WEST SUFFOLK COLLEGE

AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Extraordinary meeting

Minutes of the online meeting held on 24 June 2025 at 4pm

Present physically:	
Present virtually:	H Nydam, Committee member J Wakelam, WSC Governor, **Vice Chair** K Chapman, WSC Governor, **Chair** M Searcey, WSC Governor R Cannon, WSC Governor R Hetherington, WSC Governor
In attendance:	A Brewster, Group Head of Finance A McGarel, CFO L Carroll, Group Head of Project Accounting, Risk and Transformation N Savvas, CEO S Gales, Governance Professional
Apologies:	J Gazzard, WSC Governor P Frazer-Gale, Committee member
Absences:	

Action

1. **Declaration of Interests and Apologies for absence**

J Wakelam declared her role as a Trustee of Eastern Education Group Trust. No conflicts of interest in relation to the items of the agenda were declared.

Apologies were accepted from J Gazzard and P Frazer-Gale.

2. **Proposal to remove the net recharge cap on staffing RPT charges**

Members received and considered the paper provided which proposed the removal of the net recharge cap for related party services (RPT) between WSC and EEGT. The CFO explained the history of our intra-Group agreement for RPTs, the rationale for the proposed change and the DfE regulatory framework applying to RPTs.

The CEO explained that multi-academy trusts and colleges are both publicly funded by the DfE and share the same charitable purpose to further education for the benefit of our community and summarised the history of the Group's working with the DfE in relation to RPTs leading to the DfE amending their guidance to relax the approach for RPTs between multi-academy trusts and colleges.

Members reflected that while the existing WSC RPT agreement has made supported good financial management in the past, both the scale of Group growth and the introduction of the DfE agreement means it is sensible to consider adopting the DfE levels at this time. .

Members noted as both WSC and EEGT will continue to be independently audited and RPTs are reviewed through this process, then the Corporation will receive external assurance that RPT transactions do not breach DfE guidance. .

Members queried how we will monitor the RPT going forward to ensure ongoing value for money. The CFO explained that each year he presents a value for money report to this Committee for review, and every three years we re-agree the RPT agreement with EEGT and declare the RPT to the DfE.

Members discussed and **agreed to recommend** to the Corporation the removal of the internal recharge limit to EEGT from WSC, though **noted** continued adherence to RPTs within the DfE agreed limits.

3. **<u>Proposal to re-appoint RSM as External Auditors</u>**

Members received and considered the paper provided which outlined the outcome of the request for quote exercise and proposed the reappointment of RSM UK Ltd as the External Auditor for West Suffolk College.

Members discussed the small pool of qualified external auditors available to tender.

Members discussed the proposed term of reappointment.

Members queried whether RSM UK Ltd intend to change their terms. The CFO advised that the terms are comparable.

Members discussed the familiarity threat of reappointing RSM UK Ltd. The CFO noted that RSM UK Ltd are live to this risk and during our use of RSM UK Ltd they have changed our lead audit partner to respond to this threat.

Members discussed the College's relationships with RSM UK Ltd and with both the previous and current lead audit partner.

Members **agreed to recommend** to the Corporation the reappointment of RSM UK Ltd for an initial term of 36 months, with two potential 12-month permissible extensions.

4. **<u>Any Other Business</u>**

None.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm