

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 11 June 2025 at 2.30pm

Present physically: R Hetherington, WSC Governor

Present virtually: C Higgins, EEGT Trustee and WSC Governor (part)
D Wildridge, EEGT Trustee – **EEGT Vice Chair**
E D'Souza, EEGT Trustee and WSC Governor
K Chapman, WSC Governor
M Chatt, EEGT Trustee and WSC Governor – **Chair**
N Kellett, EEGT Trustee

In attendance: A McGarel, Chief Finance Officer
G Grainger, Chief Information Officer
J Clark, Regional Director – Primaries
L Carroll, Group Head of Project Accounting, Risk and Transformation (part)
L Moody, Group Principal – University and Professional Development (part)
N Hart, Group Head of Sustainability (part)
N Savvas, Chief Executive Officer
S Gales, Governance Professional
S Henty, HR Manager Wellbeing & Development (part)
S Hope, Group Director of Compliance

Apologies: A Duffety, EEGT Trustee and WSC Governor – **WSC Vice Chair**
A Swift, Group Director Estates
C Willcocks, Group Director IT
K Points, EEGT Trustee

Absent: R Murray, EEGT Trustee

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

Members recognised the standing declarations. No other conflicts of interest in relation to the items of the agenda were declared.

Apologies for absence were received from A Duffety and K Points. The absence of R Murray was noted.

2. **Minutes of the meetings held on 26 February and 7 March 2025**

Members reviewed and **agreed** the minutes of the meetings as accurate records.

3. **Matters arising from the meeting on 26 February and 7 March 2025**

Ten of the thirteen matters arising were complete, with three ongoing.

MA1 – L Carroll summarised the work underway to further develop the Risk Register. Members **agreed** to close this action as it better aligns to the Audit and Risk Management Committees.

MA3 – A Swift to bring detailed update next time.

MA11 – C Willcocks to update on this in his next report.

The Governance Professional informed that the two working groups (linked to MA10 and MA12) have been arranged and asked members who would like to join these to reach out to her.

The Chair queried when the Property Strategy will be presented. The CFO informed that he is meeting with Fusion who are working on the strategy next week and will be reviewed by the Executive in the early autumn term, in readiness for the Committee to review at its next meeting.

Action

Gov. Prof.

A Swift

CFO
A Swift

The Chair queried whether there are any policies for review/approve. The Governance Professional confirmed there are none.

The Chair reflected that at the last meeting we wanted to focus more time to discuss Sustainability, Health and Safety and Staff Development. The Chair suggested and members **agreed** to discuss these items first.

The agenda was discussed in this order: 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10.1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12.

4. **Risk Register Extract**

Members received and considered the paper provided which included 0 red, 8 amber and 4 yellow risks, and informed of the outcomes of recent internal audits relating to this Committees business.

L Carroll informed that the Audit and Risk Management Committees have asked that the Executive further consider the proposed new risk, so suggested this Committee do not discuss this.

L Carroll explained that EEG003 (relating to cyber security) remains on the risk register to reflect the prevalence of cyber security attacks impacting large businesses such as Marks and Spencer.

Members queried if the Group has a disaster recovery plan. L Carroll informed that the Group has a business continuity report which was recently audited with high levels of assurance. Members queried which Committee reviews this. L Carroll explained that the Audit and Risk Management Committee review the business continuity report and receive regular updates from the Incident Response team.

Members commended the risk radar and the progress of the team to improve oversight of risk across the Group.

Members discussed EEG016 (relating to transport links) and queried why the risk had increased. L Carroll explained that the increase was due to our plans to alter our transport routes, though noted that since this report was written the risk rating has decreased.

Members reviewed the risks and **felt assured** that the mitigations proposed were appropriate.

5. **Sustainability**

Members received and considered the papers provided, and N Hart summarised the key points.

C Higgins joined the meeting at 2.20pm

Members commended the strength of the approach and progress.

