LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Introduction

Corporate Governance has been defined[1] 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 CIPFA[2] and SOLACE[3] 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

[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.

- work in an open way
- work as one organisation which is mutually supportive
- 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:
• exercise strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the Authority's purpose, vision and intended outcomes for residents, visitors and other service users	• Corporate Plan 2013-16 based on the shared vision for the SDNP agreed with partners • Operational Plan • The South Downs Management Plan 2008 – 2013 (Introduction, Part A, Part B, Ambitions) • SDNP Vision published July 2012 following wide engagement with stakeholders and partners providing the strategic steer for the South Downs Management Plan, the Local Plan and for the development of a shared brand and identity for the National Park • Development of the Partnership Management Plan(PMP) including the development of impact measures as a basis for monitoring progress towards the achievement of the Vision • 5 yearly review of PMP may incorporate a review by partners of the shared vision as deemed necessary • Communication and Engagement Strategy developed to support the objectives being defined in the Partnership Management Plan. • South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment • State of the Park Report published May 2012 • Local Development Framework • Core strategy and development management plan (due Oct 2014) • Site designations development plan (due Nov

	2015) • Statement of Community Involvement completed in March 2012 • Local Development Scheme • The Petersfield Plan • Memoranda of Understanding with various partners and Natural England Accord • Local Code of Corporate Governance reviewed in 2013 • Annual Review published in July annually • Improvement plan which is regularly reviewed which includes key points raised via feedback and from other sources • Financial statements • "Learning" section of website
• ensure that users receive a high quality of service, whether directly, in partnership or otherwise	• Corporate objectives and success measures (in the Corporate Plan 2013-16) • National Park Authority performance indicators • Performance Management Framework (revised 2013) • Quarterly Milestone Reporting and annual performance reporting • Consultation on the development of the PMP and delivery framework • Planning Service Customer Survey • Visitor survey • Communication and Engagement Strategy • Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy reviewed in 2012, reported on annually
• ensure that the Authority makes best use of resources and provides excellent value for money	• Policy schedule incorporating a programme of review of governance policies • Financial Regulations and procedures revised in 2013 • Medium Term Financial Strategy • Operational Plan • Quarterly budget monitoring reports • 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 • Implementation of an automated performance management system which will support active contract management and will

	be used to monitor the delivery of the PMP • Benchmarking • Estates Strategy (currently being developed) • Approvals Process for Projects revised in 2013 • Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Guide updated in 2012 • Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy • Sustainability Action Plan • Improvement plan • Volunteer Ranger Service Action Plan

Second Core Principle: Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles	
We will:	Evidenced by:
• ensure effective leadership throughout the Authority with clear roles for Committees and Sub-committees	• Standing Orders reviewed annually • Scheme of Delegation • Terms of Reference of Committees revised in 2012 • Member/staff job descriptions • Member Champions • Decision Records
• ensure that a constructive working relationship exists between Members and officers and that their respective responsibilities are carried out to a high standard	• Scheme of Delegation to be reviewed annually • Local Protocol for Member and Officer Relations reviewed in 2013 as result of the changes introduced by the Localism Act 2011 • Job descriptions and performance appraisal process for Members and officers, including the Chair of the SDNPA • Conditions of employment • Member Development Strategy • Contract management in respect of externally provided services • Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy • Staff survey Jan 2012 (repeat survey due late 2013) • Improvement plan following Peer Review • Monitoring Officer in post • Chief Finance Officer support procured in 2012 and compliance with both the *CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government* and the *CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal*

	Audit in Public Service Organisations
• ensure relationships between the Authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other	• Memoranda of Understanding with various partners and Natural England Accord • Statement of Community Involvement • Guidance to Members on outside bodies • Development of the National Park Management Plan including the development of impact measures as a basis for monitoring progress towards the achievement of the Vision • National Park Authority performance indicators reported quarterly or annually as appropriate including corrective action as necessary • Visitor survey • On-line South Downs Forum consultations • Publicly available information about who the Members are and what they do, who the officers are and how the public can input and influence Authority decisions • Officer code of conduct reviewed in 2013 as result of the changes introduced by the Localism Act 2011 • Member Allowance Scheme • Information published in respect of expenditure over £500 • Public participation at SDNPA meetings • Local Protocol for Member and Officer Relations • Corporate Plan 2013-16 • Standing Orders • Communication and Engagement Strategy • Robust pay and conditions policies and practices for employees including structured pay scales reflecting competence

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:
• ensure Members and officers behave in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance	• Members' Code of Conduct revised in the light of changes brought in by the Localism Act 2011 • Induction for new Members and staff which includes standards of behaviour • Register of Interests for Members • Officer Code of Conduct

