

Report to	Resources & Performance Committee
Date	19 November 2013
By	Director of Corporate Services
Title of Report	Update on People Strategy
Purpose of Report	To provide the Committee with an update on progress against the people strategy

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to note the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out progress that has been made in the implementation of a People Strategy for the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). This includes:
- health and safety
 - policy and procedure
 - employee relations
 - learning and development
 - performance management and development
 - apprenticeships and work experience
 - HR data management
 - and the recent restructure of the organisation.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 14 November 2012, a report was submitted to the Resources and Performance Committee outlining progress across all elements of the People Strategy. It was agreed that an annual update would be given on progress with the strategy.
- 2.2 The People Strategy is being implemented and managed internally by the HR team. External advice and services are required in specialist areas, such as litigation, occupational health and health & safety.
- 2.3 The key focus areas of the People Strategy can be found in **Appendix I**.

3. Health and Safety

- 3.1 In November 2012, a consultancy arrangement was set up with the Health and Safety Advisor at the Peak District NPA, Jon Wayte. Jon also provides advice to Northumberland NPA and sits on the Management Board of the Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group. This means that we can share approaches to health and safety across the Parks thereby achieving greater consistency, mutually supportive evidence of compliance and most importantly confidence that we demonstrate exemplary best practice in managing safety.
- 3.2 Jon Wayte provides us with an on-site service of 15 days per annum, supported by unlimited service via e-mail and telephone consultation. His on-site time focuses on full audits of the area offices, health & safety training and attending the quarterly Health & Safety Committee meeting.

- 3.3 Jon Wayte has conducted a review of the current safety training arrangements. The Senior Management Team and Rangers have now been trained in risk assessment and risk management. This training will also be rolled out to the Planning Directorate in January 2014. Officers have been trained in manual handling. Jon is currently trialling an online training programme for members at the Peak District and this will then be rolled out to SDNPA members.
- 3.4 In April 2013, the first Annual Health & Safety Report was presented to the Resources and Performance Committee, providing details of the work to date and future health and safety plans.
- 3.5 In June 2013, a health and safety audit was undertaken by Brighton and Hove and they concluded that “substantial assurance” was provided on the effectiveness of our internal health and safety control in managing key risks. This was a significant improvement from the previous audit conducted in March 2012, which gave “reasonable assurance”.
- 3.6 Jon Wayte is currently reviewing the Health and Safety Policy and management responsibilities to ensure that it meets the needs of the organisation as simply and efficiently as possible. The revised policy will be presented to the Members in early 2014.
- 3.7 Future training and visits will focus around the central risk management discipline of risk assessment. By supporting those tasked with carrying these out, Jon Wayte aims to raise the skill and confidence levels of those involved and to gradually foster a culture of excellent risk management with all staff involvement in the risk assessment process, contributing to, using and valuing the exercise and the outputs.

4. Policies and Procedures

- 4.1 All key policies and procedures are now in place and the necessary reviews are being conducted. A list of these policies can be found in **Appendix 2**.

5. Employee Relations

- 5.1 In August 2012, a Joint Consultative Committee was formed. The committee is chaired by the Director of Corporate Services and attended by a representative from South East UNISON, two UNISON employee reps, two non-UNISON employee reps and the HR Manager. The group meets quarterly and has played a key part in the restructure consultation process.
- 5.2 The four employee reps also form the Terms and Conditions Working Group. This group has reviewed terms and conditions and benefits by collating feedback and recommendations from staff and taking into consideration benchmarking with other national park authorities and local authorities. Recommendations were made to the Senior Management Team and the review resulted in changes to annual leave, sick pay and a number of policies.
- 5.3 The working group will next review soft benefits packages that could improve employee morale and wellbeing at a minimal cost to the Authority.
- 5.4 The Employee Assistance Programme has been rolled out to officers and members and we have received very positive feedback from those who have used the service.

