

DRAFT LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Introduction

Corporate Governance has been defined¹ as being:

“how local government bodies ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which local government bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities.”

A local code of governance explains how the organisation ensures compliance with statutory requirements and best practice guidance on corporate governance. The development of the local code of governance helps to ensure that proper governance arrangements are in place and serves as a means of increasing credibility, accountability and public confidence in the organisation.

The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has produced a local code of corporate governance which is based upon the guidance published jointly by CIPFA² and SOLACE³ entitled ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework’ which applies to National Park Authorities. The Guidance sets out six core principles of corporate governance, together with various supporting principles in respect of each core principle. The SDNPA’s Local Code of Corporate Governance, set out below, incorporates these principles and identifies the source documents, good practice and other means of demonstrating the SDNPA’s compliance with the principles of good governance.

The SDNPA’s Values

The SDNPA has agreed the following statement as an expression of the values that will govern the behaviour of its staff and Members:

Working for the National Park....

We will:

- have a common goal determined by the National Park’s Purposes and Duty
- champion the National Park’s aspirations
- communicate clearly and listen well
- be flexible, encourage innovation and welcome challenge

....working together

We will:

- trust and respect people within and outside the SDNPA
- work in an open way
- work as one organisation which is mutually supportive

¹ ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework’ published jointly by CIPFA/SOLACE.

² The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

³ The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers.

- be committed to working in partnership with others to develop shared priorities and gain mutual benefits

....to deliver results

We will:

- ensure our approach and decisions are informed by evidence
- be positive and enthusiastic: take the initiative
- be seen to add value in all that we do.

The Local Code of Corporate Governance

First Core Principle: Focusing on the purposes of the Authority and on outcomes for communities in the National Park and creating and implementing a vision for the National Park	
We will:	Evidenced by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exercise strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the Authority's purposes, vision and intended outcomes for residents, visitors and other service users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan 2011-12 • Service Plans • The South Downs Management Plan 2008 – 2013 (Introduction, Part A, Part B, Ambitions) • South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment • State of the Park Report (due 2012) • National Park Strategies and Action Plans (due 2013) • Local Development Framework (due 2013) • Core strategy and development management plan (due Oct 2014) • Site designations development plan (due Nov 2015) • Statement of Community Involvement (draft due to be finalised March 2012) • Local Development Scheme • The Petersfield Plan • Memoranda of Understanding with various partners and Natural England Accord • Local Code of Corporate Governance • Annual Review • Financial statements • Annual Report (2011 report due imminently, future reports due in July of each year) • "Learning" section of website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that users receive a high quality of service, whether directly, in partnership or otherwise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • corporate objectives (in the Business Plan 2011-12) • National Park Authority performance indicators • Performance Management Framework

	(due 2012) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Milestone Reporting and annual performance reporting • visitor survey • Communication strategy • Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the Authority makes best use of resources and provides excellent value for money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Regulations • Medium Term Financial Strategy • Service Plans • Annual budget and monitoring reports • Annual Statement of Accounts • District Auditor's value for money reviews • Internal value for money reviews • ENPAA National Park Authority Peer Assessment • Benchmarking (carried out Nov 2011) • Estates Strategy (due 2012) • Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Guide • Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy • Sustainability Action Plan (due 2012)

Second Core Principle: Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles	
We will:	Evidenced by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure effective leadership throughout the Authority with clear roles for Committees and Sub-committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Orders • Scheme of Delegation • Terms of Reference of Committees • Member/staff job descriptions • Member Champions • Decision Records
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that a constructive working relationship exists between Members and officers and that their respective responsibilities are carried out to a high standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme of Delegation • Local Protocol for Member and Officer Relations • Job descriptions and performance appraisal process for Members and officers, including the Chairman of the SDNPA • Member Development Strategy • Contract management in respect of externally provided services • Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure relationships between the Authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memoranda of Understanding with various partners and Natural England Accord • Statement of Community Involvement (draft due to be finalised March 2012) • Guidance to Members on outside bodies

