

Southern Internal Audit Key Stakeholder Board

Briefing Note

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| Date considered: | 09 October 2020 | Item: 2 |
| Title: | External Quality Assessment – Final Report | |

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1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to present the outcome of the recent external quality assessment of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership against the IPPF, PSIAS and LGAN required as part of the Standards (*Attribute Standard 1312 – External Assessment*).

2. Background

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 – S5 state:

‘(1) A relevant body must 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 Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the Local Government Application Note together comprise *‘internal auditing standards and guidance’* as referenced in the Regulations.

The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require the Head of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership to develop and maintain a quality assurance and improvement programme that covers all aspects of the internal audit service including provision for both internal and external quality assessments.

An external quality assessment is required to be undertaken every five years by an independent assessment team from outside of the organisation. The last external assessment of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP) was completed in October 2015 by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA).

As agreed at the Key Stakeholder Board (October 2019) the IIA would again be commissioned to undertake a further external assessment of the SIAP during 2020.

The external assessment was completed during 4th – 11th September 2020. The review included a thorough validation of the SIAP's self-assessment, a significant number of interviews with key stakeholders across our partner and client organisations, SIAP team members, as well as an extensive customer survey.

3. Conclusion

The external assessment concluded that the Southern Internal Audit Partnership conform to all aspects of the International Professional Performance Framework, Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note.

In assessing the SIAP against the IIA's Maturity Matrix, the assessors concluded that the SIAP team are:

Excellent in their:

- Reflection of the Standards
- Focus on performance, risk and adding value
- Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme

Good in their:

- Operating with efficiency
- Coordinating and maximising assurance

The External Assessors did present a number of improvement opportunities for the partnership. Whilst these are not issues of conformance with the IPPF, PSIAS and LGAN, they do have the potential to further strengthen the impact of the internal audit service. An action plan in response to the opportunities raised is detailed at Appendix 2.

Appendix 1 – SIAP External Quality Assessment – Final Report

Appendix 2 – Improvement Opportunities - Action Plan