

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

23 June 2021

Present: Mrs J James (Deputy Chair in the Chair for items 1, 8, 9 and 10)
Councillor Mrs D Clements, Dr R Heath-Davies, Councillor M
James, Councillor PJ Morgan and Councillor S Yelland.

[Mr GA Jones was having difficulty in connecting to the meeting and
joined by phone prior to consideration of the HR Management
Report (*Minute 8 refers*)]

(Virtual meeting: 2.00p.m. – 3.30p.m.)

1. Election of Chair

It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that Councillor M James be elected
Chair for the ensuing year.

*[Councillor James then took the Chair and presided over items 2-7 at
which point he had to leave the meeting.]*

2. Election of Deputy Chair

It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that Mrs J James be elected Deputy
Chair for the ensuing year.

3. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor ML Evans and
Councillor A Wilcox.

4. Disclosures of interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

5. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 November 2020, 13 January
2021 and 3 March 2021 were presented for confirmation and
authentication.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings held on 18
November 2020, 13 January 2021 and 3 March 2021 be confirmed and
authenticated.



6. Matters Arising

a) Drug and Alcohol Policy and revised Terms of Reference (Minutes 4 and 5 respectively of the meeting held on 18 November 2020)

Members asked for an update on the above, as these were to have been circulated to the Committee prior to the next meeting. The Chief Executive replied that although the HR Manager had prepared the reports, he had removed them from the agenda. With regard to the Terms of Reference, he had noted that the changes proposed had included items currently within the remit of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee and therefore a wider discussion was necessary before this item could be taken forward. In respect of the Drug and Alcohol Policy, under the delegation agreed by the National Park Authority at its meeting in September 2020, amendments to existing policies which didn't change the general aims, objectives or direction of decision making required only the approval of the Authority's Leadership Team, rather than the Personnel Committee.

Members suggested that the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Personnel and Audit and Corporate Services Review Committees meet with officers to discuss the terms of reference of each Committee and it was **AGREED** that this would be arranged.

b) Fire Safety Policy (Minute 6, 18 November 2020)

The HR Manager reported that the Fire Safety Policy template had been implemented across the Authority's sites and fire safety inspections had been undertaken in accordance with standard procedures.

NOTED.

c) Listening Service (Minute 3, 3 March 2021)

Members asked what demand there had been for the service since its introduction, however those Members who had volunteered for the service and who sat on the Committee reported that they had not received any contact from staff.

NOTED.

[The Chair advised that he was going to alter the order of the agenda to take item 7 (People Strategy) first]

7. HR People Strategy 2021/23

The HR Manager presented the draft Strategy, which had been developed following discussions with managers and in response to the Employee Opinion Survey, and sought Members feedback. The Strategy set out six priority areas, and objectives, actions and measures of



success were provided for each. It was noted at the meeting that there was a typographical error on the first page of the Strategy whereby the reference to the Plan period should also have read 2021 – 23.

Members welcomed the Strategy, however due to its ambition, some concerns were expressed regarding the resources required to deliver it and it was suggested that some sense of prioritisation could be helpful. Reference was also made to the behaviour standards recently adopted by Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) and it was questioned whether the Authority could learn anything from these. It was also suggested that greater reference should be made to the ongoing review of policies as this was a huge task.

The HR Manager replied that the Strategy would be underpinned by an operational plan, a draft of which was soon to be considered by the Authority's Leadership Team. He recognised that some external resources may be needed to deliver some of the elements, however a key priority was to develop managers to enable them to provide greater support to their teams. The HR Manager noted that it would be interesting to see PCC's behaviour standards, however work had already begun to develop the Authority's core values and these would drive the behaviours of staff.

Thanking the Manager for his response, it was suggested that the final section "Our Commitment to the Authority" might more usefully be located at the beginning of the document, with reference also made to the role and responsibilities of line managers.

The Chief Executive added that while he recognised that the work of HR permeated the whole of the Authority, there were many competing demands for additional resources.

NOTED.

[The Chair, Councillor M James, tendered his apologies at this juncture and the Deputy Chair took the Chair].

8. Human Resources Management Report

The report of the HR Manager provided information on numbers of staff, recruitment, employee wellbeing, HR operations and projects currently being undertaken. It was noted that absence statistics would be available following establishment of the Authority's new Cezanne HR system which had recently been introduced.



Members noted the difficulties in recruitment that were identified in the report and asked if this was part of a trend. The HR Manager replied that more information could be provided at the next meeting, however he noted that Pembrokeshire suffered with a difficult recruitment market due to the age profile of the population and a lack of skills in some areas. However a variety of approaches had been employed, including recruitment at a more junior level, providing a career path for those appointed, and other initiatives such as traineeships and graduate programmes were being considered to address the issue.

NOTED.

9. Government Kick-Start Scheme

It was reported that in September 2020, the Authority, in partnership with the other UK National Parks, had applied for funds under the Government's Kick-Start Scheme. Recruiting Managers had been engaged in creating meaningful placements, resulting in a successful bid for six posts, and recruitment adverts were posted in April 2021. As part of the funding bid, the Authority also would develop and deliver an Employability Programme to improve employment skills.

At the meeting, the HR Manager reported that due to the requirement for those on the programme to be in receipt of Universal Credit, the Scheme had not lived up to expectations. The current scheme was open until December and the Authority continued to work with the job centre to improve marketing of the opportunities. He confirmed that the funding was for a 6 month part-time placement, and that there was no commitment on behalf of the Authority to provide employment after that time. However experience from previous apprenticeship schemes run by the Authority had suggested that the skills learned had enabled those recruited to successfully apply for jobs that were advertised.

Referring to the previous item regarding recruitment difficulties, it was suggested that discussions with Pembrokeshire College or the Prince's Trust could prove helpful, as they would be keen to identify the needs of local employers. The Chief Executive replied that the issue had been raised at a recent meeting of the Pembrokeshire Public Services Board and would be the subject of discussion in the near future.

NOTED.

10. Bullying and Harassment Policy

It was reported that this was a new policy that would consolidate references made in other existing HR policies, and set the tone for the culture of dignity and respect being developed by the Authority. The



policy set out the responsibilities of staff and managers and outlined the complaints procedures – both formal and informal – and support that was available. The HR Manager advised that he would be adding further signposting to resources available to individuals. As part of its implementation, the Authority would provide training for managers through a new e-learning platform, as well as holding face to face sessions. The document had been circulated to staff for comment, the need for it having been raised by the Authority’s Staff Reps forum.

Members provided a number of minor detailed comments, and the HR Manager agreed to incorporate these in the final document.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Bullying and Harassment Policy be approved subject to the minor amendments raised at the meeting.

The Minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 15 September 2021 without amendment
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