

Annual Governance Statement 2021-22



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1. Introduction

This Annual Governance Statement documents the Advisory Board's (Board) application of good governance practice during the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022, in compliance with the requirements of the Sport England Code for Sports Governance (the Code). Compliance with the Code was achieved in April 2018, and the Board has continued to ensure that its practices are in line with the requirements laid down in the Code.

A priority focus of the Board during the current year was to continue to ensure that robust governance procedures were maintained as the COVID-19 pandemic progressed, to ensure the organisation was supported during this challenging period. Members have fully embraced engaging using virtual methods and has allowed even greater connectivity between the Executive and the Board.

2. Summary of Governance Highlights

- All activities identified in the Board's Annual Governance Plan were completed;
- Five Board meetings were held during the year in May 2021, September 2021, November 2021, and February 2022, all meetings being conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams platform. A further special meeting was held in January 2022 to consider the implications of Local Government Reorganisation in Cumbria.
- The movement to virtual meetings has resulted in a noticeable increase in attendances. A principle moving forward will be the opportunity for hybrid meetings, including the option of face to face or virtual attendance.
- The Board operated in line with the agreed Terms of Reference, and within the agreed delegated authorities;
- The Board has played an active role in supporting the launch of the new 5 Year Plan 2021 – 2026 during the period, supporting the promotion and dissemination of the agreed priorities.
- The Board has played an active role in supporting the Executive to develop a new Measurement, Evaluation and Learning System for the organisation.
- The practice of identifying thematic Board Champions continues to work well, and has increased connectivity between Board members and the Executive. Thematic areas include both safeguarding, and equality and diversity.
- Two meetings of the Audit Committee were held in April 2021, and October 2021;
- The Board reviewed the following governance documents for suitability: -
 - Governance Document;
 - Diversity Action Plan;
 - Risk Register;
 - Safeguarding Children Young People Policy;
 - Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy;
 - Annual Governance Plan.
- The Board, supported by the Audit Committee, reviewed the following areas of governance: -
 - Risk Management process;
 - Internal Financial Control Systems;
 - Reserves Policy;
 - Annual Governance Statement;
 - Annual Audit Process;
 - Conflict of Interest Policy;
 - Scheme of Delegation;
 - Compliance with the Code for Sports Governance.
- The Board undertook the following improvement activities: -
 - Annual Board skills audit and review completed in November 2021;
 - Internal Board Performance Review completed in November 2021;

- Although Board membership numbers were stable, there was some movement with regard to membership during the year, with: -
 - A new Chairperson being elected from the existing membership as a result of the previous Chairperson leaving, due to reaching the end of their second term of office;
 - A new Senior Independent Member (SIM) being elected from the existing membership, due to the previous SIM being elected as Chairperson;
 - 1 member leaving the Board following the completion of the maximum of two terms of office;
 - 1 member resigning from the Board during their first term of office;
 - 3 new members recruited to join the Board during the year.
- Finances were stable, with;
 - Continuation of existing external audit process;
 - Successful external audit and approval of the 2020/21 financial accounts;
 - Unaudited 2021/22 income and expenditure position improved compared to budget, with additional ‘in-year’ income attracted through a variety of sources;
 - Year end reserves position improved.
 - An on-going commitment to focus on diversifying income streams beyond Sport England and into the private sector, thereby reducing financial risk.
- There were no breaches of data protection legislation reported during the period;
- There were no conflicts of interest reported during the period;
- The Board, supported by the Core Team contributed to the achievements of the organisation during the period, further details of which can be found in the Annual Report [here](#).

3. Leadership

3.1 The Role of the Board

The overriding functions of the Board are to: -

- Ensure clarity of vision, values and strategic direction for Active Cumbria activities;
- Provide oversight, input and challenge;
- Actively promote and further the work of Active Cumbria.

The Board has ensured that there is a framework of controls which enable the effective operation of Active Cumbria. The policies and procedures of the host agency and accountable body, Cumbria County Council, are used to enable the core team to undertake their roles.

Operational performance against the outcomes of the 3 Year Plan is monitored by the Board through an effective performance dashboard, which is scrutinised at each meeting.

A separate Audit Committee, with associated terms of reference is in place. Further details on the role of the Audit Committee is provided in Section 7.

Further details of the following documents is provided below: -

- [Governance Framework](#)
- [Advisory Board Terms of Reference](#)
- [Audit Committee Terms of Reference](#)
- [Register of Interests](#)
- [Board Minutes and Agendas](#)
- [Details of Board Members](#)

3.2 The Role of the Chairperson

The role of the Chairperson is critical in ensuring the conditions for an effective Board, as well as being an ambassador for the organisation, providing leadership and direction. Specific responsibilities are outlined in the Terms of Reference, a link to which is provided in Section 3.1.

