

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

16th June 2006

AUDIT COMMISSION: AUDIT PLAN  
YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY 2006/07

**Purpose of report**

To present the Audit Commission's annual Audit Plan (2006/07) for the Authority.

**Strategic Planning Framework**

The information contained in this report is consistent with the Authority's approved and adopted strategic planning framework:

- ***Corporate Plan***  
“ Advise on, and deliver, financial management support, ... for all departments of the NPA.”
- ***Existing policies and strategies***  
“NPAs' accounts are subject to external audit by an auditor appointed by the Audit Commission” (Financial Regulations, paragraph 17.1 (i))

**Audit and Inspection Plan**

A copy of the Plan is attached. A representative of the Audit Commission will attend the meeting to present the plan.

For Members' information, comparative data on External Audit charges for National Park Authorities is contained in the separate **Annex** to this covering report.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Members are asked to note the draft Plan, and approve its adoption.

RICHARD BURNETT  
HEAD OF FINANCE & RESOURCES

5<sup>th</sup> June 2006

Audit Plan

April 2006



# **Audit Plan**

**Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority**

**Audit 2006/2007**

External audit is an essential element in the process of accountability for public money and makes an important contribution to the stewardship of public resources and the corporate governance of public services.

Audit in the public sector is underpinned by three fundamental principles:

- auditors are appointed independently from the bodies being audited;
- the scope of auditors' work is extended to cover not only the audit of financial statements but also value for money and the conduct of public business; and
- auditors may report aspects of their work widely to the public and other key stakeholders.

The duties and powers of auditors appointed by the Audit Commission are set out in the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Local Government Act 1999 and the Commission's statutory Code of Audit Practice. Under the Code of Audit Practice, appointed auditors are also required to comply with the current professional standards issued by the independent Auditing Practices Board.

Appointed auditors act quite separately from the Commission and in meeting their statutory responsibilities are required to exercise their professional judgement independently of both the Commission and the audited body.

### **Status of our reports to the Authority**

The Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission explains the respective responsibilities of auditors and of the audited body. Reports prepared by appointed auditors are addressed to non-executive directors or officers. They are prepared for the sole use of the audited body. Auditors accept no responsibility to:

- any director or officer in their individual capacity; or
- any third party.

### **Copies of this report**

If you require further copies of this report, or a copy in large print, in Braille, on tape, or in a language other than English, please call 0845 056 0566.

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## Introduction

- 1 This plan sets out the audit work that we propose to undertake in 2006/07. The plan has been drawn up from our risk-based approach to audit planning and reflects:
  - our responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice;
  - your local risks and improvement priorities; and
  - current national risks relevant to your local circumstances.

## Our responsibilities

- 2 In carrying out our audit duties we have to comply with the statutory requirements governing them, and in particular:
  - the Audit Commission Act 1998;
  - the Code of Audit Practice (the Code);and
  - the Local Government Act 1999
- 3 The Code defines auditors' responsibilities in relation to:
  - the financial statements of audited bodies; and
  - audited bodies' arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in their use of resources. Auditors are now required to draw a positive conclusion regarding your arrangements for ensuring value for money in using resources. We will give the first such conclusion as part of the 2005/06 audit.

## The fee

- 4 For 2006/07 the Audit Commission has changed its fee scale structure and details are set out in the Commission's Work Programme and Fee scales 2006/07. Audit fees are based on a number of variables, including the type, size, location and complexity of the audited body and the national and local risks.
- 5 The total fee estimate for 2006/07 is £20,300 (2005/06: £29,115). This fee includes all work identified in this plan unless specifically excluded. Further details are provided in Appendix 1 which includes the assumptions made when determining the audit fee and the process for agreeing any additional fees.
- 6 In addition we estimate that we will charge approximately £1,500 for the certification of grant claims. The actual amount being dependent on the number and types of claim you ask us to certify. Further details are provided in paragraph 23 and in Appendix 1.
- 7 Changes to the plan and the fee may be necessary if our risk assessment changes during the course of the audit. This is particularly relevant to the work related to the opinion on the 2006/07 accounts since we have yet to audit the accounts for 2005/06. We will formally advise you of any changes if this is the case.

