

AUTUMN TERM MEETING OF THE CORPORATION OF THE SOUTH HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE GROUP

Room A201, Eastleigh College
Tuesday 10 December 2024 at 16.30

MINUTES

Present:	Anna Mae Castillo (Student Gov)	Nick Cheaney
	Celie Fulcher (Student Gov)	Ian Harris
	Andrew Kaye (CEO)	Gregory Kitchin (Staff Gov)
	Collins Ntim	Caroline Perrett (Staff Gov)
	Sandra Prail (Chair)	Benita Raphael (Student Gov)
	Andy Wannell	Phillip Wright
In attendance:	Georgina Flood	Director of Governance
	Danielle Jiranek	Chief People Officer
	Pete Joddrell	Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality
	Michael Johnson	Chief Operating Officer

25/24 Item 1: Deep Dive – Group Self-Assessment Review (SAR)

The Corporation received a 'deep dive' session on the Group Self-Assessment Review by the Director of Quality including a few slides on Ofsted 'readiness' from the DPC&Q. A copy of the presentation will be uploaded to the portal after the meeting. It was noted a full copy of the SAR was included on the portal for Governor review. The Chair clarified that Corporation approval was sought to approve the SAR and its submission to Ofsted.

In discussion, the CEO clarified the move in score for Leadership & Management from outstanding to good noting that the elements of assessment for Leadership & Management are complex and run throughout the organisation. There's no doubt we've achieved a huge amount in a short time, but this has been impactful on staff and staff wellbeing which shows in the staff sentiment measured by the staff survey. A score of outstanding would seem inconsistent with staff sentiment and as such it feels more sensitive to revert to 'good.'

A member queried if the suggested improvement actions will be enough to move SHCG into 'outstanding'? DQ confirmed its hard to anticipate specific delivery of these outcomes yet, but generally we feel those improvements will move us where we need to be.

The Chair formally conveyed her thanks to CEO of IOW for her contribution in the external SAR validation process informing members that the challenge felt positive and constructive. Member were informed key feedback centred on recognising the systemic excellent performance and acknowledging that those areas for improvement were limited and in specific areas.

The Chair reminded members that 'the Corporation as a whole (ie those charged with Governance for Ofsted purposes) needs to feel comfortable that these findings and scores reflect how we feel about the organization and are supported by evidence. Do staff and student governors recognise the college in these findings? Both

staff and student governors confirmed they did. A member offered they felt there was positive energy and transparency in those areas of improvement we've identified. All agreed.

DP C&Q provided members with an overview to the preparations underway in respect of Ofsted readiness reminding members we are expecting a visit any time before July 25. Members discussed the use of FESIT (an online data tool) and noted the limitations in comparisons from previous years because of merger. It was noted access to FESIT has only been more recent for Colleges and work is underway to understand its full content and limitations. A member suggested that it might be worthwhile spending some time identifying those key areas where we know there will be less likelihood of a like to like comparison.

A Staff Governor offered their view that after some recent training with Steve Tucker and other measures as part of the College Leadership Team, most staff (in his opinion) are really feeling ready to showcase SHCG and have a 'bring it on' feel in respect of Ofsted. Governors were reminded of the intention to have a Governor's Ofsted group and that dates for a twilight session with Steve Tucker are currently being agreed.

A student governor asked for more information about the student role in inspection and if there was anything they could do to support. DPC&Q confirmed that lots of inspection centres on triangulation and checking that what is said by leaders, matches with staff and or matches with students, and as such students will be involved throughout. Both the Chair and the DPC&Q welcomed the students' involvement in the Governor sessions if they felt willing to contribute but that there was no pressure or expectation.

THE CEO reminded Members of the need to formally agree the SAR for submission to Ofsted. All agreed.

DECISION: The Corporation approved the SAR for 2024-25 and the submission of this to Ofsted.

26/24 Item 2: Welcome and Apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone for attending. Apologies for absence were received from Fran Butler, Colin O'Donoghue, Hollie Swift, Jenesse Alozie, Sarah Harder-Collins, and Emily Morey.

