

# **Eryri National Park Authority**

## **Annual Governance Statement 2024-25**



This statement meets the requirement to produce a Statement of Internal Control  
pursuant to Regulation 5(4) of the  
Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014

[Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh](#)

## 1. Introduction

Eryri National Park Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

Eryri National Park Authority is subject to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Act places a duty on the Authority to set Well-being Objectives that directly contribute to achieving the 7 Well-being Goals as set out in the Act, namely:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

Furthermore, Eryri National Park Authority must meet its duties in accordance with a 'statutory sustainability principle', which means that the Authority must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

In discharging this overall responsibility, Eryri National Park Authority is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk and adequate and effective financial management.

Eryri National Park Authority has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/Solace Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. This statement on internal control explains how the Authority has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of regulation 5(2) of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 in relation to conducting a review of the effectiveness of the Authority's governance arrangements.

The Code of Corporate Governance was reviewed and updated, as part of a larger review of the Authority's governance arrangements in 2021/22. The new Code of Corporate Governance was formally adopted by the Authority in April 2022.

## 2. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Eryri National Park Authority's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

## 3. The Governance Framework

The Governance Framework comprises the seven principles of good governance:

- **Principle 1:** Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- **Principle 2:** Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- **Principle 3:** Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
- **Principle 4:** Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- **Principle 5:** Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
- **Principle 6:** Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- **Principle 7:** Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

Eryri National Park Authority develops and implements its strategic corporate planning through the adoption of:

- Cynllun Eryri (The National Park Management Plan);
- Eryri Local Development Plan;
- Well-being Statement and Well-being Objectives; and
- Corporate Work Programme.

These 4 documents represent the cornerstone for the Authority's work in fulfilling its primary purposes as defined in the Environment Act 1995 and in implementing its vision.

### Governance Structure

The Authority's governance structure comprises of 4 main committees:

- Eryri National Park Authority has 18 appointed Members and during 2024/25 had 6 scheduled meetings.
- The Performance and Resources Committee was held 4 times during 2024/25. As part of its remit it undertakes audit committee functions in accordance with CIPFA requirements.
- The Planning and Access Committee was held 8 times during 2024/25. This committee is responsible for carrying out the Authority's statutory planning functions.
- The Authority's Standards Committee was held twice during 2024/25. Membership of the committee, whose remit it is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members, comprises of 3 Authority Members and 3 independent members.

The Authority's Standing Orders (published on the website) gives a detailed account of the arrangements for each committee. For every committee, the agenda, minutes and associated reports and background papers are all published on the Authority's website.

### Management Team

The Authority's management structure includes the Chief Executive (who is also the 'National Park Officer' and the Head of Paid Service) and two Directors. The Authority's Management Team meet fortnightly, with the Head of Finance and the Head of Human Resources in attendance.

### Standards

The Authority has an established Code of Conduct for Members, which includes a section that specifically refers to interests and a Members' Register of Interest. The Code of Conduct for staff is the national standard code of conduct for public authority employees.

The Authority has adopted the following policies and procedures for maintaining high standards of conduct for both staff and Members, and to ensure accountability to the public:

- Complaints Procedure – based on the best practice model complaints procedure produced by the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales;

- Whistle Blowing Policy – to enable staff to raise serious concerns with the confidence in knowing that they will be thoroughly and fairly investigated, without fear of reprisals;
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy – contains measures designed to frustrate any attempted fraudulent or corrupt act, and the steps to be taken if such an act occurs; and a
- Scheme of Delegation – outlines how the full Authority's functions are carried out through delegation to its committees and sub-committees.

### Risk Management

A Risk Management Policy and Strategy is in place. The risk identification process is co-ordinated by the Head of Administration and Customer Care, with input from the Management Team and Heads of Service. The Risk Register and mitigation measures is reviewed and updated quarterly.

### Internal Audit

The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and governance arrangements is informed by the work of the Internal Auditors, undertaken by Cyngor Gwynedd. The Internal Audit service is provided in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the UK. The Internal Audit Manager prepares an annual report that summarises the results of internal audit work during the year.

### External Audit

Audit Wales act as the Authority's external auditor, and accordingly report on the Authority's financial management and performance. In addition, Audit Wales gives an opinion on the adequacy of internal audit work.

### Monitoring Officer

The Director of Corporate Services has been nominated as the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer has the specific duty to ensure that the Authority's Officers and appointed Members maintain the highest standard of conduct in all they do. The Monitoring Officer advises on constitutional procedure and the legality of the Authority's actions.

### Financial Management

The Authority's financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirement of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016). The Chief Finance Officer (who is Cyngor Gwynedd's Chief Finance Officer) is the officer responsible for the administration of financial affairs as required under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### 4. Significant Governance Issues and Actions Undertaken During the Year

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets a core duty on the Authority to set well-being objectives that maximise its contribution to achieving the 7 well-being goals set out in the Act. The Authority's well-being objectives should be objectives for change over the long term.

The Authority's Well-being Statement for 2021-26 sets out Well-being Objectives which describes how they will help the Authority achieve the seven wellbeing goals for Wales.

The Well-being Objectives concentrate on three key areas of work - Resilient Environments, Resilient Communities and Resilient Ways of Working - and have been aligned with five sub themes to provide focus, as set out below.

##### Resilient Environments

1. Improving recreation management and any negative effects of recreation.
2. Responding to the challenges of Climate Change.
3. Improving the management and understanding of Cultural Heritage.
4. Addressing the challenges and opportunities of post Brexit land management scenarios.
5. Addressing the decline in nature.

##### Resilient Communities

1. Maintaining and increasing the quality of life of residents.
2. Supporting young people.
3. Promoting sustainable tourism to add value to local communities.
4. Promoting and actively supporting the Welsh language.
5. Developing a local economy which supports both the designation and the management of Eryri as a National Park.

##### Resilient Ways of Working

1. Developing a skilled workforce.
2. Developing and promoting best practice.
3. Effective partnership working.
4. Modernising governance arrangements.
5. Maintaining and improve the understanding and support of local communities to the work of the National Park.

Any actions that the Authority takes in achieving the well-being objectives will need to be made in a sustainable way. Sustainable development involves five key requirements namely:

1. Long Term – the importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long term needs, especially where things done to meet short term needs may have detrimental long term effects.
2. Integration – how our well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, how the well-being objectives may impact upon each other or upon other public bodies' well-being objectives, in particular where steps

taken by us may contribute to meeting one objective but may be detrimental to meeting another.

3. Involvement – the importance of involving other persons with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and of ensuring those persons reflect the diversity of the population of Wales or the geographical area of the Authority.
4. Collaboration – acting in collaboration with any person (or how different parts of the Authority acting together) could assist the Authority to meet its well-being objectives, or assist another body to meet its objectives.
5. Prevention – to take account of how deploying resources to prevent problems occurring, or getting worse may contribute to meeting the Authority's well-being objectives, or another body's objectives.

