

Agenda Item 7

Report to **Appointment, Management and Standards Committee**
Date **14 February 2024**
By **HR Manager**
Title of Report **Recruitment of the Chief Executive Officer**
Decision

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Agree the Job Description and Person Specification for the role of Chief Executive Officer, as set out at Appendix I, and delegate any minor amendments to the HR Manager in consultation with the Chair of the Authority.**
 - 2. Recommend to the National Park Authority that the appointment of the Chief Executive should not be made exclusively from amongst the existing Officers of the Authority.**
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is twofold. Firstly, for the committee to consider and agree the Job Description and Person Specification (**Appendix I**) for the role of Chief Executive Officer. Secondly, to agree the committee's recommendation to the National Park Authority (NPA) that the appointment should not be made exclusively from amongst the existing Officers, which, in practice, means that the search for the Chief Executive Officer will not be limited to Officers of the Authority.

2. Job Description and Person Specification

- 2.1 As set out in the Authority's Standing Orders, the drawing up of a Job Description and Person Specification for the role of Chief Executive Officer is delegated to this committee.
- 2.2 The Job Description has been drafted in line with the Authority's practice of producing Job Descriptions which are outcome focussed rather than simply a list of tasks that a post holder is expected to undertake.
- 2.3 The Job Description has been informed, not only by the previous Job Description, but also by a consideration of other comparable Job Descriptions from other organisations and by input from Members at a workshop with the members of this committee in January 2024.
- 2.4 The Person Specification identifies the knowledge, experience, qualifications, skills, and abilities which it is considered both essential and desirable to have in order to fulfil the role of Chief Executive Officer. Again, this has been informed by input from Members at a workshop with the members of this committee in January 2024.
- 2.5 The comments of this committee are sought on the final drafts of these two documents, in particular, in relation to the Person Specification which criteria they consider essential or desirable for any candidate to have.
- 2.6 Also, Whilst the committee is asked to agree the Job Description and Person Specification, as set out at **Appendix I**, it is acknowledged that once a recruitment consultant has been appointed to work with the Authority on the recruitment of the Chief Executive Officer it is

possible that some minor amendments may be suggested to these documents. Therefore, it is proposed that the authority to agree any minor amendments be delegated to the HR Manager in consultation with the Chair of the Authority.

3. Recruitment of the Chief Executive Officer

- 3.1 The Authority's Standing Orders also set out that the Authority must determine whether the appointment should or should not be made exclusively from amongst the existing Officers of the Authority.
- 3.2 The Authority is keen that a thorough search and assessment process is undertaken for the next Chief Executive Officer. In order to ensure this, it is considered wholly appropriate that the search be undertaken both within and outside of the Authority. In order to do this the Authority proposes to work with a recruitment consultant with experience of recruiting both at this level of seniority and within this sector.
- 3.3 Therefore, it is recommended that the committee recommend to the NPA that the appointment of the Chief Executive should not be made exclusively from amongst the existing Officers of the Authority

4. Next steps

- 4.1 The recommendation to the NPA is proposed to be considered at its meeting on 28 March 2024. Should the Authority agree the recommendation, a procurement process for a recruitment consultant will then be undertaken. The relevant documentation for the procurement process will be prepared by Officers in advance of the NPA so that there will be no unnecessary delay following the decision on the NPA.
- 4.2 The procurement process is expected to take approximately 4 weeks to the point of awarding the contract. Following this, the recruitment process including working with the recruitment consultants to advertise the role and identify candidates, and the assessment and interview process is expected to take approximately 12 weeks. This would lead to the committee making an offer of employment, likely in late July or early August 2024.

5. Other implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	Yes, by the NPA as outlined in section 3 of this report.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Yes. A procurement process will be undertaken to appoint a recruitment consultant due to the costs involved. Officers from the Authority's HR and Governance Teams are leading on this recruitment process and their involvement will be required throughout the process.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	Ensuring the recruitment of the best person for the role Chief Executive of the SDNPA is key to the Authority's delivery of its purposes and duty and other statutory responsibilities.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	The role of Chief Executive supports the SDNPA's ability to delivery against all PMP Outcomes and Corporate Plan Objectives
Links to other projects or partner organisations	The Chief Executive liaises with a wide variety of organisation. The objectives in the PDR support this.
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's	The role of Chief Executive is key to the SDNPA's ability delivery its climate change objectives.

Implication	Yes*/No
climate change objectives	
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	None directly arising from this report
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes. An equality and diversity impact assessment has been undertaken to inform the recruitment process to ensure the Authority not only complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 but also to ensure that best practice is considered throughout this process.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None directly arising from this report
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None directly arising from this report
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None directly arising from this report
Are there any Data Protection implications?	None directly arising from this report

6. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

- 6.1 The role of Chief Executive is key to the Authority and its ability to deliver; therefore it is important that a thorough search be undertaken as part of the recruitment process to ensure the Authority appoints the best person for the role. If it did not, the Authority would risk missing out on high quality candidates.

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Appendices I. Job Description and Person Specification

SDNPA Consultees Head of Governance.

