



Cairngorms National Park Authority

Internal Audit Report 2021/22

ICT Strategy Review

March 2022



Cairngorms National Park Authority

Internal Audit Report 2021/22

Cyber Security Review

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| Audit Sponsor | Key Contacts | Audit team |
|--|---|--|
| <i>David Cameron- Director of Corporate Services</i> | <i>Sandy Allan- Information Systems Manager Daniel Ralph- Finance Manager</i> | <i>Paul Kelly- IT Audit Director Ashley Bickerstaff- IT Audit Manager Dominic O'Neill- IT Auditor Natasha Williams- IT Auditor</i> |

Executive Summary

Conclusion

Our review has identified several areas for improvement in relation to ICT strategy within the organisation. When updating the IT & Data Strategy in future, management should define objectives and/or outcomes to be achieved from its implementation. This should be used as the basis of developing annual IT operational plans.

As part of future development of the IT & Data Strategy, management should develop a financial strategy which sets out, at a high-level, the expected capital and revenue investment needed to support its implementation.

Background and scope

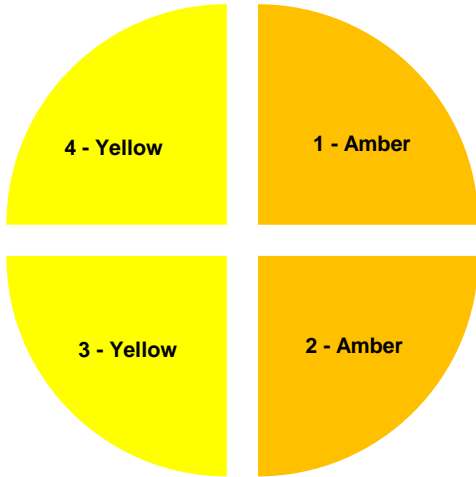
The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) is reliant on its technological infrastructure to support the delivery of its key business objectives. It is crucial that the infrastructure, systems and devices are maintained at a level capable of supporting the Authority's business plans and strategy. For that reason, it is essential that an ICT strategy is in place which adequately defines technological direction.

It is essential that organisations have clarity over medium and longer term planned ICT investments that provide a robust infrastructure and systems which meet the needs of the business.

Our review has sought to confirm the effectiveness of processes and governance in place for the implementation of the Authority's ICT strategy.

Control assessment

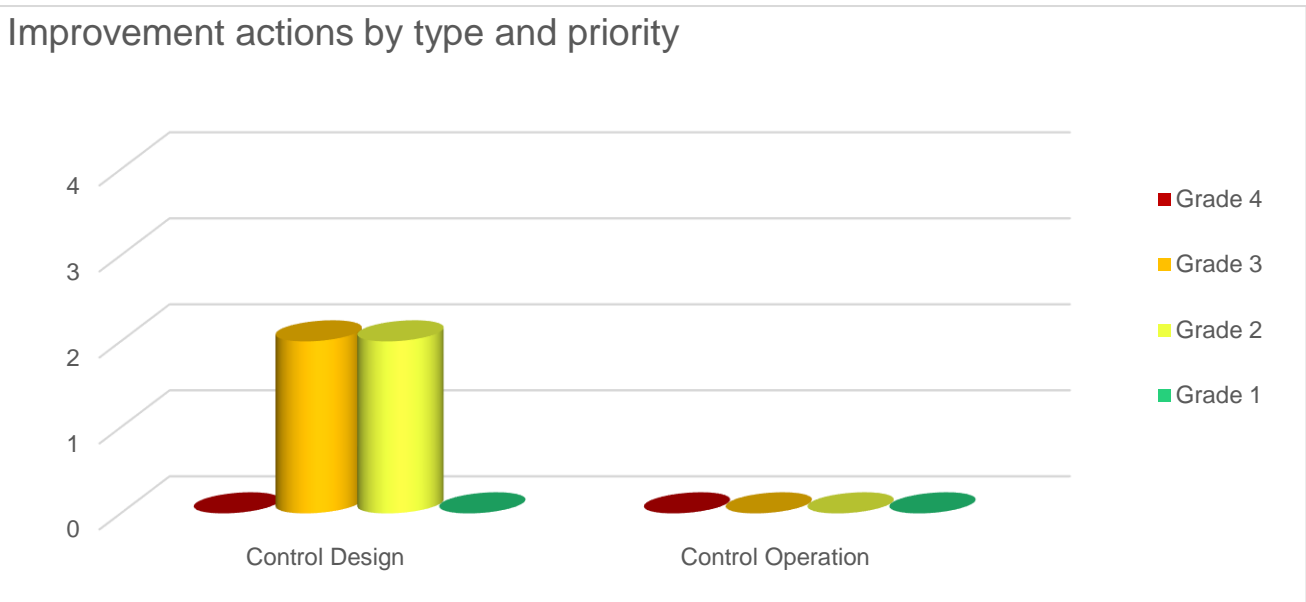
- 1. There is alignment between the ICT Strategy and Authority corporate strategy.



