

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

Boardroom, Fareham College
Wednesday 16 October 2024 at 17.30

MINUTES

Present:

Jennese Alozie	Fran Butler
Nick Cheaney	Celie Fulcher (Student Gov)
Sarah Harder-Collins	Ian Harris
Andrew Kaye (CEO)	Gregory Kitchin (Staff Gov)
Emily Morey	Collins Ntim
Sandra Prail (Chair)	Benita Raphael (Student Gov)
Hollie Swift (for part)	Andy Wannell

In attendance:

Georgina Flood	Director of Governance
Pete Joddrell	Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality
Michael Johnson	Chief Operating Officer
Anoushka Ottley	Exec Director of Business & Civic Partnerships
Danielle Jiranek	Chief People Officer

01/24 Deep Dive – Enrolment & Achievement Headlines

The Committee received a 'deep dive' session on Enrolment & Achievement Headlines by the DPCQ. A copy of the presentation was circulated in advance of the meeting – a slightly amended version (with updated figures) presented at the meeting to be made available to Governors via the portal.

Members were reminded that at their next meeting, C&Q would have the opportunity to get into the detail of the data. DPC&Q suggested and members agreed that the areas for focus at C&Q would be;

- Under recruitment at T levels
- Response to increased SEND and ECHP level levels
- Any gaps in achievement for different student cohorts
- impact of numbers and achievement rates for GSCE resits in English and Maths
- Adult achievement rates

A member queried the fact it seemed that Southampton City College seemed to have consistently missing their targets in respect of recruitment. Should this be an area of concern? DPC&Q noted this was not unexpected. The 'bold' move at pace to change to centres of excellence was likely to impact the Southampton campus the most, additionally this campus tends to recruit later into the term and as such its possible/likely these numbers will improve. Changing the external reputation of Southampton CC will take time.

A member queried if we are comfortable, we have the measures and resources in place to combat the significant increase in students with SEND? COO confirmed we are working to get early sight of EHCPs and information on needs for all students, ensuring there is the initial advice and guidance (IAG), negotiating with local authorities for additional funding, putting in the required support, tracking attendance and attainment. DPC&Q noted we are looking at additional resources e.g. job adverts, opportunities to recruit. This is one of areas for deeper consideration by C&Q.

A member queried how we can be confident that we are still servicing the communities we are trying to serve – if we acknowledge the ‘bold’ move to rearrange centres of excellence and that we’re aiming for 80% of our previous recruit, what is happening with the other 20%? DP C&Q agreed that this is absolutely a consideration – ‘kickstart’ is available to access at all campuses, minibuses exist between sites, as well as some ongoing conversations with Southampton bus services to ensure transport links exist. It's important to consider, it may be that some provision is being supplied and taken up elsewhere – which is ok as we can't provide everything at all sites, hence original rationalisation. The CEO noted that he and the VP of Southampton have met with the leader of Southampton CC to discuss how the curriculum aligns with demand e.g. construction. Members were reminded that the original travel to learn patterns between Eastleigh and Southampton already existed and there is every intention to return to 100% recruitment in the long term.

02/24 Item 1: Welcome and Apologies for absence

New Governors, new Staff Governors and new Student Governors were welcomed to the meeting and were all asked to introduce themselves. Apologies for absence were received from Governor Bernie Topham, Colin O'Donoghue and Anna Mae Castillo. Caroline Perrett and Phillip Wright gave short notice apologies due to traffic issues. Hollie Swift arrived late due to traffic issues.

03/24 Item 2: Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any interests relevant to the agenda. Staff and Student Governors, Emily Morey and Governors with formal Committee roles declared an interest in Item 4 concerning their own appointments. All staff members present declared an interest in discussions on the 2024 all- staff pay award mentioned in Item 8.1 CEO report.

04/24 Item 3: Appointment of Chair of Corporation

The Director of Governance noted that as this was the first meeting of the new term, it was a requirement to confirm the appointment of the Chair of the Corporation. There were no objections and this was agreed unanimously.

DECISION: The Corporation approved the appointment of Sandra Prail as Chair of the Corporation for the year ahead.