The Chair reminded members of the ongoing vacancy of the Vice Chair position, noting that after various discussions we have had an expression of interest from Ian Harris current Chair of Audit & Risk (subject to agreeing a handover plan for the role of chair of Audit & Risk). As such, Corporation permission is sought to approve the appointment of Ian Haris as Vice-Chair. All agreed

DECISION: The Corporation approved the nomination of Ian Harris to the role of Vice Chair of Corporation to take effect on his handover of Chairship of Audit & Risk Committee. All agreed.

Members were also informed that an expression of interest in the role of Skills Governor had been received from Nick Cheaney. Corporation permission is sought to approve the appointment of Nick as Skills Link Governor. All agreed

DECISION: The Corporation approved the nomination of Nick Cheaney to the role of Skills Link Governor.

27/24 Item 3: Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any interests relevant to the agenda. There were none.

28/24 Item 4: Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes from the previous meeting held on 16 October 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 16 October 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

29/24 Item 5: Actions & Matters Arising

Members reviewed an outcome report from the previous meeting, noting most actions were either complete or underway. There were no items of note.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

30/24 Item 6: Ratification of between meeting decisions: None

31/24 Item 7: Student Voice – Student Feedback

The Student Governors gave their view on student voice and the change makers programme noting they felt this was working well to date with visible initiatives e.g. a food bank under the Xmas tree and a well-developed (and used) WhatsApp group linking members across the group. A member raised the fact in her discussions and investigations that there is no dedicated budget for enrichment – she queried if this was usual and if this might be something we could look into /have a conversation about?

Governors agreed it was insightful for students to recognise the lack of dedicated budget and informed students that Colleges have numerous ways in providing support and budget for enrichment. The view of the DPC&Q was sought in respect of this. The DPC&Q noted that enrichment is in its infancy at SHCG and there are keen intentions to widen and grow this for the benefit of students. He went on to confirm whilst there may not be a specific budget for enrichment, there are wider budgets that include areas of cross over into student support, regardless they welcomed the opportunity to work with students to look at how a dedicated budget might be supported and provide feedback to the C&Q Committee.

ACTION: DPC&Q, Group Enrichment Lead and Student Governors to meet and discuss a dedicated budget for enrichment and to feedback to the Spring Corporation meeting

In discussing the Changemaker programme students informed members that these roles were more ambassadorial and representative e.g. open events than the role of student governor based in meetings with Governors. A 2nd year student confirmed she felt that this year, there are many more intentional methods to get students to work collaboratively. Members confirmed there were around 40 members in the group chat and that these were the core drivers of the student changemaker programme. In response to a question, students confirmed that additional members are welcome and invited and that this was well promoted. When asked how to identify a changemaker a student suggested a pin badge or similar could be provided for lanyards. All agreed this was a great idea.

ACTION: DPC&Q, Group Enrichment Lead and Student Governors to consider the development/availability of pin badges or lanyards to provide visual identity of student changemakers.

A Staff Governor informed student governors that they were really pleased to finally see that there are students actively involved in decision and activities across campuses. They thanked the students for their input and passion and said that it was inspiring to see. The CPO echoed these comments and asked if students needed anything from the Board or the Leadership team to make them feel more comfortable and supported. Students confirmed that they felt comfortable and had regular pre-meetings with the DG who helps them think about what and how they want to say and helps them with any questions on the papers. They thanked Governors for making them feel welcome.

32/24 Item 8: Chief Executive's Autumn Report

The CEO introduced this report (circulated in advance) to provide an overview of those further education sector issues of a local and national perspective which are current and relevant to South Hampshire College Group. Members commended the use of AI to create an executive summary, and suggested AI is utilised more widely as appropriate. CEO noted his attendance at a Gatsby AI event and the development of an AI working group within SHCG.