The Corporate Work Programme for 2024/25 was presented for approval as a working document by the Members at the Authority Meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2024. The Programme sets out the projects, initiatives and specific actions that will fulfil the Authority's Well-being Objectives and Service Priorities.

Progress against the Programme has been reported to the Performance and Resources Committee on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 and on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2025.

## **5. Effectiveness of the Governance Framework**

Eryri National Park Authority has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal auditors and the senior managers within the Authority, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates. The review is based on the seven principles from the Code of Corporate Governance.

**Principle 1:** Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

<p><b>Code of Corporate Governance</b></p>	<p>Governance was scrutinised in depth during 2021/22 by a Task and Finish Group of Officers and Members which was established especially for this purpose.</p> <p>The Code of Corporate Governance was reviewed in depth and redrafted by the Group, to ensure that it remains a cornerstone of effective governance for the future.</p> <p>The revised Code of Governance was formally adopted by the Authority in its meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2022.</p>
<p><b>Standards Committee</b></p>	<p>The Standards Committee met twice during the year.</p> <p>The first meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2024, considered and agreed the statutory annual report to be presented to the Authority AGM, on how the committee's functions have been discharged, which included an overview of conduct matters generally within the Authority.</p> <p>The meeting also considered a report by Internal Audit on support provided to the Authority's Members. The Committee welcomed the report conclusion that there was a high level of certainty that the internal mechanisms in place provided sufficient support to Members. However, concerns were raised at the low level of participation by Members to the Internal Audit's questionnaire. It was agreed that the lack of engagement should be referred to in the Annual Report.</p> <p>The agenda also included a report from the Monitoring Officer regarding the monitoring that had taken place on the operation of the code of conduct and specifically Declarations of Members' Interests.</p> <p>The second meeting of Standards Committee which was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2024, considered the Committee's usual business, which included the nomination of Members for the Single Status Grading Appeals Panel, Grant of Dispensations and the consideration of the Authority's Annual Complaints Monitoring Report as well as the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales Annual Report.</p> <p>On the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2024, the Chair of the Standards Committee's term came to an end. Approval for the recruitment process for a new independent member for a 5 year term and the establishment of an interview panel, was</p>



	agreed at the Authority meeting on the 13 <sup>th</sup> of November 2024. The recommendation for the appointment of a new independent Member will be presented to the Authority on the 30 <sup>th</sup> of April 2025 for approval.
<b>Whistle Blowing Policy</b>	During 2024/25, no reports or concerns were raised in relation to any Member or Officer of the Authority under the Whistle Blowing Policy.
<b>Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy</b>	During 2024/25, no complaints of alleged fraud or corruption were made regarding any Member or Officer of the Authority, and Internal Auditors did not identify any areas of concern through their auditing work.
<b>Model Code of Conduct</b>	During 2024/25, no amendments or revisions were made to the Model Code of Conduct.
<b>Complaints – Officers</b>	<p>During 2024/25, the Authority received a total of 16 formal complaints.</p> <p>None of these complaints were later referred to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales for investigation.</p> <p>The Authority was therefore not subject to a formal investigation of alleged maladministration by the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales during 2024/25.</p>
<b>Complaints - Members</b>	During 2024/25, the Authority's Monitoring Officer did not receive any formal complaints relating to the Members, and no complaints were submitted directly to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.
<b>Standing Orders</b>	<p>The Authority's Standing Orders were reviewed as part of the remit of the Reviewing Governance Task and Finish Group during 2021/22.</p> <p>The review concluded that the Authority continues with its current committee structure but that the Authority should in future consider an amendment giving the Performance and Resources committee the right to make final decisions on financial and other reports (unless Authority approval is specifically required).</p>

<b>Standing Orders relating to Contracts</b>	<p>A new revised version of the Standing Orders relating to Contracts came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2025.</p> <p>The revision incorporates slight changes to threshold limits which now incorporates VAT, and ensures compliance with the Procurement Act 2023.</p> <p>Side by side with the revision to the Standing Orders, the Authority registered on the new Central Digital Platform (CDP) to ensure readiness for the new regime. The CDP is where all UK authorities are required to publish information relating to procurement.</p>
<b>Scheme of Delegation</b>	<p>The Scheme of Delegation was reviewed as part of the remit of the Reviewing Governance Task and Finish Group during 2021/22.</p> <p>The Group concluded that the current Officer Scheme of Delegation continued to be fit for purpose, and therefore no recommendation for changes were given.</p>
<b>Members' Register of Interests</b>	<p>The Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 places a requirement on the Authority to publish the current Members' Register of Interests on the Authority's website.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of each Authority Member to keep their record of personal interests up to date and to report on any changes in a timely manner. Nonetheless, the Democratic Services Officer sends each Member a copy of their current record after each AGM of the Authority, and requests that they be reviewed and updated if required.</p>

**Principle 2:** Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

<b>Strategic Equality Plan</b>	<p>The Annual Report on the Strategic Equality Plan was presented to the Performance and Resources Committee on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2024.</p> <p>This was the final progress report on the action plan within the Authority's Strategic Equality Plan for 2020 – 24. Progress was reported on the work undertaken and how this contributed towards reaching the Equality Objectives, along with the Equality Impact Assessments undertaken during the year, equal pay monitoring data and staff equality data.</p> <p>A new Strategic Equality Plan for the period 2024 – 28 was approved by the Performance and Resources Committee on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2024.</p> <p>The Annual Report on the first year of implementing the action plan within the new Strategic Equality Plan for the period 2024 – 28 will be reported to the Performance and Resources Committee in November 2025.</p>
<b>Direct Consultation</b>	<p>During 2024/25 the Authority continued to engage with local communities and stakeholders through a range of means, from traditional written consultations and online questionnaires to webinars, online meetings as well as face-to-face meetings, workshops and consultation surgeries.</p> <p>Consultation is inbuilt into the wide range of workflows and projects we undertake as an Authority, be that through a formal statutory process, informally with communities and stakeholders or jointly with other public bodies. As a small Authority, it is important that we involve communities and stakeholders and consider their views from the outset, if we are to be successful with our projects.</p> <p>During the year, the largest consultation took place around the proposed introduction of the Article 4 Direction. The consultation and public engagement went beyond the statutory requirement, with every household within the National Park receiving a letter to inform them of the proposal. The public consultation attracted 357 written responses, and it's fair to say that opinions were divided within the communities of Eryri as to the potential effects that the introduction of the Article 4 Direction would have. With any new and innovative proposal which cannot draw upon exact historical precedents, this is to be expected. The Authority provided a comprehensive response to all concerns raised during the consultation; and provided data and</p>