05/24 Item 4: Membership Update

The Chair noted that there have been some significant changes during the Summer break. Governors Julia Martin and Bernie Topham resigned from their positions, and with effect from this week, Irene Tichy. All cited capacity through other demands as the reason for resignation. Members were informed that Fran Butler was asked to undertake exit interviews - FB gave feedback noting interviews were offered to all, only one person has taken this up so far however they spoke very positively about their experience and the Board citing entirely personal reasons for leaving.

The Corporation were provided with an update on the Chair designate campaign noting that potential Chair Brian Johnson has since decided not to move forward with the position. Members were informed the intention is to revert to an external campaign with Nurole, but that it was important to recognise the talent already on the Board - anyone who may be interested in an increased capacity was encouraged to talk to the Chair.

Members were asked for their approval for the appointments as recommended in the paper for the

appointment of staff governors as follows;

DECISION:

Caroline Perrett Curriculum Area Manager (Eastleigh Campus) to be appointed for a term of 3 years (with an initial 1-year mutual probation) with effect from 1st September 2024 until 31 August 2027 with allocation to the Resources Committee

Greg Kitchen Curriculum Area Director (Fareham Campus) to be appointed for a term of 3 years (with an initial 1-year mutual probation) from 1st September 2024 until 31 August 2027 with allocation to the Curriculum & Quality Committee.

Anna Mae Castillo, Celie Fulcher, and Benita Raphaels each for a term of 1 year from 1st October 2024 until 31 August 2025 with allocation to the Curriculum & Quality Committee.

Emily Morey to be re-appointed as an Independent Governor for a term of 3 years with effect from 1 August 2024 – 31 July 2027 with allocation to the Curriculum & Quality Committee.

To open an internal recruitment campaign for Vice Chair to enable formal appointment at the December Corporation.

The appointment of the following Committee roles for 2024-25

Chair of Resources Committee & SPH Remuneration Committee Andy Wannell

Co Vice Chair(s) of Resources Committee Fran Butler and Colin O'Donoghue

Chair of Curriculum & Quality Committee Emily Morey

Chair of Audit & Risk Committee Ian Harris

The Chair reminded members that the Audit & Risk Cttee are asked to think about appointing a Vice Chair and the C&Q Committee to consider Vice and Link Roles - if anyone would like a conversation, she is happy to discuss.

06/24 Item 5: Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes from the previous meeting held on 3 July 2024 were reviewed for accuracy.

A typo was noted on page 7 (of NOT or) and at minute 29/23 GSCE attendance was positive.

Members agreed, aside from the minor typos listed above, the minutes were an accurate reflection of the meetings held.

DECISION: Minutes for the meeting held on the 3 July 2024 and the Governors Training Session held on the 2 October 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

07/24 Item 6: 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. A typo was noted a 7i – this should read both IA and EA services.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

08/24 Item 7: Ratification of between meeting decisions

The DG reminded members of the decision made in respect of the subcontracting values and contracts due to the timing of the tender results. All approved. The Chair informed members that responses to questions raised

by written resolutions will be replied to via email by the MDBCP. It was noted that IH should be removed from the 'did not respond' list.

ACTION: AO to respond to questions raised within the subcontracting approvals written resolution via email. The Corporation received this report and ratified the decision.

The Chair noted that this was the first formal meeting of the new academic year – of note is a newly introduced front sheet with an executive summary section, comments are welcomed via email please to DG.

09/24 Item 8.1: Chief Executive's Report

The CEO introduced this report (circulated in advance) to provide an overview of recent developments within, and affecting, the college as well as to consider those factors external to the college which affect its operation and strategic direction.

Of note is the development of Skills England, the 'mission' driven language, and delivery labour's 5 key missions. There is scope for Further Education (FE) to contribute to delivery in some way to all of these, but we will need the funding to enable that to happen. We have mapped our strategic plan against these 5 key areas and this will be an important policy arena to watch closely.

Members were briefed on the ongoing work in People & Culture aligning culture, contracts etc inc. pay award including effort to capture and improve staff sentiment. Members were reminded a busy capital and improvement programme delivering estates work and improved student facilities continues.

