

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

What do we mean by Governance?

The International Framework for Good Governance in the Public Sector defines governance as:

“the arrangements (political, economic, social, environmental, administrative, legal and other arrangements) put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved. The fundamental function of good governance in the public sector is to ensure that entities achieve their intended outcomes while acting in the public interest at all times.”

For the National Park Authority Governance is about how we ensure that we are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which we are directed and controlled and through which we account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead communities

Governance is more than making sure that things do not go wrong or fixing them if they do. Good governance adds value by ensuring effectiveness in ever changing circumstances.

Why do we need a Code of Corporate Governance?

The principal objective of a code is to increase credibility, accountability and public confidence in local authorities and all public bodies are encouraged to adopt a local code. A code helps us:

- To develop a frame work for Corporate Governance for the National Park Authority based on good practice and external guidance
- To demonstrate compliance with the principles of good governance
- To continuously improve our effectiveness through an annual review of performance against the framework with an action plan to address weaknesses
- To feed the results of the above into our annual governance statement

Delivering Good Governance

The following schedule which forms the basis of our code has been developed following the structure recommended in the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework. It has been amended to reflect:

- a) our consideration of the CIPFA statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010) and the CIPFA addendum of December 2012.
- b) Our consideration of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and corruption 2014
- c) The 2016 Edition of CIPFA/SOLACE guidance notes for English Authorities.

The Framework defines the principles that should underpin our governance. It provides a structure to help us review our approach to governance by testing our governance structures and partnerships by:

- Reviewing existing governance arrangements
- Developing and maintaining an up to date Code of Corporate Governance, including arrangements for ensuring ongoing effectiveness

- Reporting publically on compliance with our code on an annual basis and demonstrating how we have monitored the effectiveness of our governance arrangements during the year and any planned changes.

The diagram below illustrates how the various principles for good governance in the public sector relate to each other. Principles A and B permeate implementation of principles C to G which are linked to each other through the “plan-do-check–act” cycle. The diagram also illustrates that good governance is dynamic, and that an entity as a whole should be committed to improving governance on a continuing basis through a process of evaluation and review.

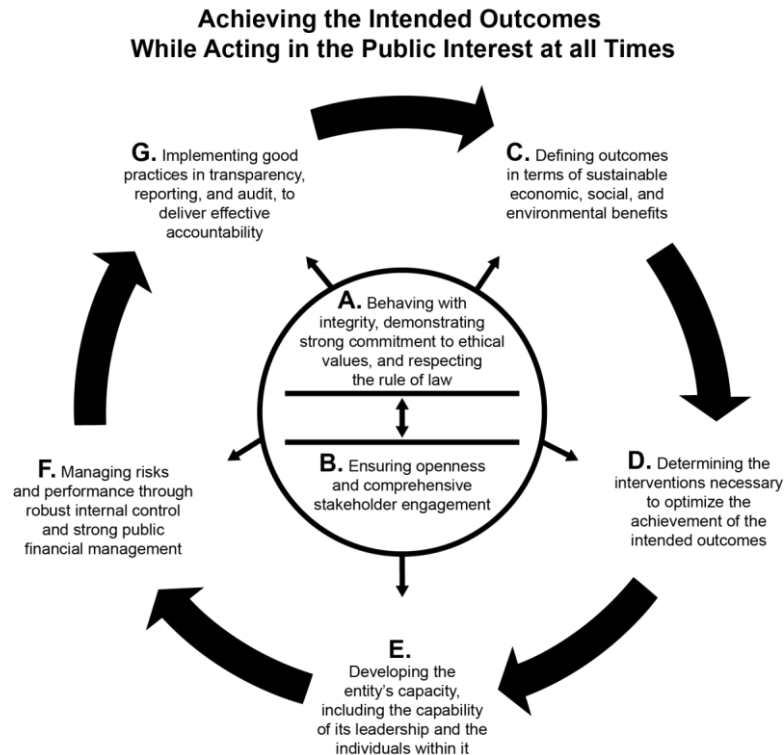


Diagram reproduced from “International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector”

To achieve good governance we must demonstrate that our governance arrangements comply with the core principles in the diagram which are underpinned by the sub-principles set out in the framework.

Commitment and Review

The Peak District National Park Authority is committed to taking action to deliver good governance and the attached schedule represents what we commit to do now (updated February 2017). Each year we will review our performance against this commitment, highlight what we have done and any further improvements needed for the forthcoming year. The outcome of the review will be reflected in our Annual Governance Statement published each year in parallel with the production of the Statement of Accounts.

Responsibilities

Our annual review will be initiated by the Monitoring Officer (also Head of Law) and will include a discussion with the Leadership Team, the Chief Finance Officer, the Deputy Monitoring Officer (also Democratic Services Manager), the Chair and Vice Chair of Audit, Resources and Performance Committee (which includes the standards remit).

This Code of Corporate Governance was approved by the Authority in February 2017. Delegation is given to the Monitoring Officer to make necessary changes/amendments to the Code as a

result of the annual review to ensure it stays relevant and up to date. Any significant changes to the Code will be reported to Audit Resources and Performance Committee as part of the report on the Annual Governance Statement.