	<p>information where available to assist the assessment of the various predicted implications. After analysing all the information and available evidence, a decision to proceed with the Article 4 Direction was taken, which came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2025.</p> <p>In addition, the trial Community Forum to try out a different approach to consult with Community and Town Councils was successful. The forum will now be used as part of the wider consultation process of reviewing the Eryri Local Development Plan and Cynllun Eryri over the next few years.</p> <p>Another significant public consultation undertaken this year surrounded the future of Plas Tan y Bwlch. The initial decision to put the site up for sale attracted significant media attention and a strong public reaction. To address concerns, the Authority held an all-day drop-in session for the public on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2024. The session was well attended by 180 members of the public, which gave them an opportunity to express their views on the future of Plas Tan y Bwlch and the surrounding woodlands, including Llyn Mair.</p> <p>As the situation with Plas Tan y Bwlch has moved on, a recent second drop-in session was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2025 to update the public on recent developments, which was attended by 70 people. It is the Authority's intention to continue with these sessions as and when required, as the situation develops.</p>
<b>Communication and Engagement Strategy</b>	<p>Communication and engagement is an essential element in everything the Authority does. It is also something that can always be improved upon, and the Authority's Strategy reflects this.</p> <p>Fast paced technological advancements and the continuing growth in social media platforms and participation levels, means that the Authority needs to be fully focused on engaging effectively through the correct channels at the correct time with a wide range of audiences.</p> <p>The annual report which included performance indicator results was presented to the Performance and Resources Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2024.</p> <p>At the Authority's meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2024, a review of the decision to use Eryri and Yr Wyddfa only in the Authority's communications was presented to the Members, following 2 years of implementation.</p>

	<p>The positive outcomes as well as challenges and areas for improvement were reported upon. The review concluded that people's sentiment towards using the Welsh words was changing which included the media in England.</p> <p>In the same meeting, approval was also given to changing the Authority's logo as a last step to incorporating the Welsh names in all communications and branding. This decision attracted the largest engagement with the public and media during the year. Interactions in the media and on social media, whether positive or negative, contributed to raising widespread awareness of the Welsh names.</p>
<b>Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations Requests</b>	<p>The Authority has adopted the Information Commissioner's Model Publication Scheme and has published a guide to information, both of which are available on the website.</p> <p>During 2024, 42 requests were received of which 23 received all the information requested (55%). Of the other 19 requests, 10 were refused or partially refused as the information requested did not exist or the authority did not hold the information, 3 requests contained commercially sensitive information, 2 requests contained third party personal data, 1 request was for information classed as legal professional privilege, 1 request was for incomplete data which had the potential to mislead the public, 1 request was partially refused as the information would have identified members of the public who reported possible breaches of planning control, and 1 request was for information already available to the public.</p> <p>Of the 42 requests, all were answered within the 20 working day time limit.</p> <p>No complaints were submitted during the year to the Information Commissioner with regard to any information request.</p>
<b>Committee Agendas and Associated Reports</b>	<p>The Authority's Committee agendas and associated reports are published on the website at least 3 clear working days before each meeting, to satisfy the statutory time limit.</p> <p>An archive of past Committee meetings agendas and associated papers is also available on the website for the last 3 years, and older agendas are available on request. Minute Books are also published annually on the website.</p>

**Principle 3:** Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

<b>Cynllun Yr Wyddfa Partnership Plan</b>	<p>The process of reviewing Cynllun Yr Wyddfa is drawing to a close with a public consultation over a period of three weeks online, and a draft of the Plan programmed for the beginning of June 2025.</p> <p>The consultation follows a process of co-designing the action plan with partners and stakeholders. There was a series of design workshops with partners and stakeholders that looked at the challenges and opportunities, with a specific workshop to write the action plan for the next five years.</p> <p>The Plan will act as a strategic document that will include a new promise to the mountain, the Partnership's aspirations in terms of a sustainable future for the mountain, and the action plan that includes specific projects, and which partner organisation will lead on the different elements.</p> <p>The action plan is divided into seven themes namely: Yr Wyddfa Ecosystem, Cultural Heritage, Communities, Outdoor Activities, Infrastructure, Economy, and Communication - with each theme clearly defined within the Plan.</p> <p>Over the next few months we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• work with primary and secondary schools in the Wyddfa area for consultation on the plan and gathering their views about the mountain,</li><li>• hold drop-in sessions to consult with the communities on the action plan, and</li><li>• conducts an online public consultation, on a draft of the Plan as a whole.</li></ul> <p>It is intended to launch the Plan in its new form in July, with the implementation of the action plan to begin immediately afterwards.</p>

<p><b>Cynllun Eryri</b> (Eryri National Park Partnership Plan)</p>	<p>Cynllun Eryri was adopted by the National Park Authority as its statutory (Partnership) Management Plan in October 2020 and officially launched in November 2020. It contains a 5-year action plan which comes to an end in 2025. This means that this year will see a final report on the current action plan and a review of the policies, objectives and actions – with a draft action plan being produced and adopted by the Authority in 2026.</p> <p>The final report on the 2020/25 action plan is currently being written.</p> <p>As a statutory part of the Management Plan review – a State of the Park Report has been produced and published in the form of a micro-site, which is accessed from the Authority's website. This process has identified 5 priorities for the National Park Authority to focus on for the future.</p> <p>A series of Symposia will be held from June – November 2025 to discuss and scrutinise further the identified priorities and begin the process of creating an Action Plan for Cynllun Eryri 2026-2031.</p>
<p><b>Eryri Local Development Plan 2016-2031</b></p>	<p>The revised Eryri Local Development Plan 2016-2031 (LDP) was adopted on the 6th of February 2019.</p> <p>The Annual Monitoring Report for 2023-24 was approved by the Planning and Access Committee on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2024, and subsequently presented to the Welsh Government.</p> <p>Some of the main findings of the report include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been no significant developments permitted which undermine the statutory purposes of the National Park;</li> <li>• The Eryri LDP policies have been effective in determining land use planning applications and in defending appeals;</li> <li>• Housing permissions and completions have been below the average annual housing requirement target for several years in a row, although an increase was seen receiving planning permission (45) in the fifth monitoring year;</li> <li>• The number of dwellings that have been completed annually have been consistently below the Annual Anticipated Housing requirement of 51 dwellings per annum since 2016-17. There is a shortfall of -41% for cumulative required build rate from the start of the plan period;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the 45 new residential properties granted planning permission during 2023-24, 20 of these were affordable housing units; and</li> <li>• During the year, 21 applications were approved to improve community facilities.</li> </ul> <p>A revised Delivery Agreement was presented to the Planning and Access Committee on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2025, outlining key stages of the full review of the Eryri LDP. The Delivery Agreement was approved for stakeholder consultation.</p>
<b>Article 4 Direction</b>	<p>At the Authority's Planning and Access Committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2024, Members approved engagement on the proposed introduction of an Article 4 Direction for the Eryri National Park Planning Authority area to remove certain permitted development rights to enable control of the use of homes within Eryri.</p> <p>A notice regarding the Article 4 Direction was served on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2024. A 6 week public engagement period commenced on that day and ran until the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2024. A total of 357 responses were received during the public engagement period.</p> <p>On the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2024, the Authority's Members Working Group discussed and considered in detail comments received during the public engagement period and the Authority's response to the comments, which were collated into a comprehensive Consultation Report.</p> <p>The Authority's Planning and Access Committee then formally considered the comments in its meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2025 and moved to formally confirm the Article 4 Direction which will come into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2025. Accordingly, a formal notice was issued in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended).</p> <p>At the same meeting, Members approved the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance: 'Change of Use of Main Home, Second Home and Short Term holiday accommodation' for public consultation. The outcome from the 6 week consultation period along with a final version of the Supplementary Planning Guidance will be presented for approval to the Planning and Access Committee prior to the Article 4 Direction implementation date.</p>



