HSCCA Board

13 July 2026

2.30 – 4.30PM

Present:

Councillors Adams-King (Chair), Bacon (Vice-Chair), Bogle, Madgwick and Pitt.

In Attendance:

Councillor North

Ruth Adams, Chief Executive, opened the meeting by welcoming elected members, chief executives and officers of the constituent authorities, members of the set-up team, partners and stakeholders, as well as members of the press, public and those watching online, to the first meeting of the Combined County Authority. She noted the significance of the occasion and the opportunity for the county, city, districts, island partners and stakeholders to come together to realise the benefits and opportunities presented by devolution.

1. Appointment of Members

The members present received the appointments to the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority (HSCCA) Board by the Constituent Councils of Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council, Portsmouth City Council and the Isle of Wight Council as required under the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority Regulations 2026 (the HSCCA Regulations).

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that the Members of the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority appointed by each Constituent Council as set out in paragraph 3.2.1 of the agenda report be noted.

2. Appointment of Chair

On the proposition of Councillor Pitt, seconded by Councillor Bogle it was

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that Councillor Nick Adams-King be appointed as the Chair of the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority.

3. Appointment of Vice-Chair

On the proposition of Councillor Madgwick, seconded by Councillor Adams-King it was

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that Councillor John Bacon be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority.

COUNCILLOR NICK ADAMS-KING IN THE CHAIR

The newly elected Chair thanked members for their appointment and expressed pride in being elected to the role. The Chair recognised the significant work undertaken over a number of years to establish the Hampshire and Solent Combined County Authority, acknowledging the contributions of councillors, officers, government, businesses and regional partners.

Particular thanks were given to the Chief Executives of the establishing councils and their officer teams for their leadership, collaboration and commitment in navigating the complex process of creating the Authority. The Chair also recognised the contributions of former Council Leaders who had played an important role in progressing devolution arrangements and helping to bring the Authority into being.

The Chair noted that the meeting marked the beginning of a new chapter and highlighted the collective responsibility of members to develop a strong and effective Authority, ready for the election of a Mayor and focused on delivering tangible benefits for local communities.

It was also noted that the membership of the Authority would develop over time, with representatives from Hampshire district and borough councils joining as non-constituent members. The Chair welcomed Councillor Phil North, Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, as the anticipated non-constituent member representative and noted that Councillor David Neighbour was expected to be nominated as a further representative. Both appointments remained subject to formal nomination and confirmation at the next meeting.

4. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

5. Declarations of interest

There were none.

6. Exclusion of Public and Press

It was noted that there no indication within the reports that the public and press would be required to be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items on the agenda.

7. Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority Governance Arrangements

The Board considered the procedural and governance matters set out within the report required to enable the HSCCA to operate effectively from its inception and meet its legal, financial and governance obligations from the outset.

Susan Zeiss, Director of Law and Governance drew the meeting's attention to tabled revised wording within the constitution along with amended wording for recommendation F. The amended wording was accepted by the meeting.

In response to the query by Councillor Madgwick about amending voting approaches the Chair reflected that it would only be voting members of the Board who would be required to come to a consensus on these key issues until the Mayor was elected. The Board unanimously supported his proposal to write a joint letter to the new Prime Minister seeking alignment of the HSCCA mayoral elections with the shadow authority elections scheduled for May 2027.

On the proposition of Councillor Adams-King, seconded by Councillor Pitt it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that:

a) the Constitution at Appendix A, as amended, be approved and adopted as the Constitution of the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority (HSCCA);
b) the Local Assurance Framework at Appendix B be approved;
c) the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association be designated as the Nominating Body for the two initial Non-Constituent Members of the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority Board and authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to write to the Nominating Body and seek their consent to the nomination;
d) the Policies of the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority listed in paragraph 3.4 of the agenda report be approved;

e) authority to be delegated to the Interim Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair and the Vice Chair,
   i) establish and convene an independent remuneration panel, including agreeing the terms of reference and reasonable allowances for that panel, so that the independent remuneration panel can, at the earliest opportunity, undertake a review and make recommendations regarding a scheme of allowances for the Combined County Authority to consider at a future meeting of this Board.
   ii) advertise and make recommendations to a future meeting of this Board for the appointment of the independent member on the Audit and Governance Committee, having first consulted with the Chair and Vice Chair about the recruitment and interview processes to be followed.
   iii) advertise and make recommendations to a future meeting of this Board for the appointment of two Independent Persons for standards under S28 of the Localism Act 2011, having first consulted with the Chair and Vice Chair about the recruitment and interview processes to be followed.
   iv) to take such steps (in consultation with the Chief Executive, Interim Chief Finance Officer (Section 73) and Chair of the Board) including entering into any agreements with the Constituent Councils as may be required to Agenda Item 6 ensure that the HSCCA can compliantly operate economically, efficiently, and effectively.
f) to delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Board, the responsibility of guiding the process of recruiting an Independent Chair of the Business Board in consultation with business communities across the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority area.