The Annual Governance Statement is approved by the Audit Resources and Performance Committee and signed by the Chair of that Committee and the Chief Executive on behalf of the Authority.

Signed:



Lesley Roberts
Chair of the Authority



Sarah Fowler
Chief Executive

Updated February 2017

(A) Core Principle

Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of Law

Sub Principle:

A(1) Behaving with Integrity

We will:

- (1) Embed in the way we work our organisational values of:
 - People matter – so we have a supported, empowered, respected workforce;
 - Performance matters – so we do what we say we will do and do it well;
 - Communities matter – so we take a positive approach and work with communities;
 - Every day matters – each day offers an opportunity to do something positive.
- (2) Ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff is defined, communicated (internally and externally) and monitored through codes of conduct, protocols and advice.
- (3) Ensure that our decision making processes are open, transparent and free from bias and conflicts of interest.
- (4) Have in place a framework of policies and processes that support good governance in all that we do; we will review and improve these in response to feedback and evaluation of effectiveness.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Codes of conduct for Members and Officers with conduct included in Member and Officer induction.
- Supplementary advice on behaviour of Members and Staff in Committee;
- Protocol on Development Control and Planning Policy in place;
- Registers of Members and Staff interests and guidance with annual review by Monitoring Officer;
- Member and Officer gifts and hospitality register and guidance with annual review by Monitoring Officer;
- Standards included in Audit, Resources and Performance Committee Terms of Reference;
- Nolan Principles are incorporated into Member Code of Conduct;
- Procedures in place to consider code of conduct complaints against Members which are reported to Committee as part of the quarterly performance report;
- Complaints policy in place and individual complaints are monitored and reported to Audit, Resources and Performance Committee quarterly with lessons learned;
- Declaration of Interests is a standing agenda item at meetings and Members are provided with a pro-forma to record interests as they prepare for the meeting. Minutes of meetings of the Authority and its Committees show that declarations of interest were sought and recorded;
- Due Diligence Panel established with Annual Report reviewed by Audit Resources and Performance Committee;
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and Whistleblowing (Confidential Reporting) Policy in place with regular review against CIPFA code with the Chair and the Vice-Chair of Audit, Resources and Performance Committee advised of any allegations and the outcome of investigations. Our contract procedure rules and standard terms and conditions for contracts refer to these policies;
- Information management policies framework (including E-Policy);
- Data Protection Charter with tools to ensure compliance.

Sub Principle: A(2) Demonstrating a strong commitment to ethical values.

We will:

- (5) Embed our standards of behaviour and values underpinning the way we work in job descriptions, the competency framework and JPAR process.
- (6) Ensure our HR, governance and procurement policies and procedures promote and support our values and standards and use every opportunity to promote our standards of behaviour and the values underpinning the way we work through for example:
- Organisational development programme;
 - Leadership group development;
 - Corporate Learning and development programme;
 - Communications strategy;
 - Member Learning and Development Programme.
- (7) Communicate to others who work with us our expectations for compliance with ethical standards through:
- Service level agreements;
 - Contracts and procurement processes;
 - Partnership agreements;
 - Sponsorship agreements.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Checking ethical compliance at governing body level through promoting good behaviour and annual Monitoring Officer checks;
- In the Member Survey we ask a question to test awareness of ethical standards and how individual Members contribute to maintaining them;
- The Chair of ARP and the Leadership Team are involved in preparing the annual governance statement and it is considered and approved by the Committee following scrutiny by the external auditors;
- Employee terms and conditions, competency framework and completed JPAR forms;
- Delivering an ongoing programme of ethical awareness training and including a session on standards and ethics in the annual compulsory planning training delivered to all Members;
- Resources Policies and Procedures;
- Member Learning and Development Plans;
- Joint Performance and Achievement Review Process;
- Corporate training programme and developing the Leadership Group;
- Procurement Strategy and Contract Procedure Rules;
- Conduct included within revised employee statement of terms and conditions;
- Tender and contract documentation including Standing Orders;
- Due Diligence Panel, chaired by the Monitoring Officer, looks at issues such as reputation and environmental impact when considering giving and sponsorship offers;
- Registers of in-kind sponsorship and giving under £5,000 reviewed by the Due Diligence Panel every 6 months;
- Register for additional employment over grade H.