<p><b>Strategic Plan for a Sustainable Visitor Economy</b></p>	<p>Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan for a Sustainable Visitor Economy in Gwynedd and Eryri (2035) by the National Park Authority on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2023, officers from the NPA and Cyngor Gwynedd have been formalising operating structures. Conwy Council have now committed to taking the Memorandum of Understanding through their democratic processes and rural Conwy will become official members of the Plan by May 2025.</p> <p>The first annual Action Plan is in the process of being completed and reported upon. The next meeting of the Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Partnership is on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 and will begin to draft the second annual Action Plan.</p> <p>As part of the original Memorandum of Understanding, the very first Gwynedd &amp; Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Conference was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2025 at Neuadd Reichel, Bangor University and marked a significant milestone in the region's journey towards sustainable tourism. The event brought together industry experts, local businesses and community leaders to explore innovative approaches for developing a thriving, sustainable visitor economy. The conference featured in-depth presentations that focused on sharing best practices for responsible tourism. 130 attendees had the opportunity to engage with leading industry experts, including Prof. Terry Stevens, renowned for his work on sustainable tourism, as well as representatives from Adventure Smart, Eco-Amgueddfa Llŷn, Croeso Cymru and Plas Coch, Llanberis. The final panel discussion chaired by Bethan Price provided insights from professionals from Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, Bangor University, and Cymunedoli.</p> <p>There is furthermore a Strategic Board which meets twice a year and a Partnership Delivery Group as well as Task and Finish Groups which lead on specific projects.</p>

<p><b>Corporate Work Programme</b></p>	<p>As the Authority now has an adopted Well-being Statement which includes its Well-being Objectives for a five-year period from 2021-26; there will therefore be no need for an annual review.</p> <p>The agreed actions in the Corporate Work Programme will now be sufficient to enable the Authority to assess its progress in attaining the Well-being Objectives and there will accordingly be no need for a separate report on Performance Indicators. The final report on the Corporate Work Programme for 2023/24 was considered by the Authority on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2024.</p> <p>The Corporate work Programme for 2024/25 was formally adopted by the Authority on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2024.</p> <p>Members were provided with updates on the progress made in meeting the Well-being Objectives, outlined in the Corporate Work Programme for 2024/25.</p> <p>Progress on the first two quarters of the financial year was reported to the Performance and Resources Committee on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2024. The third and (where available) fourth quarter progress report was reported to the same committee on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2025. A final report is expected to be presented to the Performance and Resources Committee in its meeting in July 2025.</p>
<p><b>Eryri Low Carbon Strategy 2024-29</b></p>	<p>At the Authority meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2024, the Eryri Low Carbon Strategy for the period 2024 – 29 was adopted by Members.</p> <p>Whilst the Authority already undertakes several projects which significantly contribute to the goal of reducing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions, this is the first time the Authority has had a specific strategy to guide the work.</p> <p>The strategy will focus on the following key areas: the Corporate Plan, Cynllun Eryri, and the Eryri Local Development Plan. To co-ordinate and implement the strategy effectively, the Authority created a Carbon Officer post.</p>

**Principle 4:** Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

<b>Budget Strategy 2024-25</b>	<p>The Revenue and Capital Outturn Report for 2023/24 was reported to the Performance and Resources Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2024, which noted the final position of Directorates and Services with regard to budgetary control.</p> <p>The Authority's revenue and capital budget for 2024/25 was confirmed in the Chief Finance Officer's report to the Authority on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2024. The report also confirmed the levy on constituent authorities.</p> <p>An update on the Budget was presented to the Authority on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2024 and on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 as well as to the Performance and Resources Committee on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2025.</p> <p>The March report outlined the projected year-end revenue and capital position, which estimated a £500k deficit which will be funded from the financial challenge reserve. An oral update to the report was given at the meeting confirming that an additional grant of £1.1 m had since been received by Welsh Government.</p> <p>The report confirmed that the situation in terms of net spending on services was on target to keep within budget for the year, however inflationary pressures continued to be challenging.</p> <p>Expenditure remains higher on elements affected by inflation, particularly on energy, however confirmation was received that the budget for 2024/25 was sufficient. Bank interest rates remain high due to a slower reduction in inflation than expected, which has led to significant income from bank interest for the Authority, with £300k received to the end of January against a budget target of £100k.</p>
<b>Base Revenue Budget for 2025/26</b>	<p>The Base Revenue Budget for 2025/26 which was presented to the Authority at the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 meeting, confirmed that the budget figures were based on a flat settlement to reflect Welsh Government statement that there will be no increase in indicative settlements of core grant funding for future years.</p>

	<p>However, the report outlining the Authority's Budget and Levy on Constituent Authorities for 2025/26 by the Chief Finance Officer at the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2025 Authority meeting, confirmed that a draft settlement was received in December 2024 in which an increase of around 5% was announced to the Authority's core funding. In actual terms this is an increase of £206k in the core funding, which will also result in an increase of £68k in the levies raised on the constituent authorities.</p> <p>The news was welcomed, however the Chief Finance Officer noted that the Authority continues to face an extremely challenging financial situation and starts the 2025/26 financial year with a deficit in the baseline of £635,850.</p>
<p><b>Mid Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28</b></p>	<p>The Chief Executive presented an overview of the Authority's financial challenges for the next 2 financial years (2025 – 2027) at a Members' Working Group meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2024.</p> <p>The report outlined the anticipated inflationary pressures (based on Bank of England assumptions) on the Authority over the next 3 financial years to be £903,000.</p> <p>Wage inflation was also identified as an unknown. It may reduce the challenge or increase the financial pressure on the Authority, which needs to be assessed as and when such is known. The Chief Executive concluded that no significant adjustments (except for Plas Tan Y Bwlch) need to be considered in this financial year, but preparatory work needs to be undertaken for future consideration.</p> <p>Following this, the Medium Term Financial Plan was formally considered by Members at the Authority meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2024.</p> <p>Some of the steps considered within the report to address the financial challenge included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disposing of Plas Tan y Bwlch which creates a £240k saving in the baseline budget;</li> <li>• Increase income generation in the Information Centres;</li> <li>• Increase car parking fees; and</li> <li>• Consider cuts to certain budget lines in order to create savings.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed to adopt the MTFP as a working document, and to review and update it as relevant information</p>