- 2. There has been adequate planning activity to translate the ICT Strategy into operational plans.

- 3. The ICT Strategy is supported by a financial strategy.

- 4. There is adequate governance in place to oversee development, approval and delivery of the ICT Strategy.



Four improvement actions have been identified from this review, all of which relate to the design of controls themselves. See Appendix A for definitions of colour coding.

Key findings

Areas for improvement

We have identified areas for improvement which, if addressed, would strengthen CNPA's control framework. These include:

- The IT and Data Strategy does not contain clearly defined objectives and/or outcomes. In addition, the action plan included within the document does not clearly set out the timeframe for the delivery of the actions and success measures are not documented.
- There are no IT operational plans in place which set out how the IT & Data Strategy will be delivered.
- The IT & Data Strategy does not contain a high-level financial strategy which sets out the expected capital and revenue requirements over its duration.

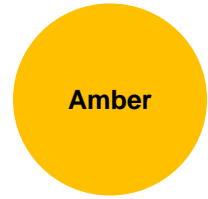
These are further discussed in the Management Action Plan below.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all staff consulted during this review for their assistance and co-operation.

Management Action Plan

Control Objective 1: There is alignment between the ICT Strategy and Authority corporate strategy.



1.1 ICT Strategy

Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) established an IT and Data Strategy in June 2021, with a focus on a two year timeframe of deliverables. This was designed to aligned with the “New Normal” project that was introduced in in May 2021 which aims to implement a blended model of working (part-home and part-office working). The CNPA IT and Data Strategy documents the link with this project and the deliverables create the environment for the success of the project.

Our review identified that the IT and Data Strategy does not contain clearly defined objectives or outcomes, other than migration to cloud-hosted solutions. In addition, whilst an action plan is set out in an appendix to the strategy, this does not detail delivery dates or action owners.

Risk

Without clear timeframes for delivery there is a risk that the objectives will not delivered in alignment with the needs of the business. This may impact on the delivery of corporate objectives.

Recommendation

We recommend that the action plan within the IT and Data Strategy is updated to include action owners and delivery dates. There should be regular reporting to the SMT on the progress of the completion of actions.

We recommend that when the new CNPA Corporate Plan is established a new IT and Data Strategy should be developed aligned with the corporate plan.

The Strategy should also be reviewed with the approval of the Strategy by the appropriate oversight group fully documented and included within the document’s version control.

Management Action

Grade 3
(Design)

Recommendation agreed. We will develop a 2022/23 project plan to update the strategy. We will separately put in place a new IT and Data Statregy to align with the new Corporate Plan.

Action owner:

Project plan = Information Systems Manager

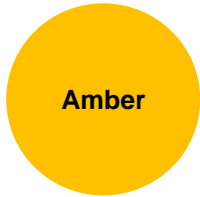
New IT Data Strategy = Director of Corporate Services

Due date:

30 June 2022

30 September 2023

Control Objective 2: There has been adequate planning activity to translate the ICT Strategy into operational plans.



2.1 IT Operating Plans

Our review identified that there has not been any operational plans documented which set out delivery tasks in support of the IT and Data Strategy.

Risk

Without a formal operational plans, management will not be able to gain assurance that all relevant tasks and activities associated with the delivery of the IT and Data Strategy are appropriately planned. This could result in the organisation not having sufficient financial and human resources available to deliver strategic imperatives.

