

Minutes

SEG Resources Committee Meeting

Governor Meetings

Date	23/09/2025
Time	5:00 PM - 7:10 PM
Location	Board room at Southport College
Governors Present	Margaret Boneham (Independent Member and Committee Chair) Michelle Brabner - Principal – (Ex-Officio Member) Rob Firth (Associate Member) Mike Naden (Independent Member) Paul Walker (Independent Member - Corporation Chair)
In Attendance	Paris Bonwick (Vice Principal - Business Services) Lisa Farnhill (Dir. Governance and Compliance) *Diane Hutchinson (Independent Governor) (up to and including item 9) Alison McDowell (Vice Principal People and Culture) Stephen Musa (Deputy Principal) Paula Smith (Vice Principal Finance)
Apologies	Colin Davies (Independent Member) Claire Moffat-Lonsdale (Independent Member)
Absent	None

*indicates attendance via videoconferencing facilities

Agenda

1 - Open and Apologies for absence

The meeting commenced with a warm welcome to all members and attendees.

Members welcomed Diane Hutchinson, the Link Governor for HR, attending for the HR items, and new member, Mike Naden, with brief introductions provided.

The meeting was formally opened, with apologies for absence detailed and accepted, with quoracy confirmed. The Committee Chair acknowledged this was the first meeting of the academic year, expressing optimism for a successful year for the College and Committee.

Item 1: Accepted

2 - Declaration of interests

Committee members were invited to declare any interests relevant to the agenda items. It was confirmed that there were no specific interests in relation to the agenda items, with it clarified the Staff Pay award discussions were deemed general in nature and not requiring withdrawal by the SLT from the meeting.

Item 2: Noted

3 - Appointment of a Committee Vice Chair

Colin Davies was reappointed as the Committee Vice Chair for the 25/26 academic year.

Item 3: Approved – The Committee approved the continuation of Colin Davies in the role of Committee Vice Chair

4 - Minutes / matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th June 2025 were reviewed, including the recommended redactions, due to commercial sensitivity. The Committee agreed to approve the minutes, clarifying that the yellow-highlighted sections would be removed from the public records but maintained internally.

No additional matters arising were raised that were not covered on the agenda or documented in the report for item 5.

Item 4: Approved – The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 11th June, agreeing to redact the commercially sensitive sections from the copy to be published.

5 - Actions and impact

The Committee reviewed against actions and matters arising from the previous meeting. Members noted that many of the actions were marked as completed, particularly those related to Corporation approval and estates.

It was noted that the request to include comparative analysis for the staff survey couldn't be completed due to changing the questions and format, compounded by the low response rate to the previous survey, making it difficult to draw comparisons. Members were advised response rates had increased significantly, from 23% to 57%. The Committee acknowledged that while some questions from the previous survey were not repeated, the overall feedback provided valuable insights.

The discussion concluded with the agreement that actions had been satisfactorily addressed and the impact statements were approved.

Item 5: Approved – The Committee approved the impact statements of the meeting held on 11th June, agreeing the comparative analysis of staff survey data did not need to be followed up.

6 - Confidential items

The Committee confirmed that as agreed under item 4, the highlighted parts of the minutes from 11th June 2025 should be held as confidential. Additionally, it was noted that the discussions around the Staff Pay award might require redaction, depending on the detail of the discussion, agreeing any redaction would be agreed at the next meeting. The Principal confirmed that the verbal presentation of pay award information to date to be provided under item 12.2, did not require staff present to leave.

No other items of business on the current agenda were deemed confidential at this stage.

Item 6: Approved – The Committee agreed the redactions and confirmed no members or staff needed to withdraw for any agenda items.

7 - KPI scorecard

The final Resources KPI scorecard for 2024/2025 was presented for information. The Committee acknowledged that the KPI scorecard was intended to support and to direct questions and discussions rather than being an item for discussion itself. It was noted that the summary of KPIs for the previous year highlighted areas requiring scrutiny, particularly apprenticeships, test and learn funding, and advanced learner loans. The Committee agreed to consider these areas when reviewing the relevant reports.

