

Corporate Policy Review

Agenda Item 14

National Park Authority Audit and Risk Committee

Tuesday 8th March 2022

Paper for noting

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1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on progress of corporate policy reviews, as agreed at the March 2021 Audit & Risk Committee, and to set out the plan for 2022/23.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1. Members are asked to note the report.
- 2.2. To consider moving presentation of the yearly review plan to June each year, with a progress report provided in December.

3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and/or Our 5-year Plan

- 3.1. This contributes towards the commitment within Our 5 Years Plan to continuously improve and develop resilient systems, processes and services.

4. Background

- 4.1. At the December 2020 Audit & Risk Committee meeting we presented a new process for updating the Committee on progress on policy reviews, as follows:

- a) Each policy will be allocated a risk rating of low, medium, or high. The rating is based on the level of organisational risk associated with a delay to a review of the policy.
- b) As a rule of thumb, high risk policies will be reviewed annually, medium risk policies every three years, and low risk policies every five years. If there are particular reasons to update an individual policy sooner or later than these timescales, we will adjust our approach accordingly. An earlier or later review could arise from an identified management need (e.g. efficiency, effectiveness or broader corporate goals), from an internal audit of an area, or from changes to the external environment (e.g. new statutory requirements).
- c) At a minimum, policy reviews will check that the policy is still compliant with statutory requirements and in line with broader organisational development since its last review. In some cases policy reviews may be more comprehensive depending on the priorities of the organisation or the level to which the external environment has changed.
- d) Each year at its March meeting, we will present the Audit & Risk Committee with our policy review plan for the year, setting out which policies will be reviewed through the year.
- e) We will provide progress reports to the Audit & Risk Committee at the mid-way point of the year (September meeting) and at the end of the year (March meeting). The reports will highlight which policies on the annual plan have been reviewed and which have not.

4.2. At the March Audit and Risk Committee we presented our policy review plan for 2021/22, setting out which policies will be reviewed throughout the year.

5. Progress update

5.1. 2021/22 Review Progress – Appendix 1

5.1.1. As reported in March 2021, we have 18 policies that require review in 2021/22. Of these, 7 have been completed and 8 are “On Track” to be completed by the end of March 2022. 2 are currently “Behind Schedule” and 1 is “At Risk”.

5.1.2. In addition to this, there are 2 policies planned for development; 1 is “On Track”, the other “Behind Schedule”. A further policy has been adopted following review by External Legal.

5.1.3. The need for an Asset Management Policy is under review; this is currently “Behind Schedule”.

5.2. 2022/23 Review Plan – Appendix 2

5.2.1. The full 5-year plan for policy reviews is at **Appendix 2**. This will be reviewed yearly.

5.2.2. As shown in **Appendix 2**, we plan to review 16 corporate policies in 2022/23.

6. Risks

- 6.1. Staff capacity to review the policies has remained the biggest risk to this process; whilst capacity has increased which has alleviated some challenges, there are often business critical activities which are required to take priority over policy reviews. This will be closely monitored by the Corporate Performance Manager to ensure that we meet our deadlines.

7. Next steps

- 7.1. We will update the Committee in December on progress against the plan, and provide a final report in June 2023.

8. Appendices

- 8.1. 13a - 2021/22 Progress Update
- 8.2. 13b - Review Plan 2022/23

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