Sub Principle: A(3) Respecting the rule of law

We will:

- (8) Progress achievement of our corporate strategy through full use of our powers and in doing so:
- identify any risks of legal challenge as appropriate;
 - ensure members and staff receive legal advice on case work and policy /procedure development as appropriate;
 - ensure appropriate Standing Orders are in place.
- (9) Support the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer roles through protocols, direct access to Members and the Chief Executive and involvement in key decision making processes.
- (10) Ensure both the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer have appropriate resources to fulfil their roles as required by the legislation.
- (11) Respond to any external or internal advice or comments received on the legality of our decisions, policies, processes and procedures including from the chief finance officer and monitoring officer.
- (12) Respond to any allegations of corruption and misuse of power in accordance with our framework of policies.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Standing Orders are regularly reviewed and updated;
- External scrutiny by external audit, internal audit, Local Government Ombudsman, Defra, HM Revenue and Customs, Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Communities and Local Government and Housing Act;
- Three statutory roles in place of:
 - Head of Paid Service;
 - Chief Finance Officer (also Member of RMT) (s114 Finance Act 1988);
 - Monitoring Officer (Supported by Deputy Monitoring Officer role) (s5 Local Government and Housing Act 1989);
- Job descriptions and Learning and Development plans are in place for individuals holding the above roles;
- Compliance with CIPFAs Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in local government;
- CFO is actively involved in all material business decisions and strategy development;
- Monitoring Officer Protocol is in place;
- Job descriptions for the Chair and Authority Members;
- Outside Body advice to Members appointed to an outside body;
- RMT procedures to make sure internal consultation takes place on proposals;
- Leadership approach with “voices round the table” making sure the relevant staff are involved e.g. Corporate Property Officer;
- Legal Team Work Programme in place to support the Corporate Strategy;
- Legal risks identified in delegated reports and reports to committees and Resources Management Team;
- Delegation to Officers indicates where delegated decisions need sign off from Legal Services;
- Recent VfM Review on Legal Services;
- Arrangements in place to report to relevant bodies when issues arise e.g. Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Fraud and Corruption, Data Protection;
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Confidential Reporting policies in place and are regularly reviewed against the CIPFA code of practice on managing the risk of fraud and corruption;
- Examples of cases where policy has been tested;
- Standards Framework in place including the Authority’s arrangements for considering complaints against Members.

(B) Core Principle

Making sure of openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Sub Principle:

B(1) Openness

We will:

- (1) Support our commitment to a culture of openness and transparency through:
- Fulfilling our obligations under the Freedom of Information/Environmental Information legislation;
 - Publicising decisions and information through our website and through web broadcasting of our committees;
 - Be open and transparent in all our decision making except, where justified, the exemptions under Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act apply.
- (2) Document evidence for decisions by recording criteria, rationale and data relied upon - using processes proportionate to the impact and risk of the decisions being made.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Annual report and Business Plan published;
- Annual Monitoring Report on Local Plan;
- Monthly and Annual Head of Law Reports to Planning Committee;
- Creation of data protection policies, data protection staff training plan and rollout with appropriate tools and monitoring, robust processes where personal/sensitive data is created or used as part of wider operations;
- Use of robust data processor agreements where 3rd parties hold or process personal/sensitive data on the Authority's behalf;
- Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme and disclosure log;
- Appointment of Senior Information Risk Owner, Lead Information Asset Owner and departmental Information Asset Owners;
- Corporate Strategy 2016-2019 including Directional Shifts, Cornerstones and success measures;
- Financial information such as outturns, accounts and external audit reports published on our website;
- Local Government Transparency Code 2015 - information is published on the website includes spending over £250, credit card spending, tenders, income from parking, organisation structures and senior salaries, trade union facility time, pay multiples, land and property assets;
- Publish information under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duties) and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 to publish workforce profile information by "protected characteristics "Gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation and pay grade);
- The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 will require the Authority to publish prescribed information about their gender pay gap results;
- Standing Orders make sure that exempt items are kept to a minimum and where possible an open report is provided to summarise the decision to be made and allow public participation;
- Documents relating to meetings of the Authority and its Committees along with Key governance documents, such as Standing Orders are published on the Authority website;
- Provisions in place allowing reporting on meetings and providing an audio webcast of meetings of the Authority and its Committees;
- Publish work programmes for the Authority and its Committees;
- Committee Reports and Minutes;
- Resources Management Team business cases and minutes;
- Standing Orders (Delegation to Committees, Delegation to Officers, Financial Procedure Rules and Contract procedure rules);
- Corporate Report Templates that include headings for key areas that must be taken into account in writing reports such as Financial, HR and Legal advice;
- Service protocols on recording decisions/file notes e.g. site visit file notes, HR forms and decisions, tender book;

- Planning and other reports for recording delegated decisions.

Sub Principle: B(2) Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders

We will:

- (3) Ensure the National Park Management Plan is a partnership Plan for the place with partners and stakeholders owning the delivery plan for the place.
- (4) Engage with constituent and surrounding councils and stakeholders through a programme of Chief Executive and member meetings.
- (5) Engage with bodies representative of different voices inside and outside of the National Park.
- (6) Maximise our partnership approach to achieving more for the place through:
 - Strategic National Park Management Partnership Plan process and delivery
 - Operational delivery partnerships;
 - National NPA partnerships;
 - Sponsorship relationships;
 - Shared commissioning of evidence for Local Plans across the wider Peak District.
- (7) Review our relationship management framework.
- (8) Ensure appropriate due diligence, programme management and contractual processes are in place to support partnerships.
- (9) Implement a programme of surveys and research so we can connect more to people and respond to feedback from people who use the National Park and our services.
- (10) Consult and engage communities and stakeholders on the development of our policies and strategies.
- (11) Consult and engage with people on specific actions that might affect them.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- National Park Management Plan Delivery Plan;
- National Park Management Plan Advisory group and annual report;
- Programme of meetings between Chief Executive and other councils (both constituent authorities councils and the wider peak district authorities) sometimes including the Chair of the Authority and Leaders;
- Programme of meetings between Chief Executive and other key stakeholders;
- Local Access Forum;
- Parishes Day;
- Participation in meetings of combined authorities;
- Engagement with Defra and other Government departments;
- LEP Membership;
- Appointments to Outside Bodies and supporting guidance;
- National Park Authority draft Communication and Marketing Strategy;
- Partnership working when preparing bids and delivering externally funded projects;
- Examples of Partnerships such as Moors for the Future (Moorlife 2020) and SW Peak Partnership and Service Level Agreements e.g. Derbyshire County Council for payroll services;
- A range of studies delivered helping to shape Local Plan policies;
- Partnership Policy and Protocol;
- Due Diligence Panel and registers.

Supporting Principle: B(3) Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively

We will:

- (12) Underpin our corporate strategy objective of enabling everyone to connect with the National Park with a sound evidence base including:
- Feedback from customers using our services;
 - Research on best ways to engage with target audiences;
 - Formal consultation processes;
 - Feedback from bodies representative of different voices inside and outside of the National Park.
- (13) Update our communications and marketing strategy to support our new outreach programme and make sure it explains how we will feedback on 'you said' - 'we did'.
- (14) Develop an integrated approach to engaging with communities through our new Policy and Communities service.
- (15) Continue to support members in their community role.
- (16) Ensure our complaints procedures and reporting arrangements are accessible and transparent and monitor our response to complaints received to ensure the authority learns from that feedback.
- (17) Ensure our long term National Park Management Plan (supported by the Local Plan) gives direction to short term decision making processes so that our aspirations for the condition of the special qualities of the National Park into the future can be achieved.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Surveys (Residents, Visitors, Bus Users, Planning, Customer feedback and the Service User Survey (Includes Customer and Business Support, learning and discovery, visitor centres, cycle hire, conservation volunteers and ranger guided walks);
- Use of Park Life, press releases and social media to promote current consultations/issue/campaigns;
- Consultation page on Authority Website listing active consultation and how to participate;
- Summary of consultation responses in Committee reports;
- Public Participation at meetings;
- User Groups (e.g. Stanage Forum' Local Access Forum);
- Work with lobbying partners such as CPRE/Friends of the Peak District, National Parks UK, Campaign for National Parks;
- Learning and development programme;
- Outside bodies appointments;
- Member allocations to specific areas of the National Park;
- Evidence of community and stakeholder meetings;
- Collect data for our corporate indicator of the number of people experiencing the benefits of the Peak District National Park from our target audiences of young people (under 25), People living with health inequalities (particularly mental well- being), Volunteers and Supporters (donors);
- People and Park connected strategy and action plan;
- Role descriptions in place for Chair, Members and Member Representative Roles;
- Consultation Area of Website;
- Articles in Park Life, other publications and media releases;
- Officer Delegation for Planning – Parish Objection brings to Committee;
- Statutory duty to consult (e.g Traffic Regulation Orders);
- Responding to consultation from Government and partners;
- Evidenced in Committee reports which includes sustainability heading in the report template;
- National Park Management Plan;
- Communicating in Plain English;

(C) Core Principle

Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Supporting Principle: C(1) Defining outcomes

We will:

- (1) Clearly communicate the vision and outcomes for the National Park through the National Park Management Plan supported by the Local Plan and the Landscape Strategy and Action Plan providing the strategic direction for the Authority's Corporate Strategy.
- (2) Clearly communicate our three year Corporate Strategy, our medium term financial plan and our one year Performance and Business plan actions and priorities to the public, stakeholders and partners.
- (3) Ensure our three year corporate strategy and medium term financial planning processes are aligned and reviewed annually and quarterly in year.
- (4) Put arrangements in place to implement our risk policy and strategy at all levels in the Authority so that informed decisions can be made on what level of risk to accept and what mitigating action needs to be in place to reduce or remove the risk to achieving outcomes.
- (5) Communicate our priorities internally and externally through the three year corporate strategy and annual performance/business plan.
- (6) Be clear about standards of service to be provided within resources available.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Corporate Strategy and Medium term (3-4 years) strategic and financial planning strategy;
- National Park Management Plan (NPMP), National Park Strategies and Action Plans and Annual Monitoring Report supported by National Park Management Plan Advisory Group – includes performance against targets;
- Local Plan (Core Strategy and Development Management Policies) and supporting documents including: Annual Monitoring Reports, Local Development Scheme, Statement of Community Involvement and Supplementary Planning Guidance;
- Annual Performance and Business Plan includes performance against targets;
- Partnership Policy and Protocol and Review;
- Participation in local area forums and local partnerships eg Local Nature Partnership;
- Service Plans including risk registers;
- People and Park connected strategy and action plan;
- Sustainability heading included in report templates;
- Environmental Management Policy and Carbon Management Plan of Action with progress reports;
- Risk Management Policy and Strategy;
- Corporate Risk Register and monitoring;
- Risk based internal audit strategy and annual plan;
- Information Technology Disaster Recovery Plan;
- Business Continuity Plan including Crisis Management Procedures;
- Health and Safety Policy, support and annual report to Leadership Team and Local Joint Committee
- Insurance Policies;
- Building security systems;
- Annual Performance and Business Plan;
- Annual Statement of Accounts.