	• Standing Orders reviewed annually • Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality • Annual Governance Statement • Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy • Whistleblowing Policy • SDNPA Values • Local Protocol for Member and Officer Relations • Member/officer performance appraisal process • Standards and Audit Committee[4] • Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy • Financial Regulations (revised February 2013) • SDNPA's Guiding Principles • Procedures for dealing with conflicts of interest
• ensure that organisational values are put into practice and are effective	• SDNPA's Values communicated to staff, volunteers and Members and included in the Corporate Plan which is published on the internet. • SDNPA's Guiding Principles • Members' and Officer Codes of Conduct • Member/officer performance appraisal process • Memoranda of Understanding with various partners including shared values and Natural England Accord • Communication Strategy • Standards and Audit Committee with terms of reference revised in 2012 which regularly reports to the full Authority through its minutes • Whistleblowing Policy • Engagement and Communication Updates (monthly) • Equality and Diversity Policy approved in 2013

Fourth Core Principle: Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk	
We will:	Evidenced by:

[4] Following the changes introduced by the Localism Act, the Standards and Audit Committees were replaced by a new Standards and Audit Committee with appropriate terms of reference.

• be rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and will listen and act on the outcome of constructive scrutiny	• Standing Orders • Scheme of Delegation • Financial Regulations (revised February 2013) • Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Guide • Members' and Officer Codes of Conduct referring to a requirement to declare interests • Standards and Audit Committee with terms of reference reviewed annually • Independent members on the Standards and Audit committee • Training for Standards and Audit Committee Members • Annual review of the effectiveness of the Standards and Audit Committee • Effective internal audit function resourced and maintained • Publication of reports and Decision Records with meeting minutes showing declarations of interest made • Freedom of Information Publication Scheme • Statement of Community Involvement (draft due to be finalised?) • Communication and Engagement Strategy • Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy
• have good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the residents/service users want/need	• Visitor survey • On-line South Downs Forum consultations • Members' induction programme • Training for Committee Chairs • Regular meetings between SMT and Committee Chairs • Procedures for obtaining financial, personnel and legal advice where necessary and recorded appropriately • Forward plan showing dates for submission, publication and distributing of reports • Annual performance reporting • compliance with the *CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government*
• ensure that an effective risk management system is in place	• Risk Management Strategy setting out process for reviewing risk reviewed 2012 • Risk assessment as part of service planning • Strategic Risk Register reviewed every other

	month by the Strategic Management Team • Regular risk reporting to Standards and Audit Committee • Business Continuity Plan/crisis management procedures (due 2013/4 Linked to Capron move and new ICT provider) • Insurance policies • Whistleblowing Policy made available to staff • Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy • Health and Safety policies and procedures • ICT User Policy
• use our legal powers to the full benefit of the communities within the National Park and for the protection of the National Park itself	The SDNPA's role is to: (1) conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park; and (2) promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Park's special qualities by the public. 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. As the local planning authority, the SDNPA is responsible for: (i) spatial planning, (ii) minerals and waste planning, (iii) development management, (iv) planning enforcement and (v) other related regulatory functions within the Park. • SDNPA is the Access Authority • Rights of Way Accord • Legal issues are identified in reports • Advice is provided by the Monitoring Officer and other legal advisers and recorded appropriately • Sustainable procurement strategy

Fifth Core Principle: Developing the capacity and capability of Members and officers to be effective	
We will:	Evidenced by:
• make sure that Members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles	• 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)
• develop the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluate their performance, as individuals and as a group	• Learning and Development Plan • Performance and development review scheme
• encourage new talent for membership of the Authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources	• Communication and Engagement Strategy • South Downs National Park Partnership • 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:
• exercise leadership through engaging with local people, stakeholders and partners and will develop constructive accountability relationships	• Communication and Engagement Strategy • Statement of Community Involvement • Engagement with key institutional stakeholders • Heads of Planning meetings • Engagement programme for National Park Management Plan • Memoranda of Understanding with various partners and Natural England Accord • Rights of Way Accord • Local Access Forum • Workshops used in the process to develop the PMP
• 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)	• Communication and Engagement Strategy • Statement of Community Involvement • Visitor survey • On-line South Downs Forum consultations • Tracking spreadsheets used for key public consultations recording changes as a result of consultation • Standing Orders • Decision Records • SDNPA Guiding Principles • SDNPA Values • Corporate Plan 2013-16 • Annual review

	• Financial statements • Annual performance reporting • Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy • Publication Scheme • Access to information policy • SDNPA website
• Make best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff	• SDNPA values • Recruitment Policy • Staff Survey • Learning and Development Policy • Performance and development review scheme • Staff terms and conditions

Monitoring and Review

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