

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**SUBJECT: CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE FOR THE AUDIT OF
PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY'S 2016-17
IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Introduction

The Wales Audit Office is required, under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) to give an opinion on whether Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (the Authority) has discharged its duties in respect of improvement reporting and met the requirements of the Measure.

The Auditor General for Wales has recently given his opinion that the Authority has discharged its duties and a copy of his Improvement Assessment letter follows this report.

RECOMMENDATION:

Members are requested to RECEIVE and COMMENT on the Improvement Assessment Letter.

(For further information contact Tegryn Jones, Chief Executive on ext 4803)

Audit of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's 2016-17 Improvement Plan

Certificate

I certify that, following publication in June 2016, I have audited Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's (the Authority) Improvement Plan in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) and my Code of Audit Practice. As a result of my audit, I believe that the Authority has discharged its duties under section 15(6) to (9) of the Measure and has acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

Respective responsibilities of the Authority and the Auditor General

Under the Measure, the Authority is required to prepare and publish an Improvement Plan describing its plans to discharge its duties to:

- make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions;
- make arrangements to secure achievement of its improvement objectives; and
- make arrangements to exercise its functions so that any performance standard specified by Welsh Ministers is met.

The Measure requires the Authority to publish its Improvement Plan as soon as is reasonably practicable after the start of the financial year to which it relates, or after such other date as Welsh Ministers may specify by order.

The Authority is responsible for preparing the Improvement Plan and for the information set out within it. The Measure requires that the Authority has regard to guidance issued by Welsh Ministers in preparing and publishing its plan.

As the Authority's auditor, I am required under sections 17 and 19 of the Measure to carry out an audit of the Improvement Plan, to certify that I have done so, and to report whether I believe that the Authority has discharged its duties to prepare and publish an Improvement Plan in accordance with statutory requirements set out in section 15 and statutory guidance.

Scope of the Improvement Plan audit

For the purposes of my audit work I will accept that, provided an authority meets its statutory requirements, it will also have complied with Welsh Government statutory guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

For this audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information, or whether the Improvement Plan published by the Authority can be achieved. Other assessment work that I will undertake under section 18 of the Measure will examine these issues. My audit of the Authority's Improvement Plan, therefore, comprised a review of the plan to ascertain whether it included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the plan complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Authority had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing its plan.

The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 17 and 19 of the Measure cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.

HUW VAUGHAN THOMAS

AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES

CC: Mark Drakeford, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

Lesley Griffiths, Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs

Huw Rees, Manager

John Roberts, Performance Audit Lead