8. Establishment of Regulatory Committees, Composition and Political Proportionality

The Board considered the report setting out the political balance calculations for application to the Authority's Regulatory Committees within its governance framework. It sought the Board's approval of the calculations and addressed related appointment considerations for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Governance and Audit Committee.

On the proposition of Councillor Adams-King, seconded by Councillor Pitt it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that:

a) the establishment of the two Regulatory Committees: Governance and Audit Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee be agreed; and

b) the political balance calculations set out in paragraph 3.2 and 3.3 of the agenda report be approved.

9. Appointment of Statutory Officers

The Board considered the report proposing the appointment of those roles necessary to support the HSCCA through the inaugural meeting in order to discharge its statutory responsibilities.

On the proposition of Councillor Admas-King, seconded by Councillor Bacon it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that:

a) the appointment of Ruth Adams to the post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service on a fixed term basis be approved;
b) the appointment of Debbie Simpson to the post of Chief Finance Officer (Section 73) on an interim basis be approved;
c) the appointment of Susan Zeiss to the post of Monitoring Officer, on an interim basis be approved;
d) the appointment of Adam Swain to the post of Chief Finance Officer (Section 73) on a permanent contract subject to the successful completion of all required due diligence and pre-employment checks and the expiry of any required notice period be approved;
e) the interim appointment in resolution b above would automatically cease on the taking up by Adam Swain of the position of Chief Finance Officer (Section 73); and
f) the recommended appointment for a permanent Monitoring Officer would be brought for approval to the next meeting of the Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority Board.

10. Budget 2026-27

The Board considered the report establishing the initial, interim budget and financial governance arrangements for Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority as well as how expenditure would be funded.

On the proposition of Councillor Adams-King and having been seconded by Councillor Madgwick, a recorded vote was taken.

To approve the budget 2026-27 and associated recommendations:	
Councillor Adams-King	For

Councillor Bacon	For
Councillor Bogle	For
Councillor Madgwick	For
Councillor Pitt	For
Carried	

The result was five for, none against and no abstentions.

It was therefore **RESOLVED that**:

a) the balanced 2026/27 revenue and capital budget be approved, as set out in Appendix A of the agenda report;
b) the acceptance of known funding be approved and authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Section 73 Officer, to accept future funding allocations in accordance with the Authority's approved schemes of delegation;
c) the proposed approach to the establishment and use of earmarked reserves for 2026/27 be approved, as set out in paragraph 3.10.6 of the agenda report, noting that a comprehensive Reserves Strategy would be presented to a future meeting of the Authority; and
d) the arrangements for internal and external Audit be approved, as detailed in 3.12 of the agenda report, and that an update of the appointment of the external auditor via Public Sector Audit Appointments, would be bought to the next HSCCA meeting.

11. Responding to the Young People and Work Report

The Board considered the report which sought guidance as to how it wished to build the priority of young people and work into the terms of reference for the Employment and Skills Advisory board and in its work to develop the Local Growth Plan and Skills and Employment Strategy.

Members highlighted a range of interconnected issues affecting employment outcomes, including skills shortages, labour market demand and supply imbalances, rising youth unemployment, declining entry-level employment opportunities, increasing health-related barriers to work, and transport accessibility. Concern was also expressed regarding the visibility of vulnerable groups, including young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), care leavers, young people involved in the justice system, and those living in areas of significant deprivation.

The Board discussed the Combined County Authority's role in convening partners and improving collaboration across local authorities, the voluntary and community sector, education providers, employers, health partners and government agencies. Members emphasised the need for a more coherent and simplified system to support individuals into work and to better align employment, skills, health and transport interventions.

Councillor Madgwick left the meeting at 15:29

Several members stressed the importance of developing a robust evidence base before determining specific interventions and priorities. Suggestions included mapping existing provision, funding streams and partnership activity; improving data sharing and analysis; identifying examples of good practice; and considering place-based approaches to addressing deprivation and worklessness.

It was agreed to extend recommendation C to write to Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education Minister on issues relating to their aspirations and concerns for vulnerable young people and employment outcomes.

Councillor Madgwick returned to the meeting at 15:54

On the proposition of Councillor Adams-King, seconded by Councillor Bogle it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

a) that additional research and local analysis was required in order to respond to recommendation B on the agenda report;
b) that an invitation would be made to Alan Milburn and the research team asked to host a round table stakeholder discussion to inform and contribute to the development of the HSCCA Local Growth Plan and supplementary Skills and Employment Strategy; and
c) that a letter would be written to the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education Minister on issues relating to the Combined County Authority's aspirations and concerns for vulnerable young people and employment outcomes.

12. Calendar of meetings

The Board considered the report setting out a draft Committee Calendar for 2026/27 to accommodate existing scheduling clashes with activity in constituent councils and create a pattern of meetings designed to accommodate HSCCA business needs.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that the calendar of meetings for the rest of the 2026/27 Municipal Year as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the agenda report be approved.

Before closing the meeting, the Chair extended particular thanks to Devolution Programme Directors Munira Holloway and Clare Fuller for all their hard work and support throughout the process. He noted their patience, professionalism and willingness to assist, often dealing with a wide range of requests and queries, and thanked them for the significant contribution they had made.

MEETING CLOSED