Supporting Principle: C(2) Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.

We will:

- (7) Ensure our strategic and financial planning delivers:
- Our purposes and socio economic duty balancing environmental, social and economic impact;
 - Consideration of conflicting interests informed by our consultation processes;
 - Long term financial sustainability of the Authority through diversifying our sources of funding, supported by a sustainable capital programme;
 - An approximate forecast for short term service and financial decision making.
- (8) Implement our Equalities Policy to ensure fair access to services.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Capital Programme;
- Capital Investment Strategy;
- Asset Management Plan;
- Sustainability heading included in report templates;
- Record of decision making and supporting materials;
- Consultation embodied in reports to Committee and delegated decisions;
- Following statutory guidance;
- Customer Service Standards;
- Equalities Impact Assessment of our plans eg Development Management Policies document;
- Performance indicators and success measures for National Park Management Plan, Corporate Strategy and service actions;
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys;
- Complaints procedure and quarterly/annual reports;
- Service and corporate improvement plans.

(D) Core Principle

Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.

Supporting Principle: D(1) Determining Interventions

We will:

- (1) Deliver our three year corporate strategy and medium term financial plan through:
 - Using research and data to inform recommendations on interventions to achieve our strategy;
 - Seeking and responding to feedback from customers and stakeholders on our services;
 - Agreeing annual priority actions that are key interventions for the forthcoming year;
 - Funded service plan actions flowing from priority interventions agreed;
 - Business case options appraisals.
- (2) Work with partners in delivering the NPMP priority ambitions for the special qualities of the national park.
- (3) Work with communities through neighbourhood planning and other community planning processes and achieve our ambitions for special qualities.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Agenda Planning Meetings and Committee work programmes;
- Contract Procedure Rules and Procurement Strategy;
- Effective procurement processes along with examples of smarter procurement and collaboration;
- Programme of value for money reviews;
- National Park benchmarking;
- External Audit value for money conclusion;
- Annual service and budgeting planning process identifying efficiency savings and different ways of doing things;
- Disposal Guidance;
- Resource Management Team business case process;
- Financial Strategy;
- Consultation results summarised in reports to decision makers;
- Public Participation Scheme for all meetings of the Authority and its Committees.

Supporting Principle: D(2) Planning Interventions

We will:

- 1 Implement our strategic and financial planning cycle for development, review and monitoring of:
 - NPMP;
 - Local Plan;
 - Corporate Strategy;
 - Medium term financial plan;
 - Performance and Business Plan;
 - Service Plans.
- 2 Engage with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered through:
 - NPMP partnership;

- Planning policy consultation;
- Landscape scale partnerships;
- Operational partnerships;
- Regular communication with bodies representative of the different 'voices' inside and outside of the National Park.

(3) Ensure our risk management policy, strategy and processes cover risk management for partnerships.

(4) Make sure that our procurement strategy and contract procedure rules are robust but provide additional flexibility when needed.

(5) Implement a performance management system with:

- identified measures of success/indicators and targets which cascade into service plans and individual objectives;
- quarterly monitoring and annual reporting of performance;
- identified leads for data owners and data collectors with appropriate checks on quality of information.

(6) Support achievement of our medium term financial plan for revenue and capital expenditure with annual financial planning processes culminating in an annual budget being recommended to the Authority each February.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Service Plans to include plans and timescales for reviewing key plans and policies;
- A work programme is maintained and published for meetings of the Authority and its Committees;
- Communications and Marketing Strategy;
- Media protocol;
- Evidence base for National Park Management Plan, Strategies, Local Plan;
- Residents and Service User Surveys;
- Constituent Council and Parish Council liaison meetings;
- National Park Management Plan focus and targets agreed with partners and stakeholders. Progress monitored by Advisory Group with an independent chair;
- Partnership Policy and Protocols;
- Risk Management Policy and Strategy with Corporate Risk Register and Service level risk registers
- Procurement Strategy and Contract Procedure Rules;
- Performance Management Framework including monitoring and reporting on performance quarterly and year end;
- NPMP, Local Plan, Corporate, National Park Family and service indicators;
- Annual performance and business plan;
- Grant Memorandum and vision statement agreed with Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs);
- Medium Term (3-4 years) strategic and financial planning strategy;
- Corporate Strategy;
- Defra 8 point plan for National Parks.