Members challenged the RAG rating of the first target relating to gathering of student and staff views given the comments seem contradictory. N Hart explained how these views will be gathered routinely in the new academic year.

Members queried whether the approach will be expanded to the schools next year. N Hart confirmed the intention to expand this to the primary and SEND schools.

Members asked future reports to attempt to quantify the financial impact/benefit of the sustainability minded investments.

Members reflected that we funded solar panels at all our colleges and queried when we will see the impact of these in lowering our emissions. N Hart noted that we are required to produce Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) to publicly

N Hart

disclose their energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions within their annual reports.

Members queried how we compare to other similar education groups. N Hart reflected that she is part of many networks with other education groups and noted there is varying engagement from other colleges. N Hart agreed to investigate how we compare to others in relation to the climate action roadmap for FE colleges and other appropriate comparable institutions, and if appropriate to seek out national recognition for the Group's progress in relation to sustainability.

N Hart.

Member commended N Hart on her leadership.

Members queried when we will move to the new sustainability targets. N Hart informed that we have achieved the emerging targets and in 2025/26 will report on progress against the established targets.

INFRASTRUCTURE

VIRTUAL INFRASTRUCTURE

6. **Data, Systems and Processes**

Members received and considered the paper provided which updated on progress since the last report on the various projects underpinning the five strategic themes of 'becoming digital, intuitive and efficient', 'automation of repetitive tasks', 'data-driven easy access to insights', 'optimised integration and infrastructure', and 'artificial intelligence mobilisation'; as well as updating on the return on investment of these project. The CIO summarised the key points.

Members queried if we are developing our bots with partners or by ourselves. The CIO informed we develop bots with partners and summarised the stages involved in scoping, design, testing, roll-out, etc. The CIO explained the areas where we are using bots to support our operations.

Members reflected that ineffective bots could impact our reputation and queried how we evaluate user feedback on the bots. The CIO explained how the team analyse usage and seek feedback, and how this informs future developments.

Members commended the return on investment summary within the paper, and suggested more work be done to develop this to reflect the hidden savings achieved by efficiencies and winding down old systems. The CIO to consider how best to quantify these.

CIO

Members praised the AI workshop at the Strategic Conference though queried how governance members, staff and students can be supported to continue to develop their confidence using AI. The CIO summarised how these sessions will be promoted to staff/governance members, and how the AI student-ambassadors will work with students. The CIO informed of plans to create an AI (executive) Board and invited members to join.

L Carroll left the meeting at 4.08pm

Members discussed the security implications of our hybrid solution to data storage onsite and on the cloud.

Members commended the roll out of MyEEG to staff and students and queried how this will be developed further. The CIO summarised his plans including a content/design review to respond to user voice and to embed AI tools.

Members requested to see the AI strategy once endorsed by the AI (executive) Board and suggested this be a substantive agenda item for the next meeting.

CIO
Gov. Prof.

Members queried if the savings identified in the paper have been incorporated as assumptions within the budget. The CFO explained that some have been.

7. **IT**

Members received and considered the paper provided which updated on cyber security, technical infrastructure, networking, data warehouses, integration and the transition to Windows 11. The CIO summarised the key points.

Members praised the team for the rapid progress integrating and supporting the SEND schools.

Members discussed the large-scale cyber security attacks at Marks and Spencer, and queried whether we feel have robust cyber security practices. The CIO explained how the IT team work risk-assess prior to integration, work to mitigate this risk and educate staff around safe IT practices.

Members asked for an update on our Cyber Security credentials at the next meeting.

Members discussed the progress on reducing the tech debt and the strategies being used to make informed decisions.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

8. **Estates and Property**

Members received and considered the paper provided which reported on unplanned repairs, outstanding issues, planned and preventative maintenance, service desk requests, asset maintenance, planned refurbishment, projects, and investment summary. The CFO summarised the key points.

Members discussed plans to develop SEND units at both Stanton Primary School and Exning Primary School.

The CFO explained that since this report was written there has been further progress on the ongoing actions.