External Consultees None

Background Documents None



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title: Chief Executive
Grade: 12

JOB CONTEXT/DIMENSIONS/RELATIONSHIPS:

Reports to: Chair of South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)
Liaison with: All stakeholders, internal and external

JOB PURPOSE:

- Lead and manage the South Downs National Park Authority to ensure the organisation always meets its statutory obligations as defined in relevant legislation and delivers the National Park purposes and duties.
- Develop the vision, business plans and outcomes for the SDNPA to empower the delivery of defined goals and objectives.
- Seek and develop commercial opportunities which improve financial growth and stability for the SDNPA.
- Lead and deploy staff resources effectively to develop a dynamic culture of continuous improvement which operationally supports organisational aims and objectives.
- Lead the SDNPA in developing partnerships and stakeholder interactions which continually improve relationships and influence the achievement of outcomes for the SDNPA and wider National Park family.
- Promote diversity and inclusion throughout all areas of work to ensure the SDNPA is accessible and inclusive regarding communities, staff, members and all other stakeholders.
- Ensure best practice governance, compliance and financial management across the SDNPA is delivered at all times.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES:

- Working in partnership with Members provide leadership and direction for the development of the SDNPA.
- Set a clear vision for the SDNPA, aligning resources to priorities, and developing a culture that is energised, creative and flexible in its thinking and approach.
- Provide inspiring, consistent, and facilitative leadership for all staff, ensuring that all are valued, their potential is maximised, and diversity, equality of opportunity and inclusion are promoted.
- Develop and deliver communications which ensure all staff and Members are informed and engaged, creating a culture in which they act as advocates to influence local and national policy influencing across all relevant sectors, lobbying for and championing the National Park.
- Through the development of networks and partnerships shape the culture of the organisation, to ensure staff are responsive to the needs of communities and work in partnership - across service and organisational boundaries and with Members.
- Lead and develop an effective Senior Management Team that ensures the delivery of outcomes, objectives, and duties to the maximum of their potential.
- Ensure that the organisation's structure is effectively aligned to the SDNPA priorities, plans and vision.

- Through the development and delivery of effective strategic leadership ensure the SDNPA has a high-profile reputation and position locally and nationally.
- Work closely and constructively with Members to support them in providing strategic leadership to ensure the creation of a modern, innovative, and responsive National Park Authority
- Develop, implement, and maintain effective governance arrangements for the SDNPA to comply with relevant legislation and best practice.
- Ensure the SDNPA's business plan sets clear priorities which focus the delivery of outcomes which enable the Authority to meet its objectives and goals.
- Ensure the SDNPA carries out all its statutory functions effectively, efficiently, collaboratively and in a timely manner.
- Ensure the management of all resources is undertaken in a way which supports the SDNPA to operate effectively and efficiently and achieve defined outcomes and objectives.
- Undertake the duties of Head of Paid Service in all matters including legal, technical and environmental responsibilities.
- Regularly review emergency plans and risk management approaches for all aspects of the SDNPA's activities.
- Ensure effective Health and Safety policies and procedures are in place and staff, members, volunteers, and the public understand and adhere to these as appropriate.
- Any other duties requested by the SDNPA in line with the grading of this post.

This is a politically restricted post as defined by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES:

Maintain awareness of and compliance with the ethical, legal and policy framework within which the organisation operates including, but not limited to:

- Authority Purposes and Duty
- Performance Development Review Scheme
- National Park Circular 2010 and any subsequent updates
- Data Protection Act
- Freedom of Information Act
- Officers Code of Conduct
- Member/Officer Protocol
- Health and Safety Policies and Procedures
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Information Technology User Policy
- Information Security Policy
- All policies/procedures and guidance related to the designated role

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job title: Chief Executive

Requirements & Criteria	Essential/ Desirable
Knowledge/Experience	
Proven senior management or leadership experience with a track record of delivering against an overarching strategic plan, with experience of working collaboratively with Members, a wide range of stakeholders and partners	
A leader with drive, resilience and self-awareness who can command the trust and confidence of the Authority, its Members and stakeholders and who can energise and engage a committed workforce of staff and volunteers	
Knowledge of environmental, conservation, biodiversity, landscape management and social and economic wellbeing	
Understanding of Planning practice and legislation	
Understanding of Planning practice ideally in relation to National Parks in England	
Understanding of the opportunities and challenges in relation to Green Finance and Environmental Regeneration	
Politically astute with an understanding of local and national public policy context, establishing, maintaining, and delivering results, with experience of liaising with government ministers	
Exceptional communication skills, with experience of communicating effectively and with authenticity to a broad range of audiences including staff, Members, stakeholders and the media, at both a local and national level, including handling contentious matters	
Financially astute, with a proven experience of overseeing complex budgets and diverse funding streams successfully, with the ability to identify new viable commercial sources of revenue	
Excellent interpersonal skills with experience of acting as a visible ambassador for an organisation with a broad and complex stakeholder network with a commitment to the principles and objectives of South Downs National Park Authority	
Understanding of the ethos of National Parks, particularly the importance of increasing diversity, a commitment to making it accessible to everyone and an inclusive environment for all who live, work and visit	
Education/Qualifications	
Degree level education or equivalent	
Skills/Abilities	
Proven strategic leadership skills with emotional intelligence and strong team building skills to instil stability, manage others and resolve conflict	
An adaptable visionary thinker with proven experience of strategic planning and decision-making	
Ability to represent and raise the profile of the Authority both locally and nationally	
Ability to influence and work with others in an ambassadorial role	
Outstanding analytical and problem solving abilities	
Ability to work under pressure and maintain commitment and motivation across the organisation to meet deadlines and objectives	
Excellent planning skills to implement strategies to meet the organisation's goals	
Ability to respond to and lead change	
Willingness to travel widely across the SDNP as required	