Supporting Principle: D(3) Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

- (7) Implement our medium term financial plan by:
- Completing reviews of the leadership team, conservation, support services, rangers, strategy and plan making;
 - Implementing a programme of reducing input costs to those areas given strategic certainty;
 - Managing the three year capital programme;
 - Being clear on the full cost of operations;
 - Increasing our income from giving;
 - Achieving our commercial programme income targets;
 - Developing/establishing sponsorship relations;
 - Securing external funding for major programme and partnership delivery;
 - Make sure the budgeting process is all inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operation over the medium and longer term.
- (8) Make sure that the medium term financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage.
- (9) Maximise the social value/return to the public on every pound spent through:
- Delivering eco system services;
 - Procuring services and goods well;
 - Reducing the Authority's carbon footprint;
 - Planning gain.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Feedback surveys and exit/decommissioning strategies with Evidence of changes as a result;
- Budgeting guidance and protocols;
- Member Budget Workshops;
- Quarterly Budget Monitoring meetings with Members;
- Quarterly budget monitoring report considered by officer performance monitoring group;
- Medium Term (3-4 years) strategic and financial planning strategy;
- National Park Purposes;
- Corporate Strategy;
- Social Value in contracts above the EU threshold;
- Contract Procedure Rules;
- Section 106 Register of Legal Agreements.

(E) Core Principle

Developing the Authority's capacity including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Supporting Principle: E(1) Developing the Authority's capacity

We will:

- (1) Maximise the impact of our three roles of regulatory, influencing and doing by:
 - Providing value for money in achieving our outputs and outcomes through service and performance reviews. This will include benchmarking and looking for opportunities for business process improvement, smarter procurement and reduction in input costs;
 - implementation of our Information Management Strategy and Asset Management Plan;
 - working with others to seek opportunities to work more effectively together, understanding the relationship between what we do and what others do to avoid duplication of effort.
- (2) Use performance data and trend analysis to guide decision making.
- (3) Use research data and benchmarking information in Service Planning.
- (4) Ensure the effective operation of partnerships to deliver agreed outcome and the methodology used to assess outcomes and effectiveness.
- (5) Empower and develop staff to maximise their potential to achieve for the Place and the Authority through:
 - Agreeing organisational capabilities and design principles and putting in place an organisation structure within the three directorates;
 - Developing and implementing a workforce plan;
 - Developing and implementing an organisational development programme.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Regular reviews of activities, outputs and planned outcomes;
- Member Scrutiny Process and scrutiny reports;
- Programme of Value for money reviews;
- Internal Audit Programme;
- Member Representatives involved in reviewing activities;
- Evidence of performance data and trend analysis informing decision making;
- Evidence of research data and benchmarking information being used to inform service planning;
- Monitoring of effective operation of partnerships to deliver agreed outcome and the methodology used to assess outcomes and effectiveness;
- Reports from the National Park Management Plan Advisory Group;
- Authority Members appointed to Outside Bodies;
- Learning and Development Policy for Staff;
- Annual identification of corporate needs and reports to the Leadership Team;
- Staff annual learning and development and induction programmes;
- Individual Staff Learning and Development Plans;
- Attainment of Investors in People Accreditation.

Supporting Principle: E(2) Developing the capability of the Authority's leadership and other individuals

We will:

- (6) Develop the capability of the membership through:
- Ensuring our committee structure and decision making processes are efficient and effective with the different roles of member and staff being clear and understood;
 - Having in place appropriate systems and guidance to support such structures and ensure effective communication between members and staff in their respective roles;
 - Ensure role descriptions for members, chairs and special responsibility roles are clearly understood;
 - Having structures in place which enable members to utilise their skills and experience including through scrutiny to help achieve outcomes;
 - Conduct a survey of members every two years and respond to feedback if required.
- (7) Agree the extent of delegation from members to staff and periodically review the effectiveness of this.
- (8) Appoint appropriately qualified and experienced people to the three statutory roles of:
- Head of Paid service
 - Chief Finance officer
 - Monitoring Officer
- and put in place appropriate protocols and policies to support these roles including in the chair's job description a responsibility for appraisal of the Chief executive.
- (7) Ensure we have an effective executive leadership group in place with appropriate skills and experience, working coherently to achieve high levels of confidence in the NPA internally and externally.
- (8) Identify learning and development needs of Members through the introduction of member personal development plans and meet these needs through an annual programme and through development tailored to the needs of individuals.
- (9) Identify learning and development needs for staff at an individual, service and corporate levels providing ways of meeting these through a variety of means as described in our Learning and Development Policy including an annual corporate programme and leadership development.
- (10) Use our skills and experience matrix for different member roles and the member development plan process to help Members self-assess and develop appropriate skills to carry out their work.
- (11) Implement the appraisal process for Secretary of State Members.
- (12) Use our Joint Performance and Achievement Review process to appraise the performance of individual staff and maximise the contribution of staff through individual objectives and development plans.
- (13) Ensure a suitable set of employment policies and practices are in place to support staff as our most valued asset.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Job descriptions for Chief Executive, Authority Chair, Members and Member Representative Roles;
- Regular meetings with Chief Executive, Chair and Deputy Chair;
- Regular meetings with Chief Executive, all Chairs and Deputy/Vice Chairs;
- Chief Executive's appraisal process led by Chair of Authority;
- Scheme of delegation reviewed at least annually in light of legal and organisational changes;
- Standing orders and financial regulations are reviewed on a regular basis;
- Clear statement of respective roles and responsibilities and how they will be put into practice;
- Leadership Development Programme;
- Member Training and Development Framework including annual Member Learning and Development

programme, individual Member Development Plans, i “Buddy” for new Members and annual self-assessment;