Members discussed the complexity of reporting on day-to-day works vs. project works and asked the CFO to refine future reports to help the Committee identify any emerging concerns and to provide assurance about the estate maintenance.

Members discussed the planned relocation of the Ipswich learning centre and queried if this is an interim or long-term solution. The CFO explained there is a wider review of the learning centres linked to our Property Strategy and agreed to include an update on this in the next report.

COMPLIANCE

9. **Health and Safety**

i. Termly report (spring term)

Members received and considered the papers provided which analysed per school/college the accidents and incidents, fire compliance, risk assessments, educational visit compliance, audit and inspections, accessibility arrangements, workplace assessments, student medical assessments, incident management, health surveillance, updates on the copse and barrack wall at WSC, systems and software and staff training. S Hope summarised the key points.

Members discussed that it is expected that there are higher level of accidents and incidents at the primary and SEND schools due to the nature of their age, play and activities.

Members commended the thorough report.

Members queried how we work with staff to build a health and safety conscious culture whereby staff are proactive and accountable for health and safety. S Hope gave examples of how his team work with teams to nurture this culture.

C Willcocks

CFO
A Swift

CFO
A Swift

Members reflected that the SEND schools utilise offsite Alternative Provisions and queried how these provisions are risk assessed. The Governance Professional explained that this is reviewed as part of the auditing that the safeguarding teams do and is reported to the SEND Educational Excellence Committee.

Member reflected that the levels of accidents and incidents at the SEND schools are much higher than at the colleges and queried whether the recording methodology is comparable across the schools and colleges and asked how best to interpret the data. S Hope explained that the transition to the new medical tracker will help to better interpret the data and agreed to try to source appropriate sector benchmarks.

S Hope

Members queried whether the statutory health and safety testing has been completed. S Hope explained that these have been completed. Members asked future reports to include these.

S Hope
A Swift

Members reflected that the number of accidents and incidents compared to last year have significantly increased due to improved reporting, and queried if we feel this year's report is accurate enough to be the benchmark for future years. S Hope explained that reporting continues to improve and the culture has strengthened sufficiently for us to have confidence in the data.

L Moody and N Hart left the meeting at 3.10pm

PEOPLE

10. HR

People update

i. Termly KPI and EDI report (spring term)

Members received and considered the paper provided which analysed the workforce size, absence and sickness rates, staff turnover, pay and workforce structure, employee relations and casework, wellbeing activities and EDI analysis. The CPO summarised the key points.

Members queried what wellbeing activities and support will be offered next academic year. The CPO summarised the proposed offer for next year including the Kaido challenges.

ii. Absence and Health Management report

Members received and considered the paper provided which analysed long-term absences and staff with a Bradford factor exceeding 200, and explained the approach taken by the HR team to address these and support staff attendance. The CPO summarised the key points.

Members reflected that absences within the SEND schools are much higher than at our colleges and queried if this aligns to trends within the sector and if there are any benchmarks. The CPO explained that anecdotally there is a sense that attendance in the SEND sector is lower, however agreed to research appropriate benchmarks.

CPO

Members commended the impact of the interventions used to reduce absence.

iii. Training and Development report

Members received and considered the paper provided which updated on the training undertaken by business support staff, improvements to the development zone, attendance at License to Lead sessions, professional development day engagement and feedback, and mandatory training compliance. S Henty summarised the key points.

Members commended the roll out of MyEEG and the uptake of staff development courses.

Members queried whether primary and SEND school staff are able to access the Licence to Lead. S Henty confirmed that the intention is to roll this out to all managers across the Group.

The CEO and CPO informed that we are seeing the impact of the Licence to Lead whereby managers are developing the confidence to be more proactive in managing their teams and being empowered to self-serve e.g. develop their own marketing documents, arrange events, etc.

Members discussed that these programmes underpin to our ambition to grow our own staff.

S Henty left the meeting at 3.30pm

11. Policies

There were no policies requiring approval.

12. Any Other Business

None.

The meeting closed at 5.07pm