Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority **Item 7**

Finance and Resources Committee

24 February 2026

Recruitment and Selection Policy

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Members approval of the revised Recruitment and Selection Policy, which sets out the Authority's approach to recruiting and selecting staff in a fair, inclusive and consistent way.

Recommendation

2. To approve the revised Recruitment and Selection Policy, as set out in **Appendix A**.

Strategic Framework

3. The information and recommendation(s) contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and support the strategic planning framework:

    - Corporate Plan Objective 31:
      Ensure that we have HR policies, procedures, terms and conditions to attract and support the right people with the right skills to deliver the Authority's work effectively.

Background

4. A clear and robust Recruitment and Selection Policy is essential to ensure that the Authority attracts high-quality applicants, applies fair and objective decision-making and complies with all relevant legal duties. A well-designed policy also supports a positive candidate experience and helps ensure that recruitment decisions are consistent with the Authority's values.

5. The current policy was last reviewed in 2019. Regular updates to policy are necessary to ensure continued compliance with legislation, reflect best practice and address evolving organisational priorities.

Summary of key changes

6. The proposed policy represents a full refresh of the previous 2019 version. The main amendments include:
    - a clearer, more concise policy structure with a separate procedural appendix;
    - explicit commitments around inclusive recruitment practice, including support for neurodivergent candidates;
    - strengthened guidance on bias-mitigation, structured decision-making and record-keeping;
    - a new section covering conflicts of interest in recruitment;
    - updated responsibilities for managers, panel members and the HR team;
    - improved alignment with the Disability Confident scheme and the Authority's equality commitments;
    - refreshed wording on pre-employment checks, including reference to the DBS and Safer Recruitment Policy; and
    - practical updates to the procedure, including clearer steps, improved sequencing, and stronger guidance for shortlisting, interviewing and providing feedback.

7. These changes are expected to strengthen the Authority's position as an employer of choice by improving clarity, consistency and confidence in the recruitment process.

Financial Implications

8. The proposed changes are not expected to incur any additional costs.

Legal Implications

9. The revised policy ensures continued alignment with current employment law, data protection requirements and the Authority's safeguarding and DBS obligations.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications

10. The revised policy strengthens the Authority's approach to equality and inclusion by embedding:

    - consistent use of objective, evidence-based criteria;
    - reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants;
    - guaranteed interviews for disabled applicants meeting essential criteria;
    - inclusive approaches to support neurodivergent candidates;
    - clearer expectations around fair and transparent decision-making.

11. These changes support compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and contribute to the Authority's broader EDI objectives.

Consultation

12. The revised draft policy was shared with the Member Champion for Corporate Management, UNISON representatives and the Senior Management Team for feedback.

Human Resources Implications

13. The updated policy will support managers to hold fair, efficient and consistent recruitment processes. The HR team will provide updated guidance, templates and training to support implementation, including revised forms, clearer procedural steps and improved support for recruiting managers and panel members.

Conclusion

14. The revised Recruitment and Selection Policy modernises the Authority's approach to recruitment, strengthens compliance and good practice, and improves clarity for managers, candidates and HR.

Vikki Thomas
Head of HR

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Appendix A

Recruitment and Selection Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Authority is committed to ensuring that a robust and efficient recruitment and selection process is in place.

1.2 This policy sets out a clear, consistent and fair approach to recruiting and selecting the best people for roles at the Authority. It supports a consistent, lawful and inclusive process from workforce planning through to offer and induction.

1.3 See **Appendix A** for the recruitment and selection procedure.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all vacancies within the Authority, recruited directly by the Authority or using approved external agencies.

2.2 This policy does not form part of any contract of employment and it may be amended.

3. Principles

We will:

- recruit on merit, using objective criteria linked to the job;
- run a timely, professional process that gives candidates a positive experience;
- apply our equality, diversity and inclusion commitments at each stage;
- take steps to minimise bias in decision making, including using structured scoring and evidence-based assessment;
- make reasonable adjustments so disabled candidates can take part fully in selection;
- guarantee an interview for disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria, as part of the Disability Confident scheme;
- consider inclusive approaches that support neurodivergent candidates to demonstrate their ability;
- protect candidate data and keep only what we need for as long as we need it (see privacy notice for retention periods); and
- complete the relevant pre-employment checks before anyone starts work.

These principles support the Authority in meeting its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Hiring Managers

- Seek approval to recruit.
- Ensue the job description and person specification are up to date.
- Lead fair shortlisting and interviews with at least one other trained panel member.
- Design selection that tests what the role needs, not unrelated preferences.
- Ensure interviews are structured and include values-based questions.
- Ensure applicants are treated fairly.
- Provide clear and constructive feedback to candidates.

4.2 Recruitment Panel Members

- Be trained in recruitment and understand the impact of bias on decision making.
- Prepare, read the applications and use structured questions.
- Score independently first, then agree outcomes as a panel.
- Record brief notes for each scored criterion to support objective decisions and feedback.
- Keep records in line with this policy.

4.3 HR Team

- Advise on good practice, the law and the steps in this policy.
- Support advertising and manage applicant communication.
- Oversee pre-employment checks and issue offers and contracts.
- Monitor recruitment data and report on equality measures.