Recommendation

We recommend that annual operational plans are developed which sets out a workplan for each financial year. This should include core operational tasks associated with maintaining a functioning IT environment as well as improvement and change activities relating to delivering the IT and Data Strategy. Planning in this manner will ensure that there are appropriate financial and human resources available to meet agreed IT and data priorities.

We also recommend that there is regular monitoring of delivery of the IT operational plan to allow management to gain assurance that it is being delivered in line with expectations. This monitoring will also allow management to identify and implement actions where plans are not tracking as expected.

Management Action

Grade 3
(Design)

Recommendation agreed. We recognise that in moving away from what has been a “steady state” operation mode for several years that the scale of change in the organisation and in the IT operations needed to support it require formal operational plans to establish required tasks and timelines and allow enhanced management control around delivery.

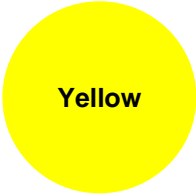
Action owner:

Information Systems Manager with Head of Finance

Due date:

30 June 2022

Control Objective 3: The ICT Strategy is supported by a financial strategy.



3.1 IT Financial Planning

The IT and Data Strategy is not supported by a financial strategy.

We did note that the CNPA budget for 2021/22 in March 2021 set out budget requirements to deliver a programme of transformation work which developed into the New Normal project. We also noted that the CNPA spending review in September 2021 set out the budget changes required to deliver the New Normal project with this including some elements of the IT and Data Strategy. These include Cyber Security software, website and records management augmentation and cloud-based ICT licensing.

Risk

There is a risk that, without an underpinning and agreed financial strategy, the IT and Data Strategy may not be financially sustainable. This could result in expected enabling technologies and improvements in IT that are necessary to support flexible working not being funded due to a lack of financial planning.

Recommendation

We recommend that the next development of the IT and Data Strategy includes a financial strategy. This should set out, at a high-level, indicative capital and revenue costs associated with achieving expected outcomes from the strategy. This should be allocated for each financial year. This will allow management to make an informed assessment of the financial viability of the strategy and to ensure that financial requirements of the strategy are fed into annual budgeting/spending reviews.

Management Action

Grade 2
(Design)

Recommendation accepted. We will more clearly link the provisions of the IT and Data Strategy to the provisions of the budget / forward financial forecasts and define the financial implications of decisions inherent in the strategy.

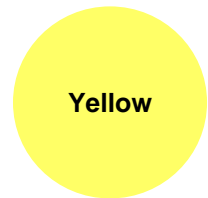
Action owner:

Director of Corporate Services

Due date:

30 September 2023

Control Objective 4: There is adequate governance in place to oversee approval and delivery of the ICT Strategy.



4.1 Governance arrangements

The IT and Data Strategy was presented to Senior Management Team (SMT) in June 2021. The discussion of the strategy, including feedback, is documented in the minutes of the meeting however, the approval is not explicitly noted.

We did note that the Corporate Services Management Group (CSMG) issues log records SMT approval of the strategy in June 2021. We also noted that the Strategy does not contain any document control to detail versions and approvals.

We also noted that there are no formal arrangements for oversight of delivery of the IT & Data Strategy. We did identify that the Organisational Development Programme Board provides some elements of this.

Risk

There is a risk that the organisation does not have appropriate arrangements in place to document the approval and oversee delivery of the IT & Data Strategy. This could result in the organisation not taking appropriate action to achieve expected outcomes.

Recommendation

We recommend that management explicitly document approvals of strategies within minutes of meetings.

We recommend that management establishes formal governance arrangements for the approval of updates to the strategy as well as oversight of delivery. Governance over the IT & Data Strategy should be the responsibility of an existing internal governance group.

Management Action

Grade 2
(Design)

We will continue to recognise the Senior Management Team as the governance body with responsibility for oversight of delivery of the IT and Data Strategy and for future revisions to it.

