Report to	**Policy and Resources Committee**
Date	**28 November 2019**
By	**Human Resources Manager**
Title of Report **(Note)**	**Annual Human Resources Report for the Year 2018/19**

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

1) Note the report

1. Introduction

1.1 The Human Resources Team are responsible for all of the organisation's HR activities, with payroll support from Brighton and Hove City Council and administration of the pension scheme by Hampshire County Council. This report highlights key areas of work carried out in the year ending in 31 March 2019, for the Policy and Resources Committee to note.

1.2 The report covers:

- Recruitment activity and turnover
- Learning and Development
- Apprenticeship Scheme
- Health, safety and wellbeing
- 2018 Staff Survey
- The work of the Culture Group
- Review of HR Management System
- Working Together – HR with other National Park Authorities
- Priorities for 2019/20

1.3 In addition to the area of work above, the HR team work closely and effectively with SMT and managers, playing a key role in all organisational issues and individual case management.

2. Recruitment activity and turnover

2.1 The headline FTE for the Authority is currently 133.

2.2 The SDNPA staff turnover rate for 2018/19 was 12%. In the Local Government Workforce Survey 2017/18, Local Councils reported a turnover rate of 13.4%. Figures for 2018/19 are yet to be published. The average 2018/19 turnover rate for other National Park Authorities (NPAs) was 12.25%.

2.3 The main reasons for leaving SDNPA were:

- Limited opportunities for career progression (60%)
- Commute (17%)
- Personal circumstances (6%)
- Relocation (6%)
- Change of career (11%)

2.4 The organisation's size and structure limits the opportunities for career progression. We have therefore introduced a number of retention initiatives, including career grades and an investment in career development and training of staff. We now have a full development package to grow and develop our own staff, particularly in Planning, which is a known hard to recruit area, due to a national shortage of experienced planning staff.

2.5 In 2018/19, 26 posts were recruited to.; 7 of these appointments were the result of internal promotions, the remaining 19 were new recruits. The recruitment process also allowed for internal ranger role transfers between teams in the area offices before a vacancy was advertised externally. This gives employees an opportunity to expand and develop their knowledge and experience.

2.6 Recruiting of posts is done via a tailored approach. Adverts are placed directly on the SDNPA website, social media and targeted external sites. This method delivers a successful cost effective way of recruiting, which avoids inflated hourly rates or finders fees that agency recruitment would incur.

SDNPA offers a wide range benefits as part of its employment package:

- Local government pension scheme
- Healthcare - includes cash plan, counselling and wellbeing discounts
- 27 days annual leave, increasing to 30 days, plus bank holidays
- Professional development
- Flexible working
- Cycle to work scheme
- Car sharing
- Use of pool cars for official business
- Regular staff events / activities, which support the SDNPA's Purposes and Duty

2.7 These benefits support SDNPA in attracting candidates by demonstrating it's an employer of choice as well as helping to retain existing staff.

3. Learning and Development

3.1 The organisation's learning and development plan includes health and safety, core skills and role specific training. In 2018/19 employees completed 120 health and safety training days, 153 core skills training days and 71 role specific training days. Staff received an average of 2.5 days training. The organisation also supported 4 staff through professional development and further education courses.

3.2 In 2017 we introduced a new e-learning system, ELMS. ELMS was designed by SDNPA and is now being utilised by 14 of the other National Park Authorities. This has allowed us to share training resources with the other NPAs and has also greatly reduced the licence costs for each NPA.

3.3 ELMS has enabled the organisation to roll out a programme of statutory training course to all staff in an efficient and cost effective manner. These courses have included Equality and Diversity and General Data Protection Regulations 2018. This first phase was completed in June 2018.

3.4 The HR team have also designed bespoke training courses. For example a health and safety course was created to signpost staff to SDNPA specific policies and procedures. The SDNPA team were also responsible for creating a National Park Induction Programme now used by the other NPAs.

3.5 ELMS houses a comprehensive induction programme, ensuring that all information is easily accessible and all training is covered by new starters.

3.6 ELMS is also used as part of a blended learning approach, for example staff are required to complete an ELMS module to cover the theoretical aspects in manual handling. This is then followed by an interactive 2 hour workshop delivered by internal trainers to learn manual handling techniques.