Item 7: Noted – The Committee noted the final position for 2024/2025

8 - Risks related to the Resources Committee

The Committee received an overview of the updates to the risk register linked to the Terms of Reference of the Committee, with the risk review process outlined in response to a question about review and approval. Members noted changes to risk ratings and the removal of risk S3, which had considered the impact of not achieving reasonable progress in the monitoring visit by Ofsted. Members were advised these visits had now concluded, with the Standards Committee having recommended a new risk relating to inspection under the new framework

should be added to replace this. Members briefly discussed the new framework, likelihood and timing of inspection, and were assured by the Principal that the Standards Committee were in support of introducing a new risk to cover the quality aspects of the impact of inspection under the new framework.

Key risk movements included the increase in risk ratings for government policy implementation, recruitment of new staff, and financial targets related to apprenticeships and adult funding. The Committee discussed the implications of these changes and challenged the SLT to consider reviewing the wording of the risk description relating to outsourced employees and the national living wage. Members suggested this needed to accurately reflect the college's ability to influence this as well as the control measures in place. The committee discussed the contractual mechanisms available and the balance between affordability and commitment to being a national living wage employer. Members advised the current wording around control was misleading, and they suggested that there were aspects within their control, asking that this is accurately reflected on the risk register when it is next reviewed.

The Committee agreed to delegate a review of the wording of the risk rating related to the national living wage for outsourced employees to the SLT.

Item 8: Noted – The Committee noted the updates to the risk register, asking that the next review and update includes a rewording of the risk related to national living wage.

Task: Review the wording of the risk rating related to the national living wage for outsourced employees.

9 - Human Resources

9.1 - Termly HR Update

The Vice Principal People and Culture presented to the Committee the termly HR update, which included detailed information on recruitment, induction, staff survey results, pay scales, and HR policies.

The attention of members to these key points:

- **Recruitment:** The Committee were informed that over the summer, 24 new staff were employed, including 13 lecturing staff and 11 business support staff. The proactive recruitment strategy led to a significant reduction in vacant roles compared to the previous year.
- **Induction:** Members were informed that the induction process had been fully reviewed and revised, being replaced with a monthly induction programme, receiving positive feedback from both new staff and managers.
- **Staff Survey:** A staff survey conducted at the end of summer included questions about workload, aligning to the Ofsted framework. There was a response rate of 47%, with the outcomes offering valuable information. This will be followed up by careful analysis of the outcomes, and staff focus groups will be organised to address specific concerns.
- **Pay Scales:** Significant progress made in addressing this. The review of management pay scales was completed, and the focus is now on support staff pay scales.
- **HR Policies:** The disciplinary, grievance, and capability procedures are under review, with updated drafts to be presented at the next meeting.

The Committee discussed the positive impact of the new induction programme and suggested there was a clear need to include visits to KGV or alternate the site at which the induction took place. Benefits discussed included ensuring both sites were familiar to the new starters, and ensuring staff felt part of the larger group. The Committee was informed that efforts were made to ensure that other activities, including celebrations and CPD alternated between sites.

Members asked about the staff survey results, including indicative outcomes and time needed to analyse the outcomes, noting plans to organise focus groups for further insights. Members were assured by plans to share outcomes with the Union Management Forum and present them to the Committee at the next meeting.

Members commended progress in reviewing and implementing pay scales and asked about the implementation and impact of the new management structure. Members were assured by details provided relating to the support being provided to the management team, ensuring those new to management were given time to develop in their roles. Members were advised that although it was too early to see the full impact, the new management team were considered to be working well together, and improvements were already being identified.

Item 9.1 – Resolved – The Committee resolved to accept the assurances of the report, noting improvements in induction processes and a clear focus on staff wellbeing through the review of workload.

9.2 - Annual HR report

The annual HR report for 2024/25 was reviewed, noting that the report included staff profile data, turnover rates, sickness absence rates, HR procedures, and the gender pay gap report.

