

## Cotswolds Conservation Board Corporate Governance Framework

## Review 2018/19

	a) Documents and Processes	b) Evaluation	c) Issues or Recommendation (Corporate Governance Action Plan)
1	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended by the NERC Act 2006)	Sets out legal status of the Board on and since its establishment in 2004. Within an earlier Red Tape Challenge, DEFRA planned to reduce the overall number of Statutory Instruments. However DEFRA then indicated the review did not have high priority and there was no clear timetable for the review. National Review of National Parks and AONBs announced January 2018 and Chairman and Advisory Panel confirmed May/June 2018 - due to report in October 2019. Two panel members visited Cotswolds in August 2018	Continue to monitor arrangements and explore opportunities if they arise.
2	Other Legislation:- Establishment Order 2004/1777; Wiltshire (Structural Change) Order 2008/490; Cotswolds AONB (Establishment of Conservation Board) (Amendment) Order 2009/1579. Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015. Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.	Sets out legal and corporate structure of Board. Local government reorganisation for Wiltshire resulted in a reduction in the number of local authority and Secretary of State members at 1.4.09. The amendment to the Establishment Order changed regulations on the treatment of actuarial pension fund reports in the Board's Statement of Accounts. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 contain provisions on internal control and detailed rules about the preparation, approval and publication of the annual statement of accounts, and about the arrangements for local electors and other interested persons to exercise their rights of inspection, objection and to question the local auditor. The Regulations are required in order to implement the new local audit arrangements set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.	Continue to monitor guidance and its effect on the approval and publication of the annual Statement of Accounts 2018/19 and 2019/20. No change currently envisaged.
3	Constitution Inc. Financial Regulations	In place since 2004. Constitution last reviewed in April 2017 to include changes to financial regulations. To be updated following abolition of Board's sub committees and establishment of task and finish and working groups.	Board approval to updates.
4	Management Plan (MP)	Management Plan for 2018-23 was adopted by Board in September 2018.	None
5	Business Plan (inc Medium Term Financial Plan)	3-Year rolling Business Plan reviewed and adopted annually by the Board. Monitored quarterly by Executive Committee. Budgets reviewed quarterly and adjusted in accordance with actual performance and the scheme of delegation.	None
6	Policies and Position Statements	Policy and position statements on issues affecting the AONB are adopted by the Board from time to time following consultation through Working Groups and Executive Committee. Policies are subject to a rolling programme of review.	Officers, Working Groups and Executive Committee to review in 2019/20 following adoption of Management Plan 2018 - 2023
7	Governance Code	Reviewed annually. Results of review reported in Business Plan and Annual Governance Statement	None
8	Funding Agreements	Main grant agreement with Natural England (NE) replaced by similar agreement with DEFRA from April 2011. Currently in year 3 of a 4 year agreement with Defra. Natural England funding for Cotswold Way in 2019/20 is a 5% cut on 2018/19 levels. Most appropriate mechanism for securing funding at present is the business plan process, which is used to support bids to Defra and other external grant providers and annual invoices to LAs submitted via the LA appointees to the Board. Defra now make a 6 month advance payment on the main grant settlement at C39the start of the financial year, with the remaining 6 months to be advanced at the mid point in the year.	None
9	Annual Accounts & Financial Policies	The last Statement of Accounts was published in June 2018 in accordance with regulatory guidance. The external auditor gave a satisfactory opinion on the accounts and on the Board's corporate governance arrangements. Financial regulations were last amended in December 2017. Investment Strategy reviewed June 2016. Reserves Policy reviewed in 2018/19.	Reserves Policy to be reviewed in 2018/19.
10	Annual Governance Statement	The Board published a compliant Annual Governance Statement as part of the last Annual Return 2017/18.	None
11	Annual Review	Reported to Board annually in June and distributed in paper form and electronically to funding partners and other interested parties.	None
12	Communications Strategy	2017 - 2020 Communications Strategy adopted March 2017.	None

