



**REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE  
 1 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021**

**(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:
  - Care – we care for the Peak District National Park, the people we work with and all those we serve. It's at the heart of everything we do;
  - Enjoy – we take pride in what we do and feel good about our contribution;
  - Pioneer – We were born of pioneers. We will continue to explore opportunities to inspire future generations;
- (2) Ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of Members and Officers 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 Officers in Committee;
- Protocol on Development Control and Planning Policy in place;
- Registers of Members and Officer interests and guidance with annual review by Monitoring Officer;
- Member and Officer gifts and hospitality register and guidance with annual review by Monitoring Officer;
- Member Standards included in the Authority Meeting 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 the Authority Meeting as part of the quarterly, performance report. Quarterly reporting changing to bi-annually in during 2020/21;
- Complaints policy in place and individual complaints are monitored and reported to the Authority meeting now half yearly with lessons learned. Reported bi-annually during 2020/21;
- 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 Programmes & Resources Committee (P&R);
- 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 ARP 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.

### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- During 2020/21 there was one Member Code of Conduct Complaint. It was alleged that the Member had not treated the Complainant with respect, had attempted to intimidate a member of the Complainant's family, bullied and harassed the Complainant and by their actions brought the Authority into disrepute. The Monitoring Officer met with the Member to discuss the circumstances behind the complaint in an attempt to avoid similar allegations in the future. There was no evidence of a breach of the Code.
- A summary of all complaints from members of the public are reported to the Authority in the quarterly performance report. The report includes information of the outcome of the complaint, management action taken and lessons learned from the complaint. Reported bi-annually during 2020/21.
- Completed the Monitoring Officers annual review of Officers' and Members' Register of Interests and the registers of Gifts and Hospitality.
- Following the AGM in July 2020 all Authority Members were asked to review and update their entries in the Register of Interests.
- The annual report of the Due Diligence Panel has been received by Programmes and Resources Committee.
- To support the Authority's aim to continuously improve and benchmark its performance against other organisations the Authority chose to be assessed against the latest Investors in People (IIP) standard and following an extensive assessment exercise, the Authority received notification in May 2019 that it had successfully met the IIP standard.
- Based on the recommendations in the Investors in People assessment report an IIP Draft Action Plan was developed during the summer of 2019. The Draft Plan was presented to the Senior Leadership Team on 15th August 2019, which was followed by wider consultation with Heads of Service, Unison and Staff Committee representatives. The consultation period closed on 9th September 2019 and the final IIP Action Plan was published in Quarter 3.
- Following a recommendation from the external IIP Assessor in May 2019, the development of the Authority's new competency framework was put on hold until the Authority's core values had been identified. A staff survey on values was undertaken and achieved a 67% response rate, indicating a very high level of employee engagement. A similar value based survey was subsequently sent to the Authority's Members and volunteers to gather their views.
- Following discussions at meetings of the IIP Delivery Group the Authority's values were agreed as Care, Enjoy and Pioneer. These values are supported by a definition and a set of behaviours.
- Received positive feedback in the Investors in People report, July 2020, with our efforts being described as highly commendable.
- Adopted the new values into person specifications to replace the competency framework
- JPAR process refreshed in line with 'keep it simple' behaviour of our core values, streamlined the guidance and forms.

### **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, through recruitment and selection, and the performance management (appraisal) 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 though 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 the Authority and the Management Team are involved in preparing the Annual Governance Statement and it is considered and approved by the Authority meeting following scrutiny by the External Auditors;
- Employee terms and conditions, values based set of behaviours and completed appraisal 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;
- Performance Management (appraisal) process;
- Corporate training programme and developing the Management Team;
- 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 (DDP), chaired by the Monitoring Officer, looks at issues such as reputation and environmental impact when considering giving and sponsorship offers;
- Registers of in-kind and financial sponsorship and giving under £5,000 and register of Staff Benefits reviewed by the DDP every 6 months with offers over £5000 being considered on a case by case basis;
- Register for additional employment over grade H.

### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- Every two years the Authority carries out a survey of Members to get feedback on the following areas:
  - Strategic and External Leadership
  - Governance and Scrutiny
  - Contribution and Development
  - Communication
  - Community Engagement
- The Members' survey was due to take place during 2018 but in light of the Member decision to carry out a review of governance arrangements the next survey will take place during 2021/22.
- The compulsory annual Member planning training events were held on 25 September 2020 and 23 October 2020. In the 2016 Members Survey 66% (15) of Members responding agreed that they were aware of the Authority's ethical framework and how they contribute to maintaining high ethical standards. 30% (7) Neither agreed nor disagreed and 4% (1) did not know.

### **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 Officers 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 & Social Care 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 RMM) (s114 Finance Act 1988);
  - Monitoring Officer (also Member of RMM and 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;
- RMM 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 Authority and Standing Committees and Resource Management Meeting;
- Delegation to Officers indicates where delegated decisions need sign off from Legal Services;
- 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.

## Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness

- Following implementation of the GDPR in May 2018 we have introduced a certification programme to ensure that all staff undertake refresher training on Data Protection and Data security every two years. All associated data protection policies have been embedded throughout the Authority and provision of advice and security incidents – both involving personal data and IT are logged. The Authority received substantial reassurance from the GDPR Internal Audit report in January 2021; previous audit had identified a need to review and undertake clear desk checks which will be actioned on return to the office. Work is ongoing with our information asset register software to enable the Authority to monitor and manage data in relation to specified retention policies. The consolidation work is expected to be completed by end of September 2021 and the following financial year end should provide a good baseline for reporting and demonstrating the effectiveness of the applied retention
- The Authority has a duty to keep its constitutional documents up to date. The Authority's Standing Orders and supporting documents are regularly reviewed and where appropriate updated to reflect organisational needs, best practice and changes to legislation.
- Received a positive unqualified opinion on the statement of accounts and a satisfactory conclusion on value for money from our External Auditors.
- Agreed the Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21 to include reports on Creditors, Payroll/Furlough, Information Governance, Budget Management/Covid Consequences, Vehicles, IT and Management (including follow up).
- Responded to three internal audit reports on Payroll, Information Governance and Creditors all of which were given a Substantial level of assurance with no priority actions reported.
- The 2020/21 annual assurance report from the Internal Auditor states: The overall opinion of the Head of Internal Audit on the framework of governance, risk management and control operating in the Authority is that it provides Substantial Assurance. No reliance was placed on the work of other assurance bodies in reaching that opinion. There are no significant control weaknesses which, in the opinion of the Head of Internal Audit, need to be considered for inclusion in the Annual Governance Statement. However in giving the opinion, Head of Internal Audit note that Covid-19 has significantly affected the Authority over the last year, with a wide ranging impact on business operation and controls. While the work of Internal Audit is directed to the areas that are most at risk or provide most value for the Authority it is not possible to conclude on the full extent of the impact of Covid-19 on the operations of the Authority.
- It has previously been decided that, in reviewing our performance against our Code of Corporate Governance, any area where the Authority has received a limited level (or no level) of assurance from the Internal Auditors will be identified in our Annual Governance Statement as an issue affecting effectiveness. During 2020/21 none of the Internal Audit reports fell into this category.
- Responded to complaints investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) reporting quarterly to Members. For 2020/21 2 decisions have been received with no evidence of maladministration or injustice and there are no complaints outstanding.
- The Authority's arrangements for handling Member Code of Conduct complaints are in place and published. One complaint was received during 2020/21.
- In the 2018/19 AGS it was recognised that, although the recommendations arising from the Glover Review were unlikely to be published until the second half of 2019/20, depending upon the recommendations, there may be unexpected or unanticipated demands as Defra implement recommendations or consult on legislative changes needed to implement the findings.
- The Landscapes Review: Final Report to Government was published in September 2019 calling on national landscapes to work together to be happier, healthier, greener, more beautiful and open to everyone. We feel this sense of mission and share the ambitions particularly keenly in the Peak District. Our Corporate Strategy 2019-2024, and the National Park Management Plan 2018-23 are both largely aligned to these aspirations.
- We are working through National Parks England to take a lead in responding to these aspirations as a network, identifying four areas where we will collectively work together: being leaders in nature recovery; being national parks for everyone, shaping the future of farming and leading on the climate emergency. The development of the Great North Bog initiative between 4 National Parks, 3 AONB's and the emerging South Pennines Park is a good example of this new way forward in line with the Landscapes review. While we await the Government's formal response, we know they support the aims and outcomes sets out. What is unknown is the extent to which the proposed new ways of working will affect the Authority's operating model and our way of working within, and across, the protected landscapes network; we are however in a good position already having some of the suggested ways of

new working already in place such as the Moors for the Future Partnership and other partner delivery arrangements. We are, and will continue to, work with the government to ensure we have the necessary tools, skills, data and resources to support these outcomes. There may be new demands, new ways of working or a different governance models recommended by Government, which if fundamentally different is likely to require consultation and legislation,

- The 2019/20 AGS identified the uncertainties around the impacts of the recommendations arising from the National Landscapes (Glover) Review on structures and funding and the timescales in which they are to be implemented as an issue that may affect effectiveness.
- The 2018/19 AGS acknowledged that uncertainty around the funding settlement from Defra following the end of the four year settlement. Through the auspices of National Parks England we have been working collectively across the National Parks network to inform Government and Defra of the importance of certainty and a strong settlement. This informing work continues. Government Departments were given a single year settlement in the Spending Review of November 2020.
- Usually, a Spending Review would cover a period of three or four years to give government departments enough certainty to make long-term plans. The coronavirus pandemic disrupted many aspects of life over the last year and that makes long-term planning particularly difficult. To reflect the uncertainties that currently exist the government has decided that this Spending Review would only cover the 12 months from April 2021. The Authority's 2021/22 NPG settlement is £6,698,847.00, however the 2021/22 budget has been prepared on the basis that the NPG will be at the same level as 2020/21 without the £335k biodiversity funding.

**(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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 2019-2024;
- Financial information such as outturns, accounts and External Audit reports published on our website;
- Local Government Transparency Code 2015 - information 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);
- Publishing prescribed information about our gender pay gap results in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017;
- 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 or audio visual webcast of meetings of the Authority and its Committees;
- Publish work programmes for the Authority and its Committees;
- Committee Reports and Minutes;
- Resource Management Meeting 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, Climate Change considerations;
- 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.

### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- Corporate Strategy 2019-24 in place.
- Since the current Covid-19 pandemic situation resulted in meetings of the Authority and its Committees being held virtually, the Authority has been providing live video webcasts, rather than audio webcasts, and a watch again facility on the internet for all meetings of the Authority and its Committees. The recordings are retained and published for three years after the date of the meeting.

### **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;

- Sign up to agreed Statements of Common Ground on cross boundary planning policy issues
- (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;
- Annual Parishes Day and regular meetings with the Peak Park Parishes Forum (PPPF);
- 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 internal communications plan;
- Partnership working when preparing bids and delivering externally funded projects;
- Examples of Partnerships such as Moors for the Future (Moorlife 2020), SW Peak Partnership, Generation Green Coalition 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
- Engagement with Heads of Planning Groups (e.g. Derbyshire, South Yorkshire, English National Parks)
- Trails Steering Group
- Trans Pennine Trail Partnership
- Stanage Forum

### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- Approved the eighth Operational Plan from the Moors for the Future Partnership. The plan covered the commitments in the financial year 2020/21 and included a look forward, both at commitments for the following year (2021/22) and the expectations of business development during and beyond this time frame.
- Approved an updated Partnerships Policy. The update makes the policy more effective in supporting the operations of the Authority's appointed representative by minimising the risks to the Authority present in partnership working.
- Provided Members with monitoring information for the end of the second year of the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2018-23.
- Successful bid to the Visit England Discover England Fund round 5 to further develop the English National Parks Experience Collection.
- National Parks UK Limited wound up and replaced by an unincorporated group – National Park Authorities work together and have service level agreements for communications and provision of new Member inductions.



- With support from the Authority, the Local Access Forum has continued to engage with our constituent Authorities to see how the Forum and the Authorities can work together on issues such as Green Lanes, reviewing Rights of Way Improvement Plans and other rights of way and access issues.
- Continued with programme of meetings between constituent councils and the Chief Executive and Chair where possible during the Covid-19 pandemic situation.
- The Authority has observer status at any meetings of Derbyshire combined authorities' and has Officer and Member involvement in Sheffield City Region meetings.
- Business Peak District, Nature Peak District and Visit Peak District continue to work together to produce a package of interventions to attract investment from local Enterprise Partnerships.
- Continued our programme of working with local authorities within and on the edges of the National Park at a strategic and operational level to help deepen understanding. This includes a memorandum of understanding with Derbyshire authorities on the duty to cooperate in relation to planning.
- In the 2018/19 AGS it was noted that although the 2018-2023 National Park Management Plan has been approved and adopted by partners there were still risks around the delivery of certain elements due to limited engagement these include Climate Control and Events Management. The third year's delivery of the 2018-23 Peak District National Park Management Plan has been one nobody could have anticipated. With resources directed to dealing with the pandemic and facilities closed many work programmes have been put on hold, however despite these constrained times essential work has also gone on undeterred. Appreciation should go the Moors for the Future Partnership for the completion of their largest annual work programme in their history with 197 Ha of sphagnum planted and 133 dams installed plus a wide variety of other work to secure our upland landscape. Also several bird of prey species showed encouraging breeding successes, thanks to collaboration between landowners, gamekeepers and raptor workers. Peregrine falcons had their best year in a decade, with all six known nesting attempts being successful, resulting in a record 14 fledged young. The levels of occupied bird of prey territories continue to present an ongoing challenge, but the progress of peregrine and goshawk this year shows us what can be achieved.
- With The Moors for the Future Partnership's biggest ever operational delivery year (£5m projects out turn) plans are now being developed to re finance the programme following the end of MoorLIFE 2020 project in March 2022.
- Ongoing partnership working with user groups and residents to develop management plans in relation to the most-visited estates/assets, namely North Lees and the Trails.

### **Sub Principle: B(3) Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively**

#### **We will:**

- (12) Underpin our Corporate Strategy outcome 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 plan to support our 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 Engagement Service and existing Policy and Communities functions.
- (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.

- (18) Ensure the work to transform the most degraded upland landscape across Europe, The Dark Peak and South Pennines, continues on its present positive trajectory through the Moors for the Future Partnership.

### **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, website 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. Stange 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;
- Evidence of community and stakeholder meetings;
- Collect data for our corporate indicator: Peak District National Park connection is increased by 20%, and Peak District National Park audience reach that is 30% closer to demographics of those within an hour's travel time of the National Park;
- Role descriptions in place for Chair, Members and Member Champion Roles;
- Consultation Area of Website;
- Officer Delegation for Planning – Parish Objection brings an application 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;
- Parish bulletins

### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- The P&R Committee received information on the works undertaken during September 2019 on the Wetton Hills route by Staffordshire County Council, as the Highway Authority, Members are asked to consider whether these have an effect on the decision made in September 2018 to proceed to make a permanent traffic regulation order (TRO) on the Wetton Hills route.
- We undertook a residents survey in 2019. The results indicate that the Peak District National Park is perceived to be a good place to live by the majority of residents, and generally positive feedback about the Authority was received.
- During the last 12 months we have undertaken 2 online surveys and starting on 08/06/21 we are holding a series of 5 online workshops to debate different themes.
- Parishes newsletter sent out regularly to all Parish Councils and Meetings within National Park Boundary
- Local Plan questionnaires and surveys
- Community Engagement - We have a page on our website which details how the Authority can help Communities including neighbourhood and village plans and developing community led projects. A communities small grant scheme is also available.
- Regular Chief Executive update reports to Authority meetings

**(C) Core Principle****Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.****Sub 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 five 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 five year Corporate Strategy and medium term financial planning processes are aligned and reviewed annually and quarterly in year moving to bi-annually during 2020/21
- (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 five 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 (3-5 years) strategic and financial planning strategy;
- National Park Management Plan (NPMP), 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;
- 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 Management Team and Programmes and Resources Committee
- Insurance Policies;
- Building security systems;
- Annual Performance and Business Plan;
- Annual Statement of Accounts.

## Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness

- The Authority has adopted the Development Management Policies and Policies Map to become part 2 of the adopted Local Plan for the National Park replacing the 2001 saved Local Plan policies in their entirety and noted the current status of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) confirming that the 2003 Affordable Housing SPD will be replaced by the DM Policies DPD
- The Authority also amended the standard S106 agreement for locally needed affordable homes to allow for the insertion of a "Mortgagee in Possession" clause, on terms to be agreed by the Head of Law in consultation with the Director of Conservation and Planning.
- Spatial outcomes in Local Plan to be reviewed through comprehensive review and engagement process.
- Agreed the arrangements for the National Park Authority to sign up to and agree Statements of Common Ground with constituent authorities and other relevant bodies as part of the duty to cooperate in producing Local Plans.
- Considered the proposed strategic interventions that will be undertaken during the third year (2021/22) of our five-year Corporate Strategy (2019-24).
- Adopted a Local Validation Checklist for Planning Applications.
- Approved a lawful development certificate checklist.

## Sub 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 – due to be reviewed;
- Capital Investment Strategy;
- Commercial 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 bi-annual/annual reports;
- Service and corporate improvement plans.

## Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness

- Approved delegation to the Chief Executive to determine whether an appropriate assessment is required under regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and where required carry out the assessment.
- Considered a record of housing delivery and policy monitoring in the National Park in 2018/19 and over the full plan period from 2006 – 2019.
- Undertake further update of housing delivery through annual monitoring update as part of Local Plan review in 2021
- Approved the appointment of contractors to carry out work on the trails structures, as identified by specialist surveyors in the Trails Structures Survey 2015.
- Corporate Property Asset Management Plan approved by Authority.
- The Programmes and Resources Committee -Climate Change Member Task Group established in 2019, has now been agreed as a Steering Group with amended Terms of Reference and Members will be appointed annually at the Authority AGM.
- Progress on the National Park Management Plan will be reported back to Members as part of the National Park Management Plan Annual Monitoring Report presented to the May 2021 Authority Meeting.
- Updated Members on the operation of the Hope Valley Explorer in 2019 and the plans for 2020 and agreed an approach of a strengthening partnership model as we develop the service over the next two years. A further update will be forthcoming in 2021 as officers' work with partners to resume the summer service following interruption during the Coronavirus pandemic.
- The Authority has contributed to and endorsed the National Parks England Climate Change Position Statement.
- Ideas for a new support scheme which would properly reward farmers and land managers for the delivery of a full suite of public goods have been further developed in particular through Defra's Environmental Land Management (ELM) Tests and Trials. A Peak District ELM Test and Trail exploring whether the National Character Assessments (NCA) are a good tool for the new support system and in particular for spatial prioritisation and the development of Land Management Plans was completed for the White Peak NCA. The test has continued in the Dark and South West Peak NCAs and will be completed in 21/22.
- £5m of delivery carried out during the 2020/21 winter delivery season of restoration work by the Moors for the Future Partnership
- New commercial plan approved by members, setting out how the Authority plans to diversify its income to support delivery of National park outcomes
- During 2020/21 the Resources Management Meeting considered a number of climate change issues including:
  - Carbon Management Plan 2
  - Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment
 The above issues were also reported to the Programmes and Resources Committee.

#### **(D) Core Principle**

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

#### **Sub Principle: D(1) Determining interventions**

##### **We will:**

- (1) Deliver our five 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
- Corporate Plan KPI updates highlight actions and interventions with communities (including grants and progress on neighbourhood plans)

**Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- Planning Committee receives reports on planning service performance including
  - The speed of determining applications for major development;
  - The quality of decisions made by the authority on applications for major development;
  - The speed of determining applications for non-major development;
  - The quality of decisions made by the authority on applications for non-major development.
- Carried out the annual review of the minerals & local finance plan.
- Designated that part of Hayfield parish that is within the Peak District National Park Authority boundary as a neighbourhood area under Schedule 9 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- Planning Committee adopted the Peak District National Park Transport Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as part of the Authority’s suite of Development Management Documents.
- Adoption of Supplementary Planning Document for Residential Annexes in 2021.
- Work Programmes published for meetings of the Authority and its Committees.
- Continued to facilitate a large number of speakers at Authority and Committee meetings through our Public Participation Scheme despite need to switch to virtual meetings due to the Covid-19 Pandemic situation. We adapted our scheme to fit the virtual meetings and enable the public to still take part.