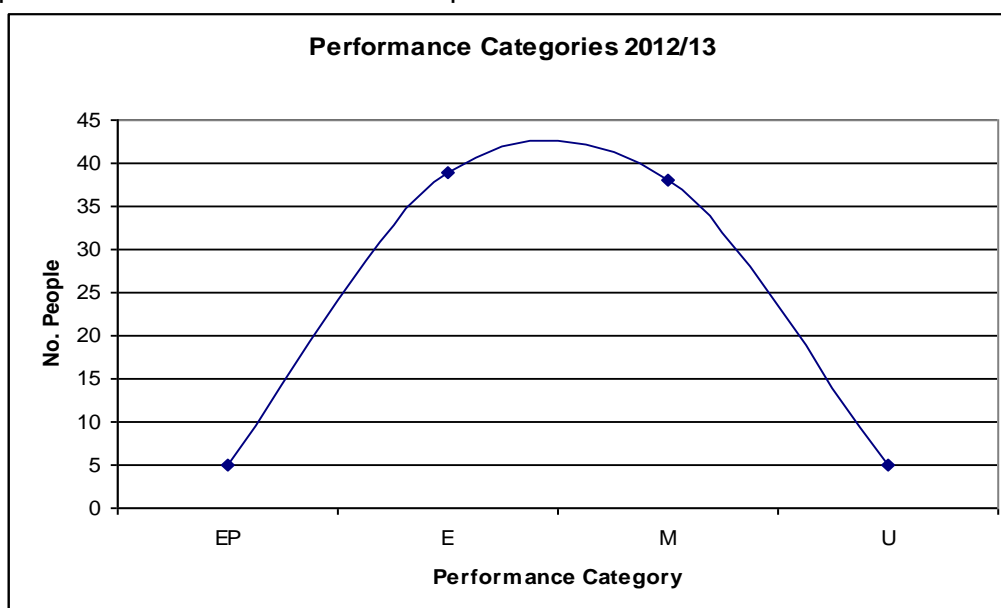
6. Learning and Development

- 6.1 Each year a learning and development plan has been created, taking into account development needs identified in all employees’ performance and development reviews. It focuses on core skills training and runs alongside any job specific training requests.
- 6.2 In 2012/2013 we ran a wide range of training course including Line Management & Leadership, Project Management, Presentation and Communications Skills, Planning for Non-Planners, Health & Safety, Report Writing and job specific training.

- 6.3 In 2013/2014 we have repeated some of the training above due to high demand, but have also covered or will be covering the following areas:
- One to one coaching
 - Media training
 - Minute taking
 - Time Management
 - Coaching and Mentoring skills for Managers
 - Smarter Communication
 - Negotiation skills and Partnership Working
 - Equality & Diversity
 - ICT specific training, e.g. Microsoft Office, GIS
- 6.4 The full 2013/2014 learning and development plan can be found in **Appendix 3**.
- 6.5 We have supported a number of employees in further education and professional studies and plan to run some accredited management training.
- 6.6 The Learning and Development budget for 2013/2014 is £80,000. This spend will reduce in 2014/2015 as a majority of the initial core training will have been delivered.
- 6.7 Members adopted the Member Development Strategy in April 2011. This is under review and a revised version (following the outcome of the Members Governance Review) will be taken to the National Park Authority meeting in February 2014.

7. Performance Management and Development

- 7.1 2012/2013 was the first complete year the performance and development review (PDR) scheme operated. At the end of the financial year, following completion of all PDRs, the HR team collated every individual result and the senior management team considered each individual in order to assign an overall performance level to each.
- 7.2 It is this overall level of performance (unmet, met, exceeded, exceptional performance) that defines the percentage level of pay increase awarded each year. For the 2012/2013 the pay increases were paid in the June 2013 payroll.
- 7.3 No appeals were received in 2012/2013 and the overall result against each of the four performance levels resulted in a near-perfect bell curve:



- 7.4 The total budget spent on performance related pay rises in 2012/2013 was £52,500. This does not include any cost of living pay increases.
- 7.5 In order to seek feedback and to ensure buy-in from staff, sessions were held in July 2013 with line managers. Feedback from these sessions, and from the overall implementation process, will be used to make alterations to the policy. In 2014/2015 we will also introduce competency based objectives.

8. Apprenticeships and Work Experience

8.1 Apprenticeships

The restructure has identified areas of the organisation that can accommodate apprenticeships. The Director of Corporate Services and the HR Manager have met with several educational establishments and providers that can support us. Initially, we intend to trial two apprentices; a Business Services Apprentice and a Ranger Apprentice, before we roll this programme out to the rest of the organisation. The trial apprenticeships will commence in early 2014/2015.

8.2 Work Experience

A Work Experience Working Group has been formed, with the aim of providing high quality work experience packages to ensure that the experience of the young person is as meaningful and relevant as possible. The programmes will offer an insight into how our organisation works, how we work in partnerships and our general work ethic. Participants will also experience skills for employment such as completing an application form against a person specification, attending an interview, completing an induction and assessment processes.

- 8.3 We will be working with Education Business Partnerships, who will train our staff in their responsibilities and identify local schools from which we can source students. We will also allow opportunities for direct applicants.
- 8.4 The group will meet at the end of November to agree these work packages and the dates that these work placements can commence, from spring 2014.