3.3 The Role of the Senior Independent Member (SIM)

Amongst other things, the SIM will stand in for the Chairperson as required, and take on the responsibilities of the Chairperson for that period. Further details of the specific roles of the SIM are outlined in the Terms of Reference, a link to which is provided in Section 3.1.

3.4 Recruitment to the Board

An open and transparent recruitment policy is in place for the filling of vacancies on the Board. A task and finish group will be appointed by the Board to undertake shortlisting and interviews, as appropriate, with recommendations being made to the Board to formally ratify the selection process. As such, no formal Nominations Committee is in place, this function is undertaken by the Board.

A link to the most recent Board Recruitment Pack can be found [here](#).

3.5 Induction for New Members

A comprehensive induction programme is in place for new Board members, this includes, but is not limited to: -

- Provision of a range of key documents, minutes, Board papers etc;
- Detailed Induction meeting with Senior Managers (and Chairperson if requested);
- Connectivity with existing Board members for informal discussion ahead of first meeting;
- Identification of potential lead thematic role.

A link to the Board Induction Checklist can be found [here](#).

4. Equality & Diversity

- 4.1 The Board is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among its membership, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The aim is for the Board to be truly representative of the population and for each member to feel respected and able to give their best.

To support this aim, a Diversity Action Plan has been produced, which is reviewed regularly, the purpose of which is to: -

- Demonstrate that the leadership (Advisory Board and Senior Management) of Active Cumbria is committed to ensuring greater equality and diversity on its Advisory Board and within the senior management of the organisation;
- Provide equality, fairness and respect for all members, and oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination;
- Provide a strong public commitment to not unlawfully discriminate in line with the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation.

Further details of the specific priorities of the Diversity Action Plan can be viewed [here](#).

5. Effectiveness

5.1 Composition of the Board

The Board is predominantly made up of independent members, appointed based on their individual skills or expertise. There are two ex-officio positions on the Board for the two senior managers from within the core team. There are currently 11 members on the Board, with no vacancies.

5.2 Evaluations

5.2.1 Board Performance (Internal)

During the year, a range of evaluations have been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the performance of the Board. An internal assessment, undertaken in November 2020 pointed towards members feeling positive about their level of involvement, adding value to the Board, the flow of information, and the general direction the Board was taking. A copy of the summary evaluation report is [here](#).

5.2.2 Skills Audit

A biennial audit of skills was undertaken during the Advisory Board meeting in November 2021 covering a range of essential skills, knowledge, and experiences. The reported strengths included areas such as strategic and business planning, working as a team, and managing and motivating partners and staff. Areas of focus moving forward included Marketing, PR and media relations.

6. Risk

A detailed Risk Register is considered by the Board at each meeting. Mitigating actions for those risk perceived to be higher are reported and considered. A link to the most recent Risk Register is [here](#).

7. Audit Committee

7.1 The Role of the Audit Committee

The role of the Audit Committee is to assist the Board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities for the financial reporting process, the system of financial controls, the audit process, and the process for monitoring financial compliance with the governing body's Code of Conduct, making recommendations through the production of appropriate reports to the Advisory Board for approval as and when required. Terms of Reference for the Committee can be viewed via the link in Section 3.1.

7.2 Membership

The Audit Committee is made up of four Board members, three of which are independent members, and the other being the Senior Manager (Operations) who has accountability for the finances under the host agency scheme of delegation. The Committee is supported by the core team Finance Officer, who provides detailed reports as required.

7.3 Review of Internal Controls

An annual review of the internal controls is undertaken by the Audit Committee at their October meeting. The minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2021 can be viewed [here](#).

7.4 Financial Auditing

The annual external audit of the Statement of Accounts for Active Cumbria is undertaken as part of the external audit of the accounts of the host authority. An agreed process has been implemented, which allows for the Board's Audit Committee to input into the process at regular and timely intervals, to ensure there is sufficient opportunity to scrutinise and/or challenge the Auditors findings. Full details of the process can be viewed [here](#).

8. Data Protection

In line with new GDPR regulations all staff have received training during the year around the new requirements of this legislation. Internal processes, systems and data have been streamlined to take account of the new requirements. There were no data breaches during the year.

9. Affiliations

9.1 Active Partnerships

As one of 43 Active Partnerships in existence across England, Active Cumbria affiliates to Active Partnerships, which is a representative body providing support to all Active Partnerships across the country. Active partnerships do not hold any influence, or impact on the operating policies of Active Cumbria.

9.2 Cumbria County Council

As stated in Section 3.1, Active Cumbria is hosted within Cumbria County Council, which is the host agency and accountable body, with the Board regularly reviewing these arrangements. All core team staff are employed by Cumbria County Council, and operate under their respective policies and procedures. An Agency Agreement between Active Cumbria and Cumbria County Council (dated 20.11.17) is in place which sets out the terms of the relationship.



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