

People and Resources Committee

Minutes of the People and Resources Committee meeting held in public on:

Date: Thursday 13 November 2025

Time: 2pm

Venue: Videoconference via Teams

Present: John McEvoy (Chair)
Neville Hounsome
Alice Gair*
Helen Grantham
Pameleta Ricketts
Valerie Webster

Apologies: None

In attendance:

James Afolabi, Financial Planning and Analysis Manager
Fatma Ali, Head of HR and OD
Claire Amor, Executive Director of Corporate Affairs
Serena Benjamin, Executive Assistant
Francesca Bramley, Governance Manager
Alastair Bridges, Executive Director of Resources
Paul Cooper, Head of Business Change
Eve Johnson, Employee Forum Representative
Geoff Kirk, Head of IT and Digital
Noah Linley-Adams, Governance Officer
Patricia Morrissey, Head of Governance
Matthew Nelson, Programme and Change Manager
Bernie O'Reilly, Chief Executive
Uta Pollmann, Partner Project Lead (for item 10)
Andrew Smith, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Education,
Registration and Regulatory Standards
Katarzyna Szklarska, IT Team and Contracts Officer

* Council Apprentice

Public meeting

1 Welcome and introduction

- 1.1 The Committee Chair welcomed those present to the meeting of the People and Resources Committee and invited each attendee to introduce themselves in turn.

2 Apologies for absence

- 2.1 There were no apologies.

3 Approval of agenda

- 3.1 The Committee approved the agenda.

4 Declaration of members' interest in relation to agenda items

- 4.1 There were no interests declared.

5 Minutes of the People and Resources Committee meeting held in public on 19 September 2025

- 5.1 The Committee approved the minutes as an accurate record of its meeting held in public on 19 September 2025.

6 Matters arising

- 6.1 The Committee noted the updates on the matters arising from previous meetings held in public.

Performance Reports

7 Resources Directorate Performance Report

- 7.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive Director of Resources, providing an update on performance in the areas covered by the HCPC's corporate enabler functions for September 2025.
- 7.2 The report showed continued good performance reported against most key performance indicators (KPIs).
- 7.3 There had been a small improvement in hearings utilisation and although bookings specifically for hearings had remained low in September, overall usage including other meetings was in line with the KPI threshold. The Executive continued to review other options to make the best use of the hearings space.

- 7.4 Delays to the Fitness to Practise (FTP) data model build had continued as resources had been diverted to non-project critical FTP reporting requirements. Additional resources had been agreed following business case approval and this was expected to mitigate the risk going forwards, with good progress being made to date.
- 7.5 There had been one critical incident during the reporting period. Online Applications and Online Concerns portals had become unavailable overnight and most of the next working day due to a failed credit card payment for the Google Captcha solution. This had prevented users from being able to access the portals but there had been no cyber risk and as the outage was overnight, minimal service disruption had been reported. The HCPC was in the process of moving to an alternative Captcha solution with a more robust contractual relationship to mitigate the risk of future breaks in service. The Head of IT and Digital was satisfied that the new Captcha solution would provide a good standard of cyber security.
- 7.6 In response to a question, the Head of Business Change clarified that the benefits set out in section 11 of the paper were annual savings but that some of these savings were not cashable; for example, productivity improvements did not necessarily generate immediate cost savings. Further work was planned to net the benefits against ongoing costs and the Committee requested further insights on the outcome of this work.

Action: The Head of Business Change would provide a breakdown of bankable savings and productivity improvements across the investment portfolio.

