

**AUTUMN TERM MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
OF THE SOUTH HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE GROUP**

Online Via Teams
Wednesday 12 March 2025 at 18:00

MINUTES

Present:	Fran Butler	Andrew Kaye (CEO)
	Colin O'Donoghue	Caroline Perrett (Staff Gov)
	Sandra Prail	Andy Wannell (Chair)
In attendance:	Georgina Flood	Director of Governance
	Danielle Jiranek	Chief People Officer
	Michael Johnson	Chief Operating Officer
	Jocelyn Lenn	Group Procurement Lead (until Item 12)
	Anoushka Ottley	Exec Director of Business & Civic Partnership

22/24 Item 1: Deep Dive – Staff Survey

The Committee received a 'deep dive' session on the Staff Survey by the CPO. A copy of the presentation was circulated in advance of the meeting.

A member welcomed the data and depth of the information available and queried if there was sector specific data to compare ourselves to? CPO confirmed she would look into sector specific comparisons.

ACTION: CPO to look at sector specific comparisons for the Best Company survey results.

Members discussed if there were any questions or areas that may have skewed responses and what the driver was behind setting suggested outcomes. CPO provided reassurance that most areas had similar numbers of questions and that actions were based on those areas of lowest scoring, combined with some of the more consistent comments. CPO confirmed that best practice would be shared across the group noting that individual teams' own development of their own team specific action plans was hoped to drive the most impactful changes.

Members endorsed the positive results of the survey recognizing that after a significant period of sustained change (and the fact the survey was timed immediately after a difficult return to term) these results were really encouraging. The CPO agreed this was an exciting piece of work and using the data to identify clear areas of improvement has been relatively straightforward which bodes well for us being able to respond and deliver change quickly.

The Cttee discussed some disappointment in the reduced responses within the SLT (10 of 14 replied) querying if there was more behind this and suggesting it would be important to ensure as a culture of 'setting the tone' all leaders buy into the process. CPO confirmed that there had not been any particular issues for those not completing the survey, and the higher response rates was part of the developing maturity of the business. Initiatives such as providing time to complete and or signposting you said we did results; will all be part of developing higher response rates. CPO endorse the impact of 'setting an example' by SLT members.

23/24 Item 2: Welcome and Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence noted.

24/24 Item 3: Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any interests relevant to the agenda. No declarations were raised.

25/24 Item 4: Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes from the previous meeting held on 27 November 2024 were reviewed for accuracy. Members agreed the minutes were an accurate reflection of the meetings held.

DECISION: Minutes for the meeting held on the 27 November 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

26/24 Item 5: Actions & Matters Arising

Members reviewed an outcome report from the previous meeting, noting that all actions were complete. There were no items of note.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

27/24 Item 6: Key Performance Indicators – Cttee review

The CEO introduced this item reviewing KPI's for the Resources Committee noting that much of this will be discussed via the wider papers included on this agenda. Of note are some minor changes to RAG ratings e.g. Sickness absence and staff utilisation ought to be red, turnover could arguably be amber. These will be updated before Corporation. In respect of strategic plan KPI's all are where we would hope to be, with little movement in the areas we would expect e.g., curriculum reform/government changes. Members were informed that the Corporation will be looking to sense check our 3rd year of strategy at the forthcoming Strategy Day in May before embarking on a full-scale review in 2026.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

28/24 Item 7: Strategic Risk Register – Cttee review

The Cttee reviewed this report (circulated in advance) noting much of the key elements were covered in wider reports on the agenda. There were no additional comments.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

29/24 Item 8: Management Accounts for the period ending 31 January 2025 inc outline Budget Strategy

The COO introduced this item and noted members are supplied with the January management accounts for review. The Cttee were informed spending announcements due in Feb have been delayed with feedback from the PIMs meeting with DfE that we should plan pessimistically for an in-year funding to be realised fully. There is still no news on the additional funding from government to help colleges or to help mitigate of national insurance increases. Positively as previously discussed the LGPS pension guarantee has provided a positive position with reduced employer contributions and legacy top up funding from EC. Rate are expected to drop further in April 26 since the scheme now registers as an asset rather than a liability.

