

Report to	Policy and Resources Committee
Date	26 November 2020
By	Human Resources Manager
Title of Report (Note)	Annual Human Resources Report for the Year 2019/20

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended:

I. To note the report

I. Introduction

- I.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 2020, for the Policy and Resources Committee to note.
- I.2 The report covers:
- Recruitment activity and turnover
 - Learning and Development
 - Apprenticeship Scheme
 - Health, safety and wellbeing
 - 2018 Staff Survey Action Plan
 - The work of the Culture Group
 - Review of HR Management System
 - Working Together – HR with other National Park Authorities
 - Priorities for 2019/20
- I.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 As at 31 March 2020, the headline FTE for the Authority was currently 136.
- 2.2 The SDNPA staff turnover rate for 2019/20 was 10%. The average 2019/20 turnover rate for other National Park Authorities (NPAs) was also 10%. According to the CIPD Resourcing and Talent Planning Survey 2020, the average labour turnover rate was 16% in 2019/20.
- 2.3 The main reasons for leaving SDNPA were:
- Personal circumstances
 - Relocation
 - Career progression opportunity
 - Career change
 - Commute
 - End of temp contract
 - End of apprenticeship placement
 - Retirement
 - Role did not meet expectations

- 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 2019/20, 32 appointments were made. 13 of these appointments were the result of permanent internal promotions, internal temporary promotions and development opportunities to cover maternity leave, or apprentices that we were able to employ as Assistant Rangers. There were 18 external appointments of which 4 were new posts (2 fully and part externally funded). We also recruited 3 casual posts for reception cover, allowing greater flexibility of cover for our Visitor Centre.
- 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.
- 2.7 To enhance this tailored approach to advertising, in August 2019 we started working with a new advertising agency "Web Recruit". This organisation was appointed as part of the wider Working Together Project across all National Parks and 14 out of the 15 National Parks are using this service. Engaging Web Recruit as a group of NPAs has given us access to an advertising agency with a much broader service than the company we previously used as a standalone client. Web Recruit provides data driven advice on where to advertise, as well as coordinating social media campaigns on platforms such as LinkedIn.
- 2.8 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
- 2.9 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 2019/20 employees completed 116 health and safety training days, 98 core skills training days and 77.5 role specific training days. Staff received an average of 2 days training. The organisation also supported 7 employees through professional development and further education courses, some of which are a continuation of training that commenced in 2018/19.
- 3.2 Our e-learning system ELMS which was designed by SDNPA and introduced in 2017, continues to be useful resource and enables us to roll out a programme of statutory and core skills training to all staff in an efficient and cost effective manner and monitor completion of mandatory courses, for example Data Protection. ELMS houses a comprehensive induction programme, ensuring that all information is easily accessible and all key training is covered by new starters.
- 3.3 We continue to bespoke all courses so that they are relevant to our organisation and signpost staff to SDNPA specific policies and procedures.
- 3.4 An internal ELMS Working Group has been established to discuss new ideas for using ELMS and maximising its benefit to staff.
- 3.5 ELMS is now being utilised by all 15 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.

- 3.6 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, Working at Height; this approach can also include ELMS as a supplementary part of the course or as the primary source of delivery.
- 3.7 In 2019/20 a training needs analysis was carried out and took into account feedback from managers, needs identified from performance and development reviews and the 2018 staff survey. A full programme was launched and included the following bespoke core skills training:
- Presentation skills (relevant to those presenting at Committee Meetings)
 - Time Management
 - Effective Communication
 - Minute taking
 - Report writing
 - Having Difficult Conversations
 - Building Personal Resilience
 - Ensuring a Positive Workplace Culture (covers bullying and harassment)
- 3.8 One third of the training budget is allocated to health and safety training, which is monitored and implemented within the HR team, by the Health and Safety Advisor. Bespoke Outdoor First Aid and Conflict Management training for public facing staff have been rolled out this year.

4. Apprenticeship Scheme

- 4.1 The Apprenticeship Scheme proved very successful in 2019/20, building on the learning from its first year and a programme evaluation. An action plan was created to ensure each team had the required support to deliver the practical skills required for each of the apprentices to complete their qualifications.
- 4.2 The new apprenticeship standard was developed and approved that enabled our apprentices to have a “more up to date qualification” increasing their chance of success when applying for job roles.
- 4.3 We saw a high volume of applications for different posts within the Authority, indicating that we have a well established programme that local colleges and communities are aware and want to be part of. A total of 7 apprentices were employed; 3 in Ranger teams, 2 in Business Administration, 1 in Planning and 1 in Facilities Management. These 7 apprentices were placed with different teams within the Authority with some working part of their time with partner organisations.
- 4.4 Although SDNPA is not in a position to guarantee employment after the completion of the apprenticeship, we were able to appoint two apprentices to Assistant Ranger posts and one to a Business Administrator post. Our Planning Apprentice successfully secured a job closer to their home in a London Borough.