9. HR Data Management System

- 9.1 We have introduced an online HR system, Breathe HR. This is a simple, easy to use self-service system that allows managers to record annual leave, sick leave and training. It provides a central database for all employee records and enables better absence management.

10. Restructure

- 10.1 In July 2013, the consultation of the proposed restructure commenced. The principles behind the restructure can be found on the intranet.
- 10.2 The HR team have been involved throughout the restructure process, supporting SMT in evaluating new posts and advising on the consultation and recruitment processes. The timeline can be found on the intranet.
- 10.3 The final structure was confirmed at the beginning of September, taking into account feedback from staff and members. In October, all staff without a post in the new structure were given the opportunity to apply for vacant posts and subsequent interviews have been taking place in November. At the end of November the outcomes of these interviews will be communicated to the successful applicants. When this process is complete, the new structure will be launched and phased recruitment for the remaining new posts will commence as budget allows.
- 10.4 The latest FTE (full time equivalent) figures for the existing structure in 2013/2014 are 98.6

and the projected FTE figures in 2014/2015 are 108.9.

- 10.5 The financial implication of the new structure in direct employee costs is £320,000 in 2014/2015. This will increase to £551,000 in 2015/16 assuming that all the posts are filled by the start of that year. This figure includes £131,450 for apprentices.

11 Resources

- 11.1 The full HR budget (excluding salary costs) in 2013/14 is £151,500. Draft budget preparations for the next financial year indicate that this may increase marginally to £152,500 in 2014/15. This budget includes recruitment costs.
- 11.2 The HR team is made up of 2.5 full time equivalents.

12 Risk management

- 12.1 The development of a people strategy will assist the SDNPA in managing any risks associated with employment of staff and their welfare.
- 12.2 Health and safety policies and procedures are a major part of the SDNPA approach to ensuring appropriate working conditions for staff and aim to reduce risks and mitigate against accidents.

13 Human Rights, Equalities, Health and Safety

The SDNPA people strategy and all HR policies take account of latest legislation regarding equalities, human rights and health and safety.

14. Sustainability

- 14.1 The People Strategy supports the second sustainability principle, in providing ways to ensure the wellbeing of its staff in ensuring that we have adequate health and safety measures and in providing benefits to members and officers, such as the Employee Assistance Programme and future plans to introduce medical screening.
- 14.2 Future soft benefits packages will encourage sustainable transport by offering schemes such as Cycle to Work and Season Ticket Loans for Public Transport, supporting the first sustainability principle.
- 14.3 The Recruitment Policy supports the third sustainability principle, ensuring that advertising sources attract and offers employment opportunities to the local community.

15 External Consultees

- 15.1 None.

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Appendices	1. People Strategy overview 2. HR Policies 3. Learning and Development Plan
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive Officer, Director of Planning, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Director of Operations, Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer & Legal Services.
Background Documents	Previous committee reports: http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/283364/Agenda-

[Item-8.pdf](#)

http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/322581/Agenda-item-7.pdf

http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/322580/Agenda-item-7-App-1.pdf

People Strategy Overview

Purpose

The purpose of the People Strategy is to secure the best people and management to achieve the SDNPA's purposes and duty.

It is an important strategy, as it will achieve the following:

- Best practice in all areas of c exemplary managers
- The organisations culture and values are supported and embedded.

Focus Areas of the Strategy

- **Recruitment**
 - A clear policy and guidelines
 - Training of all managers involved in the process
 - Comprehensive job descriptions and person specifications
 - Assessments and panel interviews
 - Appropriate and cost effective advertising and sourcing of candidates
 - Good communication to applicants
- **Effective induction**
 - A comprehensive induction pack for new starters and detailed guidance for managers
 - HR progress meetings held with each new starter at intervals during their probationary period.
- **Valuing staff**
 - Performance and Development Review Scheme (including pay and reward)
 - Other recognition schemes and soft benefits
 - Staff survey
 - Engagement groups – real involvement in strategy and feedback
 - Provision of a safe and healthy working environment
 - Employee Assistance Programme
 - Employee representative group (a combination of union and non-union employees)
- **Supporting staff**
 - A wide-ranging learning and development plan, tailored to the needs of the organisation
 - Clear, fair and comprehensive policies
 - Support through change
 - A fair and consistent approach to flexible working
 - Making leaving the organisation a positive experience
- **Clear leadership and exemplary management**
 - The “SDNPA Manager” – taking personal responsibility for managing staff with support and guidance from HR
 - Leadership and management training for all line managers