

9. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2025-26

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Internal Audit Plan is to provide the Head of Internal Audit with sufficient evidence to give an opinion on the effectiveness of risk management, governance and internal control across the full range of activities of the organisation. As we outsource our Internal Audit function, our Head of Internal audit, works directly for Veritau. This enables the Authority to receive independent assurance on the effectiveness of our internal controls.

2. Context

2.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require that the Authority undertakes an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and its system of internal control in accordance to proper practices. Our Internal Auditors, Veritau Ltd, manage this on behalf of the Authority. Stuart Cutts, Assistant Director-Audit Assurance will be joining the meeting to present the 2025/26 plan and answer any questions.

3. Proposals

3.1 Members are asked to consider and approve the Internal Audit 2025/26 Audit Plan, a copy of which is attached at Appendix 1.

4. Recommendation

4.1 That the Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26 be approved.

5. Corporate Implications

a. Legal

Pursuant to Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Authority, as a relevant authority defined in paragraph 2, Schedule 2 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, 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.

b. Financial

The cost of the Internal Audit is allocated from the Finance Budget. The annual cost of the Internal Audit service is £14,350 and the Authority has just entered a 3-year contract, with the annual price being fixed over the term.

c. National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan

The Authority Plan includes Objective F (Governance) - to have best practice governance arrangements in place.

d. Risk Management

The Internal Audit process is regarded as an important part of the overall internal controls operated by the Authority. Our Internal Auditors provide independent assurance that internal controls are functioning as intended. They will report significant risks back to management and offer recommendations to combat such risks.

e. Net Zero

With the exception of the HOIA attendance at Authority meetings, all meetings with Internal Auditors will be virtual, reducing the associated emissions caused by business travel.

6. Background papers (not previously published)

None.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Internal Audit Annual Audit Plan 2025/26

Report Author and Responsible Officer, Job Title and Publication Date

Author: Sinead Butler, Finance Manager & Chief Financial Officer. Responsible Officer: Emily Fox, Head of Resources – 30 April 2025