

**Cotswolds Conservation Board**  
**Review of Corporate Governance Framework 2019/20**

|    | <b>a) Documents and Processes</b>   | <b>b) Evaluation</b>  | <b>c) Issues/Recommendations<br/>(Corp Govnce Action Plan)</b>  |
|----|---|---|---|
| 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: 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 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.  | None  |
| 4. | Management Plan.  | Management Plan for 2018-23 was adopted by Board in September 2018.   | Planning for the next Management Plan to start in 2020/21 and will consider the Glover Review recommendations and Defra's response to it            |

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| 5.  | Business Plan including Medium Term Financial Plan.      | 3-Year Business Plan reviewed and adopted by the Board. Monitored quarterly by Executive Committee. Budgets reviewed quarterly and adjusted in accordance with actual performance and the scheme of delegation. Last considered by Board in March 2020.   | Financial forecasts for 2021/22 and 2022/23 will be presented at the September/ October Exec and Board meetings. Officers have reviewed the Board's work programme and financial performance during 2020/21 in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic. Medium to longer term impacts to be considered further |
| 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.  | Officer, Working Group and Executive Committee review in 2020/21.   |
| 7.  | Governance Code.   | Reviewed annually. Results of review reported in Business Plan and Annual Governance Statement.   | None  |
| 8.  | Funding Agreements.                                      | 2019/20 is the final year of a 4-year agreement with Defra. A new agreement is now in place. Natural England 2020/21 funding for Cotswold Way was agreed in March 2020 . 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 2019 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. The Reserves Policy was reviewed in June 2019 and the Treasury Management Strategy in February 2020. | Executive Committee reviews Reserve levels quarterly, and Treasury Management Strategy annually.  |
| 10. | Annual Governance Statement.                             | The Board published a compliant Annual Governance Statement as part of the last Annual Return 2018/19.  | 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 being written for 2020-23.   |
| 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.   | None  |

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| 15. | Stakeholder Forum.                            | Consider timing and purpose of the Board's next Stakeholder Forum.  | None   |
| 16. | Committee Structure and Procedures.           | Set out in Constitution, updated in 2019/20.  | 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 market tested and secured. Regular IT asset checks in place.   | New website design to be implemented in 2020/21.                         |
| 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 Staff Handbook and guided by service level agreement with Publica.   | CE to seek support from Publica to assist with review of staff handbook. |
| 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.   | None   |
| 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 2018/19 or 2019/20.   | Market test in 2020/21.  |
| 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.   | Organisational key performance indicators being introduced in 2020/21.   |
| 30. | Chief Executive.                              | Experienced officer in post.  | None   |
| 31. | Section 151 Officer (RFO).                    | CIPFA-qualified accountant in place in 2019/20.   | New Head of Finance starting in June 2020.                               |
| 32. | Monitoring Officer.                           | Contracted from CDC/Publica under service level agreement.  | None   |

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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 reports and decisions recorded under service level agreement with 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 handled in-house and papers posted on the website where required. 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.                                    | 2018/19 and 2019/20 Internal Audits completed in compliance with JPAG Guidance. 2018/19 audit findings reported to Executive Committee in April 2019. All recommendations have been accepted by management for implementation.  | None   |
| 37. | Risk Management Framework.                         | Framework in place and key corporate risks reviewed by Executive 6-monthly and Board annually.  | 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.   | CE arranging for review of H&S policy and processes. Employee training currently being undertaken.         |
| 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 2020/21.   |
| 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 updated by Board in December 2019. No issues were reported in 2018/19 or 2019/20.  | None   |
| 42. | Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Procedure. | Current Procedure adopted by Executive in November 2019. No issues were reported in 2018/19 or 2019/20.   | As above.  |
| 43. | Disciplinary and Capability Procedures.            | Set out in staff handbook and under review.   | Staff handbook to be reviewed, see above.  |
| 44. | General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).        | A series of internal audits undertaken to capture and review current practice. Negotiating provision of Data Protection Officer (DPO) role via Publica and/or Defra. Relevant notices published on Board's website. GDPR considered by Executive in July 2018.  | Update and adopt relevant GDPR policies and secure DPO provision. All employees receiving online training. |
| 45. | Related Party Transactions.                        | Formal annual review alongside register of interests in March each year.  | None   |