

REPORT TITLE: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL INTERNAL AUDIT STANDARDS

09 JANUARY 2025

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Neil Cutler, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Contact Officer: Antony Harvey Tel No: 07784 265289

Email antony.harvey@hants.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL WARDS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the new Global Internal Audit Standards, to which public sector internal audit functions will have to comply from 1 April 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Audit & Governance Committee note the pending implementation of the Global Internal Audit Standards.

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 Internal audit plays a vital role in supporting the Council accomplish plan outcomes by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.
- 1.2 The Council is responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate risk management processes, control systems, accounting records and governance arrangements. Internal audit plays a vital role in advising the Council that these arrangements are in place and operating effectively.
- 1.3 The Council's response to internal audit activity should lead to the strengthening of the control environment and, therefore, contribute to the achievement of the Council Plan Outcomes.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from the content of this report.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require local authorities to "undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance". The Global Internal Audit Standards incorporate the current public sector auditing standards and should therefore be integrated to the Council's internal audit function.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no additional workforce implications arising from the content of this report.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no property and asset implications arising from the content of this report.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 The contents of the report were shared with both the Director (Legal) and Director (Finance) prior to publication.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 There are no environmental implications arising from the content of this report.

8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

8.1 None.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 None required.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure	Internal Audit supports the Council to ensure proper financial management, effective and transparent governance, risk management and control through its audit activities and assurance service.	Enhancement of the Council's reputation through the strengthening of the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.
Exposure to challenge		
Innovation		
Reputation		
Achievement of outcome		

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

11.1 Since their implementation in 2013 the Council's internal audit function have been required in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations, to comply with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards which were based on the mandatory elements of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) International Professional Practice Framework (IPPF).

11.2 In January 2024 the IIA published a significant revision of their IPPF in the form of the Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS). The revised framework is to take effect within the public sector from April 2025 (effective from January 2025 in the private sector).

11.3 The GIAS are a replacement to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and provide a single source to guide the worldwide professional practice of internal auditing and serve as a basis for evaluating and elevating the quality of the internal audit function.

11.4 The GIAS is arranged under five domains which incorporates 15 Principles and 52 Standards (Appendix 1).

11.5 Some of the key differences between the existing Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the new Global Internal Audit Standards include:

- Domain II – Ethics & Professionalism
 - Professional courage (1.1)
 - Professional scepticism (4.3)
- Domain III – Governing the internal audit function
 - Internal audit mandate (6.1)
 - Board interaction (8.1)
 - Quality (8.3)
- Domain IV – Manage the internal audit function
 - Internal Audit Strategy (9.2)
 - Coordinating reliance (9.5)
 - Communicating results (trends / root cause) (11.3)
 - Performance measurement (12.2)

11.6 The authority for determining standards applicable to internal audit in the UK public sector rests with the Relevant Internal Audit Standard Setters (RIASS), supported by the UK public sector Internal Audit Standards Advisory Board (IASAB).

11.7 During October 2024 the RIASS issued a consultation document in response to the GIAS (Application Note). Simultaneously CIPFA issued a consultation a new Code of Practice for Internal Audit:

- Application Note – GIAS in the UK Public Sector (consultation close 31 October 2024)
- Code of Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit in the UK Local Government (consultation close 28 November 2024).

Application Note – GIAS in the UK Public Sector

11.8 The IASAB has considered the content of the GIAS and has determined that it is applicable to the internal audit of UK public sector bodies, subject to a small number of additional requirements and interpretations.

11.9 The key requirements and interpretations covered within the Public Sector Application Note that are not encompassed within the main text of the GIAS include:

- requirements for an annual report and opinion to be produced
- that the chief internal auditor will be both professionally qualified and have appropriate public sector skills and knowledge.

- a requirement for at least one of the external assessment team (required periodically to undertake an External Quality Assessment of the internal audit function) will have the characteristics required of a chief internal auditor in the UK public sector.

11.10 Any External Quality Assessment undertaken must provide an overall opinion on the internal audit functions conformance with the GIAS and Application Note on GIAS in the UK Public Sector.

Code of Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit in UK Local Government

11.11 The new standards include 'essential conditions' for the governance of internal audit. When the IIA published GIAS, it recognised that in the public sector, governance structures or other laws or regulations may impact on how the essential conditions can be applied.

11.12 This is the case in UK local government, where there isn't a straightforward replacement for the 'board' as described in GIAS. Elected representatives are ultimately those charged with governance, whether that is the full council of an authority or an elected police and crime commissioner.

11.13 Audit committees are non-executive advisory bodies with limited decision-making powers and police audit committees cannot be delegated any decision-making powers. Internal audit's primary mandate comes from statutory regulations rather than the decision of the audit committee.

11.14 The GIAS provides for the chief internal auditor to reach agreement with those in governance roles and senior management on alternative conditions that still allow for conformance with the standards. The Code of Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit in UK Local Government provides the route to satisfying the essential conditions in GIAS (UK public sector), tailored for UK local government. The GIAS (UK public sector) directs the local government sector bodies to apply the Code.

11.15 The Code meets the objectives of the essential conditions, by providing for the necessary governance of internal audit, but in a way that is appropriate for UK local government bodies. It includes roles and responsibilities of the audit committee, senior management, and those charged with governance towards internal audit.

Conclusion

11.16 The Southern Internal Audit Partnership have completed an initial self-assessment / gap analysis against the GIAS and developed an action plan to ensure the Partnership in the strongest possible position for when the Standards take effect in April 2025.

11.17 As part of that action plan SIAP will be engaging with Senior Management and members of the Audit & Governance Committee during January / February 2025 to contribute to the development of key requirements of the GIAS including the Internal Audit Strategy and key performance measures.

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 None.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

None.

Other Background Documents:-

None.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Global Internal Audit Standards

Appendix 2 – SIAP – GIAS Road Map.