Members were advised that this was a summary of the more detailed termly reports reviewed by the Committee throughout the previous year, and subject to Committee approval, would be presented to the Corporation as assurance of the Committee's oversight of this area.

The Committee discussed the benchmarking figures for staff turnover and sickness absence rates, noting that the benchmarking data was outdated, with a member having contacted the Vice Principal People and Culture ahead of the meeting to ask if any alternative benchmarking data was available. The Committee was advised that the latest AOC data collated for the sector, considered to be the most relevant for benchmarking, had been 2020/2021, however, other data from the CIPD was available, which was for 2024. Members were informed that this identified staff turnover for all sectors in the UK was at 34%, with the data broken down into sectors, with the education sector in that report at 33.7%. Members were assured that the data for SEG was significantly below this at 15.1%. Members discussed data within their own organisations and other sectors, considering the impact of organisation size, as well as in-demand roles and the impact of pay issues in education. The Committee was advised that efforts to obtain further benchmarking data from other colleges were ongoing through networks, with a hope this would provide more relevant and up to date benchmarking information. Members concluded there was no concern based on the available information and thanked the Vice Principal for continuing to review options for comparative analysis.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of addressing career progression opportunities to retain staff and reviewed the remaining data lines, agreeing the level of information was sufficient to ensure the Corporation was assured of their work in overseeing HR matters, and provided sufficient detail for viewing at Corporation level.

Item 9.2: Approved – The Committee approved the HR annual report for presentation to the Corporation for assurance.

Task – Efforts to obtain additional and more up to date benchmarking data will continue and any relevant information will be presented to the Committee.

10 - Enrolment report

The Deputy Principal presented the enrolment report, highlighting a slight decline in student enrolment numbers compared to the previous year, which was contextualised against a number of years of significant growth. Members noted enrolment of 1993 on day 12, with day 12 used for consistency, enabling trend analysis. Members were advised that this was below the financial target but above the post-census target.

Members were advised the reduced enrolment had been unexpected. Staff had expected enrolment would be above the target, based on application data. Members noted early indications, including open day attendance, applications and course discussions, had all been positively attended, and up on the previous year, using conversion rates carefully calculated based on previous data.

In considering the reasons for the decline, members asked about the impact of the previous inspection, GCSE English and maths and pass rates overall, and discussed entry requirements. The Committee was advised that staff had been working hard to understand the reasons, including contacting those that had not enrolled. The Deputy Principal informed the Committee that analysis indicated the decline was attributed to various factors, including competition from local colleges and changes in student preferences, travel and outcomes. The Committee discussed the need to analyse the reasons for the decline and develop strategies to improve recruitment and retention

Summaries of strategies to date were outlined, with work to develop and effectively market an A Level foundation program commended, with members asking about the positioning of the proposition to ensure it had wide appeal. Members highlighted how this met a local need not met elsewhere and aligned to the College's Strategic Intention to be at the heart of the community.

The Committee considered the link between outcomes and enrolment, along with the impact of the decline in specific A-level subjects on two-year enrolment figures, receiving assurances about support to address

performance issues in these areas. In addressing concerns raised over the financial impact, members were advised the risk was mitigated by the lagged funding model, facilitating time to manage the reduction in income without impacting quality.

Members attention was drawn to the positive data around internal progression, evidencing student satisfaction and clear progression routes, with progression having increased from 40% in 2020/2021 to over 70% for 2025/2026 entry.

Members discussed at length sector trends in enrolment, and demographics, being advised the data trends for 16-18 year olds in Southport, did not align with other local areas. The Committee was assured by strategies to support retention, noting high expectations for behaviour to ensure students thrive and reach their potential.

Item 10: Noted – The Committee noted the update.

11 - Estates reporting

11.1 - Termly Estates Report

The Vice Principal Business Services summarised the Estates update, which included updates on accommodation, capital grants, sustainability, and room utilisation. The Committee reviewed the progress of ongoing projects, being assured by regular work to maintain and improve the site, including painting and maintenance work, fixed wire testing, and defect surveys, to ensure any grant project defects could be addressed within the defect time limit.

