

AM 691/24

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 17 OCTOBER 2024

**DRAFT FINANCIAL REPORT 2022/23
(Including the Annual Governance Statement)**

Report by: Nigel Stone, Chief Finance Officer

Purpose:

- 1 To present the draft Financial Report 2022/23, including the Annual Governance Statement, Accounting Policies and Letter of Representation.

Summary:

- 2 This report contains the latest draft of the Authority's Financial Report for the 2022/23 financial year – **Annex 1** (previously known as the Statement of Accounts). The core financial results, draft Accounting Policies and draft Annual Governance Statement were considered and recommended for approval by the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee on 5 June 2023. Members will also need to approve the draft Letter of Representation as set out in **Annex 2**.
- 3 Members will be aware of the national issues which have affected the audit process for our 2022/23 Accounts. Whilst the Authority published its draft Accounts on time and in the appropriate format, including the necessary public consultation and complete audit papers, the full audit has not been undertaken by our External Auditors Ernst & Young LLP. At the Authority meeting in March 2024, Members received the clean Value for Money conclusion (paper AM 672-24 Annex 2), however the audit itself has not been performed.
- 4 The 'lack of' / disclaimed audit does not in any way reflect on any of the Authority's actions, or those of its Officers and Members, and certainly does not imply any issue(s) exist with the Financial Report or that the Authority's financial position is anything other than strong and stable.

- 5 In early November 2024, the Authority will receive the official 2022/23 Audit Results Report from the Auditors and the government has set a deadline for acceptance of this and the Financial Report of 13 December 2024. This meeting is the only meeting of the full Authority during this period. We know the report will propose what is called a 'modified' audit opinion, in that as the audit has not been completed, the Auditors will disclaim responsibility for giving an opinion. Given the short timescales, we are required to ask Members to approve the draft documentation as it stands today, whilst delegating approval of the final versions when the time comes in early December.

Recommendation:

That the draft Financial Report, the Accounting Policies and Annual Governance Statement contained therein, and the draft Letter of Representation be approved, subject to any further changes required in relation to the outstanding issues identified at the meeting for which delegation is given for these to be mutually agreed at the appropriate time by the Chief Finance Officer, Chief Executive and Chair of the Authority.

Papers:

AM 691/24	Cover paper
AM 691/24 Annex 1	Draft Financial Report 2022/23
AM 691/24 Annex 2	Draft Letter of Representation 2022/23

Previous Relevant Papers:

674-24 March 2024 - [Paper Link](#)

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no specific equality or diversity implications arising out of this report.

Contact:

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