

Draft Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Name of Committee | National Park Authority |
| Date | 25 June 2019 |
| Report Author | Julia Gruffydd |
| Job title | Democratic Services Manager |
| Contact Details | 01874 620400 julia.gruffydd@beacons-npa.gov.uk |
| Purpose of Report | To seek approval of the Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19 for submission to the Wales Audit Office with the Annual Statement of Accounts |
| Single Integrated Assessment | N/A |
| List of Enclosures | Enclosure 1: Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19 |
| Public Interest Test | N/A |
| Recommendation(s) | That the draft Annual Governance Statement be approved for publication with the Annual Statement of Accounts. |

1.0 Introduction or Background

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS), along with the Corporate Plan, is a key document which the Authority is required to produce each year to comply with the Local Government Measure 2009. It is required to be published at the same time as the Annual Statement of Accounts which the Authority will be asked to approve in July. It is a retrospective document and looks at what is already in place with examples given.

The purpose of the AGS is to:

- Provide assurance that the Authority has a good governance framework in place
- Show how governance is monitored in order to know when governance is working/not working
- Show how this information is used to improve performance

It needs to be supported by evidence from the Internal Auditors and the Wales Audit Office reports.

CIPFA issued new guidance in 2016 which has made clear the change in emphasis of the AGS. While it is still a compliance document the guidance has been updated to highlight the importance of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and suggests that it should be a more accessible document for the public to seek assurance. To this end the use of hyperlinks and symbols is considered good practice, which was included in the AGS last year, and which this committee welcomed. Since then the Democratic Services Manager has received some helpful feedback from the Wales Audit Office on the draft report for 2018/19 and as a result a slightly leaner document has been produced. Advice included the need to be able to produce evidence on assurances made, but that hyperlinks to evidence were not essential, apart from a few key links to committee papers and regulatory documents.

The document aims to demonstrate a continuous cycle of improvement by giving an update on actions identified in the previous year, and highlighting through self-evaluation those issues which the Authority will address in the next year.

2.0 Proposals

Given the advice from the WAO, and mindful of the comments made by this committee last year about the amount of work needed to produce such a complex document, the AGS has been prepared as a much leaner document, with key assurances and examples, but without the detail on individual projects given in previous years.

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee received the draft document on 3 May 2019 and approved it subject to further editing and any input from the Governance and Member Development Working Group 7 May 2019. Comments from the working group have been incorporated. The Corporate Governance Team has had input, and key managers have all been consulted.

The Wales Audit Office has reviewed the draft document since the above meetings and their helpful suggestions have been incorporated in this final draft.

The guidance stipulates that while the AGS must be published at the same time as the Annual Statement of Accounts although does not have to be part of the same document and should be accessible as a separate document.

11.3 Implications

The Authority is required to produce an Annual Governance Statement and must be able to substantiate the claims within the document.

11.4 Risk

We are required to produce an Annual Governance Statement under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

11.5 Conclusion

Members are asked to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19.

RECOMMENDATION: That the draft Annual Governance Statement be approved for publication with the Annual Statement of Accounts.