A member queried if the asset pension position was driven by stock market investment and as such could swing in the other direction. COO confirmed that whilst Hants CC pride themselves on having a 'wide' portfolio, there is inevitably some stock market investment and that this position could change.

Members welcomed the ongoing development of the mgmt. accounting report and noted that the format provides good oversight and assurance with the ability to deep dive where required.

The COO informed members this was the subject of a secondary report, where members were asked to review and provide feedback on a suggested guiding principle for the Group Budget for 2025-26.

The Cttee queried the timescales for investment projects and how quickly the identification and endorsements would need to be made. COO confirmed that the current best outcomes is £220k EBITDA but there is an expected additional £500K on top of this – so anything we can aim to bring forward will be useful.

The Cttee discussed their comfort (or not) with the 'guiding principle' and noted their clear endorsement of the fact any additional investment should not impact any expected financial health score, additionally members were clear that any investment should not have any material negative impact on the business. The Cttee clarified that approval is not being sought on specific operational spending, but on the principle as a strategy.

It was agreed the COO would include various options for spending with the February Management accounts which will be circulated to members via email. It was also agreed that clarification of the principles, its lack of impact on any financial health score and the wider business should be clarified before sharing with the Corporation at the meeting on 2 April.

ACTION: COO to include spending options in February mgmt. account and further clarify principles before submitting reporting to the Corporation on 2 April.

The Cttee received this report and noted the assurance provided.

30/24 Item 9: Annual Group Pay review for the coming year

The CPO introduced this item noting that she would like to provide the Committee with options for the recommended Pay Award for 2025 and to provide options regarding other pay measures which could be taken (subject to affordability) to improve staff recruitment and retention. The Committee is asked to consider the affordability of the proposed measures and the options presented in readiness for the executives' early negotiations with Unions, prior to a final recommendation coming forward in the summer term.

Members assessed the options listed on page 13 of the report in turn, and agreed in principle to all of the suggested options. The Committee made the following comments of note;

- Pay award 2.5% - the Cttee confirmed they felt that any uplift should be applied to all employees regardless of teaching/support staff. The CPO confirmed (in response to a question) that a member of staff could potentially benefit from more than one of the suggested pay award measures e.g., minimum wage uplift and an all staff pay award subject to eligibility.
- Extra pay band – the Cttee recognised this was the most expensive option and asserted that any rationale should be data driven since there did not seem to be a huge disparity compared to sector averages. The CEO noted that SHCG salaries are not as competitive as some of our peers. Members discussed the possibility of various options within this envelope and agreed with one member's suggested to start on a smaller scale and then either accelerate or expand. It was agreed that the CPO do more modelling to look at multiple options.

- Scope for growth – the Chair noted he was less comfortable with a non-allocated sum preferring the executive to make a case and a delegation in the eventuality that a new need arises. The Cttee agreed this was a preferable method of good governance.

The Cttee thanked the CPO for her considerable effort in the putting together of the report and various options that enabled a full and constructive debate.

The Cttee received this report and noted the suggested options.

31/24 Item 10: Capital Projects Update

The COO introduced this item noting that the purpose of this report is to update members of the Committee on progress with Capital Projects and to assure the Committee that SHCG has adequate control over capital projects. The College has numerous discrete capital project funds with strict deadlines, and in addition, has set aside £1.2m of its own cash to invest. This paper will assure members on progress with these projects and funding streams.

A member sought assurance that a contractor responsible for a previous capital project at SC (that experienced notable slippage) is either not being used or is being more closely managed. COO confirmed that the list of contractors being used by the project mgmt. team does not include this specific contractor.

The Cttee received this report and noted the assurance provided.

32/24 Item 11: Procurement Update

The COO introduced this item noting the annual report of the Group Procurement Lead (Oct 24 to date), to assure members of the committee that SHCG is robust in its use of non-staff budgets, and procurement is well managed. Members were reminded of the merger plan general milestones was to recruit a dedicated group-wide procurement lead and that this post would drive savings of c. £100k per annum.