Members asked about risks associated with delays to completing some of the fixed wire testing, being advised this had not been needed for new build projects then missed by the previous testing company, with assurances given that this was booked in and did not impact the insurance.

Training was summarised, and details of fire risk assessments and the need for expert external validation outlined, with members commending this approach, clarifying this was in addition to and supplementing the work of the IAS, ensuring specialist support, advice and guidance. Members were advised of plans to upgrade the fire system, receiving an outline of the cost implications and requirements for each of the levels, with plans to progress with level 4.

The Committee also received an update on the KGV playing fields, speaker system installations, and DfE capital funding. The Committee considered the impact of structural inspections and planned repairs on the college's facilities, then discussed at length the demolition of the Fern building. Approval of expenditure for the project was confirmed to be within the delegated authority of the Committee, noting two tenders had been submitted and received. Members were however informed that this was not yet able to be presented for approval, as the tender packs could not yet be opened due to challenges faced in obtaining planning permission. Members clarified the expenditure had been included in the financial plan, agreeing to review the awarding of the contract by Written Resolution to avoid any delays in commencing the work.

In reviewing the room utilisation data, members asked why utilisation was lower at KGV, being advised this was due to larger class sizes and changes in reporting methods, with reporting now considering use as opposed to capacity. Members asked about the number of rooms no longer in use and were given an update of plans to bring four classrooms, known as the West Wing of KGV, back into use by creating specialist provision for student with SEMH difficulties, with a summary of the proposal outlined to Corporation in July provided to the Committee. Members were advised plans and discussions with relevant stakeholders were progressing well, with a summary of expected costs and income outlined.

In concluding, members thanked the Vice Principal Business Services for the report, confirming the new format presented information in a digestible format.

11.2 - Estates Approvals

The Committee confirmed that as detailed under item 11.2, the approval of the contractor to be awarded the Fern demolition contract would need to be done by Written Resolution. Governors questioned the financial implications, querying the potential costs, asking if VAT was recoverable. The Committee clarified the risks and challenges in relation obtaining planning permission. Timing was discussed and the Committee agreed to respond promptly to the Written Resolution once planning permission is granted to

support with ensuring the most disruptive aspects of the works could be completed during the half term college closure.

Item 11 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to note the update, agreeing to approve a contractor for the demolition of the Fern building by Written Resolution.

12 - Financial reports

12.1 - Management Accounts

The Vice Principal Finance advised the Committee that the June management accounts had been included in the papers for information and approval, however, would not be presented as they were superseded by the July accounts.

The accounts were summarised, with members attention drawn to the current position, noting a number of minor adjustments had been made during the auditing of the financial statements at year end. Members were advised the draft operating result showed a deficit of £338,000, which was a favourable variance compared to the forecast. Members noted that income, pay and non-pay costs were better than expected, and discussed the positive variances attributed in part to pension fund adjustments. Members asked for an explanation of the pension position, noting the potential for reduced employer contributions at the next valuation, with contributing factors discussed, noting the college was unable to influence the valuation process. Governors questioned the impact of pension fund adjustments on long-term financial health, being advised that a reduction in contributions would impact the financial health score by reducing outgoings.

Members queried the exam cost variance, with the Vice Principal Business Services informing the Committee of circumstances that impact the costs, including those who withdraw from a course yet attend an exam, and human error as a result of changed courses. Assurances were provided over new processes that will reduce variances, highlighting the prioritisation of student outcomes, confirming students who turn up to an exam will always be allowed to sit it.

The Vice Principal Finance explained the high cash balance, and outcome of the property revaluation on the balance sheet. The background to the revaluation, along with the process and outcome was outlined, including the rent review, with transparency and fairness being prioritised throughout the process. Members were advised that the previous valuations had been based on residential potential, which was incompatible with the covenants, with the current valuations and rent an accurate reflection of current use and potential.

In concluding, the Committee reviewed the financial health score, noting this maintained a grading of 'good'.