	<p>becomes available. In addition, it was agreed to work closely with Welsh Government Ministers and Officials to develop a commitment on indicative future budgets and to try and ensure provision towards inflationary costs, to ensure that the Authority achieves its statutory duties.</p>
<b>Performance Management</b>	<p>The mechanism for reviewing performance in relation to the Authority's Well-being Statement and the Corporate Work Programme was set out formally in 2021/22.</p> <p>The Performance and Resources Committee will scrutinise performance on the actions contained in the Corporate Work Programme which gives an insight into progress on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>The Annual Report for 2023/24 which was approved for adoption and publication by the Authority in its meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2024, reported on Year 3 progress in achieving the Authority's Well-being Objectives.</p>

**Principle 5:** Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

<b>Members' Role Descriptions</b>	<p>Revised role descriptions for Members and for the Chair and Vice Chair were adopted by the Authority on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2022.</p> <p>Changes were made to strengthen the emphasis of the role of members in setting a strategic direction and ambition for the Authority, providing an overarching introduction including the purpose of National Parks and the role of the Authority in delivering on these purposes, and strengthening the section on personal and role development.</p>
<b>Members' Attendance</b>	<p>From the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2024, all the Authority's committees and meetings have been held at the Head Office in Penrhyndeudraeth, taking full advantage of the new technological investment for conducting hybrid meetings which has embedded well.</p> <p>Members of the public can observe the committees in person or can view a live webcast, with the current exception of the Performance and Resources Committee. Recordings of committees can also be accessed at a later date through the Authority's YouTube channel.</p>

	<p>Members' attendance at meetings during 2024/25 was 85%, compared to 85% and 81% in the two preceding years of 2023/24 and 2022/23.</p>
<b>Member Training</b>	<p>In 2024/25, member attendance at training events was 48% (53.5% in 2023/24).</p> <p>In addition to the Authority's Member training programme, this year Welsh Government provided funding for Members training sessions on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Effective Financial Governance;</li> <li>➤ Risk Governance; and</li> <li>➤ Sustainable Governance.</li> </ul> <p>Course materials have been made available on the Landscapes Wales website, which allows Members who were unable to attend to access the information.</p>
<b>Staff Performance Appraisals and Training</b>	<p>Learning and development needs are identified in annual performance appraisal reviews, which outlines training priorities for the year ahead.</p> <p>Staff appraisal rates remain low, with only 35% of staff having received appraisals during 2024/25.</p> <p>Further focus will continue to be applied to ensure that as many staff as possible are annually appraised.</p>
<b>Human Resources Strategy</b>	<p>During 2024/25 the average staff sickness absence was 8.9 days compared to 9.1 days in 2023/24.</p> <p>Analysis of available data has shown that there has been a significant increase in absences due to mental health, stress at work, stress, low mood and depression.</p> <p>This increase has promoted the Authority to take the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer staff absent from work due to stress the opportunity of a referral to Occupational Health;</li> <li>• The HR department to support managers in developing Wellness Action Plans, for staff returning to work after a period of absence due to stress;</li> <li>• The implementation of stress risk assessments across the Authority; and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the accuracy of recording reasons for absence to identify trends and provide data for further analysis.</li> </ul> <p>As part of the above work a Stress Indicator Tool online survey was rolled out to staff. The survey gathers data anonymously from employees, and will score the performance on workplace aspects related to stress.</p> <p>In addition, all Authority staff and Members have access to the 360 Wellbeing app, which offers amongst other things 24 hour access to GP services, 24 hour mental health helpline and counselling sessions.</p> <p>During the year, several new or revised policies were introduced, including Flexible Working, Domestic Abuse Policy, Learning and Development Policy, Smoking Policy, and a Policy on Reasonable Adjustments.</p>
<b>Management Team Capacity</b>	<p>Following the retirement of the Chief Executive, a new appointment for the role was confirmed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2024, which was an internal appointment.</p> <p>On the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 a report by the new Chief Executive was presented to the Authority to recommend a new structure for the Management Team.</p> <p>The report's main issue of resilience had previously been raised by the Authority as a risk to the operation of the Authority. Therefore, this was considered an opportune time to address this, thereby mitigating a corporate risk. Whilst acknowledging that increasing the capacity of the Management Team had significant financial implications, the Authority nonetheless considered on balance that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages.</p> <p>The Authority therefore resolved to support the increase in Management Team Members from 3 to 4, which will be structured as follows: Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and 2 Directors. The administrative support will remain as existing.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive role would be subject to review between the CEO and Chair of the Authority within 6 months.</p>

**Principle 6:** Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

<b>Financial Statements</b>	<p>The Final Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 were formally presented and approved, along with the ISA 260 Report at the Authority meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2024. The Chair and Chief Finance Officer were authorised to sign the Final Letter of Representation by the Appointed Auditor from Audit Wales in accordance with The Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.</p> <p>In the Audit Wales report it was noted that the number of amendments and initial omissions were more numerous than would generally be expected. Detailed background on the delays experienced during the revaluation of the assets was also reported.</p> <p>At the Performance and Resources Committee on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2024, Audit Wales presented their Audit Plan which sets out the plan for the 2022/23 audit of accounts and the 2023 and 2024 performance audit work programme.</p> <p>The Plan set out a timeline of January 2024 for completion of the audit and formal opinion of the 2022/23 financial statements. This timetable was not achieved and the Final Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 along with ISA 260 report were presented to the Authority on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2025 instead.</p> <p>Audit Wales confirmed that yet again a number of amendments were required, and due to this more time was required by Audit Wales to audit the accounts which would result in an increased fee to the Authority. However, an unqualified opinion was given on the final accounts once corrections had been made.</p> <p>The Chair and Chief Finance Officer were authorised to sign the Final Letter of Representation by the Appointed Auditor from Audit Wales in accordance with The Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.</p>



<b>Risk Management</b>	<p>The Risk Register is reviewed and updated quarterly by the Heads of Service and Management Team.</p> <p>Identified risks as noted in the Risk Register are allocated as a responsibility to named officers and target dates are set for mitigation. The Risk Register is reviewed by Members at each Performance and Resources Committee and any removal of risks from the Register is ratified annually at an Authority meeting.</p>
<b>External Audit</b>	<p>At the start of 2023, Audit Wales commenced a review on governance within National Park Authorities in Wales, which included effective scrutiny, partnerships, supporting recovery and resilience, the appointment of members and maximising their contribution through balancing national and local issues. The report was formally presented to Members and Officers at the Authority AGM on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2024.</p> <p>The organisational response was later presented to Members for discussion at the Performance and Resources Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2024. Audit Wales staff were present to provide Members with a follow-up to the responses received to their four recommendations.</p> <p>Full details of the findings and recommendations are set out under Section 6 (Significant Governance Issues) in this Statement.</p> <p>In the summer of 2023 Audit Wales issued a brief on their proposed forthcoming audit on 'Promoting Equality and Diversity of Access', and Officers duly submitted the evidence requested. A draft report was received on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2025 to which the Authority provided follow up questions on some of the findings. A joint meeting to discuss these issues took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2025. The final report including recommendations is yet to be received.</p>
<b>Internal Audit</b>	<p>The Internal Audit Manager reports on the previous financial year's work to the Performance and Resources Committee. However, the annual report for 2023/24 was not presented at any time during the year.</p>