3.7 The HR Team work to secure the most cost-effective ways of delivering training which often includes a blended approach. Where in-house training courses are organised they can be delivered by an external provider, staff with expertise or staff who have been trained to deliver the course internally e.g. Manual Handling, Train the Trainer; this approach can also include ELMS as a supplementary part of the course or as the primary source of delivery.

4. Apprenticeship Scheme

4.1 September 2018 saw the first major intake of apprentices for the organisation. Prior to this date we only supported one apprenticeship but last year we attracted 6 new recruits to various roles across the organisation,

4.2 With additional funding secured externally, we were able to recruit an Apprentice Co-Ordinator to the HR team whose key duties were to develop our programme and provide support to managers and pastoral support to the young apprentices in embedding and developing the scheme. Much of the work to date has focussed on developing the relationships with colleges and other course providers to ensure that we can secure the educational support we need to support meaningful apprenticeships which meet the SDNPA purposes and duty.

4.3 To date we have been very successful. Feedback from the apprentices and staff has been positive and 2 apprentices, having completed their apprenticeships with us, have successfully moved into roles with other organisations. We have always recognised that, given the size of the organisation our key role in developing an apprenticeship programme is to develop the skills of young people enabling them to find employment in the local area as if is unlikely we will be able to offer jobs at the end of the apprenticeship.

5. Health, Safety and Wellbeing

5.1 The HR team oversees the management of health and safety for the organisation, with strategic and best practice advice provided externally by the Health and Safety Advisor for the Peak District National Park Authority, Jon Wayte. An annual Health and Safety report for 2018/19 was presented to the Policy and Performance Committee in September 2019. This report can be found as a background document at the end of this report.

5.2 HR proactively monitor the recording of sickness absence and contact managers regularly to ensure that accurate recording has taken place.

5.3 Sickness data for 2018/19 can be found in **appendix 1**, with a comparison of our sickness levels with other National Park Authorities and the public sector. Detailed absence statistics are reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee and reported to OMT.

5.4 Pre-employment medical screening and other occupational health services are carried out by Portsmouth Hospital NHS Trust Pre-employment screening ensures that any necessary and reasonable adjustments can be made prior to an employee starting with the organisation, for example the supply of specialist work station equipment.

5.5 Significant progress has been made this year in supporting health and well-being internally, particularly in the area of mental health. We have 15 trained Mental Health First Aiders who meet quarterly and promote mental health initiatives. Our directors, managers and staff have also received training in mental health awareness.

5.6 There is now a dedicated health and wellbeing page on the intranet with links to health and wellbeing resources and a Health Cash Plan offers a wide range of health and wellbeing benefits and access to an employee assistance programme.

5.7 A wide range of lunchtime and after work activities have been organised, including football, yoga, running clubs and walks.

Health and Wellbeing training courses are available through ELMS for all staff and cover a wide range of topics, e.g. e-mail stress, bullying and harassment, drug and alcohol awareness, stress management, healthy lifestyles, couch to 5k, building personal resilience.

6. 2018 Staff Survey

6.1 In May 2018, HR engaged "Quality Health Research" to undertake a comprehensive staff survey. The survey was launched at an all staff meeting in September 2018, supported by an effective communication plan that resulted in final response rate of 93%. Quality Health confirmed that this was unprecedented, compared to an average response rate of 45% for most other organisations and it indicated that we have a highly engaged and positive workforce, with a belief that there would be response and action from senior management.

6.2 Quality Health also confirmed that the results were very positive compared to other organisations; staff are generally highly engaged and the organisation appears to be performing well.

6.3 The survey identified the following key findings:

- A vast majority of staff at the SDNPA are proud to work for the Authority, they understand how to do their jobs clearly and are comfortable with their level of responsibility.

- Staff report a high satisfaction with training opportunities, however further work is needed to improve the performance development review process and the e-learning system.

- Senior and Line managers are very highly regarded amongst staff. Staff feel that there is still some work to do in relation to their understanding of the role of members and the functions of OMT.

- The values are extremely well understood and embraced

- There are some issues regarding communication between teams and awareness of how key decisions are made that need to be addressed.

- Staff reported that stress levels are very low and are highly satisfied with the flexible working opportunities on offer. There were positive comments on wellbeing and health and safety. Further work will be undertaken into a very small number of reported incidents of harassment and / or discrimination, these were predominately from external sources.