8 HR Performance Report

- 8.1 The Committee received the HR performance report from the HR Business Partner covering the second quarter of the 2025-26 financial year, which outlined the performance of the organisation in line with the KPIs from the HR function.
- 8.2 The Committee noted the following points.
- The total average full-time equivalent of 378 remained within the budgeted establishment of 398. Agency usage had decreased to 2%, reflecting a sustainable approach to workforce planning. The number of fixed term contracts had increased to 42 (12% of the workforce). These contracts related to maternity leave cover and time-sensitive projects such as the international registration and fraudulent entry projects. This was expected to reduce over the next quarter.
 - The average days to hire had reduced from 22 days to 20 days, which was well within the key performance indicator limit of 42 days.
 - Staff retention (82%) and voluntary turnover (11%) were both stable and remained broadly consistent with previous quarters.

- The exit interview completion rate had increased to 90%. No themes had been identified within the exit interview feedback, noting this included more qualitative comments in addition to the quantitative data included in the report.
- There had been significant learning and development activity during the reporting period, including the launch of a management development programme for first-time managers and the recommencement of the senior leadership programme. Feedback was sought from all learner cohorts after courses had been completed on the impact the learning programme had had on their work.
- Employee satisfaction had remained high, with an overall satisfaction rate of 81% in the employee pulse survey. Engagement had decreased to 53%, which was partly attributed to the internal changes within the Fitness to Practice (FTP) department, high workloads during the quarter, ongoing discussions regarding hybrid working and the range of alternative feedback loops available to employees. The Chief Executive clarified that the engagement rates had fluctuated significantly over the past two years for no easily discernible reason and compared well with other public sector organisations. All free-text feedback was regularly reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team. The frequency of pulse surveys would also be reviewed as part of the people strategy development.
- Work was under way to reduce long term sickness absence through targeted support and intervention. The increase in mental health-related sickness absence was across the organisation and was being closely monitored. An enhanced employee assistance programme had been launched to provide additional support and this had been promoted to employees.

8.3 A Council member enquired as to whether 'stay conversations' had been considered as a means of intervening before employees left the HCPC to encourage them to stay. The Head of HR and OD advised that this was not something that was currently part of the HCPC's approach.

Action: The Head of HR and OD would consider 'stay conversations' as part of the development of the HCPC people strategy.

8.4 The Committee sought clarity regarding the impact of the potential changes to the funding arrangements for level 7 apprenticeships on the HCPC.

Action: The Head of HR and OD would update the Committee on the impact of the potential changes to the funding arrangements for level 7 apprenticeships on the HCPC.

9 Finance Report

9.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive Director of Resources presenting the financial position as at the end of September 2025, with a commentary on the major variances, risks and opportunities.

9.2 The Executive Director of Resources highlighted the following points:

- a year-to-date surplus of £428k excluding exceptional legal costs and £279k including these costs;
- a break even full year forecast of £8k surplus (excluding ringfenced reserves for exceptional legal costs), which was £172k lower than the budgeted surplus of £180k.
- a full-year forecast adverse income variance of £1.7m, mainly due to a decrease in international application volumes offset but an increase in income fees following the 6% fee rise that came into effect in April 2025;
- a full-year expenditure forecast of £43.8 million, which was £1.5m below budget due to a decrease in direct costs associated with lower international application volumes and a decrease in payroll costs due to unfilled vacant posts;
- a forecast contingency fund of £120k;
- the full-year major projects and investments budget forecast of £1.8 million against the budget of £2.3 million;
- an improved general reserves position of £9.8 million and realisable net assets of £7.1 million, representing just over two months of operating expenditure;
- a number of risks that continued to be managed, including a potential pressure relating to SMS costs, potential partner claims and potential additional costs related to complex cases;
- opportunities to improve the financial position, which included reduced operating costs due to the reclassification of operating expenditure to capital expenditure and a reduction in staff costs due to the flexible resourcing model within international registration; and
- the comprehensive reforecasting exercise that was under way for the October finance report due to be submitted to the Council meeting in December.

9.1 In response to a question, the Executive Director of Resources advised that it was difficult to accurately predict international application volumes because the drivers were diverse and hard to model and that the forecast would be based on recent trends, informed by the work of the income forecasting group who met regularly and reviewed the external environment, government policy and wider strategic developments across the four nations. A prudent approach would continue to be adopted.

