

Committee: FINANCE AND RESOURCES

Date: 30 MAY 2023

Report: HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Purpose of report

1. To provide Members with information on the following during the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023:
 - recruitment activity and equal opportunities;
 - gender pay gap;
 - training and development; and
 - turnover and retention data.

Recommendation

2. That the report be noted.

Strategic Planning Framework

3. The information and recommendation contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework, and specifically Corporate Action Plan Objective 33, to "Ensure that we have HR policies, procedures, terms and conditions to attract and support the right people with the right skills to deliver the work of the Authority effectively".

Recruitment Activity

4. In the year from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, 40 posts were advertised. This is slightly lower than in 2021/22 when 53 posts were advertised.
5. Recruitment costs (see table, below) for 2022/23 were lower than the previous year. Previously 'difficult to recruit to' roles (Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer, IT Manager, Local Plan Project Officer, Senior Planning Officers and Senior Trees and Woodlands Officer) incurred additional costs due to wider advertising, i.e. countryside, environmental and/or career specific websites.

Year	Recruitment Costs
2018/2019	£3,585
2019/2020	£12,721
2020/2021	£7,775
2021/2022	£9,982
2022/2023	£8,599

Webrecruit

6. Webrecruit provides the authority with an applicant tracking system (ATS) which enables candidates to apply online, managers to access the applications using the ATS platform and invitations to interviews to be sent using the software.
7. Webrecruit also provides a recruitment agency service whereby they can advise on advert wording and suggest where to place adverts on behalf of the Authority using appropriate and relevant jobsites at a reduced cost.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring - Applicants

8. The monitoring of applications for the purpose of equal opportunities is a practice recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. This is an important tool to enable the Authority to ascertain at an early stage whether or not there appear to be any areas of its work from which particular groups are excluded. This monitoring provides evidence as to whether current recruitment practices are reaching the full spectrum of possible candidates (so that we can attract the best people) and helps us to avoid possible future problems of allegations of discriminatory practices.
9. Completion of monitoring forms is not compulsory, and non-completion does not invalidate an application. Therefore, not all applicants complete all, or any, sections of the form.
10. Using the information shared by candidates, statistics are available at Appendix A.
11. With the intention of promoting inclusivity and continuing to improve the diversity of candidates, during 2022/23, we included the following statement in all job adverts: *We are committed to equal opportunities and our recruitment process treats all job applications equally, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other equality characteristic. We aspire to have a diverse and inclusive workplace and strongly encourage applicants from a wide range of backgrounds to apply and join us.*
12. Whilst we've requested and monitored candidate diversity for a significant period, the monitoring and reporting of staff diversity was identified as an area needing development in 21/22. In March 2022 and 2023 all staff were invited to undertake a workforce data questionnaire. The 2022 data is published on the Authority's website can be accessed [here](#). The 2023 data will be reviewed and reported within the Annual Equality Statement later in the year.

Gender Pay Gap

13. The gender pay gap is one measure of women's position in the economy in comparison to men. It compares the difference in average hourly pay for women and men in the labour market.
14. The gender pay gap is not simply the result of women being paid less than men for the same job. It is the result of a combination of economic and social factors that come together to reduce the earning capacity of women across their lifetime. For example, the unequal division of caring responsibilities within the household means that more women, than men, work part time.

15. Paying men and women differently for the same or equivalent work has been unlawful for decades. Although it does still happen in some organisations, it is not considered a major factor in explaining the gender pay gap, and an employer that has completely eliminated unequal pay may still have a wide gender pay gap.
16. The gap can be measured in various ways, so it's important to understand how, in any specific context, the gap is being measured. A gender pay gap can be expressed as:
 - a positive measure, for example, a gap of 13.9% indicates the extent to which women earn, on average, less per hour than their male counterparts
 - a negative measure, for example, a gap of -9.2% indicates the extent to which women earn, on average, more per hour than their male counterparts.
17. There are regulations in place which apply to all private sector and voluntary sector employers with 250 or more staff, and require them to publish details of the gender pay gap for their organisation. The Authority does not employ 250+ staff and is therefore not required to publish details of its gender pay gap.
18. There are a number of different ways in which the pay gap is measured. For the purposes of this report, the mean gender pay gap has been calculated across all staff, both full-time and part-time.
19. The Authority's mean gender pay gap for all (full and part-time) staff was **7.4%** for 2022/23. This is an increase from 4.1% for 2021/22. Some of the reasons for the gender pay gap are:
 - the Chief Executive, and highest paid member of staff, is a man;
 - the Authority employs almost twice as many women than men; and
 - 69 staff are employed on the bottom 2 pay bands (band F and band E), of which there are 22 (31.9%) men and 47 women (68.1%).
20. For comparison, in 2022 the UK's mean gender pay gap for all employees, full- and part-time, was 14.9%, which was a reduction from 15.1% in 2021.

