

## Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

### Corporate Governance Policy

#### The Authority's Values

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has adopted six Values, which apply to all its work. They are:

**1. 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.

**2. Accountability**

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

**3. Commitment**

We will do what we say we will do.

**4. Involvement**

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

**5. Improvement**

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

**6. 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.

#### Implementing the Values

The Authority believes that strong corporate governance arrangements are necessary to ensure that these Values are put into practice. Corporate governance arrangements are all of the structures, policies and procedures that determine and control the way that the Authority operates.

In order to achieve this, the Authority has adopted the "Good Governance Standard for Public Services" published by the Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services as a guide to understanding and applying principles of good governance, and as a tool to assess the strengths and weaknesses of current governance practice within the Authority and to improve it. The Authority believes that good governance is critical to encourage public trust in the Authority, and public participation in its work: these in turn will enable the Authority to improve its performance in achieving its statutory purposes, and in delivering services.

The principles of corporate governance apply to all aspects of the Authority's work. These six principles are:

Principle 1: focussing on the organisation's purpose, and on outcomes for citizens and service users.

Principle 2: performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles.

Principle 3: promoting values for the whole organisation, and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour.

Principle 4: taking informed, transparent decisions, and managing risk.

Principle 5: developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective.

Principle 6: engaging stakeholders and making accountability real.

### Responsibilities

All **Members of the Authority** share responsibility for good governance: Members are the Governors. The members who are first among equals in this responsibility are the Chair of the Authority, who has a unique leadership role in ensuring the development of a culture within the organisation which reflects its values; the Chair of the Audit & Review Committee; and the Member Champion for the Corporate and Democratic Core.

The Audit and 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 will receive an annual corporate governance report from the Monitoring Officer. The Standards Committee is responsible for oversight of ethical issues, and has been asked to advise the Authority on ethical issues which affect governance.

**At officer level**, good governance is first and foremost the responsibility of the Authority's three "Statutory Officers": namely the Chief Executive, the officer responsible for the Authority's financial affairs 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 it.

The lead officer on governance issues is the Monitoring Officer. S/he will be 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.
- Keeping the Authority's structures, policies and procedures under review in the light of the "Good Governance Standard", and drawing any concerns to the attention of the other statutory officers and if necessary to Members.

The Authority's **internal and external auditors** will also assess the Authority's governance arrangements, and their work will provide assurance to Members that governance arrangements are sound. Details of these and other assurance arrangements will be published annually by the Authority as part of a "Statement of Internal Control" within the Statement of Financial Accounts.

*This policy was adopted by the Authority in March 2007, and is due to be reviewed in 2010.*