

Internal Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service
Medway Council & Gravesham Borough Council

Internal Audit Strategy 2025-28

Medway Council &
Gravesham Borough Council

Reviews & Revisions

	Date	Changes
1.	February 2025	Document created in line with introduction of GIAS.

1. Introduction

Internal audit services are delivered to Medway Council and Gravesham Borough Council by the Internal Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service, which was formed on 1 March 2016.

The Internal Audit & Counter Fraud Shared Service recognises and commits to adhere to the mandatory elements of The Institute of Internal Auditors' (IIA) International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF), including the Global Internal Audit Standards ('the Standards'), as well as the requirements of the Application Note: Global Internal Audit Standards in the UK Public Sector.

The Standards require that the Chief Audit Executive develops and implements a strategy for the internal audit function that supports the strategic objectives and success of the organisation and aligns with the expectations of the Audit Committees, senior management, and other key stakeholders.

This Strategy is designed to meet the requirements of the Standards and provides a framework to ensure the internal audit function is able to fulfil its purpose and mandate, as detailed in the Internal Audit Charter. It also ensures that our internal audit services are aligned to the priorities and values of both Medway Council and Gravesham Borough Council.

The Strategy will be reviewed with senior management and the Audit Committees on an annual basis.

2. Our Vision

To fulfill the 'Purpose of Internal Auditing' and Internal Audit Mandate, as well as to drive continuous improvement, our vision is:

"To be a leading provider of high-quality assurance and advisory services to help the councils meet their objectives, acting as a catalyst for driving positive change, promoting improvement, learning, and innovation, so that we can truly add value. By investing in our staff and working to raise our profile, we aim to become the default, respected advisor at the heart of Medway Council and Gravesham Borough Council".

3. Our Strategic Objectives

We have three long-term strategic objectives for the internal audit function that will drive us towards attaining our vision:

- Aligning internal audit coverage to key strategic objectives and risks.
- Optimizing our workforce planning and talent management processes, ensuring we can attract, develop, and retain internal audit staff.
- Delivering a positive impact.

To ensure these strategic objectives can be achieved within the period covered by the Strategy, a number of supporting initiatives have been identified and are detailed below.

Aligning internal audit coverage to key strategic objectives and risks

- Our work plans will be developed and reviewed in consultation with senior management and the Audit Committees to ensure they are closely aligned to the core objectives and risks of the councils.
- Internal audit services will be scheduled, and the scope defined in consultation with key clients to ensure we focus on the right areas, while maintaining independence and objectivity.

- Internal audit will lead an assurance mapping exercise to identify gaps and/or overlaps in assurance provision, and coordinate services to ensure adequate coverage, while minimising duplication of effort with other providers of assurance and optimise the use of the internal audit resource.

Optimizing our workforce planning and talent management processes, ensuring we can attract, develop, and retain internal audit staff

- We will employ and develop a strong mix of people with different skills, technical expertise and we will match those people to the work plans to make the best use of our staff.
- We will be a great place to work with a motivated, productive, and aspirational workforce.
- We will work to embed the Internal Audit Career Progression Framework and are committed to investing in staff development through training and other opportunities, including professional qualification training and continuing professional development.
- We will create succession plans to promote talent development through targeted training, mitigate risks associated with the departure of key staff and identify paths for leadership transition.

Delivering a positive impact

- We will build strong, positive, professional relationships with senior management, the Audit Committees and other key stakeholders across both councils and engage them in the development of our strategies and work plans.
- We will raise the profile of the work of internal audit to ensure senior management other key stakeholders are aware of the services available.
- We will seek to be involved in key projects and working groups at both councils to provide advice on governance, risk management and control matters and also to promote our work and the services we can provide to a wider audience.
- We will embrace the use of new and advancing technology to improve the efficiency of our work processes and provide deeper insights, to produce greater assurance.
- We will share our outputs with senior management, the Audit Committees and other key stakeholders through high quality reports to maximise the positive impact of our work.
- We will take a balanced and pragmatic approach to our work and our reports will emphasise positive assurance alongside areas for improvement.
- Our performance measurement and monitoring arrangements will be focussed on the aspects of the service most valued by senior management, the Audit Committees and key stakeholders of both councils.
- We will take steps to ensure we are able to demonstrate full compliance with the Global Internal Audit Standards for our next external quality assurance (EQA) review.

4. Monitoring Progress

A performance measurement methodology, to assess progress towards achieving the strategic objectives identified in this Strategy, is incorporated within the Internal Audit Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme (QAIP).

As per the reporting arrangements identified in our Internal Audit Charter, the Chief Audit Executive will present an annual report to the senior management and Audit Committees of both councils providing an update on progress against delivery of the Internal Audit Strategy and communicating the results of the QAIP, including conformance with the Standards.