6.4 In January 2019, a staff group compiled an action plan to address the issues raised in the staff survey and its progress is reviewed and communicated to staff regularly. The work to achieve the identified objectives is being managed and delivered through other internal working groups; e.g. Health and Wellbeing Group, Culture Group, Health & Safety Committee etc.

7. Culture Group

7.1 This group is chaired by HR and champions a wide range of initiatives targeted at ensuring the SDNPA is a good place in which to work.

7.2 The group's key project has been the development and introduction of the SDNPA Values: Respect: Innovation and Collaboration. These were determined through a variety of working groups led by Culture Group members – including 2 Member representatives – with the launch of the agreed key values being made at an All Staff Event.

7.3 Since that time the Culture Group have been working on a number of projects, many identified through the Staff Survey. These include staff recognition and the competency framework, all of which will be linked to the core values of respect, collaboration and innovation.

8. Review of HR Management System

8.1 The HR team have been working closely with Brighton and Hove City Council to design and implement a new HR Management System as part of PIER. The system provides effective security of data and allows internal control of the payroll system, rather than a complete

reliance on Brighton and Hove. It also has a comprehensive report writing facility allowing more accurate reporting of data.

9. Working together with other National Park Authorities

9.1 The SDNPA HR team works closely with the other National Park Authorities, attending an HR Forum every 6 months, open to all NPA HR Managers. There is also online and e-mail communication tools in place to share policies and practices.

9.2 The NPAs share some HR services. SDNPA is one of 5 NPAs that share the Peak District health and safety resource, benefitting from the advice from Jon Wayte, the Peak District's Health & Safety Advisor.

9.3 The most successful example of a shared service is the e-learning system ELMS which is being used by 14 of the 15 NPAs. This project was led by SDNPA who worked with the e-learning provider to design an e-learning system that would meet most of the needs of the Parks.

9.4 Our work continues in looking at different ways of working together including an approach to recruitment advertising (led by SDNPA) and lone working practices and devices.

10. Priorities and actions for 2019/20

10 .1 Key Priorities for HR in 2019/20 include:

- A review of the PDR (Performance and Development Review Process) and Competency Framework linking this more closely to values
- A review of the organisation's approach to recognising staff achievements and outputs
- Launch of a corporate training programme to focus on core skills and to address issues raised through the staff survey
- A review of induction programme
- Development of ELMS through a working group and the roll out of ELMS to volunteers
- Further development of HR Management System PIER modules
- Continuing to the work on internal health and wellbeing
- Further development of the apprenticeship scheme to include a wider range of apprentice opportunities

11. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	Delivery of an efficient HR service contributes to the effective running of the organisation and the Authority overall, achieving value for money.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	There are no social value implications in this paper
Has due regard been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	The HR function delivers an equalities act compliant services through recruitment, training and workplace adjustments. We have an equalities policy and all staff completed the Equality and Diversity ELMS training module.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the	There are no Human Rights implications in this paper

proposal?	
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	There are no Crime & Disorder implications in this paper
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	There are no Health & Safety implications in this paper
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy:	An effective HR service contributes to principle 4 – promoting good governance.

12.   Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

There are no risks arising directly from this paper although key HR risks are captured in the corporate risk register.

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Appendices	Appendix 1 – data analysis of sickness
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Head of Business Services
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	2018/19 Health & Safety Report submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee by the HR Manager in Sept 2019 (Report PR19/20-15 page 85 Agenda item 14)

Data analysis for sickness absence 2018-19

Sickness levels and reasons for absence for SDNPA have remained consistent over the last few years.