- Annual appraisals are carried out for Secretary of State Members;
- Learning and Development Policy for Staff;
- Annual identification of corporate needs and reports to the Leadership Team;
- Individual Staff Learning and Development Plans;
- Lunchtime walks and talks;
- Staff and member e-zine;
- Employee Roadshows;
- User Groups;
- Consultation on proposals;
- Biennial Staff Survey results and Action Plan;
- Biennial Members Survey results and Action Plan;
- Annual Audit Plan;
- Individual Service Surveys;
- Joint Performance and Achievement Review (JPAR) Guidance makes sure that appriasals are linked to service plans and learning and development plans;
- Human Resources Policies are published and periodically reviewed to make sure they comply with legislation and reflect best practice;
- Corporate Training Plan;
- Wellbeing Policy includes guidance on health and wellbeing and offer services to employees;
- Health and Safety reports are considered by the Leadership Team and by the Local Joint Committee and Health and Safety Committee;
- Managing Change Policy and training (e.g resilience training);
- Occupational Health referrals;
- Coaching and counselling available.

(F) Core Principle

Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

Supporting Principle: F(1) Managing Risk

We will:

- (1) Implement our risk management policy and strategy throughout all levels of the Authority and regular review its effectiveness including through regular reviews and scrutiny by internal audit.
- (2) Implement robust and integrated risk management arrangements and make sure that they are working effectively.
- (3) Making sure that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Risk Management Policy and Strategy;
- Corporate Risk Register and monitoring;
- Service Plan – Risk register and monitoring;
- Risk based internal audit strategy and annual plan;
- Information Technology Disaster Recovery Plan;
- Business Continuity Plan including Crisis Management Procedures;
- Health and Safety Policy, support and annual report to Leadership Team and Local Joint Committee
- Insurance Policies;
- Building security systems.

Supporting Principle: F(2) Managing Performance

We will:

- (4) Implement a robust performance management framework with quarterly and annual monitoring and reporting to managers and members.
- (5) Ensure our decision making processes are sound through:
 - evidenced based reports following a prescribed format to ensure relevant information and risks are included;
 - expert advice being available to report authors and to managers and members at decision making meetings;
 - committee and meeting processes.
- (6) Implement our scrutiny process and monitor its success as an effective challenge and performance improvement tool.
- (7) Monitor and review activities and report on progress made.
- (8) Ensure our financial regulations, standing orders and budget monitoring support reporting of financial performance.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Annual Performance and Business Plan includes performance against targets;

- Using research data and benchmarking information in Service Planning;
- Quarterly Performance Reports to Audit Resources and Performance Committee;
- Quarterly Performance Review meetings involving Managers;
- Employee performance against targets is formally reviewed twice a year as part of the JPAR process;
- Annual Planning Policy Review – provides analysis on how planning policies are working;
- Ongoing discussion between members and officers on the information needs of members to support decision making and questions in biennial Member Survey;
- Publication of agendas and minutes of meetings;
- Report templates include heading to make sure that risks and other implications are considered;
- Agreement on the information that will be needed and timescales;
- Although not required to have Scrutiny Committees we have a tried and tested framework for Member involvement in scrutiny;
- Evidence of improvements arising from Member Scrutiny;
- Value for money reviews to Audit Resources and Performance Committee;
- Member motions to full Authority allow Members to raise and discuss areas of concern;
- Every year the annual Member Learning and Development programme include workshops relating to strategic business and financial planning;
- Record of decision making and supporting materials;
- Our Standing Orders include Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations;
- The Budget Monitoring Group involving Members meets quarterly to discuss financial arrangements and assess the effectiveness of the control measures in place.

Supporting Principle: F(3) Robust Internal Controls

We will:

- (9) Ensure there is a system of internal control in place which is reviewed in light of experience and feedback on its effectiveness from auditors and others.
- (10) Evaluate and monitor risk management and internal control on a regular basis.
- (11) Ensure our confidential reporting policy ('whistle blowing' policy) and anti- fraud and corruption policy are clearly accessible on our website, intranet and to all employees as part of the material given to staff during their induction.
- (12) Ensure that effective internal and external auditors are appointed and that they have direct contact with the Audit Resources and Performance committee.
- (13) Ensure that the Audit Resources and Performance committee is supported in its audit, scrutiny and standards roles.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Risk Management Policy and Strategy formally approved and adopted and is reviewed and updated on a regular basis;
- Risk Management Policy and Strategy;
- Risk based internal audit strategy and annual plan;
- Audit reports and management actions reported to Audit Resources and Performance Committee;
- Compliance with the Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption;
- Confidential Reporting Policy in place and promoted;
- Risk based internal audit strategy and annual plan.

