

Guildford Borough Council

Report to: Corporate Governance and Standards Committee

Date: 16 January 2025

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of: Deputy Head of Southern Internal Audit Partnership

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Lead Councillor responsible: Councillor Richard Lucas

Report Status: Open

Global Internal Audit Standards Implementation

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The new Global Internal Audit Standards, to which public sector internal audit functions will have to comply come into effect from 1 April 2025.
- 1.2 This report is brought direct to this Committee in the name of the Chief Internal Auditor, rather than an Officer of the Council, in order to conform with the CIPFA Code of Good Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit in Local Government.

2. Recommendation to Committee

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the pending implementation of the Global Internal Audit Standards.

3. Reasons for Recommendation:

- 3.1. The Committee has a responsibility to ensure compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015.

4. Exemption from publication

- 4.1. No part of this report is exempt from publication.

5. Purpose of Report

- 5.1 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.

6. Strategic Priorities

- 6.1 The audit of Council services supports the priority of providing efficient, cost effective and relevant quality public services that give the community value for money.

7. Background

- 7.1 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).
- 7.2 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).
- 7.3 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.

- 7.4 The GIAS is arranged under five domains which incorporates 15 Principles and 52 Standards (Appendix 1).
- 7.5 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)
- 7.6 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).
- 7.7 During October 2024 the RIASS issued a consultation document in response to the GIAS (Application Note). Simultaneously CIPFA issued a consultation on 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

- 7.8 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.
- 7.9 The key requirements and interpretations covered within the Public Sector Application Note that are not encompassed within the main text of the GIAS include:
- In the UK public sector, a chief internal auditor must prepare an overall conclusion encompassing governance, risk management and control (governance should support any specific sector obligations or processes).
 - 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.
- 7.10 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

- 7.11 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.

- 7.12 This is the case in UK local government, where there is not 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.
- 7.13 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.
- 7.14 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.
- 7.15 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

- 7.16 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 is in the strongest possible position for when the Standards take effect in April 2025.

8. Consultations

8.1. Consultations have not been undertaken.

9. Key Risks

9.1. None.

10. Financial Implications

10.1. None.

11. Legal Implications

11.1. None.

12. Human Resource Implications

12.1. None.

13. Equality and Diversity Implications

13.1. None.

14. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

14.1. None.

15. Conclusion

15.1 The Committee is asked to note the report.

16. Background Papers

None.

17. Appendices

Appendix 1: GIAS.

Appendix 2: SIAP Roadmap (GIAS)