Action owner:

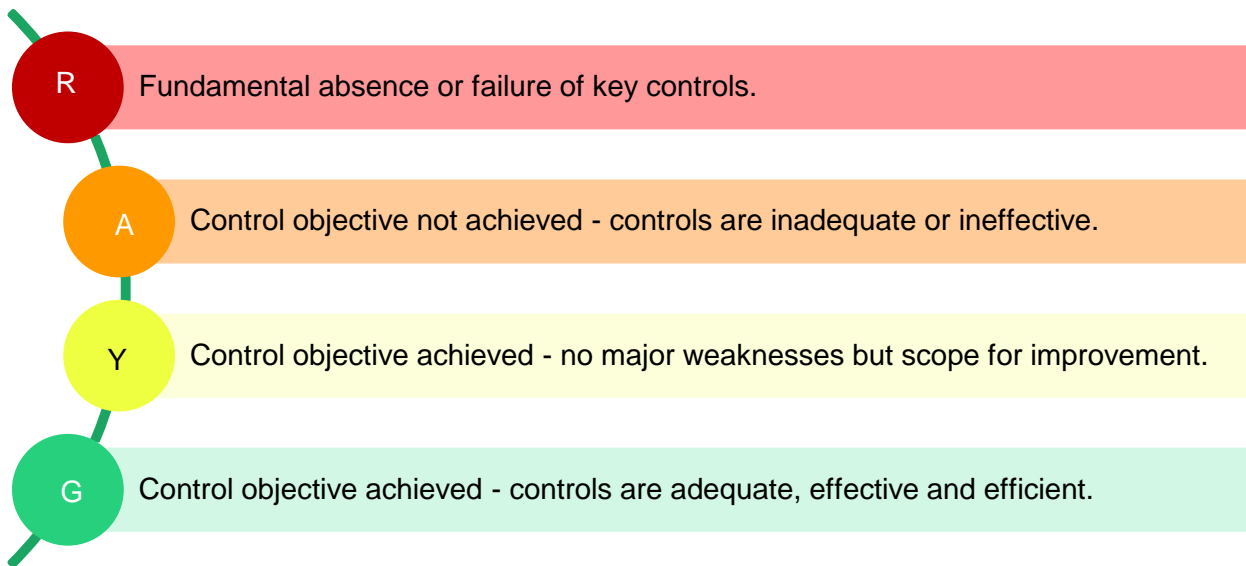
Director of Corporate Services

Due date:

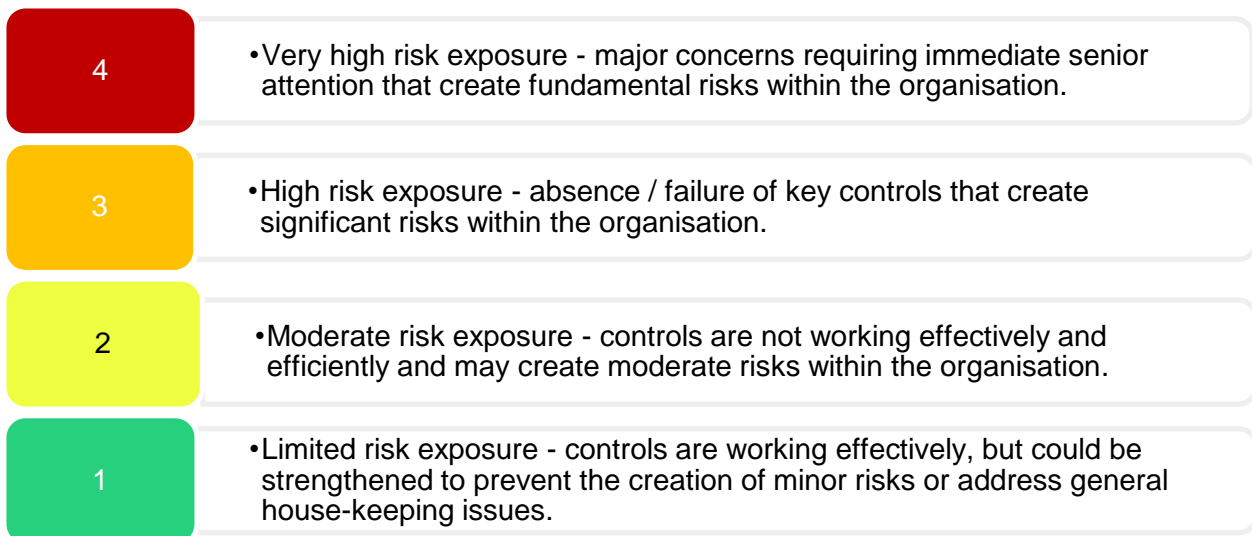
31 March 2023

Appendix A – Definitions

Control assessments



Management action grades



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