**Sub Principle: D(2) Planning Interventions**

**We will:**

- (4) 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.
- (5) 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.
  - (6) Ensure our risk management policy, strategy and processes cover risk management for partnerships.
  - (7) Make sure that our Procurement Strategy and Contract Procedure Rules are robust but provide additional flexibility when needed.
  - (8) Implement a performance management system with:
    - identified measures of success/indicators and targets which cascade into service plans and individual objectives;
    - quarterly monitoring moving to half yearly monitoring and annual reporting of performance;
    - identified leads for data owners and data collectors with appropriate checks on quality of information.
  - (9) 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 in March.

#### **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;
- Internal Communications Plan;
- 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.

#### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- Planning Committee considered a summary of the work carried out by the Monitoring & Enforcement Team over the year April 2020 – March 2021. The Committee also received quarterly performance reports setting out details of breaches that had been resolved in that quarter. The majority of breaches of planning control were resolved voluntarily or through negotiation with the landowner (or other relevant

- persons) without resorting to formal enforcement action.
- Approved the work plan for the Programmes and Resources Committee for 2019-2020.
- The Strategic Leadership Team and during the Re-structure transition period the Management Team of the Chief Executive and Heads of Service have continued to meet monthly to discuss performance and identify ways of working together to address issues whether performance targets may be off target.

### **Sub Principle: D(3) Optimising achievement of intended outcomes**

#### **We will:**

- (10) Implement our Medium Term Financial Plan by:
- 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.
- (11) 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.
- (12) 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 (3-5 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.

#### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- The Authority Meeting received an operational and financial update on the Peak District National Park Foundation. Regular reports on performance of the Foundation will be included in the half-yearly reports against performance of KPI13 considered at meetings of the Authority.
- Members continued to be involved in preparing the 2021/22 Budget through Strategic Financial Workshops held in October and November 2020.



- The 2017/18 AGS identified a remaining risk/concern in relation to meeting the corporate objective of diversifying and growing income. Specifically there remained a risk to the scale and speed of diversification and growth. There was a need for the Strategic Commercial Plan to set out the process, activities, skills and investment required to deliver the Corporate Strategy plus the potential returns (scale and timeframe) from the implementation of the Plan.
- In the 2018/19 AGS it was recognised that there still remained issues around the culture of the Authority and its ability to deliver commercial ambitions.
- While the issue remains solid progress has been made on a number of fronts. Work has progressed with Heads of Service to encourage more significant partnership grant applications with success in particular for Moors for the Future; South West Peak Landscape Partnership Programme funding, Millers Dale goods shed, Discover England and Generation Green project. New avenues of strategic funding are being actively explored with PDNPA as a partner via D2N2; LEP; Universities bordering The Peak District and major infrastructure projects e.g. A628 upgrade.
- Our charitable foundation is now launched and raising income through visitor giving, donations and sponsorship. This is helping to change mindsets amongst volunteers, employees and Members. Finally relationships with a selection of major industries are being nurtured to develop a collective investment fund which will sustain delivery of nature and carbon outcomes at a landscape scale.
- Members approved the Authority's Revenue Budget for 2021/22 on the 19th February 2021 and the Budget report included a forward look in terms of the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The report reflected the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **(E) Core Principle**

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

### **Sub 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
  - 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 Champions 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;
- Investors in People Delivery Group in conjunction with Staff Survey results identify corporate learning needs ;
- Staff annual learning and development and induction programmes;
- Individual Staff Learning and Development Plans;
- Retainment of Investors in People Accreditation.

### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- Following the implementation of the new national pay spine with effect from 1 April 2019, a pay modelling exercise was undertaken to work out the costs involved in moving to a pay grade structure with consistent number of increments (ideally 4) with no overlaps.
- The National Park Authority agreed an adjustment to the baseline budget for 2020/21 of £29,000 to be allocated for removal of overlapping spinal points in the grade structure following a review of the pay structure; (the total cost of which over four years is estimated to be £75,000). This action has been delayed as a result of the impact of Covid on the work of the HR service.
- Following a request from a Member the Programmes and Resources Committee established a Micro Scrutiny Panel to review the process used to progress the disposal of 7 minor properties. The findings of the Panel were reported back to the Committee in May 2020.
- Overall the Scrutiny Panel were content with the revised process and recommended a number of changes to make sure that:
  - The revised process enables the Authority and its Officers to be bolder in approach by clarifying that the methods of disposal identified in the Toolkit should have equal weighting.
  - There is a clear audit trail with good record keeping including meeting notes and agreed actions.
  - Good lines of communication were maintained internally and externally with a single point of contact for enquiries. The process needed to be much clearer on whether engagement with stakeholders was consultation or informing or notifying.
  - Greater clarity on the stages at which Members have input into the process.
- To address the findings the Panel recommended that the Tool Kit for the Disposal of Assets was amended as set out in Appendix 1 of their report.
- Approved a new Corporate Property Asset Management Plan (2020-2024)
- The responses from the Investors in People online questionnaire were analysed with an Investors in People Delivery Group set up to develop and agree an action plan. Performance against the action plan is being monitored.
- Organisational changes implemented 1 April 2021 – Directors removed and Heads of Service now report direct to Chief Executive. New Deputy Chief Executive post implemented.