## Summary of key audit risks

- 8 This section summarises our assessment and the planned response to the key audit risks which may have an impact on our objectives to:
  - provide an opinion on your financial statements;
  - provide a conclusion on your use of resources; and
  - provide a report on your best value performance plan.
- 9 In assessing risk we have considered:
  - previous internal and external audit work;
  - the outcome of your National Park Authority Performance Assessment (NPAPA);
  - current national and local issues; and
  - your risk register and financial standing
- 10 Our planned work takes into account information from other regulators, where available. Where risks are identified that are not mitigated by information from other regulators, or your own risk management processes, including internal audit, we will perform work as appropriate to enable us to provide a conclusion on your arrangements.
- 11 The expected outputs from this work are outlined in Appendix 2.

## Value for money conclusion

- 12 We will focus our work so as to enable us to conclude whether you have put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness with regard to the use of resources.
- 13 The Audit Commission has developed relevant criteria for auditors to apply in reaching our value for money conclusion as required under the Code of Audit Practice. These criteria are listed in Appendix 3. Sources of assurance will include our cumulative knowledge and experience including the results of previous work and the work of other regulatory agencies (including internal audit).
- 14 From our initial risk based planning assessment, and assuming you deliver the improvement plan following your NPAPA and implement all the recommendations made in the course of our 2004/05 and 2005/06 audits, then we have not identified any further specific local areas of audit risk that we need to address.

## Best Value Performance Plan

- 15 We are required to report on whether or not you have complied with legislation and strategy guidance in respect of the preparation and publication of your best value performance plan (BVPP).

## Financial statements

- 16 We will carry out our audit of the 2006/07 financial statements and have regard to the International Standards on Auditing UK and Ireland (ISA UKIs).
- 17 We are also required to review whether the Statement on Internal Control has been presented in accordance with relevant requirements and to report if it does not meet these requirements or if it is misleading or inconsistent with our knowledge.
- 18 On the basis of our work to date we have identified the following audit risks.

**Table 1 Summary of opinion risks**

Opinion risks	Response
The Standard of Recommended Practice changes in the accounting requirements in respect of capital accounting, movement on reserves statements etc.	We will check to see whether or not the accounts comply with the new requirements.

- 19 Our fee estimate for 2006/07 is based on the assumption that the current standard of working papers will be maintained/improved and that Internal Audit will complete their planned work on key information systems to the agreed quality and by the agreed date and that the accounts will be prepared and fully supported by working papers again by the agreed date.
- 20 We have yet to undertake the audit of the 2005/06 financial statements and our 2006/07 planning work will continue as the year progresses and take account of:
- the 2005/06 opinion audit;
  - our documentation and initial testing of material systems;
  - our assessment of the closedown arrangements; and
  - and any changes in financial reporting requirements.
- 21 When we have finalised our risk assessment in respect of your financial statements, we will issue a separate plan in advance of the audit detailing our specific approach, including any impact on the fee quoted above.

## Whole of government accounts

- 22 The government is introducing Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) in order to produce consolidated accounts for the whole public sector. WGA will include the accounts of local authorities and WGA data returns will be required to be audited. The Audit Commission is currently discussing the scope of the likely audit work with stakeholders. The fee for this work is not included in this plan and we will discuss this with the Head of Finance and Resources when further details are available.

## Certification of claims and returns

23 We will continue to certify the your grant claims:

- claims for £50,000 or below will not be subject to certification.
- claims between £50,001 and £100,000 will be subject to a reduced, light touch, certification audit; and
- claims over £100,000 have an audit approach relevant to the auditor's assessment of the control environment and management preparation of claims. A robust control environment would lead to a reduced audit approach for these claims.

## Other information

### The team

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**Table 2**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Mark Kirkham	District Auditor and Relationship Manager
Rob Chambers	Audit Manager
Joe Molloy	Audit Team Leader

- 24 We are not aware of any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of the team, and which are required to be disclosed under auditing and ethical standards.
- 25 We comply with the ethical standards promulgated by the Auditing Practices Board and with the Commission's requirements in respect of independence and objectivity as set out at Appendix 4.

## Appendix 1 – Audit fee

**Table 3**

<b>Fee estimate</b>	<b>Plan 2006/07 (£)</b>	<b>Plan 2005/06 (£)</b>
Accounts	15,375	19,500
Use of resources	4,925	9,615
<b>Total audit fee</b>	<b>20,300</b>	<b>29,115</b>
Certification of claims and returns	1,500	500

- 26 The fee (plus VAT) will be charged in 12 equal instalments from April 2006 to March 2007.
- 27 The fee above includes all work contained in this plan except:
- any work required in relation to the Whole of Government Accounts
  - any work relating to issues raised by members of the public or any legal matters arising.
  - Any work required to address any new audit and inspection risks that may emerge.