A member queried the impact of the new procurement act querying what impact it might have for SHCG moving forward and what steps might be need to take? GPL confirmed that a number of steps had already been taken with the purchase of new tendering software (with built in 'wizards' enabling adherence to rules and limits) this also provides the ability to store and log contracts more easily. The Cttee were informed that as our non-pay spend remain under £1m much of the new more stringent rules don't apply to SHCG, this combined with the ability to still work within sector specific frameworks will reduce the direct impact.

The Cttee requested more information in respect of the forecast to meet a minimum £100k procurement saving. COO confirmed that we are on track to exceed this e.g., the recent external audit tender created a saving of c. £30k. It was noted that we may need to consider methodology to separate which savings can be attributed to procurements decisions and process v. movement to group costs. It was agreed additional information should be provided within the next reporting cycle.

ACTION: COO to provide more information on progress against the 100k procurement saving to be included in reporting to June Resources Cttee.

The Chair returned to the discussion on the impact of the new procurement act and the use of frameworks suggested whilst there was clear rationale for using them (frameworks) as they are quick and useful, they do have limitations in respect of value for money and the wider corporate social responsibility and the impact of using suppliers and contractors within the communities we serve. It was suggested this could be reviewed in the longer term. All agreed.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

33/24 Item 12: Business and Civic Partnerships report – Spring Term

The EDBCP introduced this item noting that the report is to provide an overview of income for Apprenticeships, Adult Skills, Higher Education, Full-Cost, Subcontracting, Bids and Progress against our Accountability Agreement Targets.

- on target to spend 97% of our Adult Skills Allocation,
- Apprenticeship income expected as planned
- Effective use of tailored learning fund – for ESOL and employers specifically, keen to expand next year
- HE enrolment falling short, in-year starts haven't come to fruition as
- Increase to subcontracting approved back in Dec is largely allocated, confident we will spend
- Bids and tenders positive.

The Cttee discussed the general decline in HE numbers. EDBCP confirmed there is lots underway in the political landscape for HE and our decline is consistent with other small HE suppliers in sector. A good conversation was held at C&Q where it was agreed to re-review the proposed HE Strategy at the forthcoming strategy day in May.

A member queried the drop in SWOP enrolment numbers – is there anything else happening in the sector more widely? EDBCP confirmed there is a decline on SWOP compared to previous years, we are working hard with DWP, developing a custom website for them to make it as easy as possible to stay on top of the SHCG offer. The Cttee were asked to note, whilst start targets are lower, the quality and outcomes are better and improving compared to last year. EDBCP suggested moving forward looking it would be interesting to develop SWOP options in other sectors e.g., care and hospitality as when this initiative works, it works really well and the progression outcomes are really positive. All agreed this would be a positive development.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

34/24 Item 13: Sustainability Spring Term Update

The EDBCP introduced this item noting that the report is to provide an overview of sustainability and green group objectives and our progress since the autumn term, including progress against the climate action roadmap. The EDBCP noted that SHCG have now transferred progress onto Version 2 of the climate action roadmap which is extremely comprehensive and offers much more guidance and support. The EDBCP confirmed we have significant work to do to fully embed sustainability within the curriculum and targets for this are included throughout the roadmap at various stages.

A member provided feedback on their attendance at the green group, noting the all had welcomed the new roadmap and its more constructive approach. Referring to earlier conversations about possible investment, they noted sustainability options would be a pragmatic option to consider. The Cttee generally agreed but cautioned the use of any investment into initiatives that don't deliver ongoing savings or have tangible impact.

The Cttee went onto discuss the strategy (at Item 17 for approval) suggesting the progress tracking at section 4.0 would be useful to keep under regular review at Resources Cttee. A member suggested adding more information about how and when these targets could be achieved noting it was hard to ascertain size and scale of some of these measures. EDBCP confirmed that work to track these suggested progress measures back to the wider strategic plan targets would be a useful piece of work for the green group to complete and bring back to the Committee.

