Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

1.   Introduction

Every local government body operates through a governance framework that brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes. Corporate governance arrangements encompass all of the policies and procedures that determine and control the way the authority operates.

Good governance leads to good management, good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and, ultimately, good outcomes from the service provided .

The foundation of the Authority's corporate governance arrangements can be traced directly to the "Good Governance Standard for Public Services" published by the Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services in January 2005, and subsequently refined for local government through a framework promulgated in 2007 by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).

In March 2008, the Authority adopted its own governance principles, customised to its own needs and circumstances from this framework.

Since then, local government has been subject to continued reform to improve local accountability and engagement, and in 2016 CIPFA and SOLACE produced a revised framework "Delivering Good Governance".

This framework defines the principles that should underpin the governance of each local government body, and provides a structure which should assist individual authorities with their governance arrangements.

The Core Principles are:

- **Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values , and respecting the rule of law;**

- **Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement;**

- **Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits;**

- **Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes;**

- **Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it;**

- **Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management;**

- **Principle G: Implementing good practice in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.**

In addition to the ***overarching requirements for acting in the public interest*** in Core Principles A and B, achieving good governance also requires a commitment to Core Principles C to G. In order to translate these principles into practice, the Authority has adopted this Local Code of Corporate Governance.

2. The Authority's Values

The Authority has adopted six Values, which apply to all its work:

- Improvement
  We will continually strive to improve our performance in delivering National Park purposes and welcome feedback to help us do this.

- Accountability
  We will explain and take responsibility for our decisions and actions.

- Commitment
  We will do what we say we will do.

- Integrity
  Our relationships with the public, partners and each other are built on honesty, transparency, equality, impartiality and consistency. We welcome and respect diversity and demonstrate equality in working relationships.

- Involvement
  We are open and approachable, and are proactive in encouraging wider and diverse participation in achieving our statutory purposes.

- Valuing People
  We value the people who work for us and will ensure that they are equipped and empowered to provide professional services to the public.

3. Responsibilities

All Members of the Authority are collectively and individually responsible for good governance; Members are the governors.

Primary responsibility rests with the Chair of the Authority who has a key role in ensuring there is a culture within the organisation which reflects its values. The Chair is supported in this role by all Members, but in particular the Deputy Chair, the Committee Chairs, and the Member Champion for Corporate Management.

The Audit & Review Committee is responsible for advising the Authority on its corporate governance policies and agenda, and implementing and managing the Authority's agreed policies in this area. It receives an annual corporate governance report from the Monitoring Officer.

The Standards Committee has an important role in the ethical governance of the Authority since it deals with complaints of breach of the Code of Conduct by a Member, and also with applications by Members for dispensations to speak, or to speak and vote, when they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. The Committee has the power to make recommendations to the Authority on issues of Member conduct, where these arise out of its consideration of complaints or applications for dispensations.

At officer level, good governance is first and foremost the responsibility of the Authority's three **"Statutory Officers",** namely the **Chief Executive, the Treasurer, and the Monitoring Officer.** Amongst their responsibilities is leadership in promoting a culture and practice of good governance throughout the staff of the Authority, so that all employees understand and promote the value.

The **lead officer on governance issues is the Monitoring Officer** who is responsible in particular for:

> ➢ monitoring the operation of this policy, ensuring that it remains up to date, and that any significant developments in public sector governance are brought to the attention of the Authority

and, if appropriate, that recommendations for action are considered by Members;

- ➢ ensuring that the Authority's structures, policies and procedures are kept under review through the maintenance of a Local Code of Corporate Governance, which will be reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team and by the Audit & Review Committee; and

- ➢ drawing any concerns to the attention of the other statutory officers and, if necessary, to Members.

The Authority's **internal and external auditors** also assess the Authority's governance arrangements, and their work provides an important part of the assurance to Members that governance arrangements are sound. Details of these and other assurance arrangements are published annually by the Authority as part of an Annual Governance Statement which accompanies the Statement of Financial Accounts.

This Local Code of Governance has been produced to show how the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority will implement the core principles and sub principles of the CIPFA/ SOLACE framework and demonstrate full compliance with it.