9.2 The Committee suggested that the forecast international application numbers could be sense checked against the average number of applications received over the previous three years.

Action: The Head of Finance and Commercial would provide an overview of the conclusions from the analysis of international application volumes to the Committee.

- 9.3 The Committee reflected that some education providers had also seen a significant reduction in applications from international students and emphasised the importance of reducing the HCPC's reliance on international income so as to maintain financial sustainability.
- 9.4 In response to a question, the Executive Director of Resources clarified that the exceptional legal costs in relation to fraudulent entries that were being funded from reserves would continue to be incurred in the next financial year and a more precise timeline would be agreed as part of the budget setting process for 2026-27. The October reforecast would result in the £1.5 million ringfenced reserves reducing for 2025-26.
- 9.5 The Head of Business Change outlined the work being undertaken to review the investment budget to ensure operational expenditure targets were not being exceeded on investment projects, noting that a slight downward trend was anticipated towards the end of the financial year.

10 Partner Report

- 10.1 The Partner Project Lead joined the meeting for this item. The Committee received the Partner report for the second quarter of the 2025-26 financial year, which provided an overview of a number of performance metrics.
- 10.2 Voluntary partner turnover had remained stable and remained below the KPI threshold.
- 10.3 Two recruitment campaigns for panel chairs and legal assessors had gone live during the reporting period. The applications received were of a very high standard. Training had been provided to 95 partners.
- 10.4 There had been a significant increase in partner costs compared to the previous quarter, which was due to a higher number of FTP and registration appeal hearings, a test of competency backlog and an increase in continuing professional development (CPD) assessor fees linked to the renewal cycle.
- 10.5 New partner contracts were now in place and a new payroll module had been implemented. The first pay run through the new system was due to be completed in November 2025.

People

11 Employee Forum update

- 11.1 The Committee received a verbal update from the Employee Forum Representative, who introduced herself to the Committee as a Hearings Officer who had been an

Employee Forum Representative since 2022 and had recently taken on the role of Deputy Employee Forum Chair pending an election process.

11.2 Key updates included:

- an overview of the topics discussed at the most recent Employee Forum meeting on 3 September 2025, which had included EDI activities, a successful charity coffee morning which had raised over £250 for Action for Children and black history and breast cancer awareness events, all of which had received positive feedback from employees; and
- reflections on the Employee Forum Representative's positive personal experience of accessing the enhanced employee assistance programme and the HCPC's promotion of World Mental Health Day in October 2025.

11.3 The Committee emphasised the importance of promoting the employee assistance programme by sharing insights from colleagues who had accessed the programme to encourage others to access the programme.

11.4 In response to a question, the Employee Forum Representative confirmed that Employee Forum representatives were in regular contact through a group chat on Microsoft Teams, which they used to discuss topics and share ideas.

11.5 The Committee expressed its continued support of the Employee Forum's work and thanked the Employee Forum Representative for attending the meeting.

Finance and investment

12 Technology roadmap delivery update

12.1 The Head of IT and Digital presented a mid-year progress update on the delivery of the HCPC's technology roadmap approved by the Council in May 2024.

12.2 The following points were noted:

- the HCPC had taken a modular approach to implementing new technology, enabling the best solutions and/or partners to be selected for individual projects and maintaining affordability;
- the roadmap included foundational workstreams, 'quick wins' to respond to pressing operational issues and innovation through proof of concept pilots;
- good progress had been made to date on user research as part of the corporate strategy development, with the intention of following up with further conversations to understand communication channel preferences;
- a plan was in place to rapidly progress the FTP and Registration data models to support the data platform that would replace the multiple data systems currently in use, which would enable the introduction of data self-service and data analysis tools;

- following the successful implementation of Business Central, the Finance team planned to adopt Workday to further improve financial reporting and budget setting processes;
- the decommissioning of on-premise infrastructure and cloud migration was almost complete;
- 2026-27 priorities were linked to the investment plan and included embedding the data platform self-service into business as usual, the development of an omnichannel contact centre, establishing a single CRM platform and exploring AI automation; and
- the roadmap had been updated and adjusted to reflect changing timescales and reprioritisation, including the addition of a major website upgrade led by the Communications team, and the roadmap would be refreshed to ensure alignment with the new corporate strategy.