	<p>Internal Audit have confirmed that they will report on work undertaken during 2023/24 and 2024/25 in a combined two year report at the Performance and Resources Committee in July 2025.</p>
<b>Health and Safety</b>	<p>Following a review of the management of Health and Safety within the Authority during February 2023, and to meet compliance with Regulation 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, the appointment of an inhouse Health and Safety Officer was made in January 2024.</p> <p>A Health and Safety Report was presented to the Performance and Resources Committee on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 by the new Officer. The report identified several gaps in the Health and Safety Management System, notably the review process of policies and procedures, risk assessments and training needs assessments. Those issues are now being addressed.</p> <p>During 2023/24, 43 members of staff attended training courses in relation to health and safety. A further 160 health and safety courses have been completed by staff through the ELMS e-learning platform for National Parks.</p> <p>Within the same reporting period, 18 incidents were reported, none of which were reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).</p>
<b>Information Centres</b>	<p>The Authority has 3 Information Centres in Betws y Coed, Beddgelert and Aberdyfi, which are managed by the Sustainable Tourism Manager, whose main objective is to ensure that the Centres are commercially viable / self-financing.</p> <p>The Information Centres Annual Report was presented to the Performance and Resources Committee on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2024. The report provided an overview of the 2024/25 year to date and concluded that the Centres would end the financial year within their set operating budget.</p> <p>The main issues of note was the increased turnover seen in all 3 Centres, that the number of visitors had remained stable in Aberdyfi and Betws y Coed but had decreased slightly in Beddgelert. Full staffing levels have been in</p>

	<p>place at all Centres for the full season and no days were lost due to insufficient cover.</p> <p>The report confirmed that increasing income and reducing the running costs of the Centres will be a priority in 2025 and all commercial opportunities will be explored.</p>
<b>Borrowing and Investment Strategies / Treasury Management</b>	<p>The Annual Report providing the actual Treasury Management (borrowing and investment) of the Authority during 2023/24, was not presented to the Authority during the year.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer presented the Capital Strategy for 2025/26 at the Authority meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2025.</p> <p>The report gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of National Park services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.</p> <p>The report confirms that the Authority commences 2025/26 debt free. Capital expenditure planned for the year amounts to £1.44M of which £1.24M is financed by external sources and £196K is financed by the Authority's own resources. There is no expectation that the Authority will need to finance any capital works through borrowing.</p> <p>Members approved no change in the authorised borrowing limit and the operational boundary, and approved both the Capital Borrowing Strategy and Investment Strategy for 2025/26, and noted the content with regard to the Prudential Code.</p>
<b>Plas Tan y Bwlch Study Centre</b>	<p>In his report to the Authority on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2024, the previous Chief Executive reported that the Plas Tan y Bwlch Board had come to the conclusion that a viable business linked to delivery of the Authority's statutory purposes could not be developed within the current resources available.</p> <p>It was resolved at the meeting to pursue a two-way path of gauging what interest there in the Property on the Open Market and in addition, to continue discussions with potential partners to run the site.</p>

	<p>A report by the Interim Chief Executive to the Authority on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2024 reported on progress thus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite numerous enquiries and interest shown in the site, only one definite offer to purchase had been received;</li> <li>• A community company, Cymunedoli Cyf., had commissioned a feasibility study on the possibility of transferring the asset into their ownership; and</li> <li>• Due to recent increased press coverage, concerns had been raised by the public, primarily over losing access to the woodland and Llyn Mair.</li> </ul> <p>It was resolved to postpone a decision relating to the offer to enable discussions to continue with other interested parties and with Cymunedoli Cyf., and to investigate options to protect access to the woodlands and Llyn Mair.</p> <p>A further comprehensive update report was presented to the Authority on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2024. After careful consideration and discussions by Members, it was resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To formally rescind the Authority's decision relating to Plas Tan y Bwlch dated 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024;</li> <li>• To defer a decision on the future of Plas Tan y Bwlch to the Authority meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025;</li> <li>• To continue communications and negotiations with those parties that have shown an interest to date with a view to gaining a better understanding of their interest and ability to purchase;</li> <li>• To utilise this time to undertake an assessment of any potential buyer's ability to fund necessary repairs and improvements to Plas Tan y Bwlch and what plans they have for the property. This assessment to include an assessment of the means of Cymunedoli Cyf. and any other Community Company to proceed with their plans and the likely timeframe involved;</li> <li>• In the meantime, that Plas Tan y Bwlch be formally withdrawn from the market; and</li> <li>• To consider and reach a decision on the preferred option for ensuring public access to the woodlands and Llyn Mair for formal decision by the Authority at its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025.</li> </ul>
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	<p>Following a detailed discussion at the Members' Working Group on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2025, in which the new Chief Executive presented a new option for the future of Plas Tan y Bwlch; Officers were asked to explore the retention of Plas Tan y Bwlch subject to securing a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant. The option was also discussed with the community in a drop-in session on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2025.</p> <p>A further report by the new Chief Executive to the Authority on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2025 gave more detail on this option and a proposed timetable to consider. The following recommendation was formally approved by Members at the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers to pursue the retention of Plas Tan Y Bwlch subject to securing a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant, with a view to relocating offices from Penrhyndeudraeth to Plas, including a wider mix of uses for the property;</li> <li>• Officers to pursue this with a National Lottery Grant application this Summer;</li> <li>• Officers to emphasise the importance of expectation management throughout this process, noting that Plas would revert to be sold should the grant application fail;</li> <li>• Should the grant funding approach prove unsuccessful, that the Authority should retain control of the woodlands and Llyn Mair, whatever decision is made on Plas Tan y Bwlch;</li> <li>• Officers to continue to closely monitor the Authority's financial situation throughout this process, including presenting measures to reduce the current budget deficit during the course of this financial year; and</li> <li>• That the Authority further considers this matter and any progress made at the Authority's September 2025 meeting.</li> </ul> <p>The Authority's Risk Register continues to be reviewed and updated throughout this process, to reflect the most up to date situation with regard to mitigation of risks. Further detail can be found under Section 6, Significant Governance Issues, of this report.</p>

<b>Yr Ysgwrn</b>	<p>Yr Ysgwrn's Annual Report for 2023/24 was presented to the Authority on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2024.</p> <p>The report noted that 2 successful projects had been undertaken during the year. The first was the Vanishing Words (Geiriau Diflanedig) Project which opened its exhibition in June 2023. Financial grant support was received to develop an educational resource based on the project, which would respond to the curriculum of Wales requirements for pupils aged 7 to 11 years old.</p> <p>The second was the Fama Project, which was initiated because of the vandalism committed on the Hedd Wyn memorial during 2022. This was an opportunity to work with the community to reinterpret the relationship with Hedd Wyn and the heritage of Yr Ysgwrn and the local community, exactly a century after the memorial was unveiled, in 1923.</p> <p>In addition to the 2 projects, a further 20 activities attracting over 500 attendees were held during the year.</p> <p>Despite the financial challenges, the year concluded within Yr Ysgwrn's operating budget.</p>
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**Principle 7:** Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

