REVISED AUTHORITY HANDBOOK

1 SUMMARY

1.1 The Authority Handbook contains the key policies and documents that govern the business of the Authority. A review has been taken of the policies and documents both in terms of which policies and documents should constitute the Authority Handbook and also the content of these policies. This report contains details of the amendments made to the Authority Handbook under the Authority Solicitor's delegated authority and draft documents for review by this Committee with a view to adoption.

Recommendation that:	**a**	**Members consider and adopt from 18 September 2025 the Authority Handbook documents at Appendix 1;**
	b	**Members note the details of amendments made by the Authority Solicitor to the Authority Handbook; and**
	c	**Members authorise the Authority Solicitor to make any consequential adjustments to the Authority Handbook documents including the appointment of the requisite number of Independent Members to Governance Committee.**

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Local Government Association "The Constitution and Meetings" states:

"As a new councillor you will receive a copy of your council's constitution, which sets out how the council conducts its business, including:

- who is responsible for making decisions and how decisions are made
- procedural matters (set out in the 'Standing Orders')
- the role of officers
- standards and ethical governance."

The Environment Act 1995 Schedule 7 sets out the status and constitution of the NPAs and therefore should be included in the Authority Handbook for information.

The constitution will be available on the Authority's website and accessible by members of the public to comply with disclosure requirements.

2.2 The current Authority Handbook was adopted by the Authority at its meeting on 16 February 2022 and took effect from 1 April 2022. At this meeting Members authorised the Authority Solicitor to make any consequential adjustments to the Authority Handbook such as changes in personnel and typographical errors together with delegating authority to amend to reflect legislative changes.

2.3 The Authority also adopted a revision of the Contract Standing Orders on 18 September 2024 which took effect on 24 February 2025 and detailed changes required by the Procurement Act 2023 and associated Regulations.

2.4 The Authority Solicitor has undertaken a review of the documents set out in the table below and has amended the documents in accordance with the delegation given to her.

Authority Handbook document	**Changes**
Authority Prospectus	Amended to reflect changes in staffing, role profiles, typographical and grammatical errors.
High Level Structure Diagram	Amended to reflect changes in roles.
Part A: Proceedings and Business of the Authority	Typographical and grammatical errors. Change to reflect that sealing of documents may be undertaken by the section 151 officer rather than the Director of Visitor Services and Resources.
Part B: Contract Standing Orders	Typographical and grammatical errors.
Part E: Structure of Authority and Committees	Typographical and grammatical errors.
Part F: Site Visit Protocol	Typographical and grammatical errors.
Part G: Public Attendance and Speaking at Committees	Typographical and grammatical errors.
Part H: Members Representation on Internal and External Bodies	Update links to revised Committee Membership
Part I: Member Code of Conduct	Typographical and grammatical errors.
Part J: Guidance on Member Code of Conduct	Typographical and grammatical errors.
Part K: Member Role Profile	Typographical and grammatical errors.
Part L: Members Allowances Scheme	Typographical and grammatical errors. Reference to update legislative provisions.
Part M: Officer Code of Conduct	Reviewed and amended to correct grammatical and spelling errors Deleted table of Values at M3.2 and inserted link to relevant intranet webpage at M3.1. M5.2 amended to reflect new organisational structure.
Part N: Members and Officers Working Together	Reviewed and amended to correct grammatical and spelling errors Amended to reflect new organisational structure.
Part P: Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy	Reviewed and amended to correct grammatical and spelling errors Amended to reflect new organisational structure.
ALL	Insertion of versions table

2.5 The remaining documents that make up the Authority Handbook and that are attached for Members' consideration are listed below:

Core Documents:
Part C: Financial Regulations (Annex 1)
Part D: Scheme of Delegation (Annex 2)

Structure, Standards and Ethical Governance Documents
Part O: Anti-Fraud Theft and Corruption Policy (Annex 3)

2.6 Changes to part C: Financial Regulations

- Removal of some duplications or overlap with provisions covered in other sections of the handbook
- Clarification of services that are linked to the trading reserve (formally Visitor Services) and therefore the virement rules that apply.
- Update of roles and responsibilities following changes with Directors and Heads of Service, largely amending references to “Director of Visitor Services and Resources” and “Head of Resources” to “S151 Officer”
- Clarifying that responsibility for risk management sits with the Head of People and Organisational Development, with the exception of insurance arrangements.
- Clarifying that although the S151 needs assurance that satisfactory procurement arrangements are in place (to meet their duty around arrangements for value for money), the responsibility for design and delivery of those arrangements sits with the Authority Solicitor.
- Updating some references to specific documents to allow for different versions and subsequent updates to those documents.

