ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024/25

1. Purpose
To seek Members' approval of the audited Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25.

2. Context

2.1 Each year the Authority reviews its performance against the Code of Corporate Governance and in doing so reviews the effectiveness of its governance arrangements including the system of internal control. The results of this feed into the Authority's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) appended as Appendix 1.

2.2 The AGS highlights areas for further action in accordance with the Authority's approach to achieve continuous performance improvement.

2.3 The review of the effectiveness of the Authority's governance framework, including the system of internal control, is informed by assurances from Officers and Members within the Authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment (including financial controls, risk management and performance management processes, compliance with advice on legislation and regulations), Internal and External Audit reports and opinions, comments made by other agencies and inspectorates as well as feedback from customers and stakeholders.

2.4 The External Auditor, in their annual report for 2024/25, gave a satisfactory conclusion to their assessment of the AGS, with no issues highlighted.

3. Proposals

3.1 The audited AGS for 2024/25 is appended at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration and approval.

3.2 As part of reviewing performance and assurances received, no significant issues have been identified and the arrangements in place continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework. However, a number of issues identified from the Authority's review of effectiveness to further enhance our governance arrangements were identified and these are set out against the 7 core principles of the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance at the end of Appendix 1. The issues identified have been monitored and reviewed during 2025/26 in preparation for the next AGS in 2025/26.

4. Recommendations

1. **To approve the audited Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 appended at Appendix 1 for sign off by the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Authority.**

2. **To delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer, following consultation with the Chair of the Authority, to make minor changes to the Code of Corporate Governance following publication of the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25.**

5. Corporate Implications

a. Legal
Pursuant to Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Authority must conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and Members must approve an AGS, prepared in accordance with proper practices in

relation to internal control, when the Statement of Accounts is approved under Regulation 9(2)(b). In compliance with the Regulations, the Authority published an unaudited version of the AGS before the required deadline of the 31 May 2025. This report now asks Members to approved the audited version before it is published with the Statement of Accounts.

b. Financial
The AGS is an important part of the Authority's system of internal control which is regulated by the Audit and Accounts Regulations 2015 and sits alongside the Statement of Accounts.

c. National Park Management Plan and Authority Plan
A review of the Authority's performance against the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance feeds into this AGS and is part of our work to ensure the Authority has a solid foundation supporting achievement of our aims and objectives, as set out in the Authority Plan.

d. Risk Management
There are no issues to highlight other than already included in the AGS and Code of Corporate Governance. Annual review of the Authority's internal control systems ensures good practice is followed and reduces the risk of failing to address any corporate governance weaknesses.

e. Net Zero
There are no adverse implications.

6. Background papers (not previously published)
None.

7. Appendices
Appendix 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date
Angela Edwards, Authority Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Responsible Officer, Job Title
Angela Edwards, Authority Solicitor and Monitoring Officer