### Assumptions

- 28 In setting the audit fee we have assumed:
- you will inform us of significant developments impacting on our audit;
  - Internal Audit meets the appropriate professional standards;
  - Internal Audit undertakes appropriate work on all material information systems that provide figures in the financial statements sufficient that we can place reliance for the purposes of our audit recognising the shift in requirements introduced by the International Standards on Auditing (ISA);
  - officers will provide good quality, accurate, working papers and records to support the financial statements by the agreed date;
  - officers will provide requested information within agreed timescales; and
  - officers will provide prompt responses to draft reports.
- 29 Where these requirements are not met, we will be required to undertake additional work which is likely to result in an increased audit fee.

- 30 Changes to the plan will be agreed with you. These may be required if:
- new risks emerge;
  - additional work is required of us by the Audit Commission or other regulators; and
  - there are any changes to financial reporting requirements, professional auditing standards or legislation which results in additional work.

## **Process for agreeing any changes in audit fees**

If we need to amend the audit or inspection fees during the course of this plan we will hold discussions with the Head of Finance and Resources.

## Appendix 2 – Planned outputs

Our reports will be discussed and agreed with the appropriate officers before being issued to the Performance Monitoring and Management Committee.

**Table 4**

Planned output	Start date	Draft due date	Key contact
Audit plan*	1 February 2006	31 March 2006	Relationship Manager
Auditor's Report to those charged with governance	August 2007	September 2007	District Auditor
Opinion on financial statements	TBA	30 September 2007	District Auditor
Vfm conclusion	TBA	TBA	Audit Manager
Final accounts memorandum	1 July 2007	October 2007	Audit Manager
Annual Letter	October 2007	16 December 2007	Relationship Manager

\* To be revisited during the year to reflect outcome of 2005/06 opinion audit and 2006/07 interim visit. Appendix 3 - Criteria to inform the auditor's conclusion on proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

### **Arrangements for establishing strategic and operational objectives and for determining policy and making decisions**

- 1 The body has put in place arrangements for setting, reviewing and implementing its strategic and operational objectives.

### **Arrangements for ensuring that services meet the needs of users and taxpayers, and for engaging with the wider community**

- 2 The body has put in place channels of communication with service users and other stakeholders including partners, and there are monitoring arrangements to ensure that key messages about services are taken into account.

**Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing performance, including arrangements to ensure data quality**

- 3 The body has put in place arrangements for monitoring and scrutiny of performance, to identify potential variances against strategic objectives, standards and targets, for taking action where necessary, and reporting to members.
- 4 The body has put in place arrangements to monitor the quality of its published performance information, and to report the results to members.

**Arrangements for ensuring compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations**

- 5 The body has put in place arrangements to maintain a sound system of internal control.

**Arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing operational and financial risks and opportunities, including those arising from involvement in partnerships and joint working**

- 6 The body has put in place arrangements to manage its significant business risks.

**Arrangements for managing its financial and other resources, including arrangements to safeguard the financial standing of the audited body and for ensuring compliance with the general duty of best value (where applicable)**

- 7 The body has put in place arrangements to manage and improve value for money.
- 8 The body has put in place a medium-term financial strategy, budgets and a capital programme that are soundly based and designed to deliver its strategic priorities.
- 9 The body has put in place arrangements to ensure that its spending matches its available resources.
- 10 The body has put in place arrangements for managing performance against budgets.
- 11 The body has put in place arrangements for the management of its asset base.

**Arrangements for ensuring that the audited body's affairs are managed in accordance with proper standards of conduct, and to prevent and detect fraud and corruption**

- 12 The body has put in place arrangements that are designed to promote and ensure probity and propriety in the conduct of its business.