Local Code of Corporate Governance
Good Governance means …

Core Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	
Supporting Principles	**What Evidence/Assurance is in place at YDNPA**
Behaving with integrity Ensuring Members and Officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the Authority. Ensuring Members and Officers take a lead in establishing specific standard principles or values for the organisation (based on seven Nolan Principles) Leading by example and using the principles as framework for all actions and decisions Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles through appropriate policies and processes, which are regularly reviewed to ensure effectiveness **Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values** Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the Authority's ethical standards and performance Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the Authority's culture and operation Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the Authority act with the integrity and ethical standards expected by the Authority **Respecting the rule of law** Ensuring Members and Officers demonstrate strong commitment to the rule of law Creating the conditions for the three Statutory Officers and Members to fulfil their regulatory responsibilities	• Mission and Core Values Statement • Member Code of Conduct • Officer Code of Conduct • Member Employee Protocol • Scheme of Delegation, and records of delegated decisions • Standing Orders • Financial Regulations • Local Code of Corporate Governance • Role of Audit & Review Committee and Standards Committee. • Arrangements for dealing with complaints about Member conduct • Appointment of Independent Persons to Standards Committee • Roles and Responsibilities of Members • Job Descriptions for Chairman and Members ; • Member Champion Protocol • Staff Appraisal process linked to Core Values • Equality and Diversity Policy; the Equality Working Group • Annual report on Equality Compliance to SMT or Audit & Review Committee as appropriate. • HR policies in place to maintain ethical values and deal with issues concerning conduct • Complaints procedure • Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy • Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) procedures • Role of three Statutory Officers • Role of Monitoring Officer to report on illegality • Role of Chief Financial Officer to report on unlawful expenditure • Appointment of Internal and External Auditors and reporting arrangements in place to Audit and Review Committee with statements in annual reports to the Authority • Annual Governance Report and Annual Governance Statement reporting on effectiveness and significant issues • Register of Members Interests, updated regularly and published on the YDNPA website • Register of Officer Interests • Registration of Related Party Transactions

Striving to optimise the use of full powers available for the benefit of stakeholders Dealing effectively with breaches of legal or regulatory provisions Ensuring corruption and misuse of powers are dealt with effectively	• Declarations of lobbying and declarations of interests at committee meetings • Transparency about business dealings between the Authority, Members and senior Staff

Core Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	
Supporting Principles	**What Evidence/Assurance is in place at YDNPA**
Openness/ensuring an open culture Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating our commitment to openness. Making decisions that are open and transparent; presumption against confidentiality without justification Providing clear reasoning and evidence relating to actions and decisions, and ensuring the impact and consequences are clear Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate courses of action	• Authority and Committee meetings held in public; Authority and Planning Committee meetings and recorded • Publication of agendas , reports and minutes for the Authority and its Committees, plus audio recordings where appropriate. • Reports include legal, financial, and human resources (HR) equality implications where necessary • Opportunities for public speaking at committee meetings • Access to Information arrangements • Agreed actions to comply with the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014 • Agreed actions to implement the requirements of the Data Transparency Code and arrangements for the information to be available on the website • Adoption of the ICO's standard Publication Scheme

Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders
 	
Ensuring that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably.
 	
Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively.
 	
Ensuring that partnerships are based on trust, a shared commitment to change, and a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners; the added value of partnership is explicit
	• Formal and informal consultation
	    o NPMP steering group
	    o Local plan consultations
	    o Stakeholder consultations
	    o Parish Forums
	• Yorkshire Dales Local Access Forum
	• Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum
	• Customer and Residents surveys
	
	• Dales Newspaper for residents
	• The Visitor
	• Press releases
	• Use of Social Media and websites
	• Performance and Service reviews reported to Audit and Review Committee

Effective engagement with individual citizens and service users Establishing a clear policy on consultation with stakeholders to ensure service provision contributes to intended outcomes Ensuring communication methods are effective in relation to community engagement Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views of stakeholders including reference to future needs Implementing effective feedback mechanisms and ensuring inclusivity of all feedback	• Published strategies, codes and protocols • Procedures for regular review of strategies , codes and protocols • Agenda reports and minutes; codes and protocols published on Authority website. • Comprehensive and accessible YDNPA website, publications • Review of Partnerships – a review is undertaken every two years (last review March 2017) • State of the Park Report: information updated and published annually on the Authority's website as part of monitoring progress towards achieving NPMP objectives • Annual monitoring report on the impact of the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan. • Annual Corporate Plan: progress regularly reviewed by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and reported twice a year to the Audit & Review Committee. • National park performance indicators for benchmarking

Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other groups to ensure inclusivity. Taking account of impact of decisions on future generations of taxpayers/service users	• Satisfaction surveys are carried out in relation to the main 'promoting understanding' services (NPCs, website) annually, and in relation to the planning service every two years • In 2010, the Authority achieved the Government's Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard and this has been retained every year since last reassessed /confirmed in October 2017.

Core Principle C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable benefits	
Supporting Principles	**What Evidence/Assurance is in place at YDNPA**
Defining Outcomes Having a clear vision as an agreed formal statement of the Authority's purpose and intended outcomes Specifying the intended impact on stakeholders Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within resources Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes Managing service users expectations with regard to determining priorities **Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits** Consider and balance the combined economic social and environmental benefits Taking a long term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently in the face of conflict of interest Determining the wider public interest when balancing conflicting interests, through consultation where possible Ensuring fair access to services	• The Authority's role defined by the two statutory purposes and the Mission Statement. • The Authority's National Park Management Plan: developed together with partner organisations - sets 20 year vision and 5 year objectives on communities, economy and environment. The NPMP is currently being reviewed which will take account of the extension to the Park. A Steering Group of key partners has been established to oversee the drafting, with a view to adoption of the final Plan in 2018. • The Authority sets its own objectives in its Corporate Plan (many of them taken directly from the Management Plan. A detailed review of the Authority's priorities is carried out every 3 years, with a light touch review annually • The annual Action Plan refines the objectives into specific activity each year • The new Local Plan (15 year period) has been published following extensive public consultation • Defined quality measures, and information on performance in relation to them. • Risk Management Policy . • Strategic Risk Register biannual reviews of operational risk by SMT, annual report to Members in relation to strategic risks • In 2017 external audit gave an unmodified conclusion that the Authority had appropriate arrangement for securing economy efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. • The Customer Services Excellence final report in 2017 confirmed that the Authority has systems in place to monitor the outcomes of its services and to measure the degree of satisfaction that customers have with them.

Core Principle D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievements of the intended outcomes	
Supporting Principles	**What Evidence/Assurance is in place at YDNPA**
Determining Interventions Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating associated risks, thereby ensuring best value is achieved Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making service improvements in order to prioritise competing resource demands **Planning Interventions** Establishing and maintaining robust planning and control cycles for plans, priorities and targets Engaging with stakeholders in relation to planning and delivery; considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively, including shared risks Ensuring arrangements are flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances Establishing key performance indicators; and ensuring capacity exists to generate information needed to review service quality regularly Prepare budgets in accordance with objectives, strategies and the medium term financial plan Inform medium and long term resource planning through a sustainable funding strategy **Optimising achievement of intended outcomes** Ensuring the budget process is all-inclusive of full cost of operations over medium and longer term Ensuring medium term financial strategy is responsive to external circumstances to optimise resource usage/integrates and balances resource constraints Ensuring the achievement of "social value" through service planning	• Explicit statement of the criteria, rationale and relevant considerations on which decisions are based. • National Park purposes considered for all decisions. • National and local planning policies (Local Plan / Local Development Framework) for planning decisions. • All Committee Reports address conformity of the subject matter with the Authority's strategic planning framework. • "Guidance on Good Decision Making" developed and circulated in 2006. • Recent Performance Improvement 'Review of Committee arrangements and resourcing' which was reported to the Authority June 2014. • Reporting cycles for Corporate Plan objectives, priorities , financial budget, corporate governance and risk management in place • State of the Park, visitor, users and residents survey • Risk Management Policy. • Strategic Risk Register biannual reviews of operational risk by SMT, annual report to Members in relation to strategic risks • All key systems are reviewed cyclically by Internal Audit. • External Audit relies in part on the work of Internal Audit and augments this with additional testing and review work where a significant risk is perceived. This work covers all transactional activity for which the Authority is an accountable body. • All key systems reviewed cyclically by Internal Audit. • Regular review of assets and property strategy. • Annual use of resources assessment undertaken by External Audit • Regular budget monitoring reports to SMT and Finance & Resources Committee. • No separate capital programme; regular review of assets and property strategy • Budgeting processes examined each year by Internal and External Audit. • Reserves maintained in line with guidance from the Audit Commission (contingency reserve) and with CIPFA capital accounting guidelines. • Medium Term Financial Plan • Service plans • Annual budget and quarterly management monitoring plans • Annual Statement of Accounts • Audit reports (Internal and External)

