



For decision

Title: Internal Audit Plan 2024/25: Operational and Financial Planning

Cover Paper prepared by: David Cameron, Deputy Chief Executive

Report submitted by: Elizabeth Young, Stephanie Hume, Azets

Purpose

This paper presents the review of the annual operational planning process at the Park Authority, including how operational plans are developed alongside, and the extent to which they are integrated within, the annual financial plan. The review considered the cycle of spending and monitoring of spend throughout the year to achieve the operational plan, and the link to the delivery of corporate outcomes, including the use of scenario planning.

Recommendations

The Audit and Risk Committee is asked to

- a) Consider the internal auditors report and findings.
- b) Endorse the management responses to recommendations for future action and improvements.

Executive Summary

1. Azets have completed their internal audit review of the Cairngorms National Park Authority's approach to operational and financial planning.
2. Five recommendations for action have been highlighted. One recommendation has a "purple / advisory" rating, with the remaining four recommendations graded 2 "yellow / moderate".
3. Overall, the report notes that the Park Authority has clear processes in place for financial and operational planning that ensure approved plans are in place prior to the start of the financial year. Recommendations are offered to strengthen the



existing processes, particularly in the areas of preparation and review of scenarios, and longer-term planning.

4. Four of the recommendations have been accepted by management. The advisory recommendation reflects actions already underway and that will be continued. Three recommendations requiring action will be worked on over the coming months.
5. Recommendation 3.1 Reporting and review of scenario plans is not agreed by management. We believe that this recommendation does not add any control value; controls are in place within the executive's scenario planning, and we report to appropriate committees as and when we see any risk of budget amendments materialising along with proposed solutions. This recommendation is assessed as posing higher new risk around reputational management and damage than is offered by any limited additional value of acting on this recommendation.

David Cameron

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