<b>Pay Policy Statement</b>	<p>Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 places a requirement on Local Authorities to prepare pay policy statements. Whilst National Park Authorities are exempt from this requirement, it has been considered good practice to adopt such a statement, and accordingly this is done annually by the Head of Human Resources.</p> <p>The Authority's Pay Policy Annual Report for 2023/24 and Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 was presented to the Performance and Resources Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2024, ensuring transparency in staff remuneration at the Authority.</p>
<b>Annual Report 2023/24</b>	<p>The Annual Report for 2023/24 was presented to the Authority meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2024, before being published on the website and distributed to the Authority's main centres, public libraries etc., within the National Park.</p>

	<p>It contains the Chairman's Annual Report for the year, which sets out what was achieved, not achieved and any problems that were encountered.</p> <p>It also contains details of the Authority's Service Priorities and the Authority's Objectives set on an annual basis that feed into and show how it is intended to take the National Park forward in order to attain the Authority's vision; a summary evaluation of progress made in attaining the Authority's Objectives, and performance management.</p>
<b>Hybrid Committees and Broadcasting</b>	<p>From the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2024, all official Authority meetings are now held at the Head Office at Penrhyndeudraeth, taking full advantage of the investment in hybrid meeting technology installed in the conference rooms.</p> <p>The Authority meetings and the Planning and Access Committee are also webcast live on to the Authority's YouTube channel, as well as a recording of the meeting being able to be viewed at any time. Members of the public therefore can either attend the Committee meetings in-person or can access remotely.</p> <p>This not only improves access for Members and Officers but also access, transparency and reporting of the Authority's business for members of the public.</p>
<b>Grant Funding</b>	<p>Most project based work in the Authority is funded through external grant funding.</p> <p>Grant Funding updates, including any reprofiling and amendments to end dates where relevant, are given to Members through the Performance and Resources Committee. Detailed information is given on capital funded projects as well as live projects.</p> <p>The Authority reviews its priorities annually, ensuring consideration is given to the timescales involved with some grant obligations, and as a result confirms the priority areas for future bids.</p>

	<p>Members have previously confirmed that their approval is required for projects under the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any multi-year projects.</li> <li>• Any proposal that does not fit within agreed strategic priorities.</li> <li>• Any proposal referred to members by the Chair or CEO.</li> <li>• Any in-year proposal above an agreed financial limit (agreed at £150,000).</li> </ul> <p>During the year an update was given to the Performance and Resources Committee on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2024.</p>
<b>Welsh Language Standards</b>	<p>On the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2015, the Welsh Language Commissioner issued the Authority with a Compliance Notice in accordance with section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, which confirmed the Welsh Language Standards that the Authority is subject to.</p> <p>As is required by the Standards, the Authority produced an Annual Report for the year 2023/24 outlining in detail how the Authority complied with all the Standards during the year.</p> <p>The Authority duly approved the Annual Report at its Annual General Meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2024, and authorised for the report to be published on the Authority's website and for publicity to be given to it on social media channels.</p>

## 6. Significant Governance Issues and Actions Proposed for 2025/26

### Audit Wales: Governance of National Park Authorities

During the period between January and December 2023, Audit Wales conducted a review of governance arrangements across the National Park Authorities in Wales. The review considered five key elements: governance model and structure; key functions and responsibilities within these structures; governance culture; infrastructure to support effective governance; and arrangements to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of governance.



The purpose of the review was twofold. Firstly, to identify how governance arrangements could be strengthened in light of previously identified themes which had emerged over the last few years reviews, which were:

- Stretched Officer Capacity;
- Tension between key priorities when discharging functions;
- Reliance on short-term grant funding;
- Challenging financial positions and use of reserves; and
- Difficulties in performance management of partnerships.

Secondly, the challenging operating environments for National Parks in Wales due to 15 years of reduced budgets, makes good governance even more important so as to effectively manage the reductions in funding in a way that secures value for money.

Reporting on the outcome for this Authority in June 2024, Audit Wales noted in its report that “Overall, we found that the governance model for National Park Authorities provides a clear framework to discharge their key functions, but weaknesses in its implementation present a risk to good governance.”

Particular issues identified were:

- National Park Authorities recognise the value of collaboration but governing through complex partnership structures presents challenges.
- Servicing governance requirements risks stretching Officer capacity.
- Weakness in elected member selection processes risk undermining good governance.
- The Welsh Government has a comparatively rigorous process for appointing Members, but there is limited on-going support to appointed Members.
- The extent to which Members are being held accountable for their contribution to the governance of National Park Authorities is unclear.
- Weaknesses in how the governance model is being implemented raises questions about its suitability.

### Proposals for Improvement

The table below sets out the proposals for improvement for this Authority, identified by Audit Wales whilst undertaking the review and the Authority's response.

<b>Recommendation</b>	
R1	<p><b>Supporting Members to carry out their role:</b> This report highlights weaknesses in the ongoing support and guidance provided to members appointed by the Welsh Government. To address this, we recommend that NPAs and the Welsh Government work together to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Agree the support and guidance that will be provided to NPA members;</li><li>➤ Agree which of this support and guidance will be provided by the Welsh Government and which will be the responsibility of NPAs; and</li><li>➤ Clearly communicate this to Welsh Government appointed members.</li></ul>
<b>Eryri NPA Response 12.06.2024</b>	
	<p>The Authority frequently evaluates the development needs of all Members. Following on from this a support programme is provided to all Members. The Authorities hold a seminar for Members at Welsh level annually. There are other opportunities at UK and European levels available to Members.</p> <p>We will continue to collaborate with the Welsh Government to enable thematic training for all Members.</p>
<b>Audit Wales Response 10.07.2024</b>	
	<p>Whilst agreeing to continue to collaborate with the Welsh Government to enable thematic training for all Members was to be commended, Audit Wales remained of the opinion that the organisational response did not directly address what was needed and did not provide sufficient certainty that this would happen.</p>
<b>Eryri NPA Further Response 10.07.2024</b>	
	<p>Members and Officers agreed to address the issues raised by Audit Wales.</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	
<b>R2</b>	<p><b>Ensuring Member nominations support good governance:</b></p> <p>This report highlights a lack of clarity and inconsistency in how local authority members are nominated to sit on NPAs. It also highlights a lack of diversity amongst local authority NPA members. To help address this, we recommend that NPAs work with the WLGA and the Welsh Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ review whether the protocol for nominations remains fit for purpose;</li> <li>➤ raise awareness of the protocol and how it can support nominations; and</li> <li>➤ promote its usage amongst relevant local authorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Eryri NPA Response 12.06.2024</b>	
	<p>These are not matters within the Authority's control. These are a point of action for the WLGA, individual local authorities and the Welsh Government. The Authority will be willing to contribute to any review/scrutiny on this if invited to do so.</p>
<b>Audit Wales Response 10.07.2024</b>	
	<p>Audit Wales welcomed the offer to work with the Welsh Government and the WLGA on the protocols, and whilst the response stated these matters were not within the Authority's control, they were relevant to the Authority as it has a role to govern effectively.</p>
<b>Eryri NPA Further Response 10.07.2024</b>	
	<p>Change the response as follows: These are not matters within the Authority's control. These are a point of action for the WLGA, individual local authorities and the Welsh Government. The Authority would welcome the opportunity to contribute to any review/scrutiny on this if invited to do so.</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	
<b>R3</b>	<p><b>Improving accountability for Members</b></p> <p>To provide assurance on Members' contribution to the governance of NPAs, and to help inform future training and development provision, we recommend that the Welsh Government, NPAs and constituent local authorities work together to develop an accountability framework for all members of NPAs that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ evaluates their contribution to the NPA; and</li> <li>➤ can be used to help to target support and development to enable NPA members to be effective in their role.</li> </ul>