### **Sub 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 Officers 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 Officers 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.

(9) Ensure we have an effective Management Team in place with appropriate skills and experience, working coherently to achieve high levels of confidence in the NPA internally and externally.

(10) 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.

(11) Identify learning and development needs for Officers 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.

(12) 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.

(13) Implement the appraisal process for Secretary of State Members.

(14) Use our appraisal process to appraise the performance of individual staff and maximise the contribution of staff through individual objectives and development plans.

(15) 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 Champion 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;
- Management Development Programme;
- Member Training and Development Framework including annual Member Learning and Development

### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- Continued to provide a learning and development programme for Members. The Member participation rate for essential training/briefing events for 2019/20 was 60% and for participation in formal meetings was 72.4%. During 2019/20 24% of Members had personal development plans and 47% completed a

self-assessment.

- As Defra and other appointing Authorities regularly request information on the attendance levels of their appointees the Authority has previously agreed to publish attendance figures annually based upon the financial year. (1 April to 31 March) the target is 75%. The 2018/19 figures were reported to the Annual Meeting in July 2019 when the overall attendance level was 81%. The 2019/20 attendance figures for individual members were reported to the 2020 Annual Meeting and the overall attendance level for this period was 72.4%. There were a number of membership changes during this period which led to reduced attendances.
- The Authority has established a Panel to oversee the process for making appointments in key positions at the Annual Meeting each year. This was reviewed by the Governance Working Group in May 2020 and the conclusion was that the Appointment Process Panel did make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the Annual Meeting and should therefore continue.
- The second report of the Governance Review Working Group gave recommendations of the following subjects:
  - Officer Delegation Scheme
  - Member Representative Roles
  - Outside Bodies
  - The Appointment Principles
  - Encouraging Member Participation
  - Reporting on attendance.
- All planning applications which are not directly connected with, or necessary for, the conservation management of a habitat site, require consideration of whether the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on that site. This consideration – typically referred to as the ‘Habitats Regulations Assessment screening’. The Authority has amended the scheme of delegation so the decision on whether an assessment is needed and carrying out the assessment is delegated to officers.
- There was one Secretary of State Member vacancy advertised during 2020/21. Defra, working with the Cabinet Office, promoted the vacancy and managed the recruitment process for all the English National Parks, however the Authority has contributed to the campaign by circulating details of the Member vacancy widely using a number of contacts including MOSAIC, using social media and issuing a press release and has responded to enquiries from individuals wishing to be considered for the Peak District vacancy. At the end of the process the Minister made one appointment.
- Defra has also re-appointed 2 existing Secretary of State Members for further terms of office following business cases submitted by the Authority.
- Continued to assist the Chair in carrying out appraisals for Secretary of State Members and submitting business cases to Defra for the reappointment of exiting Secretary of State Members at the end of their term of office.
- In the 2018/19 AGS it was acknowledged that while the Authority had appointed a number of apprentices during the year there were still risks that the Authority would not meet its targets on providing apprentice opportunities resulting in the amounts paid into the apprenticeship levy exceeding the amounts withdrawn. There also remained an issue about the Authority’s ability to provide relevant longer term employment opportunities at the end of apprenticeships and reap the benefits of utilising the skills experience and knowledge acquired.
- In 2020/21 we had 2 new apprentice start (1 existing staff member and a new member of the Democratic Services Team):
  - Associate project manager, Level: 4
  - Business and Administration, Level: 2
- Managers in 2 areas are considering appointing apprentices. We did not meet our Public Sector target of 6/7 new apprentice starts per year which exclude existing employee apprentices.
- The South West Peak Landscape Partnership (SWPLP) has had 3 Countryside Worker apprentices since January 2020. During this same period SWPLP have also supported 8 Livestock Worker apprentices employed on farms in the Peak District, and has funded additional training courses to increase their skills for their future employment in the farming sector. This was by external funding from the national Lottery Heritage Fund and the DCLG as well as the Government apprentice levy.
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation no local government elections were held in 2020. These will be held in May 2021 instead, two current Council appointed Members indicated that they would not be standing for re-election.

## **(F) Core Principle**

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

## 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 Management Team and Programmes and Resources Committee
- Insurance Policies;
- Building security systems.

## Sub Principle: F(1) Managing Risk

### We will:

- (1) Implement our Risk Management Policy and Strategy throughout all levels of the Authority and regularly 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.

### Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness

- During 2020/21 Members reviewed the year end position for the Corporate Risk Register and approved the proposed Corporate Risk Register for the year.
- The Corporate Risk Register for 2020/21 was developed by the Leadership Team by:
  - Reviewing the 2019/20 corporate risk register year end position.
  - Considering risks that might prevent the achievement of the corporate strategy.
  - Considering risks in service plans that need to be escalated and monitored at a corporate level.
  - Considering the external environment that we operate in.
- The Programme and Resources Committee received a report providing evidence that health and safety performance was satisfactory and continuously improving. The report included:
  - An overall appraisal of occupational safety and health performance for the PDNPA for the previous year
  - Reference to corporate initiatives making further significant improvements and (from 2019) to performance indicators
  - Accident and incident data and analysis for the year ending December 2019 for staff and visitors
  - A report on services provided to other National Parks
  - Recommendations for further action through 2020.
- The Authority recognises the need to have appropriate insurance cover in place for the Authority's operations, arising from statutory requirements and for risk management purposes.
- The Authority has given Officers the authority needed and insurance contracts have been let for the 2020-25 period.

## Sub 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 Authority Meetings moving to bi-annually reporting;
- Quarterly Performance Review meetings involving Managers moving to bi-annually reporting ;
- Employee performance against objectives is formally reviewed one a year as part of the Performance Management (appraisal) 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 Programmes and Resources Committee;
- Member motions to full Authority allow Members to raise and discuss areas of concern;
- Every year the annual Member Learning and Development programme includes 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.

### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- During 2018/19 Members of the Audit Resources and Performance Committee continued to receive and discuss quarterly performance reports including a review of performance against the Corporate Plan); monitoring of the corporate risk register; monitoring of Freedom of Information Requests and monitoring of complaints. Since the 2019 Annual Meeting these reports have been considered at meetings of the Authority.
- Approved the performance review element of the Performance and Business Plan.
- The quarterly budget monitoring meeting involving Authority Members has continued to meet.
- In the 2016 Members' Survey 87% (20) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had have appropriate performance data so that I know how well the Authority is delivering against its approve policies and plans. 13% (3) neither agreed nor disagreed and none disagreed.

## **Sub 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 Officers 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 Authority Meeting.
- (13) Ensure that the Authority Meeting 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 the Authority Meeting;
- Compliance with the Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption;
- Confidential Reporting Policy in place and promoted;
- Audit reports and management actions reported to the Authority Meeting;
- Annual assurance and summary of activities reported to the Authority Meeting and included in Annual Governance Statement;
- The terms of reference for the Authority Meeting include 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.

### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- The Authority Meeting received the 2019/20 Internal Audit Annual Report. The overall opinion of the Head of Internal Audit on the framework of governance, risk management and control operating in the Authority was that it provides Substantial Assurance. No reliance was placed on the work of other assurance bodies in reaching that opinion. There were also no significant control weaknesses which, in the opinion of the Head of Internal Audit need to be considered for inclusion in the Annual Governance Statement. However, the opinion was qualified in light of the current coronavirus pandemic and the impact of this on the Authority.
- Out of 7 areas reviewed in 2019/20 4 were given a high level of assurance and 3 a substantial level of assurance.
- The Authority Meeting approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21.
- The Authority meeting received the Internal Audit Reports and recommendations and proposed management action to address the issues raised.
- The Risk Management Policy and Strategy has been approved and adopted and is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Risk is monitored quarterly by the Authority.
- The Authority has a risk based Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan agreed by the Authority Meeting. Audit report findings and details of action taken in response are considered by the Authority with the Internal Auditor present to address any questions and/or concerns.
- Both the Internal and External Auditors have direct access to Members.
- The Risk Management Policy and Strategy has been approved and adopted and is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Risk is monitored quarterly by the Authority.
- The Authority has a risk based Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan agreed by the Audit Resources

and Performance Committee (In future it will be the Authority). Audit report findings and details of action taken in response are considered by the Authority with the Internal Auditor present to address any questions and/or concerns.

- Both the Internal and External Auditors have direct access to Members.

### **Sub 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 Officers 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

#### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- In accordance with the recommendation in the Freedom of Information Act the Authority maintains and publishes a disclosure log which contains information relating to requests that we have received and responded to within the quarter. The log is in summary format which provides details of the request, whether we have disclosed the information and whether we have responded within the time period defined by the Information Commissioners Office.
- On-going measures to improve data capture and data quality will continue in order to properly assess the direction of travel for the performance of planning policy and planning decisions over the coming years
- In accordance with the Information Management Strategy (IMS2) we continued with our action to 'clean' data as it is the key to being able to improve the quality of our data and make it more accessible from one single source to officers and the public.
- Collected survey data to inform performance assessments and design of services in a number of areas including: planning, cycle hire, visitor centres, guided walks, volunteers and residents
- The Authority has a number of privacy statements in place and published on the Authority website.
- Continued implementation of the 'Infrastructure as a Service' (IaaS) model as part of a refresh of the core IT Infrastructure funded through the ICT capital programme. This approach allows the Authority to renew its infrastructure while increasing its capability, reducing risks of failure and increasing security, backup and disaster recovery provisions.



## **Sub 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, following the re-structure the post holder is a direct report of the Chief Executive Officer.

