

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

**22 July 2020**

Present: Councillor A Wilcox (Deputy Chair in the Chair)  
Councillor Mrs D Clements, Councillor M James, Mrs J James, Mr GA Jones, Councillor PJ Morgan and Councillor S Yelland.

*[Councillor ML Evans joined the meeting during consideration of the report on Employee Engagement (Minute 6 refers)]*

(Virtual meeting: 10.00a.m. – 10.50a.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 the remainder of 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**

An apology for absence was received from Dr R Heath-Davies.

**4. Disclosures of interest**

Mrs J James disclosed a personal but not prejudicial interest in the reports on both Employee Engagement and the Corporate Health Standard.

**5. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2019 were presented for confirmation and authentication.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2019 be confirmed and authenticated.

**6. Employee Engagement**

The Human Resources Manager explained that employee engagement within the National Park Authority was good – during the COVID-19 lockdown, the Authority's Leadership Team had been in weekly contact with managers, who had, in turn, spoken regularly to their staff. Staff had also fully engaged in the preparation of the Authority's recovery plan and



in carrying out risk assessments. Only a handful of staff were currently furloughed, and their return to work had had a positive impact on mental health. Two members of staff had been apprehensive about returning to the workplace and these concerns had now been resolved satisfactorily.

Employee Engagement was considered to be a key indicator for employee wellbeing and mental health, and in order to measure this in a more quantitative manner, a staff opinion survey had recently been rolled out to all staff, both permanent and casual. To date, it was reported that 40% of surveys had been returned, however employees still had a further week in which to complete them. The aim was to achieve a response rate of 68%.

The report set out the aims and objectives of the Employee Opinion Survey and how it had been structured, as well as an indicative timeline for analysis and presentation of the results. It was noted that almost as important as the quantitative results was the opportunity to discuss and explore what they meant. To this end a focus group would be arranged with the Authority's Staff Forum Members. At the end of the process, a report would be presented to the Leadership Team and the Personnel Committee would have sight of this also.

It was intended to run the survey each year to gauge the improvements that had been made and to assist this an action plan would be agreed by the Authority's Leadership Team containing both high level actions and those that particular departments would take responsibility for.

Members commended the officer for initiating a staff engagement survey, as it was important to gain feedback from employees, and for all the work to communicate with staff and Members during the COVID-19 lockdown. It was suggested that future surveys could include questions more directly related to staff health and wellbeing, to ascertain for, example, how physically active staff were, whether they smoked, etc.

The HR Manager replied that as part of the Corporate Health Standard (Minute 7 refers), it was intended to carry out 'pulse' surveys on specific subjects in order to gain statistics that would help to drive key initiatives, and such questions could be asked by that means.

There were also some comments on engagement with those who did not complete the survey. The officer replied that although he hoped that most would, no-one would be compelled to complete the survey, it was purely voluntary. It was hoped that once feedback was provided to staff, those who chose not to complete a survey would feed into the process through their Staff Representative. Next year it was hoped to introduce some granular statistics whereby those completing the surveys would be



asked to identify against a department, although ensuring that no individuals could be identified. In response to a question, the Chief Executive advised that 71.78% of staff replied to the previous staff survey, undertaken in 2012.

**NOTED.**

**7. Corporate Health Standard**

It was reported that both the Authority's Leadership Team and its Staff Forum had endorsed a commitment to adopt Public Health Wales' Corporate Health Standard. This was a quality framework and award system for employers, demonstrating good health and wellbeing practices in the workplace.

The criteria against which the Standard operated had been reviewed, and a 'first pass' audit had been carried out against the areas of assessment at Bronze level, and this was appended to the report in order to gain Members' experience, views and opinions. Following consultation, an Action Plan would be drawn up. The Human Resources Manager thanked Mrs J James for drawing his attention to the existence of the standard and for imparting her knowledge which was invaluable in completing the initial audit.

Members congratulated the officer on the progress made to date and encouraged the involvement of other well-being champions to assist. A number expressed concern that under the section on specific health issues the Authority had no drug and alcohol policy, hoping that a statement to cover this was included in individual contracts, and the Committee was keen to see a copy of the draft policy, once written. The HR Manager reassured Members that such a statement was included within contracts of employment, and agreed to report the draft policy to a future meeting of the Committee.

Finally, one Member sought reassurance that the Authority had the funding to achieve the Standard and achieve the benefits it could deliver. The Chief Executive replied that apart from a small staff wellbeing budget, there was no particular sum of money set aside for this work. However he believed that investing in employee health and wellbeing would produce savings, rather than cost money, as the Authority's largest cost related to staff salaries. The HR Manager commented that it would be necessary to bring focus on a smaller number of actions (three) and embed them fully and that other actions would need to be prioritised in future years.

**NOTED.**

