systems are complete, accurate and timely. 	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff declare relevant interests and appropriate action is taken to avoid conflicts of interest when allocating work. 	Partial

Appendix 1a: Audit Opinion and Themes

Assurance



Key Issues

Due to lack of resource, the annual Declaration of Interest refresh had not taken place since June 2014 and there are no plans to do this. It is important that these are renewed regularly to ensure that declared interests can be managed effectively.

Number of actions agreed: 1