**Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority** **Item 9**

**Audit and Review Committee**

**14 April 2026**

# Internal Audit – Complaints and Compliments

## Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with the outcome of the internal audit of complaints and compliments.

## Recommendation

2. That Members note the overall opinion of the internal audit of substantial assurance.

## Strategic Framework

3. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and support the strategic planning framework:

   - Corporate Plan Objective 32:
     Operate governance arrangements that are fit for purpose, as reported through the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Governance Report

## Background

4. The Authority successfully maintained the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard for 14 years. On 15 July 2025, this Committee agreed that the Authority should transition to an internal audit based approach to assessing customer service as an alternative to continuing in the CSE Standard.

5. The internal audit process is not intended to replicate the entirety of the CSE standard but aims to provide assurance in key areas related to customer service.

6. Given the pending review of the Complaints policy and the retirement of the Corporates Services Officer, it was felt that an internal audit of the customer complaints process would be useful to ensure that complaints and compliments are handled in line with Authority policy, that processes support the effective handling of complaints from the public, that good quality response to complaints are provided and to identify any areas for improvement.

## Outcome of Internal Audit

7. The internal audit report is attached at the **Appendix**. An overall opinion of substantial assurance has been provided by Veritau. This is a testament to the time and effort spent by officers managing and responding to complaints.

8. Some actions to improve the Authority's process were agreed and have been implemented. This includes the establishment of a dedicated Authority "complaints" e-mail address for receipt of complaints and the development of an internal guidance note for the complaints officer, which sets out the Authority's approach to the management of complaints.

## Financial Implications

9. None, the cost of the internal audit fell within the allocated budget.

## Legal Implications

10. None.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

11. None.

## Conclusion

12. The internal audit approach has reduced officer time and has been tailored to a specific area of customer service.

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