Training and Development

21. Training and Development continues to be important to the Authority and its staff. Training plans were determined for each directorate following the annual appraisals which were mostly completed by May 2022.
22. The training budget for 2021/2022 was £60.1k and it is the responsibility of the manager and staff member to agree their training and development needs for the forthcoming year, in line with role requirements and budget limitations.
23. In 2022/23 HR facilitated and co-ordinated various corporate training courses that took place both in-person and virtually.
24. The Authority has access to a shared e-learning portal (ELMS). The agreement with Learning Pool (the organisation that operates ELMS) was due for renewal and after consultation it has been agreed that we're going to upgrade the library of courses. This a positive change and, as it is being offered at the same costs for the next 2 years, is good value for money.

Staff Turnover

25. Some degree of **staff** turnover is inevitable. It is also desirable. The influx of new people can generate new ideas and fresh ways of thinking. Turnover also gives the Authority the room to develop career progression of existing staff, either through promotion or through a sideways move. No organisation wants to stagnate.
26. However, if labour turnover is too high, or the most valued staff are leaving, this can damage organisational performance in a number of ways, including the financial cost of replacing leavers and the loss of corporate knowledge and skills.
27. During the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, 27 staff left the Authority for the reasons detailed below:

Reason for Leaving	No. of staff	% of Leavers
Voluntary resignation	17	63%
End of Fixed Term Contract/Apprenticeship	9	33%
Other	1	4%
TOTAL	27	100%

28. The turnover rate for 2022/22 was **15.7%** which is only slightly higher than 15.3% reported in 2021/22.
29. XpertHR have undertaken some research and write 'Around one in six employees (16.4%) resigned from their roles in 2022. This is a noticeable increase from the 9.6% voluntary resignation rate for 2021. The total UK labour turnover rate was 22.5% in 2022, again higher than the 14.6% recorded in 2021'. They also explain this increase was 'not unexpected given the effects of the pandemic and the tight labour market, making it an employee's market', which reflects the situation at the Authority.

Retention Periods

30. The length of service of the 27 people who left the Authority in 22/23 is shown below:

Length of Service	Number of leavers
<1 year	4
>1 year but < 2 years	10*
>2 years but < 3 years	1
>3 years but < 4 years	2
>4 years but < 5 years	0
>5 years	10

* 7 of these leavers were trainees/apprentices who completed an 18-month placement.

Feedback from Leavers

31. During 2022/23, leavers questionnaires were only issued when the staff voluntarily resigned, and were not compulsory. From 1 April 2023, staff leaving due to the expiry of a fixed term contract or an apprenticeship placement ending, will also be asked for their feedback.
32. Of the 17 Officers who resigned voluntarily, 12 provided feedback. The majority of feedback was positive about working for the Authority, although there were 2 questionnaires submitted that resulted in improvement actions being taken and/or considered.

Other updates

33. In 2021 a performance review of the apprenticeship programme was undertaken and reported to the Audit and Review Committee in 2021, a copy of the paper can be accessed [here](#). As a result, the HR team have been working with colleagues to implement the recommended action plan, including: *improving the apprentices' experience; programme development; and evaluation*. This piece of work has now concluded with several positive improvements for the apprentices, their managers and the wider Authority, introduced.

Vikki Thomas
Head of HR

17 April 2023

Appendix A

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Statistics – Applicants 2022/23

Age

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Under 18 years	0.7%	1%	0%	4%
18 – 25 years	26.6%	27%	21%	17%
26 – 34 years	25.6%	32%	22%	21%
35 – 44 years	20%	15%	20%	18%
45 – 54 years	14%	13%	25%	29%
55 – 64 years	11.4%	11%	10%	10%
65 years and above	1.7%	1%	2%	1%

Disability

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Disability declared	8.8%	7%	6.5%	8%

The Authority has a policy, which is consistent with Equality law, that all applicants who declare a disability will be shortlisted *if* they demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria within their application form.

Gender

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Female	49.8%	44.5%	60%	60%
Male	47%	53.8%	40%	40%
Other	1.1%	0.1%		
Prefer not to say	2.1%	1.6%		

During 2022/23, the Authority introduced a question asking candidates if their gender identity matched their sex as registered at birth.

Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth

	2022/23
Yes	96.6%
No	1.1%
Prefer not to say	2.3%

Ethnic Origin

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
White	87.4%	91.4%	91%	96%
Black	1.2%	1.7%	0.5%	1%
Asian	4.9%	2.4%	4.5%	2%
Mixed	2.2%	1.8%	3%	1%
Other	1.1%	0.4%		
Prefer not to say	3.2%	2.3%	1%	

Sexual Orientations

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Heterosexual/straight	79.8%	83.4%		
Gay man	2.1%	1.4%		
Gay woman/lesbian	1.5%	3%		
Bisexual	6.7%	5%		
Other	1.5%	0.8%		
Prefer not to say	8.4%	6.4%		

Marital Status

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
Single	42.5%	53.2%	45%	50%
Married	31.2%	28%	39%	32%
Civil partnership	1.5%			
Co-habiting	16.7%	3.1%		
Divorced	2.6%	1.1%		
Widowed	0%	0.4%		
Separated	0.2%	0.3%		
Other	1%	9.6%	15%	18%
Prefer not to say	4.3%	4.3%	1%	

We currently don't request or monitor the protected characteristic of 'religion or belief'.