5. Internal Candidates and Redeployment

5.1 Internal applicants will be considered on the same basis as external applicants unless a redeployment situation applies. Where redeployment is required, suitable alternative vacancies may be offered prior to open advertising in line with the Redeployment Policy.

5.2 Internal applicants who are not successful will be offered feedback on their performance and support to identify development or learning opportunities that may help them in future applications.

6. Conflicts of Interest

6.1 Recruitment panel members must declare any potential conflict of interest, for example a personal relationship with an applicant.

6.2 The HR team will advise on appropriate steps, which may include replacing a recruitment panel member or adjusting roles within the panel.

7. Legal Compliance

7.1 The Authority will comply with all relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Asylum and Immigration Act 1996
- GDPR and associated privacy regulations
- Any safeguarding-related legislation relevant to the role

7.2 Where a role requires a criminal check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), this will be carried out in line with the DBS and Safer Recruitment Policy.

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Appendix 1

The Recruitment and Selection Procedure

The steps below outline the procedure for recruiting and selecting staff. Managers should read this alongside the Hiring Manager Guidance [to be developed and linked]. This procedure ensures consistency, fairness and compliance with legal requirements.

Step 1 - Planning

- **Review and update job description and person specification - Hiring Manager**

  Check accuracy and relevance. Updated templates are available on the HR Hub.

- **Complete a Job Evaluation Profile Form if an evaluation (or re-evaluation) is needed - Hiring Manager**

  Submit the form to confirm or determine the correct pay grade for the role. See the Authority's Pay Policy for details.

- **Complete Recruitment Authorisation Form** [new MS Form to be created] **- Hiring Manager**

  Complete the form and obtain the necessary approval before proceeding.

- **Consider agency support – Hiring Manager**

  Where appropriate, consider if using a recruitment agency will help attract suitable candidates or support the process. The HR Team can offer advice and guidance.

Step 2 - Advertising

- **Advertise vacancy - HR Team**

  Publish the vacancy through agreed internal and external channels, taking into account any redeployment requirements.

  Where possible, include provisional interview dates in the advert to help candidates plan.

  Vacancies are usually advertised internally and externally at the same time. Internal-only advertising must be approved by the relevant Director.

Step 3 – Receive applications

- **Receive applications – HR Team and Panel Members**

  Collect and manage applications through Webrecruit, the online application tracking system.

- **Shortlist using essential and desirable criteria - Panel Members**

  After the closing date, assess applications against the person specification and agree on a shortlist based on essential and desirable criteria.

  Panel Members should record brief notes for each scored criterion and share these with the HR Team.

  Personal details that are not relevant to assessment are not shared with the hiring manager or Panel Members during shortlisting.

- **Review any disability declarations - HR Team and Hiring Manager**

  Check disability declarations and ensure compliance with reasonable adjustments duties and the Disability Confident Scheme. Examples of adjustments could include extra time for assessments, alternative formats for materials, remote or accessible interview locations and adjusted timings.

- **Notify shortlisted candidates and arrange interviews - HR Team**

  Schedule interviews and provide interview details. Request candidates to bring evidence of their right to work in the UK, qualifications and any other required documentation.

- **Notify unsuccessful candidates - HR Team**

  Send timely communications to candidates who were not shortlisted.

Step 4 - Interviews

- **Finalise interview questions, selection process and adjustments – Panel Members**

  Agree the interview questions, scoring framework and any additional assessments in advance. Ensure all methods are relevant to the role and will be used consistently for all candidates.

  When planning interviews and assessments consider adjustments that support neurodivergent candidates. Examples include:

  - sharing interview questions or themes in advance where appropriate;
  - allowing candidates to bring and refer to notes;
  - providing a clear outline of the interview structure;
  - reducing ambiguity in tasks and instructions;
  - offering a quiet waiting space if needed;
  - avoiding timed exercises unless essential for the role.

- **Conduct interviews and any additional assessments - Panel Members**

Hold a brief meeting before interviews to confirm roles, timings and who will ask which questions.

Ensure a structured, fair process, using agreed scoring criteria and document decisions clearly.

Agree scores and outcome straight after the final interview to ensure accuracy and consistency.

Step 5 – Offer and Checks

- **Make conditional offer to preferred candidate - Hiring Manager**

  Make a conditional offer subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks. Refer to the Pay Policy for starting salary arrangements.

- **Notify unsuccessful candidates and offer feedback. Feedback will be provided where requested - Hiring Manager**

  Inform candidates who were not successful and give constructive feedback when requested. Internal candidates should always be offered feedback and signposting to development or learning opportunities that may support future applications.

- **Issue conditional offer letter - HR Team**

  Prepare and send the letter, including details of the necessary pre-employment checks.

- **Complete pre-employment checks - HR Team**

  Carry out all required checks, including references, right to work verification, health questionnaire and criminal records check if relevant. Where a DBS check is required, this will be carried out in line with the DBS and Safer Recruitment Policy.

Step 6 - Appointment

- **Confirm start date when pre-employment checks complete - Hiring Manager**

  Agree and confirm the start date with the candidate once all checks are satisfactorily completed.

- **Issue contract - HR Team**

  Send the contract to the candidate for review and agreement.

Shortlisting and interview notes will be retained by the HR Team for the period stated in the Authority's privacy notice, then securely deleted.

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