In 2018/19 the average number of sick days per FTE employee per annum was 3, a decrease from 4.6 days in 2017/18 and below the average of 4.26 days at other National Park Authorities. Public sector data for 2018/19 isn't currently available but in 2017/18 the average was 5.6 days and SDNPA have been consistently below both NPA and public sector sickness levels (see figure 1 below) in previous years.
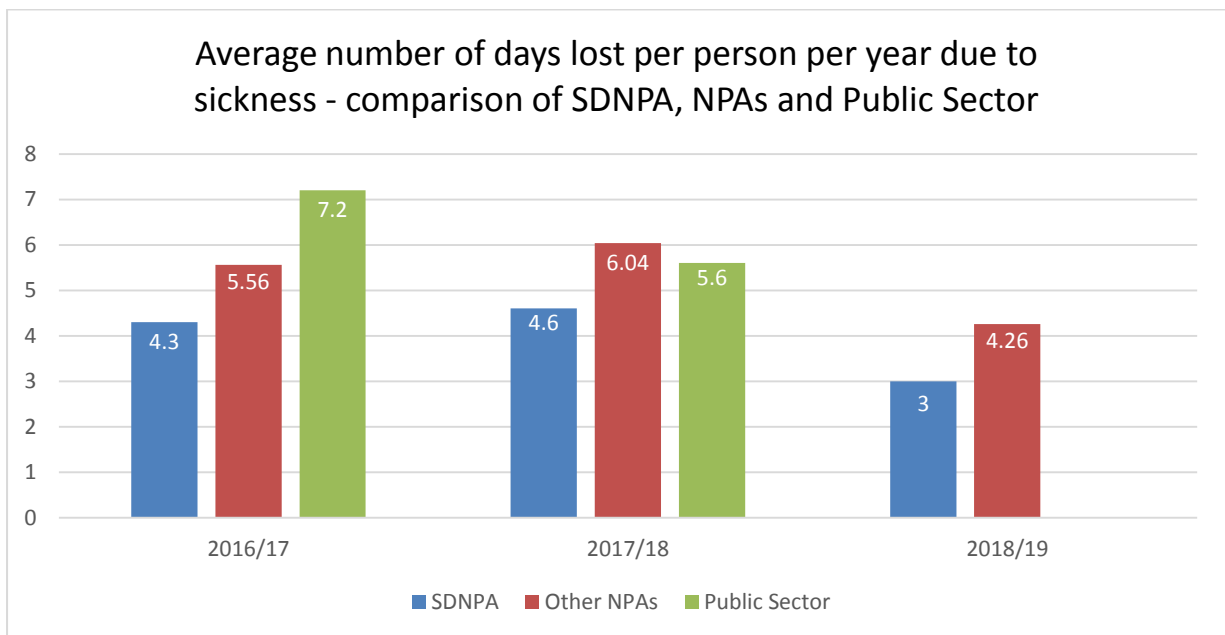

Figure 1

Figure 2 and 3 below show the reasons for absence at SDNPA in 2018/19.

The top 3 reasons for sickness absence have been coughs and colds, digestive/stomach and back and neck. The sickness absence due to back and neck problems relates to one individual who had time off to recover from surgery.

Although coughs/colds and stomach illness is increasing common now over the winter months, the committee did investigate this issue and feedback indicated that many staff would come into work when they were unwell, therefore increasing the risk of spreading germs to others. This was raised with OMT to ensure that managers encouraged staff not to return to work until fully fit.

The fourth reason for sickness absence was a case of non-related stress. The individual was supported on their return to work and encouraged to use the counselling service through Simply Health.

25 days absence were recorded as "other", where the manager has not recorded a reason for the sickness absence as it did not fit into the existing categories. We have now reviewed and expanded our sickness categories to enable more accurate recording.

Reasons for Sickness Absence

Type of sickness	Number of days per annum	
Back and neck	86.5[1]	
chest/respiratory	9	
cough/cold	128.5	
digestive/stomach	58	
ear, eye, nose and mouth	8.5	
Genito-urinary	11.5	
headache/migraine	15	
Heat Exhaustion	3	
Musculo-skeletal	8.5	
non-work related injury	5.5	
other	25	
Pregnancy	3.5	
Mental Health - other	0	
Anxiety	0	
Depression	15	
non work related stress	25.5	
work related stress	0.5	
work related injury (RIDDOR)	10	
Total	**413.5**	

Figure 2

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[1] Relates to 1 individual

Sickness absence reasons

Legend:
- Mental Health
- Anxiety
- work related stress
- Heat Exhaustion
- Pregnancy
- non-work related injury
- ear, eye, nose and mouth
- Musculo-skeletal
- chest/respiratory
- work related injury
- Genito-urinary
- headache/migraine
- Depression
- other
- non work related stress
- digestive/stomach
- Back and neck
- cough/cold

Figure 3