The CEO noted that huge progress on IT and MIS systems was focussed over the summer when significant integration came to a head in August and Sept. There were lots of lessons learnt, notably around communications and managing expectation. It's fair to say much of the success of strategic change was lost in the detail of day-to-day practical user frustrations but this an improving picture.

A member raised their concerns in respect of Safeguarding and issues arising from the migration from old systems querying if at any point in time we did not have a clear understanding of whom was on site as this would be huge risk. The CEO confirmed that at enrolment systems were not working as they should be but we did have internal and hard copy records as a back-up and these were being checked. Whilst enrolment wasn't smooth, and it continued for longer than we wanted it to issues are now largely resolved and at the time there was no significant safeguarding risk.

A staff governor confirmed whilst online registers were an issue for a time, there were paper registers and high-risk students were clearly covered by a process. He noted that there is often more movement in registers at this time of year, regardless of systems alignment. He said that since then the process has significantly improved (the latest check within their own department showed 88% all registers marked) and provided examples.

The Chair acknowledged we have an honest transparent awareness of the issue and suggested that the Safeguarding Link Governor (SG) pick this up to get a deeper understanding of the impact and lessons learnt. She said she was aware of recent challenges at the Eastleigh Campus and had already raised these with the Director of Student Experience who has provided some reassurance but more detail was needed, SG confirmed her feedback would be channelled via usual reporting to the C&Q Committee.

The Chair suggested the Systems T&F group re-starts and picks up where it previously ended in respect of taking an overview of system integration. All agreed.

ACTION: Systems T&F group to re-start and arrange a meeting with key IT personnel led by COO

POST MEETING NOTE: Systems T&F group meeting arranged for 4 November via TEAMS. Agreed output to be a deep dive on systems integration to the Resources Committee (including hearing from users).

A student governor queried if access to some of the IT systems, e.g. canvas, had been resolved, and if all students now had ID badges (as for a period of time at the beginning of term not all students had lanyards). Student Governors expressed concern about campus security without these measures in place. The CEO confirmed that Canvas is up and running (as it had been delayed). All students do now have ID cards (due to a technical issue these were not available at enrolment) but were in place within the first week of term. The CEO acknowledged that there was potentially the chance of non-students accessing campuses (as in all campuses pre-barrier instalment), but there was improved security and staff visibility to address this.

A member noted that these 'start of term' issues are likely impacting on student experience, and probably staff. There have been some great achievements in recruitment etc – could we look at how we re-market this to staff to help improve engagement and positivity? The CPO agreed noting there have been lots of conversations about this and how to structure it. Due to the level of frustration staff are experiencing, SLT are focussing on being 'on receive' e.g. making themselves available for coffee and connect whilst looking to address some of the immediate issues e.g. photocopying/printing before we try to shout out about some of our wider achievements.

A staff governor was directly asked for their opinion on what could be done to improve things for staff. They acknowledged discontentment was mainly about small things e.g. staff can't print in colour; estates can't bring paper stock to classrooms. Equally communication is key e.g. if things are being taken away, they've not always been communicated to staff. Lots of these things are slowly being resolved but the start of the year is always a fractious and tense time.

The Chair reiterated that the Systems T&F Group can supportively challenge the delivery and roll out of systems to make sure that this is being delivered properly and communicated well. The upcoming staff survey will also help us temperature check the views and feelings of the staff more generally.

The Chair asked the COO as Line Manager of the IT Team whether that team is receiving enough support? COO confirmed that appraisals were held yesterday with 2 key members and that wellbeing was part of these discussions. It would be fair to say some of the members are feeling a bit bruised but remain resilient. 2 new members of staff to join the helpdesk are hoped to alleviate some of the pressures.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided. They will seek additional assurance via the SG Link Governor Safeguarding report to C&Q and the future engagement of the ICT T&F Group.

10/24 Item 8.2: Horizon Scanning

The CEO introduced this item in tandem to the above CEO report. Its intention was to provide an overview of further education sector issues of a local and national perspective in the post-election environment.

A member queried the staff response rate to the mandatory KSCIE reading and Safeguarding training. DPC&Q confirmed 87.6% of staff are fully trained. Final checks are being completed on those staff yet to complete training to data cleanse for e.g. leavers/long term sick or maternity leave etc. The Chair thanked Governors for responding to the chase to complete their KSCIE/Safeguarding training noting that all members had read KSCIE with just a few left to complete the online training.

