

**Cotswolds Conservation Board**  
**Review of Governance Framework 2021/22**

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. Government response published January 2022	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 2022/23, led by the Head of Finance and the Monitoring Officer.
4	Management Plan.	Management Plan for 2018-23 was adopted by Board in September 2018.	Planning for the next Management Plan is underway and will consider, amongst other things, the Glover Review recommendations and Defra's response to it. Revised plan is being proposed at June 2022 Board Meeting proposed to undertake a limited interim review to produce a plan for publication in 2023, but to only run that plan for two years. This will allow for a further thorough review that can fully consider all of the above leading to the publication of a fully revised plan in 2025. This new plan will then be aligned with most other plans and the 25 Year Environment Plan.
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 and the Finance and Governance Sub-Committee. The continued impact of COVID has been considered when preparing the budget for 2021/22.	Write and obtain adoption of the next Business Plan (2023-26), supported with a 3-year financial forecast.
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 2021 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 by the Finance and Governance sub-committee (appointed in 2021), this committee is to be responsible for the review of these policies and governance arrangements.	The rolling programme of finance policies to be reviewed by the Finance and Governance sub-committee in 2022/23.
10	Annual Governance Statement.	The Board published a compliant Annual Governance Statement as part of the last Annual Return 2020/21.	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.	2020-2023 Communications Strategy adopted December 2020.	None

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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 2019/20 performance was presented to the Board in June 2021. Customer Charter developed during 2020/21 and published on the website.	Policy has been reviewed and updated and will be presented to the Board for adoption at the June 2022 Board Meeting along with review of 2020/22 performance.
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 and Diversity Policy updated in the new Employee Handbook in consult with Publica HR in December 2020. Appointment application form procedures amended in response to new legislation in 2010.	Health Wellbeing & Social Inclusion Working Group has been established and started work in 2021/22. ACAS Equality, Diversity & Inclusion course being rolled out to all CNL team members, Board Members, and selection of Voluntary Wardens by end of July 2022
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 developed in 2021	IT Policies and strategy updated throughout 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 reviewed in 2021 with new starter induction pack introduced, and structured H&S training provision implemented.	Volunteer Policy to be presented to Board at June 2022 AGM for adoption.
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 2021/22.	Market test insurers in 2022/23.
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 performance reviews 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.	Appointed at AGM 2021.
33	Legal Advice	Legal firm appointed for advice and guidance as appropriate.	None

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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.	Internal Auditor appointment continued 2022-23, to be reviewed during 2022/23
37	Risk Management Framework.	Framework in place and key corporate risks regularly reviewed by the Finance and Governance Sub-Committee.	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.	Reviewed annually.
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 2022/23.
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 2021/22.	None
42	Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Procedure.	Current Procedure adopted by Executive in November 2019. No issues were reported in 2021/22.	Policy to be reviewed 2022/23
43	Disciplinary and Capability Procedures.	Set out in employee handbook.	None
44	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).	Data Protection Officer services now provided by Publica.	DPO appointment to be reviewed during 2022/23.
45	Related Party Transactions.	Formal annual review alongside register of interests in March each year.	None