

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

RESOURCES, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE – 4 MARCH 2024

INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER AND PLAN 2024/25

Report by: Antony Harvey. Deputy Head of the Southern Internal Audit Partnership and Chief Internal Auditor to the Authority

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee with the Internal Audit Charter 2024-25 (Annex 1) and Internal Audit Plan 2024-25 (Annex 2), for the New Forest National Park Authority.
- 1.2 The Internal Audit Charter formally defines the internal audit activity's purpose, authority and responsibility in line with the Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards [the Standards].
- 1.3 The aim of internal audit's work programme (plan) is to provide independent and objective assurance to management, in relation to the business activities, systems or processes under review that:
 - The framework of risk management, control and governance processes is appropriate and operating effectively; and
 - Risks to the achievement of the Authority's objectives are identified, assessed and managed to a defined acceptable level.

2 Internal Audit Charter

- 2.1 With effect from 1 April 2013 (updated 2017) internal audit services across the public sector have been governed by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (the Standards).
- 2.2 Within the Standards there is a requirement for an Internal Audit Charter - a formal document that defines the purpose, authority and responsibility of the internal audit activity. The proposed Charter is attached at **Annex 1**.
- 2.3 The Internal Audit Charter must be reviewed periodically (as a minimum annually) by the Chief Internal Auditor and presented to 'Senior Management' and 'the Board'. The Board is defined as

'the governance group charged with independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of financial reporting. At the Authority this shall mean the Resources, Audit and Performance Committee'.

3 Internal Audit Plan

- 3.1 The Internal Audit Plan provides the mechanism through which the Chief Internal Auditor can ensure most appropriate use of internal audit resources to provide a clear statement of assurance on risk management, internal control and governance arrangements.
- 3.2 To ensure the Internal Audit Plan is aligned to the needs of the Authority, the plan has been developed following consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and with the Executive Board. A review of key corporate documents and our understanding of the organisation have informed the development of the plan.
- 3.3 The Internal Audit Plan, **Annex 2**, will remain fluid and subject to on-going review, and amended in consultation with the relevant officers, to ensure it continues to reflect the needs of the Authority. Amendments to the plan will be identified through the Chief Internal Auditor's continued contact and liaison with those responsible for the governance of the Authority.
- 3.4 The Authority's Internal Audit Charter ensures the Chief Internal Auditor has sufficient resource necessary to fulfil the requirements and expectations to deliver an internal audit opinion. Significant matters that jeopardise the delivery of the plan, or require changes to the plan will be identified, addressed and reported to the Executive Board.

4 Additional Information

- 4.1 Provision for the delivery of Internal Audit is included within the Authority's Service Level Agreement with New Forest District Council.

5 Recommendation

That members approve the Internal Audit Charter for 2024-25 (Annex 1) and Internal Audit Plan for 2024-25 (Annex 2).

Annexes:

Annex 1 – Internal Audit Charter 2024-25

Annex 2 – Internal Audit Plan 2024-25

Contact:

Antony Harvey, Deputy Head of Partnership, Southern Internal Audit Partnership

Tel: 07784 265289

Email: antony.harvey@hants.gov.uk