## Appendix 3 - The Audit Commission's requirements in respect of independence and objectivity

- 1 Auditors appointed by the Audit Commission are subject to the Code of Audit Practice (the Code) which includes the requirement to comply with ISA UKIs when auditing the financial statements. Professional standards require auditors to communicate to those charged with governance, at least annually, all relationships that may bear on the firm's independence and the objectivity of the audit engagement partner and audit staff. Standards also place requirements on auditors in relation to integrity, objectivity and independence.
- 2 The ISA defines 'those charged with governance' as 'those persons entrusted with the supervision, control and direction of an entity'. In your case the appropriate addressee of communications from the auditor to those charged with governance is the Audit Committee. The auditor reserves the right, however, to communicate directly with the Authority on matters which are considered to be of sufficient importance.
- 3 Auditors are required by the Code to:
  - carry out their work with independence and objectivity;
  - exercise their professional judgement and act independently of both the Commission and the audited body;
  - maintain an objective attitude at all times and not act in any way that might give rise to, or be perceived to give rise to, a conflict of interest; and
  - resist any improper attempt to influence their judgement in the conduct of the audit.
- 4 In addition, the Code specifies that auditors should not carry out work for an audited body that does not relate directly to the discharge of the auditors' functions under the Code. If the Authority invites us to carry out risk-based work in a particular area, which cannot otherwise be justified to support our audit conclusions, it will be clearly differentiated as work carried out under s 35 of the Audit Commission Act 1998.
- 5 The Code also states that the Commission issues guidance under its powers to appoint auditors and to determine their terms of appointment. The Standing Guidance for Auditors includes several references to arrangements designed to support and reinforce the requirements relating to independence, which auditors must comply with. These are as follows:
  - any staff involved on Commission work who wish to engage in political activity should obtain prior approval from the Partner or Regional Director;
  - audit staff are expected not to accept appointments as lay school inspectors;

## 16 Audit Plan | Appendix 3 - The Audit Commission's requirements in respect of independence and objectivity

- firms are expected not to risk damaging working relationships by bidding for work within an audited body's area in direct competition with the body's own staff without having discussed and agreed a local protocol with the body concerned;
- auditors are expected to comply with the Commission's statements on firms not providing personal financial or tax advice to certain senior individuals at their audited bodies, auditors' conflicts of interest in relation to PFI procurement at audited bodies, and disposal of consultancy practices and auditors' independence;
- auditors appointed by the Commission should not accept engagements which involve commenting on the performance of other Commission auditors on Commission work without first consulting the Commission;
- auditors are expected to comply with the Commission's policy for both the District Auditor/Partner and the second in command (Senior Manager/Manager) to be changed on each audit at least once every five years with effect from 1 April 2003 (subject to agreed transitional arrangements);
- audit suppliers are required to obtain the Commission's written approval prior to changing any District Auditor or Audit Partner/Director in respect of each audited body; and
- the Commission must be notified of any change of second in command within one month of making the change. Where a new Partner/Director or second in command has not previously undertaken audits under the Audit Commission Act 1998 or has not previously worked for the audit supplier, the audit supplier is required to provide brief details of the individual's relevant qualifications, skills and experience.

**Audit Fees**

<b>National Park Authority</b>	<b>2005/06 £</b>	<b>2006/07 £</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>2006/07 National Park Grant £</b>	<b>Audit Fees as % of Grant</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Appointed Auditors</b>
Yorkshire Dales	29,115	21,800	-7315	-25%	5,022,659	0.43%	From Rob Chambers 21/03/06	Audit Commission (Northern Region)
North Yorkshire Moors	24,100	20,300	-3800	-16%	5,050,317	0.40%		Audit Commission (Northern Region)
Lake District	27,418	26,800	-618	-2%	6,440,510	0.42%		Audit Commission (Northern Region)
Peak District	16,714	18,025	1311	8%	7,723,177	0.23%		Audit Commission (Central Region)
Broads	16,000	16,400	400	3%	4,025,018	0.41%	2006/07 Estimate	Audit Commission (Central Region)
Dartmoor	15,404	18,800	3396	22%	4,409,116	0.43%		Audit Commission (Southern Region)
Northumberland	18,750	18,750	0	0%	3,079,171	0.61%	2006/07 Estimate	Deloitte
Exmoor	0	0	0	0%	3,700,466	0.00%	Awaiting Information	RSM Robson Rhodes
Brecon Beacons	29,221	27,460	-1761	-6%				Wales Audit Office
Pembrokeshire Coast	28,290	29,140	850	3%			2006/07 Estimate	Wales Audit Office
Snowdonia	41,210	42,240	1030	2%			2006/07 Estimate	Wales Audit Office
Cairngorms	10,100	10,100	0	0%			2005/06 Estimate	Audit Scotland

Note: Loch Lomond and New Forest - not contacted