

Natural England – Strategic Statement of the Role of the Board

Context

Natural England's general purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generation, thereby contributing to sustainable development. This includes:

- Promoting nature conservation and protecting biodiversity.
- Conserving and enhancing the landscape.
- Securing the provision and improvement of the natural enjoyment.
- Promoting access to the countryside and open spaces and encouraging open air recreation.
- Contributing in other ways to social and economic well being through the management of the Natural Environment.

In doing this Natural England will strive to:

- Be independent and trusted.
- Build consensus and lead opinion.
- Be a catalyst for others and take action ourselves.

The primary purpose of the Board is to establish strategy and approve policy direction for Natural England, including:

- Ensuring appropriate interpretation of the General Purpose of Natural England as set out in the NERC Act 2006 and directing it in areas that are conducive to the discharge of its functions.
- Development and communication of Strategic Direction, policies and corporate values.
- Approval and review of the Corporate Plan and annual budget within the resources framework determined by the Secretary of State.
- Approval of policies (including responses to significant Government consultations).
- Taking account of any public policy directions from the Secretary of State.

The Board has responsibility to scrutinise, review and evaluate:

- Performance of Natural England in delivering its Strategic Direction and policies.
- Overall operation and management including, in particular, systems of internal control.
- Identification and management of risk.
- Achievement of value for money and the use of resources in delivery of its Strategic Direction.
- Compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and with corporate governance principles as laid down in HMT guidance.

The Board will discharge its responsibilities by:

- Creating appropriate Board Committees (including an Audit Committee) and informal groupings of Board Members and ensuring that Board structures and behaviours promote the efficient and effective discharge of the Board's business.
- Promoting and securing high-level performance and development of the Board and its Members in the discharge of its business.
- Establishing appropriate arrangements for corporate governance.
- Appointing, with the Secretary of State's approval in the first instance, a Chief Executive, and assessing his/ her performance against a framework established by the Board, in consultation with the Secretary of State, which gives due weight to the proper management and use of public monies and to the efficient and effective use of staff and other resources. and approving an appropriate level of bonus.
- Delegating appropriate authority to the Chief Executive and oversight of the discharge of responsibilities.
- Requiring the Chief Executive to provide, regular and adequate reports on financial and non-financial performance and progress against the Strategic Direction and Corporate Plan.
- Approving the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts.
- Ensuring that research is carried out, and advice provided, in accordance with the NERC Act 2006.
- Ensuring an effective and influential dialogue with Ministers, Defra, other Government Departments and their Agencies and Local and Regional Authorities in pursuit of the successful delivery of the Strategic Direction.
- Ensuring that the Secretary of State is kept informed of progress against Natural England's Strategic Direction and the attainability of its targets.
- Influencing and building relationships with a range of strategic partners and other stakeholders in pursuit of its Strategic Direction.
- Promoting transparency in the outside world about Natural England's strategic direction, objectives, policies, performance and stewardship of public monies and giving opportunities to stakeholders, and to the diverse community it serves, to contribute their views on these matters.
- Advocating Natural England's purpose and core values.