

**Cotswolds Conservation Board**  
**Review of Governance Framework 2020/21**

a) Documents and Processes	b) Evaluation	c) Issues/Recommendations (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. National Review of National Parks and AONBs reported in September 2019.	Continue to monitor arrangements and explore opportunities as they arise.
2 Other Legislation including: Establishment Order 2004/1777; Wiltshire (Structural Change) Order 2008/490; Cotswolds AONB (Establishment of Conservation Board) (Amendment) Order 2009/1579; Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.	Sets out the legal and corporate structure of Board. 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 local audit arrangements set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.	Continue to monitor guidance and its effect on the structure of the Board; and on the approval and publication of the annual Accounting Statements.
3 Constitution including Financial Regulations.	In place since 2004. Constitution reviewed by Board in June 2019 and March 2020.	Constitution to be reviewed during 2021/22 following the appointment of a Monitoring Officer at the AGM.
4 Management Plan.	Management Plan for 2018-23 was adopted by Board in September 2018.	Planning for the next Management Plan 2023-28 is underway and will consider, amongst other things, the Glover Review recommendations and Defra's response to it.
5 Business Plan including Medium Term Financial Plan.	3-Year Business Plan reviewed and adopted by the Board. Performance against the Business Plan and Budget is monitored quarterly by the Executive Committee. The continued impact of COVID has been considered when preparing the budget for 2021/22. Given the uncertainty surrounding COVID and the difficulty in reforecasting during 2020/21 and budgeting for 2021/22 a three year forecast has not been prepared. The organisation has set targets for the medium term for free reserves and has performed well against these targets in 2020/21.	Continue to monitor the impact of COVID on the Business Plan and Budget and ensure quarterly reforecasting takes any financial implications into consideration. Ensure that the budget is updated for Farming in Protected Landscapes when the funding and requirements are known.
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.	Continued Officer, Working Group and Executive Committee review in 2021/22.
7 Governance Code.	Reviewed annually. Results of review reported in Business Plan and Annual Governance Statement.	None
8 Funding Agreements.	Confirmation has been received from Defra regarding the level of core funding for the year. Natural England 2021/22 funding for the Cotswold Way has been agreed for the year. 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 Local Authorities.	None
9 Annual Accounts and Financial Policies	The latest Statement of Accounts was published in June 2020 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 2020. There is a rolling programme of review of financial policies.	The rolling programme of finance policies to be reviewed by the Finance and Governance sub-committee one established in 2021/22 and this committee to be responsible for the review of these policies and governance arrangements.
10 Annual Governance Statement.	The Board published a compliant Annual Governance Statement as part of the last Annual Return 2019/20.	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.	New strategy adopted by the Board in December 2020, year one actions form part of the annual Work Programme.

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13 Consultation Strategy.	Consultation strategies were developed for the Management Plan and will be put in place for other key issues as they arise. Management Plan Review for the 2018-2023 period was adopted in September 2018.	None
14 Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy & Procedure.	Scheme approved by Board in March 2007. A review of performance was presented to Executive in September 2019. Customer Charter developed during 2020/21 and published on the website.	None
16 Committee Structure and Procedures.	Set out in Constitution, updated in 2019/20. Committee structure reviewed in 2020/21. Creation of Finance & Governance Committee approved by Board.	Implement the revised committee structure in 2021/22.
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 market tested and secured. Regular IT asset checks in place.	ICT strategy to be developed during 2021/22.
21 Members Allowances Scheme.	Reviewed annually 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 Publica.	None
23 Recruitment Policies & Procedures.	Set out in Employee Handbook and guided by service level agreement with Publica. Employee Handbook reviewed in 2020/21 with support from Publica.	None
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 and detailed briefing pack, and are brought together in small groups (or 1 to 1 if necessary) for detailed background briefing.	Officer induction to be reviewed in 2021/22.
27 Codes of Conduct for Members and Officers.	Codes of Conduct set out in Constitution. Members adopted a revised code in March 2020.	None
28 Officer and Member Indemnity Insurance.	Policy last market tested in 2015/16 with current supplier still remaining favourable. No claims in 2020/21.	Market test insurers in 2021/22.
29 Performance Management Framework.	Performance is reported against the Board's Business Plan quarterly to the Executive Committee. The Chief Executive monitors performance at team meetings and at 1 to 1 appraisal meetings with officers.	None
30 Chief Executive.	Experienced officer in post.	None
31 Section 151 Officer (RFO).	ICAEW qualified accountant in post since June 2020.	None
32 Monitoring Officer.	Agreement with Publica /CDC to provide Monitoring Officer has ceased and a new monitoring officer is due to be appointed at the AGM 2021.	Appoint Monitoring Officer at AGM 2021.

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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 and Executive Committee minutes recorded internally and made available on website. Notification of agenda and papers sent to all board members, relevant officers and made publicly available on the website.	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.	2020/21 Internal Audit completed in compliance with JPAG Guidance. 2019/20 audit findings reported to Executive Committee and recommendations have been accepted by management for implementation.	None
37 Risk Management Framework.	Framework in place and key corporate risks regularly reviewed by Executive and Board.	None
38 Health & Safety Policy.	H&S Policy adopted by the Board in Oct 2008. Reviewed in 2019/20 with support from Publica and external consultant. New H&S Policy adopted by the Board in June 2020.	None.
39 Environmental Performance Policy.	No specific performance policy in place. Where practical, actions being taken to reduce carbon impact.	New policy to be established during 2021/22.
40 Register of Interests.	Register held by Monitoring Officer. Formal annual review alongside related party transaction declarations in March each year.	Publish register on web-site.
41 Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy.	Policy reviewed by Board in March 2021. No issues were reported in 2020/21.	None
42 Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Procedure.	Current Procedure adopted by Executive in November 2019. No issues were reported in 2020/21.	As above.
43 Disciplinary and Capability Procedures.	Set out in staff handbook.	None
44 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).	Data Protection Officer services now provided by Publica.	None
45 Related Party Transactions.	Formal annual review alongside register of interests in March each year.	None