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13	Consultation Strategy	Consultation strategies were developed for the Management Plan and would be put in place for other key issues as they arise. Management Plan Review for the 2018-2023 period was adopted in September 2018.	
14	Comments Compliments and Complaints Policy & Procedure	Approved by Board in March 2007. A review of performance against this policy was presented to the Executive Committee in July 2018 forming part of an annual process.	None
15	Annual Forum	Successful Annual Forum held in September 2016 marking the launch of the Management Plan Review Workshops. Date and subject for next Forum to be agreed, pending recommendations from the Glover Review.	None
16	Committee Structure and Procedures	Set out in Constitution, updated in 2018/19 to reflect abolition of Sub Committee and establishment of Task and Finish Groups and Working Groups.	None
17	Freedom of Information Publication Scheme	In place.	None
18	Partnership Protocols: Planning; Transport	Adopted by Board after consultation through Sub Committees and Executive Committee.	None
19	Equality Standards	Equalities Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Race Equalities Scheme set out in the Staff Handbook are those adopted on transfer from Cotswold DC at establishment. Appointment application form procedures amended in response to new legislation in 2010.	None
20	Board Website & IT arrangements	In place. IT Policy adopted by Board in June 2009. Contract with IT supplier has been in place since 2005 and market tested. Independent IT audit undertaken November 2012. Regular IT asset checks in place. New website design and content implemented 2017/18.	
21	Members Allowances Scheme	Reviewed annually. Last reviewed and updated in March 2019 at Board Meeting/AGM.	None
22	Officer Job Descriptions, Pay and Conditions	Job descriptions in place for all posts. Pay and conditions determined by national agreement. Board advised under service level agreement with Cotswold DC / Publica.	None
23	Recruitment Policies & Procedures	Set out in staff handbook and guided by service level agreement with Cotswold DC - now Publica the company jointly owned by WODC, CDC CBC and FoD LAs.	Director to seek cost estimates from Publica and others in order to advance review of staff handbook; report due with Executive July 2019.
24	Scheme of Delegation	Set out in Constitution.	None
25	Member/Officer Protocol	Set out in Constitution.	None
26	Member and Officer Induction and Training	Members receive introductory letter, detailed briefing pack and are brought together in small groups (or 1 to 1 if necessary) for detailed background briefing.	None
27	Codes of Conduct for Members and Officers	Codes of Conduct set out in Constitution. Member Code for Conservation Boards were under review by DEFRA following unsuccessful attempt by DEFRA to include CBs with the new model code for LAs issued by DCLG in April 2007. Members adopted voluntary code wef June 2012. Issue revisited with DEFRA in 2012. DEFRA deferred to DCLG. Monitoring Officer pursued DCLG 2012 but still to secure definite long term solutions for dovetailing CB Codes of Conduct with NPAs or LAs. Voluntary code being followed by Board.	None

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28	Officer and Member Indemnity Insurance	No claims in 2018/19. Policy last market tested in 2015/16 with current supplier still remaining favourable.	None
29	Performance Management Framework	Performance is reported against the Board's Business Plan quarterly to the Executive Committee. The Director monitors performance at team meetings and at 1 to 1 meetings with officers.	None
30	Director	Experienced officer in post.	None
31	Section 151 Officer (RFO)	CIPFA-qualified accountant in place.	None
32	Monitoring Officer	Contracted from CDC/Publica under service level agreement.	None
33	Legal Advice	Contracted from CDC/ Publica under service level agreement, or purchased from external legal firms where there is a conflict of interest for CDC solicitors.	None
34	Decision Making and Recording Procedures	Board, Executive committee reports and decisions recorded under service level agreement with CDC/Publica. Available on website. Notification of agenda and papers sent to all board members, relevant officers and the press/media. LEADER reporting by the Accountable body is handled in house and papers posted on the website where required. Task and Finish and Working Group reports and action points handled in house.	None
35	External Audit	External Audit provided by PKF Littlejohn with effect from 2017/18 under a national contract awarded by government agency.	None
36	Internal Audit	Internal auditor in place with effect from 1.4.13. Audit completed in compliance with JPAG Guidance, and agreed Strategic Audit Plan. Audit findings to Executive Committee in April 2019. Recommendations have been accepted by management and <u>incorporated into this review.</u>	None
37	Risk Management Framework	Framework in place and key corporate risks reviewed by Executive in February 2019.	None
38	Health & Safety Policy	H&S Policy adopted by the Board in Oct 2008. Reviewed in 2010/11 with support from Oxon CC, adviser to CDC and reviewed by CDC in 2016/17. Updated policy adopted by Board March 2019. Publica due to undertake H&S audit June 2019.	None
39	Environmental Performance Policy	No specific performance policy in place. Where practical, actions being taken to reduce carbon impact.	None
40	Register of Interests	Register held by Monitoring Officer. Formal annual review alongside related party transaction declarations in March 2019.	None
41	Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy	Adopted by Board in March 2006. Reviewed by Board in Dec 2009. No issues were reported in 2018/19.	Anti-fraud and corruption strategy and confidential reporting procedures to be reviewed in 2019/20
42	Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Procedure	Adopted by Board in March 2006. Reviewed by Board in Dec 2009. No issues were reported in 2018/19.	As above
43	Disciplinary and Capability Procedures	Set out in staff handbook and under review.	Cost estimates for review of Staff handbook to be secured, see above
44	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)	A series of internal audits undertaken to capture and review current practice. Data Protection Officer (DPO) role provided by Publica. Policy adopted by Board in June 2018. Policy and privacy notice published on Board's website.	None
45	Related Party Transactions	Forma annual review alongside register of interests in March 2019.	None