

Human Resources Committee

29 June 2022

Present: Mrs J James (Deputy Chair in the Chair)
Councillor Mrs D Clements, Dr R Heath-Davies, Councillor SL
Hancock, Mr GA Jones, Councillor R Jordan and Councillor A Wilcox

[Councillor PJ Morgan arrived prior to consideration of the minutes of
the previous meeting (Minute 5 refers).]

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

1. Election of Chair

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

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 Councillor M James.

4. Disclosures of interest

Cllr Dr S Hancock disclosed an interest in the discussion on the UK Living
Wage (Minute 7d) refers).

5. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 May 2022 and 25 May 2022 were
presented for confirmation and authentication.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meetings held on 18 May 2022 and
25 May 2022 be confirmed and authenticated.

6. Matters Arising

a) Director Recruitment Panel (Minute 4e) 18 May 2022)

It was noted that at the meeting of the National Park Authority when this
Panel was created, it was resolved to also include the Chair and Deputy
Chair of the Development Management Committee.

Dr Heath-Davies advised that if the Committee felt that the Panel was too
large, she was happy to step down. However it was felt that it was better
for her to remain on it in case other Members were unable to attend on the
agreed date.



Noted.

b) Restructuring (Minute 5 18 May 2022 and Minute 5 25 May 2022)

The Chief Executive confirmed that Members of the Authority at the time of the meeting had been provided with a copy of the revised structure, and that this had also been covered as part of the induction process for new Members. In response to another question, the HR Manager confirmed that an article for the staff newsletter providing a response to the points raised as part of the consultation had been drafted and it was anticipated that this would be sent out in the next few days. Members reiterated that it was important for staff to be kept involved.

An update was also sought on cost profiling for the new structure and the Chief Executive advised that this would be provided as progress with introducing the structure was made.

With regard to the statement in paragraph 2 of page 2 of the minutes regarding the number of Directors, the Chief Executive clarified that this had arisen from a suggestion by a member of staff that the Authority had previously had 4 Directors and that this would provide a potential solution to Members' concerns regarding the number of people who reported directly to him. However he reiterated the point that this was not financially viable.

Noted.

7. HR Management Report

a) Hand Arm Vibration Policy

The HR Manager explained that Hand Arm Vibration (HAVS) was one of the more prominent risks to the health of Authority employees (along with the actual use of Chainsaws and other cutting equipment), therefore a policy had been drafted in response to the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005.

The Policy would be presented to the next meeting of the Authority for review and approval and a copy was appended to the report for feedback from Members of the Committee. This had already been provided to Members of the Audit and Corporate Services Review Committee.

It was reported that equipment and software to measure exposure to hand arm vibration, had been purchased and this was being rolled out across the Authority. Testing of equipment was underway and monitoring of individual use of equipment would be phase two of the mitigation plan and would take place from August onwards once training for managers and teams had taken place. The HR Manager clarified that HAVS was something the Authority had been managing for a number of years and had always purchased the most up to date equipment to minimise the vibration load for



staff, including the use of equipment that was electrically powered or did not require manual intervention. The time spent by individuals in using the equipment was also managed.

Members acknowledged that this was an important policy, and were interested to understand how the equipment worked. The use of the word 'surveillance' throughout the policy was questioned. The Chief Executive added that communication of the risks, education and support for staff was a vitally important part of the policy.

It was **resolved** that the Committee support introduction of the HAVS Policy, which would be presented to the National Park Authority for approval.

b) Organisational Restructure Update

The report provided an update on actions undertaken since Members approved the amendments to the original staff structure, made as a result of staff consultation, at the previous meeting. It was reported that discussions with staff in the three areas that had not been determined (People and Governance; Health and Wellbeing; and administration) were ongoing and an admin review had been commenced. It was hoped to hold an extraordinary HR Committee at the end of July or early August so that decisions could be made on those elements of the structure.

One Member asked about an item of feedback which included a counter-proposal which had not been presented to the previous meeting, and asked whether that would be documented in some way. The HR Manager confirmed that this had been captured internally and as it was one of the unresolved elements of the structure, would be discussed with the HR Committee at a later date.

Noted.

c) Director Recruitment

It was reported that the advertising campaign would close on 17 July, and that indications from the search consultant, Gatenby Sanderson, was that there had been quite a lot of interest and some good candidates.

Noted.

d) UK Living Wage

It was reported that the Authority had unofficially supported the UK Living Wage since 2015 by adopting a 'supplementary living allowance' paid as a separate element of pay to bridge the gap between the Authority's pay rates and the Living Wage at the time. As this had continued each year since 2015, it could be strongly argued that this had become 'custom and



practice' and if tested in an Employment Tribunal would be considered as a permanent contract change. However the Authority had never sought formal accreditation as a Living Wage Employer. Members views were sought on whether accreditation should be sought, as this would enable the Authority to actively market itself as a responsible and fair wage employer committed to going further than the government minimum to make sure its staff earned enough to live on, which sent a positive message in a difficult recruitment market. At the meeting, the HR Manager set this question in the context of the 2022/23 national pay review process which was still ongoing.

Members were generally supportive of the Authority seeking accreditation as a Living Wage employer, however given the information presented, and the Authority's current restructure and impending pay and grading review, were cautious and asked that a more detailed paper be provided with input from the Authority's Finance Manager regarding the affordability of such a decision.

Noted.

e) Recruitment

It was reported that the UK skills shortage was beginning to be felt by the Authority, and Members views were sought regarding the introduction of a trainee programme, to invest in its own training and development, as well as internal staff's career progression. A further report on this would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

Members were supportive of this approach. They agreed that succession planning was important in all parts of the Authority and that all encouragement should be given to developing apprentices, learning from the lessons of the Kickstart scheme and working with Pembrokeshire College and other trainee providers.

Noted.

f) Human Resource Metrics May 2022

A range of metrics was presented, with a short commentary to explain some of these. A question was asked about the high absence rates, and the HR Manager advised that the majority of these were COVID related. He agreed to include a percentage figure to allow benchmarking with other organisations in the next report. He added that refresher training was being organised in response to the RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) incident.

Noted.