Core Principle E. Developing the Authority's capacity including the capability of leadership and individuals	
Supporting Principles	**What Evidence/Assurance is in place at YDNPA**
Developing capacity Reviewing operations and resources to ensure continued effectiveness Improving allocation of resources so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently Recognising the benefits of partnership working where added value can be achieved Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance allocation of resources	• People Management Strategy • IT Strategy • Internal and external audit of processes • NPMP review cycle • Corporate Plan and Action Plan review cycle • Setting priorities linked to Appraisal process • Budgetary control reported to SMT • Reports to Finance & Resources Committee including long term budget setting • YDMT Memorandum of Understanding • Annual Review of Partnerships • Income Generation Strategy – quarterly updates to F&R committee
Developing capability of leadership Developing protocols to ensure that shared understanding of roles and responsibilities is maintained Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions Ensuring Chairman and CEO have clearly defined roles Developing capabilities of Members and Senior Management by giving access to induction and ongoing training; Members and Officers have appropriate skills and support to fulfil roles and this is kept updated; development through shared learning and learning from identified weaknesses Ensure structures in place to encourage public participation in development Taking steps to ensure leadership's effectiveness through peer reviews and appraisals Holding staff to account through performance reviews Ensuring arrangements in place to maintain physical and mental wellbeing of Officers	• Staff and Management restructure approved • Training and Development programmes for Members and Officers • Authority Days for officers and Members • Bi-annual All Staff Meetings • Role/Protocols of Statutory Officers • Clear Members Roles and Responsibilities • Member Champion role • Scheme of Delegation • Delegated decisions published through Open Data • Role of Chairman Job Descriptions • Member and Officer Appraisals; including CEO • Peer reviews for senior management • IIP accreditation • Annual review of Customer Service Excellence • Access to Occupational Health scheme • Employees Assistance Programme in place • Active Health & Safety Working Group

Core Principle F. Managing risk and performance through robust internal control	
Supporting Principles	**What Evidence/Assurance is in place at YDNPA**
Managing risk Ensuring risk management is an integral part of all decision making Implementing robust and integrated risk management Ensuring individual responsibilities for managing risk are clearly allocated **Managing performance** Monitoring service delivery effectively Making decisions based on clear and relevant objective analysis including risks Encouraging effective and constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives Providing Members and SMT with regular reports on service delivery Ensuring consistency between specification stages and post implementation reporting **Robust internal control** Aligning risk management strategy and policies Evaluation and monitoring risk management Ensuring counterfraud and anti-corruption measures in place Ensuring additional assurance through effective internal audit Ensuring audit committee independent of the executive **Managing data** Ensuring effective arrangements for safe collection and use of data including sharing of personal data Effective arrangements for sharing data with other bodies Regularly reviewing and auditing quality and accuracy of data used in decision making	• The Authority has adopted a three tiered approach to risk management: Annual Risk Management Plan; Strategic Risk Register; Operational Risk Register . • A Risk Management Policy was approved by Audit & Review Committee in November 2010. The Committee reviews risk management on an annual basis • The Risk Management Policy and Strategic Register are reviewed by SMT; views of external audit and internal audit are included • The Annual Risk Management plan is prepared by the Senior Management Team and is based on the Authority's priorities. • SMT undertake scheduled reviews of risks and Directors maintain logs within their own Directorates • SMT undertakes biannual reviews of operational risk, and there is an annual report to Members in relation to strategic risks • Scheduled risk meetings with insurers • Internal Audit: Veritau role • A comprehensive Complaints procedure is in place, as reviewed and approved in April 2017 • The Authority's own performance in delivering its services is measured through a range of corporate objectives set out in the annual Corporate Plan. Progress is regularly reviewed by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and reported twice a year to the Audit & Review Committee. Performance Improvement reviews are carried out by small member/officer teams including the relevant Member Champion and a member of the Audit & Review Committee ensuring there is Member input in the process. In 2010, the Authority achieved the Government's Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard and this has been retained every year since • Complaints that Members have breached the Code of Conduct are made to the Monitoring Officer. Procedures to deal with complaints were approved in June 2012, and an Independent Person (and reserve) appointed to advise in relation to such complaints in accordance with a Protocol adopted in September 2013 (currently being updated) • State of the Park information is updated and published annually on the Authority's website as part of the information that monitors progress towards achieving all the objectives in the NPMP. There is also an annual monitoring report on the impact of the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan. • Data Protection Policy; internal audit on DP compliance carried out every three years • Nominated Data Protection Officer and Senior Information Risk Owner • An updated Access to Information Statement approved August 2017 • Data Sharing arrangements included in Data Protection Policy. • Anti Fraud, Bribery & Corruption policy • Compliance with Payment Card Industry Standard