A member queried the rate of turnover asking the CPO if exit interviews are providing any insights. The CPO noted in her view that exit interviews were not currently sufficiently robust with opting 'in' an issue. In terms of reasons for leaving, most are related to workload and organisational change. Whilst year 1 had the majority of redundancies, year 2 seems to be reflecting the impact of merger on staff. The CPO did suggest that she is less confident in historical / baseline data to make accurate comparisons. Members went onto discuss if there was a particular area or campus where staff are leaving and if we think we have reached a peak? CPO confirmed there were no obvious trends of location or department, but we are only just starting to be able to analyse the data. It was noted a drop would be expected over the holiday period but that it is hard to predict and will remain a watching brief. It was noted 3-5yrs length of service is identified as a common trigger time, as such work will be done to further analyse/drill down.


Members discussed the ongoing issues with poor student attendance recognising this was a sector-wide challenge. DPC&Q confirmed that the impact of hybrid schooling and for some the requirement to work to add to the family income were contributing factors. There are also ongoing mechanisms for mental health/anxiety etc.

Members were informed measures remain in place to monitor, support, influence and provide interventions where appropriate and detail is provided to C&Q Committee on a termly basis

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

33/24 Item 9: Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for 2024-25

The CEO introduced this item noting the key items to watch as follows;

- Student numbers for HE are low which is consistent in the sector. We've recently completed analysis of the financial contribution of HE programmes which has given us things to consider in respect of viability and class size. This will support the review of the HE strategy in Spring.
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- Recognition that the H&S risk needs to be expanded to cover include wider aspects of mental health. Mental Health First Aiders as a scheme is being re-introduced as well as the launch of the 'aspire' conversations which focus the first 4-5 questions on wellbeing, feedback so far is positive.

In response to a question staff governors endorsed that the developing culture enables open discussions around mental health to be held, and that they feel there is an open and supportive culture. In respect of the feedback from the best companies survey, the 'my team' score was one of the high performing scores and this supports that feedback.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

34/24 Item 10: Annual Risk Review & Current Risk Register

The Chair noted that this report had been received at the joint Audit & Risk and Corporation meeting last week and as such did not require review. All agreed.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

35/24 Item 11: Resources Committee Chair's Update

Deep dive on systems - really wanted to understand the scale and impact of change and understand the lessons learnt and feel confident that measures would be taken forward.

The Chair of the Resources Committee informed members that approval of the following documents is required (all information has been included under Item 19 Information Pack); Gender Pay Gap Report, Disciplinary Policy, Emergency Response Plans for each campus.

DECISION: The Corporation approved the following items; Gender Pay Gap Report, Disciplinary Policy, and Emergency Response Plans for each campus.

36/24 Item 12: Management Accounts for October inc. current budget update

The COO introduced this item noting

- 16-18 funding R04 (42 days into term) has just been filed with 237 students ahead of our allocation which will trigger in year funding
- Crown guaranteed via LGPS, will take effect in 2026, but Hampshire is offering to review our contributions earlier (2025) in exchange for a small admin fee.

In discussion around the Financial Health Score, members were informed that it was the EBDITA that is preventing the 'good' score. Members were reminded that SHGC had planned/expected to score 'requires improvement' at this stage of the post-merger journey.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

37/24 Item 13: Capital Projects

The COO introduced this item noting SHCG has numerous discrete capital project funds with strict deadlines,

[REDACTED] The COO was asked to provide any additional specific updates to the report where he noted that the SALIX issues is hoped to be resolved shortly (a grant received via SALIX by Eastleigh College back in 2021-22 was missing confirmation of spending and related match funding and subject to this information not being provided, a re-payment was to be required)

POST MEETING NOTE: Salix have confirmed that they have the information required and a repayment is not required.

The CEO noted that as members may remember, the Marine Skills Centre based in Woolston as part of the Southampton campus was included in areas of the estate to release/sell. SHCG have been approached directly by a local marine skills company who have made a market-based offer. We are currently seeking the DfE view on this (as it's slightly under the most recent valuation) and how we may proceed with this disposal. Members discussed the lack of other potential buyers (but noted the sale of the site had not been advertised) and discussed the fact the company in question have recently bought the land adjacent on a 30yr lease (and as such we could be in a strong negotiating position).