12.3 The Committee emphasised that staff engagement and training were key enablers of the successful implementation of new technology and sought assurance that this was reflected in the HCPC's approach. A comprehensive training plan had been developed for each individual project, which detailed how the effectiveness of the learning would be evaluated. Targeted communications were taken forward through the senior leadership team and with affected teams as required as part of the business change process.

12.4 The Committee enquired as to whether individual projects such as the data platform, the omnichannel contact centre and AI-assisted online, email and telephone support were connected. The Head of IT and Digital clarified that these projects were interconnected and that these components would evolve to ensure full cross-project alignment.

12.5 In response to a question, the Head of IT and Digital assured the Committee that a comprehensive equality, diversity and inclusion impact assessment and data privacy impact assessment was undertaken prior to any new IT system or equipment being implemented. In addition, the Change and Benefits Forum evaluated all proposals against criteria such as sustainability and quality and the ELT also reviewed any proposals to assess strategic fit.

13 Benefits realisation and change management

13.1 The Head of Business Change provided an update on benefits realisation and change management.

13.2 The following points were noted;

- good progress had been made on the technology roadmap and investment plan priorities; most high-value initiatives were in progress and on track to prepare foundational layers;

- the HCPC had committed approximately 50% of the investment portfolio budget against approximately 10 programmes of work, including technology roadmap projects, the new partner operating model, the new international assessment model and Fitness to Practise frontloading;
- the reorganisation of the Business Change function had been supportive in driving progress, including new business analyst and senior programme manager roles;
- the end-of-year capital expenditure carry-over projection was estimated at 20% and was mainly a result of project phasing or contingency, rather than unplanned slippage;
- the Head of Business Change planned to provide regular dashboard updates to the Committee at each of its meetings in 2025;
- successful strategic partnerships had been established across a range of projects, including the customer contact centre, website portals and cloud migration;
- operational challenges relating to cyber security, reporting and invoice duplication had caused some delays in project timelines, however risks had been well-mitigated and most projects were on track;
- further work was planned in 2026 to create and embed change across the organisation, which would be supported by the Communications team; and
- a recent internal audit on benefits realisation had identified many examples of good practice and work continued to move the HCPC from a cost-based planning process to a value-based planning process, in addition to a review of the terms of reference for the Change Benefits Forum.

13.3 The Committee welcomed the update and reflected that the breakdown of bankable and non-bankable benefits discussed earlier in the meeting would be useful to provide a clearer picture of the overall financial impact of the investment portfolio, acknowledging that non-financial benefits such as service/quality improvement and risk reduction should also be evaluated and reported.

13.4 In response to a question, the Head of Business Change clarified that the Business Change team's involvement in FTP frontloading had been limited to implementing new workflows, but as the HCPC's business change processes matured and capacity increased the intention was to provide broader change management support, including process optimisation and process review.

Governance

14 Committee forward plan

14.1 The Committee noted the forward plan for 2026. This included reference to deep dives on topics of interest to the Committee. Further consideration would be given

as to how to better align the People and Resources Committee and Remuneration Committee meetings. As all Council meetings would be in person during 2026, the option for an in-person Committee meeting would remain under review by the Committee Chair.

15 Resolution to move the meeting to private session

- 15.1 The Committee resolved that the remainder of the meeting would be held in private, because the matters being discussed related to matters which, in the opinion of the Chair, were confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Council's functions.
- 15.2 The meeting was briefly adjourned.