

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

15th September 2006

ANTI FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

Purpose of Report

To review the Authority's anti fraud and corruption policy, and to recommend that some amendments be made.

Strategic Planning Framework

Core Value: Integrity

Best Value Performance Plan Action: Review current arrangements for asset management and procurement, and identify the most appropriate approach to future management.

Background

The Authority adopted an Anti-fraud and corruption policy in November 1999, on the recommendation of this Committee. The policy was then widely distributed within the organisation, with all (then) members of staff being required to sign a document stating that they had read and understood it.

Six years on a review of the policy is timely, especially given the current work on corporate governance, and the introduction of related policies and guidance, particularly the Confidential Reporting Policy and the guidance on declarations of personal interests by staff. This is not an area, however, where internal or external auditors have expressed concern about current arrangements.

It is certainly the case that the anti fraud and corruption policy is not as well known as it was in 2000, and the current review should be seen as an opportunity to increase levels of awareness of its existence and content.

Review of the Policy

My review of the policy has comprised:

- Updating to bring procedures in the policy into line with other Authority policies;
- Comparison of the policy with North Yorkshire County Council's equivalent;
- Consultation with Senior Management Team colleagues and with the Treasurer;
- Suggesting other changes which I believe to be appropriate.

Overall, the essential elements of the policy seem to me still to be appropriate, and I am suggesting only limited changes to it. These are as follows:

- Applying the policy to Members as well as to Officers;
- Being clear at the outset about the purposes of the policy, and responsibilities under it;
- Including reference to recruitment as an important element of fraud prevention;
- Including reference to the importance of keeping evidence secure;
- Changes to reporting lines, to bring this policy into line with the Confidential Reporting Policy;
- Delete the Annex to the policy, which now “looks its age”; and
- Including a list of relevant associated documents.

Attached to this report is the text of the existing policy, with proposed amendments indicated.

The Treasurer has been consulted on the proposed changes, and is of the opinion that the policy as revised will be fit for purpose. The point was made that “comprehensive performance assessment” for local authorities tends to require a more proactive approach of looking for fraud even if there are no overt reasons to suspect it, but for a smaller organisation such as YDNPA, this proposed policy is considered appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Authority be recommended to adopt the amended policy, and that steps then be taken to ensure that all staff are aware of it.

Richard Daly

31 August 2006