ACTION: Green group to look at developing the progress targets at section 4.0 with more detail and linking them into the current strategic plan sustainability targets.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

35/24 Item 14: People and Culture Termly Report

The CPO presented the People and Culture Update – March 2025 report as a strategic update that demonstrates progress against all ten strategic elements of the 2023-2026 People and Culture Strategic Plan.

It was noted that some of the internal 'links and appendices for this report had not been included within the papers. DG apologised to Governors on behalf of the Governance Team.

POST MEETING NOTE: Additional appendices were uploaded to the Board portal directly after the meeting.

The Cttee discussed the 'non-reporting' or blank responses for c.40% of staff. The CPO clarified these were empty entries (rather than refusals to complete) noting legacy data from previous HRIS system hasn't pulled through and the roll out of the awareness campaign #careto share, was only initiated last week. Members were informed the revised integral onboarding and recruitment module asks for candidates to complete this in their very early stages (which is when it is recognised compliance is generally at its highest). Members welcomed the #care to share campaign and agreed it would be useful to set a longer-term target for completion – but agreed it important to let this early work embed for the rest of this academic year.

Members were unable to see the prototype dashboard/metric report from the new HRIS system. A governor queried if there was any intention to combine this data with other metrics being developed e.g., C&Q. CPO confirmed that it was possible to share a given number of high-level metrics to contribute to a wider corporate dashboard.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

36/24 Item 15: EDI Plan 2025-27 and action plan 2024-25

The CPO presented this report noting EDI Strategy 2024-27 and action plan for 2024-25 and confirmed that purpose of this report is to provide an introduction to the new SHCG EDI Strategy. The Resources Committee are asked to focus on the staff elements of the EDI strategy and action plan for 2024-25 with C&Q Cttee providing additional scrutiny from a student EDI perspective. The Cttee welcomed the thoroughness of the report and action plan and recognised/cautioned some of the targets for year 1 were ambitious.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

37/24 Item 16: IT Project Overview

The CPO noted that this report is to provide the Resources Committee with a termly update regarding delivery of the major IT and systems projects currently underway. The Chair welcomed this report on behalf of the Cttee noting previous concerns with resources and the direct impact on a small team – what is the current mood and impact? CPO confirmed the IT team remain really stretched, two new 3rd party contractors have been commissioned this week (which will ease some pressure) but there is additional work to be completed in respect of curriculum planning and IT resourcing. It was noted the Team are being really impacted by capital works and getting pulled in lots of different directions, workload remains a watching brief.

A member queried the RAG rated report and welcomed its simplicity but queried if the underpinning project management support and important user methodology and experience were also being tracked. CPO confirmed that this is not yet embedded but that a new user group has been set up and will meet on a monthly basis – the feedback and actions/temperature checking from this group will help to inform workload priorities in the longer term. The Cttee welcomed the report and reiterated their desire to retain oversight of such a key area of the business with wide impact.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

38/24 Item 17: Policies & Strategies for approval: CONSENT AGENDA

Due to the volume of content on this agenda and as previously notified when papers were issued, the following items will form a consent agenda and will not be subject to discussion unless this was raised in advance of the meeting. The DG confirmed that no queries or issues had been raised. A member noted minor typos and missing links in the DAW policy in para 7.1. DG to update.

ACTION: DG to check para 7.1 of the DAW policy

- a) Dignity @ Work policy
- b) Sickness Absence policy
- c) Family leave policy
- d) Sustainability Strategy

DECISION: The Cttee approved the Dignity at Work and Sickness Absence policy

ACTION: DG to carry forward to Corp. The Cttee recommended the Corporation approve the Family Leave policy and the Sustainability Strategy.

39/24 Item 18: Any Other Business

The Chair noted The Chair noted the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 11 June 2025 from 5-7 pm online via Teams.

40/24 Item 19: Reflections on the meeting

Members were invited to participate in a short SLIDO poll to assess engagement and impact.

The meeting ended at 20.04.