The new Human Resources Information System (HRIS) went live on Monday. Initial access is based on employee self-service e.g. leave sickness etc. Next steps will be the addition of online Performance

conversations and an embedded recruitment module. As previously discussed, we continue to investigate the use of the 'data' module to improve our 'people' reporting.

The CEO provided an update to the whole staff pay award reminding members that the Board had approved a revised proposal for 3% flat rate for all staff regardless of pay scale. This has been communicated in detail to staff and then followed up with unions today. The union meeting was positive with a consultation outcome expected by 6 Nov. More work is to be done in respect of job alignment/harmonisation and reviewing job 'families' but this will be picked up separately to the pay award.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

11/24 Item 9: Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

The CEO introduced this item noting that the report provides an opportunity for Governors to review and approve for 2024-25 the KPI's available to the Corporation and its Committees.

Members' attention was also brought to the headline KPI's or 'ones to watch' across our KPI suite (before usual Autumn term scrutiny) as follows;

- T Level recruitment – our T Level enrolment is behind plan (this is a national picture).
- Adult achievement rates – our adult achievement rates were below target and below national rates last year, improvement actions for this year in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) should be monitored by the Curriculum and Quality (C&Q) Committee.
- [REDACTED]
- IT Systems' Integration – the technical systems' issues arising at the start of term need to be closed off by Christmas to improve staff user experience.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided. A decision on KPI's was not formally made at this meeting, there has since been an agreement that the Committees and Corporation will continue to receive the qualitative and quantitative KPI's at Corporation and Committee level for the 2024-25 period.

12/24 Item 10.1: 2023-24 Outturn and early update on 2024-25 Budget

The COO introduced this report (circulated in advance) noting it sets out the Group's 2023/24 outturn versus budget and, based on enrolments, sets out some early implications on the 2024/25 budget and 2025/26 forecast. Members were reminded that throughout the year, the management accounts have reported a favourable position versus the budget. This paper gives assurance that the outturn for the year, was in line with those forecasts and the result is significant improvement versus budget. The COO confirmed that the fieldwork by RSM (External Auditor) was almost complete and the final ILR submission this week will confirm final positions for the Adult Education Budget (AEB) and Apprenticeships.

A member confirmed that the financial position looks strong, noting the reference to a group procurement lead and the target of saving £100k - is this realistic and achievable? The COO confirmed he felt this was at the lower end of what could be expected, with hope for this target to be outperformed. It was agreed this could be discussed at the Resources Committee.

ACTION: Stretch Target for Group Procurement Lead to be discussed at Resources Cttee

A member noted that income looks very good and there have been very good enrolment figures. What should we do more of? The CEO confirmed that recruitment has been really positive, we will know the result of 'in

year' funding soon but we think this will improve, apprenticeships applications are also looking positive and we're expecting this to continue. EDB&CP noted that apprenticeship retention is key – robust induction and then consistent ongoing reviews make for positive outcomes and retention.

A member noted that with significantly increased numbers of students studying for either GCSEs, and or with EHCP's what controls are in place for agency staff e.g. teaching assistants etc? Is there a strategy? The CEO confirmed [REDACTED]. There are robust monitoring strategies place and careful calculations. The member went on to query if this was the best solution for an expected cost? The CPO noted that this discussion had been raised previously and suggested a short paper on costs and trends could be brought to an appropriate meeting.

ACTION: CPO to provide a short agency costs and trends paper to the next Resources Committee meeting.

The Chair sought consensus on whether the Board felt they had adequate assurance on issues raised? All agreed.

The Corporation received this report and noted the assurance provided.