<b>Eryri NPA Response 12.06.2024</b>	
	We look forward to assisting the Welsh Government and local Authorities on this.
<b>Audit Wales Response 10.07.2024</b>	
	Accepted.

<b>Recommendation</b>	
R4	<p><b>Reviewing whether the model is delivering what was intended</b></p> <p>This report highlights weaknesses in the implementation of the governance model and how these issue raise questions about its suitability. To ensure it remains fit for purpose and reflects the distinct and different challenges each faces we recommend that, within the timescales of designating a new national park, the Welsh Government reviews the governance model for NPAs.</p>
<b>Eryri NPA Response 12.06.2024</b>	
	<p>The report does not highlight any weaknesses in terms of Governance, common concerns that are shared by several public bodies are highlighted which is a lack of resources to deliver, this is a challenge, not a lack of Governance.</p> <p>No logical evidence has been presented in this report about the need for change and why the Governance system is not fit for purpose. Several reports have come to the conclusion that the current Governance system provides the necessary balance to manage special and vulnerable places.</p> <p>The report has missed an opportunity to look at strategic Governance issues e.g. The effectiveness of section 62(2) of the Act supporting the objectives of National Parks, NPA's ability to trade and NPA's ability to manage natural Resources within its boundaries. Very disappointing as an overview of Governance.</p>
<b>Audit Wales Response 10.07.2024</b>	
	The Authority's response stated the report did not provide evidence why the Governance system was not fit for purpose. Audit Wales were confident that the report provided a basis for the evidence which was comprehensive and conclusive.
<b>Eryri NPA Further Response 10.07.2024</b>	
	Members and Officers agreed that no change was necessary to the Authority's response.

### The Authority's Risk Profile

The three highest risks to the Authority as reported formally in March 2025, is as follows:

*\*Both risks associated with Plas Tan y Bwlch have since been updated and is due to be reported upon to the July 2025 Performance and Resources Committee.*

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Action Identified / Progress to date</b>
Insufficient core budget funding.	Cut in Services.	<p>The Budget for 2025/26 was approved by the Authority in its meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2025, and was established on the basis of a 5% increase in the Welsh Government Grant for 2024/25, and consequently a 5% increase on the levy charged to the local authorities. However, this increase follows several years of no increase, and the grant has not caught up with inflation over this period.</p> <p>At the time of setting the budget it was anticipated that the 2025/26 budget will include a deficit of £635,850 which will have to be financed from reserves, and the Authority will have to continue to ensure that decisive steps are taken to close this gap or the Authority's general reserves will be depleted. Therefore, despite the increase in Government Grant, savings and/or increasing income will still have to be considered in forthcoming years.</p> <p><b>Risk Rating:</b> <b>Effect 4 x Likelihood 4 = 16 (High)</b></p>
*Plas Tan y Bwlch – short term financial pressures on the Authority and securing its long-term future.	Failure to keep within the Authority's budget. Significant reputational damage to the Authority. Adverse impact on the local economy. Loss of livelihood for staff employed	<p>Plas continues to operate a much reduced business at the time of writing, but has succeeded in attracting temporary business, subject to final sign off.</p> <p>At the Authority meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 the Authority resolved to:</p> <p>(i) formally annul the decision made by the Authority regarding Plas Tan y Bwlch dated 11 September 2024.</p> <p>(ii) postpone a decision on the future of Plas Tan y Bwlch until the Authority's meeting on 30 April 2025.</p> <p>(iii) continue to communicate and</p>

	<p>at Plas Tan y Bwlch. Failure to maintain a Grade II* listed building.</p>	<p>negotiate with those parties who have shown interest so far with the intention of gaining a better understanding of their interest and ability to buy. (iv) use this time to carry out an assessment of the ability of any potential buyer to fund repairs and improvements that are necessary to Plas Tan y Bwlch and whatever plans they have for the property. This assessment includes an assessment of any Community Company's ability to proceed with their plans and the likely timetable in question. (v) meanwhile, formally remove Plas Tan y Bwlch from the market. (vi) consider and decide the preferred option in order to ensure public access to the woodlands and Llyn Mair via a formal decision by the Authority as soon as possible. (vii) if negotiations referred to in (iii) do not succeed and/or if all potential buyers fail the assessment referred to in (iv), all options including placing Plas Tan y Bwlch back on the open market will be considered. (viii) hold a further drop-in session on a date to be arranged but before the Authority's meeting on 30 April 2025 in order to communicate the Authority's decision and listen to any unresolved concerns that local communities and beyond have.</p> <p>Negotiations have continued with interested parties since 13<sup>th</sup> November and the position remains unchanged in that only one firm offer has been received to date. A report is due to be considered by the Authority's Working Group on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025 when the situation will be discussed in further detail.</p> <p><b>Risk Rating:</b> <b>Effect 4 x Likelihood 5 = 20 (High)</b></p>
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*Reputational and financial risk regarding the future of Plas Tan y Bwlch.	The future of Plas Tan y Bwlch (whether this is to sell or retain) could create a significantly increased financial risk and reputational damage.	<p>This complicated and dynamic situation is currently being reviewed by the Chief Executive. Great care will be taken to ensure that the financial impacts will be mitigated as far as possible, although these risks cannot be eliminated. There are various reputational risks arising from a range of scenarios too, and these are being carefully considered internally with officers. The Chief Executive will present a report outlining these risks and how they will be addressed to the April Authority meeting.</p> <p><b>Risk Rating: Effect 5 x Likelihood 3 = 15 (High)</b></p>
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## 7. Opinion

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the matters referred to in part 6 to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.





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**JONATHAN CAWLEY  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
SNOWDONIA NATIONAL  
PARK AUTHORITY**

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**CLLR. EDGAR WYN OWEN  
CHAIR  
SNOWDONIA NATIONAL  
PARK AUTHORITY**

**DATE: 11.06.2025**

**DATE : 11.06.2025**