- Audit reports and management actions reported to Audit Resources and Performance Committee;
- Annual assurance and summary of activities reported to Audit Resources and Performance Committee and included in Annual Governance Statement;
- The terms of reference for Audit Resources and Performance Committee includes Internal and external Audit matters and matters relating to the Authority's corporate governance framework including the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Governance Report;
- The Budget Monitoring Group involving Members meets quarterly to discuss financial arrangements and assess the effectiveness of the control measures in place.

Supporting Principle: F(4) Managing Data

We will:

- (14) Implement our Information Management Strategy led by our designated Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and supported by a network of Information Asset Owners.
- (15) Develop and roll out our Data Protection charter which will include guidance on arrangements for sharing data.
- (16) Ensure our data is accurate and clean through:
- The measures outlined in the information management strategy;
 - The performance management processes.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme and disclosure log;
- Appointment of Senior Information Risk Owner, Lead Information Asset Owner and departmental Information Asset Owners;
- Guidance available to Staff and Members on data protection issues;
- Creation of data protection policies, data protection staff training plan and rollout with appropriate tools and monitoring, robust processes where personal/sensitive data is created or used as part of wider operations;
- Use of robust data processor agreements where 3rd parties hold or process personal/sensitive data on the Authority's behalf;
- Data Protection Statement;
- Quality and accuracy of data considered in preparing quarterly performance reports;
- Growth of datasets/types published online.

Supporting Principle: F(5) Strong public financial management

We will:

- (17) Put in place a medium term financial plan supported by an annual review and budget setting process aligned to the corporate strategy.
- (18) Ensure our financial management includes forward planning of expenditure and resources, budget consultation, budget setting and monitoring and final accounts. The aim is to ensure that these are accurate, include information relevant to the user and are completed to agreed timescales. Financial Regulations further support the above by setting our policies and procedures that are to be adhered to.
- (19) Ensure the Chief Finance Officer has independent reporting as necessary to the Chief Executive, Resource Management team and members even though the post holder sits in the Corporate Strategy and development Directorate.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Financial Management Arrangements and reporting;
- Budget monitoring reports;
- Budget Monitoring meetings involving Members.

(G) Core Principle

Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

Supporting Principle: G(1) Implementing good practice in transparency

We will:

- (1) Increase accessibility to information and to engaging with the Authority through a variety of ways and access channels including through improvements to digital communications.
- (2) Hold all meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality and implement a public participation scheme for all committee.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Key governance documents, including Standing Orders, are published on website using modern.gov;
- Publishing operational data through our website;
- Documents relating to meetings of the Authority and its Committees are published on the Authority website;
- Provisions in place allowing reporting on meetings and providing an audio webcast of meetings of the Authority and its Committees;
- Publish work programmes for the Authority and its Committees;
- Committee reports containing exempt information are kept to a minimum and where possible an open report is provided to summarise the decision to be made and allow public participation.

Supporting Principle: G(2) Implementing good practice in reporting.

We will:

- (3) Prepare, approve and publish annual performance monitoring reports for our:
 - National Park Management Plan
 - Performance and Business Plan
 - Local Plan
- (4) Prepare and publish an Annual Governance Statement which assesses performance against our Code of Corporate Governance and identifies actions for continuous improvement.
- (5) Ensure our Monitoring Officer has independent reporting as necessary to the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team and Members even though the post holder sits in the Corporate Strategy and Development directorate.
- (6) Prepare and publish our annual financial statements in accordance with guidance and good practice.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Committee approval of year end performance reports and annual accounts;
- Prepare and publish Annual Governance Statement and financial statements in accordance with guidance and best practice;
- Monitoring Officer Protocol.

Supporting Principle: G(3) Assurance and effective accountability

We will:

- (7) Proactively work with internal and external auditors to ensure the good governance of the Authority through:
- Regular liaison meetings;
 - Forward audit plans based on risk;
 - Responding to all recommendations in a timely way.
- (8) Ensure the internal and external auditors have direct and unrestricted access to senior managers and members.
- (9) Consider and respond to assurances sought and received on our performance including:
- External audit letter;
 - Internal audit reports;
 - Feedback from those charged with governance including Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Chief Executive and Chair of Audit Resources and Performance Committee;
 - Local Government Ombudsman;
 - Planning appeals and inspector reports;
 - Complaints and Freedom of Information/ Environmental Information Regulations enquires;
 - Investors in People assessors;
 - Legal proceedings;
 - National Park peer reviews;
 - Self-assessment processes e.g. against CIPFA's code of practice on managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption.
- (10) Ensure our risk management policy processes are applied to partnerships and delivery service level agreements.

What evidence/assurance is in place?

- Evidence of positive improvement;
- Compliance with CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit;
- Compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards;
- Evidence in Annual Governance Statement;
- Community Strategy;
- People and Park connected strategy and action plan;
- Audit Plans agreed by Members at ARP;
- Assurances included in Annual Governance Statement.