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. We now have an internal NEBOSH qualified Health and Safety Advisor who manages the day to day health and safety performance. An annual Health and Safety report for 2019/20 is being presented to the

Policy and Resources Committee at the November 2020 meeting. 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 2019/20 can be found in **Appendix 2** of the **annual 2019/20 health and safety report**. 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 continues 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 A health and wellbeing presentation to staff and Members was held at the all-staff meeting in May 2019 and was well-received.
- 5.7 There is a dedicated health and wellbeing page on the intranet with links to health and wellbeing resources and promotes health and wellbeing activities and an internal working group meet regularly to review our health and wellbeing provision. Our Health Cash Plan offers a wide range of health and wellbeing benefits and access to an employee assistance programme.
- 5.8 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 etc.

6. 2018 Staff Survey

- 6.1 Progress on the Staff Survey action plan has continued and was close to completion by the end of 2019/20. These actions are being managed and delivered through other internal working groups; e.g. Health and Wellbeing Group, Culture Group, Health & Safety Committee etc.
- 6.2 Key outcomes required from the survey are:
 - Delivery of Bullying and Harassment Training (Ensuring a Positive Workplace Culture) to all staff
 - A full review of the Performance and Development Review process, and the establishment of a competency based framework linked to the delivery of organisational objectives delivered through individual and team outcome.
 - Workshops with staff to understand the issue of recognition in more detail and explore ways to address this
 - The establishment of an ELMS user group to review ELMS usability issues; and to recommend appropriate content/courses
- 6.3 Progress made on the staff survey action plan has been communicated to staff via the intranet. Regrettably due to COVID issues some areas of work, particularly in relation to the introduction of the competency framework, had to be halted but will be continued as soon as the situation improves.

7. Culture Group

- 7.1 The Culture Group initially chaired by HR, includes representatives across all areas of the organisation, who together champion a wide range of initiatives targeted at ensuring the SDNPA is a good place in which to work.
- 7.2 The Culture Group has been working on a number of projects, which include development and delivery of a new staff induction programme to address better understanding of roles and people, meeting etiquette, embedding the authority values across all areas of our work and behaviours and identifying quite space for working at SDC amongst others. Larger

projects for the group during this period include reviewing and developing better ways of staff recognition, as well as reviewing and developing the competency framework, as described above and linking this to the organisational values of respect, collaboration and innovation.

8. Review of HR Management System

- 8.1 The HR team have worked closely with Brighton and Hove City Council to design and implement a new HR Management System as part of the PIER payroll system. The system provides effective security of data and allows internal control of the payroll system, taking away our complete reliance on Brighton and Hove.
- 8.2 The new system was successfully implemented on 2 May 2019 and the HR team is now directly responsible for processing the monthly payroll for all SDNPA employees.
- 8.3 HR now has direct access to a far greater range of employee data, through a comprehensive range of report writing facilities enabling the team to work more effectively and efficiently through real time reporting.

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 are also online and e-mail communication tools in place to share policies, practices, issues and ideas.
- 9.2 The NPAs share some HR services across all UK parks which has a joint benefit in respect of both cost savings and cross organisational understanding.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 The most successful example of a shared service is the e-learning system ELMS which is being used by all 15 National Park Authorities, led by SDNPA. A majority of the Parks are also using the system to train and induct their volunteers.
- 9.5 The ELMS National Park Induction module, designed by SDNPA now runs alongside a newly launched face to face induction meeting which will be hosted by each Park every quarter.
- 9.6 Work continues in looking at different ways of working together, and the most recent example is Web Recruit, a shared approach to recruitment advertising.

10. Priorities and actions for 2020/21

- 10.1 Key Priorities for HR in 2020/21 include:
 - Ongoing review of the provision of guidance and advice to managers and staff in working through the pandemic, particularly in respect of developing and maintaining a Covid secure working environment, supporting different working practices and developing health and wellbeing initiatives.
 - Continuation of the rollout of the corporate training programme, to include virtual training
 - Launch of a bespoke training programme, Achieving Organisational Outcomes to the Countryside and Policy Management Directorate.
 - Finalisation and implementation of the review of the PDR (Performance and Development Review Process) and Competency Framework.
 - A review of the induction programme taking to address issues of more remote working during the pandemic and for the future.
 - Development of ELMS through an internal working group and an external group with representatives from other NPAs
 - Development of a training module within the PIER Management System

- Continuation of the work on internal health and wellbeing
- Further development of the apprenticeship scheme

11. Our response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

11.1 The 2019/20 Health and Safety report submitted to this Committee provides a summary of the measures we put in place in response to the pandemic at the end of 2019/20 and into 2020/21.

12. 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 proposal?	There are no Human Rights implications in this paper
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.

13. 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.

VICKY PATERSON & DEBBIE HARTMAN
Human Resources Manager
South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer: Vicky Paterson – Human Resources Manager
 Tel: 01730 819224
 email: Vicky.paterson@southdowns.gov.uk
 Appendices: None

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	<p><u>2018/19 HR Report submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee by the HR Manager in November 2019 (Report PR19/20-27 page 133 Agenda item 16)</u></p> <p><u>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)</u></p>