A member queried the development of the planning application for Hamwic querying the response to date from Southampton city Council in respect of additional parking in the city centre. The CEO confirmed that we feel confident planning for (some) spaces will be approved, it may just be less than we'd like, the planning does include additional planting and bike racks to try to make the case as reasonable as possible.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

38/24 Item 14: Curriculum & Quality Committee Chair's Update

The Chair in lieu of the Chair or Vice Chair of the C&Q Cttee introduced this item noting that most of the discussions at C&Q including HE, the improved data position and attendance concerns, have already been discussed within this agenda.

The Corporation was asked to approve the Safeguarding Policy on C&Q recommendation. All agreed.

DECISION: The Corporation approved the Safeguarding Policy.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

39/24 Item 15: Curriculum & Quality Autumn Term Update

The DPC&Q introduced this item noting that this report provides key information regarding final academic performance for 2023/24 and to provide early indication of enrolment, attendance, and academic progress to date for 2023/24. Key items of note included;

- Attendance – as already discussed this is an ongoing challenge
- Increased access to segmented data is hoped to improve scrutiny
- Whilst the headline message for enrolment is positive - T level recruitment is behind merger target; we are also experiencing a c.10% withdrawal rate (consistent with sector)
- Watching for outcomes of the govt review on the defunding of other qualifications and its potential impact

The Chair noted that the C&Q Committee had already suggested that SEND would be the focus of their next meeting, and suggested particular focus is made to the high number of care experienced learners. All agreed.

ACTION: DPC &Q to ensure a review of the increase in care experienced students is considered as part of the SEND deep dive at the C&Q meeting in March 2025.

In response to a direct question, a student governor (on a T level course) provided feedback on their T level experience confirming that for them, there was an intentional focus on the work experience element of her T level, which they hope will provide her with an advantage in respect of applying for a degree apprenticeships. They suggested promoting links between T levels and degree apprenticeships could be made more of.

The Chair commended the improved data availability and requested clarity on potential timelines for the development of a dashboard. DPC&Q confirmed that this a clear intention since this report was very labour intensive to compile. It was agreed the development of dashboard will greatly improve access to segmented

data. DPC&Q confirmed that a working group comprising of MIS, COO and DG is working with an intention to deliver this before the end of this academic year.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

40/24 Item 16: Annual Safeguarding Report

The DPC&Q introduced this item noting that this report is to review SHCG Safeguarding practices for 2023-24 and that Governors are asked to find assurance that Safeguarding and Student Experience is well managed, and that the Corporation is fulfilling its regulatory responsibilities. Members reiterated their earlier concerns on the increased number of care experienced learners and SEND learners, urging this to be considered via the C&Q Committee. No update from SG Link as absent.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

41/24 Item 17: Audit & Risk Committee Chair's update

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Cttee gave a verbal report due to time constraints as the meeting took place last week. It was noted that since the joint meeting last week, the accounts have been finalised by RSM with no changes, and these will be onward filed externally as required.

Of note for the Audit Committee were ongoing discussions around the quality and integrity of data, and the reliance on this to help make good decisions - to this end discussions will be had with the COO in respect of a possible deep dive on MIS and student data.

42/24 Item 18: Governance Committee Chair's Update

The Chair introduced this item noting there were no additional comments. Members approved the Governance SAR (subject to any minor additions suggested during this Cttee round).

DECISION The Corporation approved the Governance QIP (subject to any minor additions as suggested during this Cttee round).

43/24 Item 19: Information Pack

The Chair reminded members that items included in the information pack are intended for exception reporting/questions only. There were no additional queries.

44/24 Item 20: Any other business

The Chair noted the next meeting of the Corporation will take place on Wednesday 2 April 2025.

45/24 Item 21: Reflections on the meeting

It was noted that the reflection tool was not available at this time, and this would be sent after the meeting. The first part of the Corporation meeting ended at 18.35

Staff and Student Governors and members of staff left to enable a Private and Confidential session.