2.7 Changes to Part D: Scheme of Delegation include:

- correction of typographical and grammatical errors.
- addition of Conservation Covenants Board (CSB) as a subcommittee of Authority. As the CSB is made up of the Chairs of four committees, the correct sub delegation is via Authority Committee. However, it has been agreed by a meeting of Committee Chairs that the decisions of the CSB will also be reported to the relevant committees as considered appropriate by Members. We are also committed to informally report to Resources Committee for full awareness of cumulative risk.
- removal of provisions in relation to Executive Performance Committee to reflect custom and practice. Whilst Executive Performance Committee is not to be constituted as a Committee, the Chair and Deputy Chair will continue to performance manage the Chief Executive through the setting of objectives and reviews of performance. This means that the requirements for the publishing agendas, minutes, quoracy and other provisions relating to committees will not apply.
- from 1 April 2026 it will be a mandatory requirement that we have at least one independent member to sit on Governance (Audit) Committee and the Scheme of Delegation has been amended to reflect this change. Also, there will be a mandatory requirement to report the Auditor’s Annual Report to full Authority Committee, and this is also reflected in the Scheme of Delegation.
- the approval of changes to the terms and conditions of the Cumbria and Lakes Local Access Forum has been removed from the remit of the Resources Committee and placed with the Rights of Way Committee.
- The delegation already recorded in Authority Committee Minutes of 26 June 2025 relating to the Business Plan has been formally recorded at D3.4.
- D4.14 amended to reflect the role of the Director of Sustainable Development as the Deputy Chief Executive.
- D4.17 and D4.18 amended to reflect the new structure of the Heads of Service.
- Annex 1: entertainment budget increased from £500 to £1,000.

- Annex 3 deleted and functions moved to the Head of Resources (now Section 151 Officer) at Annex 7 (now Annex 6).

2.8 Changes to Part O: Anti-Fraud, Theft and Corruption Policy include:

- correction of grammatical and spelling errors
- amendments to reflect changes to organisational structure.
- introduction of a zero-tolerance statement.
- reference to training included.
- clarification of sanctions.

2.9 These documents have been considered by the Executive Board, Heads of Service and Officers as required and have been amended/consulted upon prior to this bringing them before this Committee.

2.10 Members are asked to consider the documentation attached and adopt the revised documents as part of the Authority Handbook from 18 September 2025.

3 POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Sound corporate governance lies at the heart of the Authority's ability to achieve the key delivery aims of the Vision. An Authority Handbook including documentation needed by Members is necessary to ensure compliance with legislation and ensure Members have the information they need in a readily accessible format to enable them to undertake their role within the Authority.

3.2 It is essential that the Authority's procedures are kept up-to-date with all changes in legislation and government guidance affecting the business of the Authority to ensure that the Authority makes sound decisions and complies with the law.

4 OPTIONS

4.1 Members note the details of amendments made by the Authority Solicitor to the Authority Handbook under her delegated authority and consider and adopt the revised documents attached to this report as part of Authority Handbook from 18 September 2025, authorising the Authority Solicitor to make any minor consequential adjustments.

4.2 Members note the details of amendments made by the Authority Solicitor to the Authority Handbook under her delegated authority and consider and make substantial amendments to the Authority Handbook and further consider the Handbook at the next meeting of Authority Committee.

5 PROPOSALS

5.1 Members consider and adopt from 18 September 2025 the Authority Handbook documents attached;

5.2 Members note the details of amendments made by the Authority Solicitor to the Authority Handbook; and

5.3 Members authorise the Authority Solicitor to make any consequential adjustments to the Authority Handbook documents.

6 BEST VALUE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Good governance underpins the work of the Authority and a suitable Code of Conduct for Members to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members supports the achievement of best value in the Authority.

7 FINANCE CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 The report has no financial implications.

8 RISK

7.1 The Authority must ensure that there are systems in place to show compliance with legislation and government guidance.

7.2 The Authority must ensure that all procedures are updated to comply with legislation that affects the business of the Authority to prevent challenge to its decision making and processes.

8 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The legal considerations are set out in the body of this report.

9 DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no diversity implications.

10 SUSTAINABILITY

10.1 There are no significant environmental, economic and social effects

Background Papers	Legal files: LEG/2007.003.
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Annex 1i: Part C Financial Regulations for the Lake District National Park Authority (showing tracked changes)

Annex 1ii: Part C Financial Regulations for the Lake District National Park Authority (tracked changes accepted—as the document will look if approved)

Annex 2i: Part D Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Committees (showing tracked changes)

Annex 2ii: Part D Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Committees (tracked changes accepted—as the document will look if approved)

Annex 3i: Part O Anti-Fraud, Theft and Corruption Policy (showing tracked changes)

Annex 3ii: Part O Anti-Fraud, Theft and Corruption Policy (tracked changes accepted—as the document will look if approved)