13/24 Item 10.2: Appoint Internal Auditor

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Cttee introduced this item noting that he and other members of the SLT team had been involved in the tendering exercise for the Internal Audit services. Members were informed that interviews were held on 3 October and the Audit Committee has been cited on the detail of the applications, the scoring, and the decision-making criteria. As a result (by recommendation of the Audit Committee) approval is sought to appoint Validera as the new Internal Auditor for SHCG (and similarly cease engagement with TIAA at the end of their contract on 31 December 2024)

A member noted a typo that the written resolution took place on the 9th not 8th October. A member queried confidence in whether the new IA company have sufficient team and range of expertise. Chair of Audit confirmed that this was explored in the selection process and that feedback from HSDC (who recently engaged them as their IA) was very positive. A member sought assurance that ongoing performance review will take place. COO confirmed yes. Another member queried the use of a 'break' clause or the ability to ensure if there is a material breach we can exit any agreement. COO noted that 'break' clauses were not common within the sector, but we would work with the new Group Head of Procurement to consider this option.

ACTION: Head of Procurement to advise on IA contract 'break' clause or exit arrangements should delivery not be as expected/promised.

DECISION: The Corporation approved a recommendation from the Audit & Risk Committee to appoint Validera as Internal Auditors to the Group with effect from 1 January 2025. In doing this, the Corporation also approved the requirement to inform incumbent Auditors TIAA that their current contract will end on 31st December 2024.

14/24 Item 11.1: Governance SAR and QIP

The DG introduced this item noting this was the first draft and output of our SAR workshop session held on 2nd October. Corporation approval is sought to delegate the creation of a SMART action plan or Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to the Governance Committee and to return this to the Corporation at its meeting in December. All agreed. The Chair encouraged any members interested in helping to formulate the SMART action plan to get in contact.

DECISION: The Corporation is asked to approve the delegation of the formulation of a SMART Governance QIP to the Governance Committee.

15/24 Item 11.2: Governor Link Feedback

Link Governor Sarah Harder-Collins provided a verbal update on her activities in respect of her role as Safeguarding Governor since the previous Corporation meeting. She informed members that the first 'in-person' single central record check will take place in Southampton this week, and a meeting with Safeguarding leads is scheduled for next. Members were informed a full written report will be provided to the C&Q Cttee.

The Chair informed members that the review of Link Governor and Champion roles discussed over the summer, will take place before the next Corporation meeting on 10 December.

ACTION: A review of Link Governor and Champion roles will take place before the next Corporation meeting
The Corporation received this verbal report and noted the assurance provided.

16/24 Item 11: Any other business

The Chair noted the next meeting was scheduled as a Joint Meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee and Corporation on Wednesday 4 December 2024.

A member noted that the first meeting of the EDI Task & Finish group has been held and we are keen to open this to as many as that are interested in being involved. Anyone who is interested please contact Sarah.

17/24 Item 12: Reflections on the meeting

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

The meeting ended at 19.32.

IMPACT

- Governors used up to date information to assess the Groups position in respect of recruitment targets and achievement rates
- The Corporation used robust Governance to re-appoint the Chair of Corporation, distribute Committee roles for the year and appoint and re-appoint Governors in line with its appointment & training policy
- Governors used pro-active discussion to consider the recruitment to vacant roles of VC and Skills/SEND Link Roles
- Governors provided feedback on a revised formal report template intended to aid scrutiny and challenges
- Governors used robust KPI and management information to receive assurance that the merger project and wider strategic aims are being addressed, tracked and monitored across the business
- Governors used critical challenge to raise concerns around the potential impact of systems integration
- The stakeholder view of both student governors and staff governors was used to triangulate concerns expressed in relation to systems integration

- The role of the Safeguarding link governor helped to provide additional evidence and triangulate concerns in respect of systems integration
- Governors used agile governance to improve scrutiny by re-instigating a 'systems' task and finish group to provide additional oversight and feedback to the Board in respect of systems integration
- Governors used appropriate delegation to direct a deep dive of the Resources Cttee to be focused on areas of concern raised at this meeting
- Governors have been provided with detailed financial information and strategy to inform the budget setting and wider financial health of the group.
- Governors applied scrutiny and drove suggested improvements (by requesting a 'stretch' target in respect of procurement savings)
- Governors applied scrutiny and requested additional information relating to agency cost spend and trends
- In line with the ACOP and on recommendation from the Audit Committee the Corporation appointed a new IA.
- Governors used appropriate delegation in reviewing the output of the Governance SAR and the formulation of the Governance QIP by delegating to the Governance Cttee.
- Governors used reflective mechanisms to assess their performance