	(being developed in 2012) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor survey • on-line South Downs Forum consultations • publicly available information about who the Members are and what they do, and how the public can input and influence Authority decisions • Member Allowance Scheme • information published in respect of expenditure over £500 • public participation at SDNPA meetings • Local Protocol for Member and Officer Relations • Business Plan 2011-12 • Standing Orders • Communication Strategy
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Third Core Principle: Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour	
We will:	Evidenced by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure Members and officers behave in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members' Code of Conduct • Register of Interests • Officer Code of Conduct • Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality • Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy • Whistleblowing Policy • the SDNPA's Values • Local Protocol for Member and Officer Relations • Member/officer performance appraisal process • Standards Committee⁴ • Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy • Financial Regulations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that organisational values are put into practice and are effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the SDNPA's Values • the SDNPA's Guiding Principles • Members' and Officer Codes of Conduct • Member/officer performance appraisal process • Memoranda of Understanding with various partners and Natural England Accord • Communication Strategy • Standards Committee

⁴ In the event that, post-Localism Act implementation, there are changes made regarding the Standards Committee, any references to the Standards Committee will be reviewed.

Fourth Core Principle: Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk	
We will:	Evidenced by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and will listen and act on the outcome of constructive scrutiny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Orders • Scheme of Delegation • Financial Regulations • Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Guide • Members' Code of Conduct • Audit Committee Terms of Reference • Independent Members on the audit committee • Training for Audit Committee Members • Annual review of the effectiveness of the Audit Committee • publication of reports and Decision Records • Freedom of Information Publication Scheme • Statement of Community Involvement (draft due to be finalised?) • Communication Strategy • Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the residents/service users want/need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visitor survey • on-line South Downs Forum consultations • Members' induction programme • training for Committee Chairs • procedures for obtaining financial, personnel and legal advice where necessary and recorded appropriately • annual performance reporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that an effective risk management system is in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Strategy • risk assessment as part of service planning • Strategic Risk Register • Regular risk reporting to Audit Committee • Business Continuity Plan/crisis management procedures (due 2012 Linked to Capron move and new ICT provider) • insurance policies • Whistleblowing Policy • Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy • Health and Safety policies and procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use our legal powers to the full benefit of the communities within the National Park and for the protection of the National Park itself 	<p>The SDNPA's role is to:</p> <p>(1) conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park; and</p> <p>(2) promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Park's</p>

	<p>special qualities by the public.</p> <p>In pursuing these purposes, the Authority also has the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the Park.</p> <p>As the local planning authority, the SDNPA is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) spatial planning, (ii) minerals and waste planning, (iii) development management, (iv) planning enforcement and (v) other related regulatory functions within the Park. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal issues are identified in reports • advice is provided by the Monitoring Officer and other legal advisers • sustainable procurement strategy
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Fifth Core Principle: Developing the capacity and capability of Members and officers to be effective

We will:	Evidenced by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make sure that Members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate job profiles used in recruitment • Member/officer induction programmes • Learning and Development Policy for officers and individual staff learning and development plans • Member Development Strategy and individual Member development plans • training events • statement to bodies which appoint members as to what skills and perspectives would be most helpful (including diversity issues)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluate their performance, as individuals and as a group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Development Plan • performance management/appraisal system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage new talent for membership of the Authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Strategy • advertising Member vacancies • statement to bodies which appoint members as to what skills and perspectives would be most helpful (including diversity issues)

Sixth Core Principle: Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

We will:	Evidenced by:
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exercise leadership through engaging with local people, stakeholders and partners and will develop constructive accountability relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Strategy • Statement of Community Involvement (draft due to be finalised March 2012) • engagement with key institutional stakeholders • Memoranda of Understanding with various partners and Natural England Accord • Local Access Forum • Workshops used in the process to develop the NPMP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take an active and planned approach to dialogue with, and accountability to, the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery (whether directly by the Authority, in partnership or otherwise) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Strategy • Statement of Community Involvement (draft due to be finalised March 2012) • visitor survey • on-line South Downs Forum consultations • Standing Orders • Decision Records • The SDNPA's Guiding Principles • the SDNPA's Values • Business Plan 2011-12 • annual performance reporting • Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment Policy • Staff Survey • Learning and Development Policy for officers and individual staff learning and development plans

Monitoring and Review

All Members and officers of the Authority share responsibility for good governance. In particular, the Standards Committee is responsible for the oversight of ethical issues and the Audit Committee is responsible for receiving the Annual Governance Report prepared by the External Auditor and the Annual Governance Statement prepared jointly by the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer.

Delegated Authority is given to the Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Chair of the Audit Committee to make any necessary amendments to the Local Code of Governance as a result of the annual review. Any significant changes shall be reported to the Audit Committee.