and performance monitoring	
Strong public financial management Well developed financial management to support long term and short term financial and operational performance Ensuring financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control	• Money laundering advice • Regular budget monitoring reports to SMT, and Finance & Resources Committee. • No separate capital programme • Regular review of assets and property strategy.

Core Principle G. Implementing good practice in transparency, reporting and audit	
Supporting Principles	**What Evidence/Assurance is in place at YDNPA**
Good Practice in Transparency Writing and publishing reports in a balanced, understandable and easily accessed style Striking a balance with regard to the amount of information provided	- All committee business published on website - FoI/EIR compliance - Publication Scheme - Open Government requirements (including delegations),publishing expenditure / contract details
Good Practice in Reporting Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources in a clear, timely way Ensuring members and officers take "ownership" of the reported results Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the principles in this framework are applied, including an action plan for improvement Ensure this framework is applied to joint working/shared services Ensuring that performance information accompanying the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and allows for comparison with similar organisations	- A&R/F&R committee - PIs - Action plan 6-monthly updates on progress - Annual review of performance across all aspects of work - Internal and external audit - Arrangements for end of year A&R Governance Statement - External Audit Ernst &Young - Arrangements in place with Internal Audit Veritau regular audits undertaken and reported to Audit & Review Committee; recommendations actioned - The Authority has adopted clear criteria as to when partnership working is appropriate; a bi-ennial review of Partnerships is reported to the Authority - Review of governance arrangements undertaken by Monitoring Officer; bi-annual report to SMT
Assurance and accountability Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted on Ensuring an effective internal audit service is in place Welcoming peer challenge and regulatory inspections and acting on recommendations Gaining assurance on risks delivered through third parties and ensuring that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement When working in partnership, ensuring arrangements for accountability are clear.	

Adopted **March 2008**
Reviewed **April 2014; November 2016; November 2017**

Lead Officer: **Gill Cooper**

Corporate Governance:
Annual cycle of planning, reviewing and learning

	Planning	Reviewing	Budget Setting
April	Corporate Plan published Proposed programme of reviews confirmed	Major project review results to Audit & Review	
May	Action Plan published	End of year performance reports prepared Submission of "Family" PIs	Year end financial outturn to F&R, identifying carry-forward budgets
June		NPMP end-of-year report End-of-year report on Corporate Plan Objectives	
July	ToR for performance reviews to Audit & Review	Comprehensive end of year performance report to Audit & Review	Finalisation of annual accounts to F and R
August			
September	Authority reviews priorities		3-month financial progress report to F&R with preliminary income projections
October	SMT/section heads discuss progress and looking ahead	6-month progress report on Objectives and Actions from Section Heads to SMT	
November	NPMP Steering Group meet re programme implementation	6-month progress report to A&R	SMT budget discussions Draft budget to F & R.
December	Objectives for year ahead to Authority		6-month financial progress report to F&R Final approval of budget for next year.
January			
February	Section heads draft Action Plan		Draft budget to F&R
March	Annual appraisals	Setting individual objectives and targets, and reviewing performance	Final budget approved by Authority