### **What evidence/assurance is in place?**

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

### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- Received an unqualified External Audit Opinion for 2019/20 for the final accounts and a satisfactory conclusion on value for money.
- Members will be asked to approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy at the Authority meeting in May 2021.
- The Authority considered the outturn for 2019/20, approved the necessary appropriations to or from reserves and agreed unspent funds and overspends to be carried forward into the 2020/21 financial year.
- Developed Budget Proposals for 2021/22. To reflect the uncertainties that exist due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Government decided that the Spending Review would only cover the 12 months from April 2021. As the Defra settlement had not been confirmed the Authority prepared a budget based on the assumption that the NPG baseline funding of 2019/20 will be maintained, less the £335k Biodiversity funding. Therefore, to balance the 2021/22 revenue budget it has been necessary to identify annual savings of £610k.
- Based on these proposals we agreed and implemented a balanced budget for 2021/22.
- Defra advised the Authority that it intended to update the existing mechanisms for review and oversight of National Park Grant. As part of the new arrangements, the standing Financial Grant Memorandum, dated 1st April 2008, was replaced by a new National Park Grant Funding Agreement, common to all National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Authority signed the Agreement for signature so that it was operative for the National Park Grant (2019/20). Defra will re-issue the Agreement to cover future settlements. At the time of writing this has been delayed by Defra for 2021/22.
- The budget monitoring group met at Q1, Q2 and Q3 to review the 2020/21 budget. The provisional Medium Term Finance Plan for 2021/22 to 2024/25 was presented to members as part of the 2021/22 budget. A revision is to be approved by RMM in April 2021 following the confirmation of the NPG for 2021/22.
- Uncertainty remains about the future of farming and land management in a post Brexit world. In 2020/21 we have worked directly with Defra in testing and trialling the new Environmental Land Management approach, and through National Parks England have set out our vision for the future of farming in protected landscapes. A new Farming in Protected Landscapes programme is planned for delivery in 2021/22 and will run until 31 March 2024. Development of the programme details are being supported but final details remain unknown at the time of writing.
- The 2017/18 AGS identified risk around a failure to influence the transposing of EU laws and legislation

for landscape and the environment into UK law after Article 50 remain.

- The area of land within National Park in an agri-environment scheme land management option remained a concern, but it was recognised that this was not within the Authority's control. A Transition paper highlighting the issues and offering potential solutions was prepared on behalf of National Parks England. This shows the coverage of agri-environment schemes in each English National Park as at April 2020 and has been used with key stakeholders to highlight concerns. The Authority has continued to work with other English National Parks (through NPE) increasingly with other Protected Landscape organisations and with DEFRA to influence the design of future Environmental Land Management (ELM) approach.

### **(G) Core Principle**

**Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit, to deliver effective accountability.**

### **Sub 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. During 2020/21 meetings have been broadcasted via Youtube due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation and under the Government's remote meeting legislation;
- 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.

#### **Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- Key governance documents, such as Standing Orders are published on the Authority website and available through the modern.gov app.
- Continued to publish documents relating to meetings of the Authority and its Committees on the website. In addition members of the public can use self service functionality to register to receive automated email alerts for specific topics or meetings. Documents are also published through the modern.gov app available for IOS, Android, Blackberry, Kindle Fire and Windows 10 users.
- Audio webcasting of meetings of the Authority and its Committees continues with recordings being held and published for 3 years after the meeting. During 2020/21 and due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation meetings have been broadcast via Youtube and these are recorded and available to watch again after the meetings.
- Although we are not required by law to publish a forward plan of decisions, in the spirit of openness and

transparency we continue to compile and publish work programmes for the Authority and its Committees to allow members of the public to be aware of forthcoming decisions.

### **Sub 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, Management Team and Members. Following the re-structure the post holder reports directly to the Chief Executive.
- (6) Prepare and publish our annual financial statements in accordance with guidance and good practice.

#### **What evidence/assurance is in place?**

- Authority 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.

### **Sub 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 Officers 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 the Authority;
  - Local Government & Social Care 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 Authority Meetings;
- Assurances included in the Annual Governance Statement.
- Self Assessment against the CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption

**Review of action and assurances indicating maintenance/improvement to effectiveness**

- Committee received and noted the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Annual Review letter for 2019/20.
- Members considered the 2019/20 Annual Audit Letter which confirmed:
  - An unqualified conclusion on the Authority's arrangements to secure value for money.
  - An unqualified opinion on the financial statements. This means that they believe the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority and its expenditure and income for the year.
  - The Statement of Accounts was prepared in a timely manner with high quality supporting work papers. There were no uncorrected audit adjustments at the end of the audit process.
  - The External Auditor had reviewed the Annual Governance Statement and concluded that there are no matters to report and that it was consistent with their understanding.
- Members considered the External Auditors' (Mazars) 2019/20 annual report.
- The 2020/21 External Audit Strategy Memorandum from our External Auditors, Mazars has been received but not yet reported to Members.
- Received a report summarising the work carried out on planning appeals from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. In 2019/20 56 new planning appeals were received of which 23 were still in hand. 45 appeals have been determined, but decision notices were only received in 40 cases; 3 were withdrawn, 1 was invalid and 1 was submitted outside the prescribed time limits. Of the 40 appeals determined 37% were allowed and 63% were dismissed. The percentage of appeals dismissed in the year 2019/20 is 1% higher than in the previous year but again it should be noted that on such low numbers currently one appeal decision can change the percentages by 2.5%.