Item 12.1 – Approved: The Committee approved the management accounts for June and July, noting the expected adjustments to be included in the presentation of the final accounts, to be presented in November.

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12.3 - Tuition Fees Policy

The Vice Principal Business Services advised the Committee that the recommended updates to the Tuition Fee Policies incorporated wording around the DfE, EHCP requirements, and internal changes to staffing, roles and responsibilities.

Members clarified that the updates made reflected current DfE guidance, with no major changes beyond rewording and clarification of funding streams. Members endorsed the updates, agreeing to recommend the policy to the Corporation for approval.

Item 12.3 – Approved: The Committee resolved to recommend the Corporation approve the updates to the Tuition Fee Policy.

12.4 - Bank Mandate Updates

The Committee reviewed the recommended updates to the signatories on the bank mandates, with the Vice Principal Finance advising the update had been at the request of the bank, who noted the previous mandate was outdated.

Members queried the use of names, asking that roles are used to ensure the mandate remains current when role holders' change, clarifying who would be the primary and secondary signatories.

Members noted there had been a request by the bank for evidence of resignations and appointments, with it confirmed this may still be required, however, suggested that a mandate aligned with roles prevented a need for further approvals when there had been resignations and appointments. Members agreed this would future-proof the process whilst maintaining compliance with bank requirements.

Item 12.4 – Approved: The Committee resolved to approve updates to the mandate, subject to it being updated to incorporate roles rather than named signatories, to future proof the process by ensuring that the first and second level signatories detailed reflected their role, not individual names.

13 - Procurement update

The Committee noted the contracts due for review this academic year, with assurances provided regarding timing in line with meeting dates. Discussions included opportunities for savings and the potential impact of inflation on contract renewals.

Governors questioned the timing and impact of inflation on contract renewals, indicating the increases may be significant due to the length and size of the contract, challenging the SLT to identify opportunities for cost savings and risk mitigation.

Item 13 – Noted: The Committee resolved to note the update

14 - Annual assessment of committee performance

The Committee reviewed the annual assessment of its performance in relation to its Terms of Reference, agreeing on actions to be undertaken in 2025/26. The discussion highlighted the importance of continuous improvement and the need to address any gaps in policy review and compliance. Governors noted the improvements made and received an overview of plans to improve the approvals process for some items, by increasing the delegated authority of some Committees.

Members discussed the improvements in governor engagement and link work, noting the presence of the HR Link Governor earlier to support with the review of HR items.

Item 14 – Approved: The Committee resolved to approve the self-assessment.

15 - IAS reports linked to resources

The committee reviewed IAS reports related to Resources, being advised by the Vice Principal Business Services that the Estates review had concluded, however, the report had not yet been finalised, although the draft had been presented for management review and comment. The verbal presentation confirmed that there were a number of recommendations, all of which aligned with the organisations own analysis of risk areas and prioritisation of necessary works.

Members noted the enrolment report provided substantial assurance, with Committee members questioning the findings of the estates report and the implications for future resource management. Members also asked about the performance of the IAS, being advised the recent reviews had been comprehensive, evidencing improved understanding and communication from the new team.

Item 15 –Noted: The Committee resolved to note the substantial assurance form the enrolment report.

16 - Meeting reflection

16.1 - Risk Reflection

The Committee reflected on their discussions and considered whether any of the data reviewed in the reports resulted in a need to reconsider the wording, or ratings of any Resources risks.. Governors questioned the current risk scores and mitigation strategies, agreeing that all risks are accurately assessed and managed, with the only update for consideration being the already noted wording around control in the national living wage risk.

Item 16.1 –Noted: The Committee reflected on their discussions and agreed no additional updates to the risk register were required based on the items presented.

16.2 - Items to be recommended to the Corporation

The Committee agreed only the tuition fee policy needed to be presented for approval in October.

Item 16.2 – Approved: The Committee resolved to approve items for Corporation approval.

17 - Date of next meeting and close

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday, 19th November 2025, at 5:00 PM.

The meeting was formally closed at 7.12pm