

AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 7 October 2025 at 4.30pm

Present physically: R Attwell, EEGT Trustee, **Chair**
R Inman, EEGT Trustee

Present virtually: D Bicker, EEGT Trustee
J Wakelam, EEGT Trustee, **Vice Chair**
J Wyn-Beer, Committee Member
P Frazer-Gale, Committee Member

In attendance: A Brewster, Group Director of Finance
A McGarel, CFO
B Pritchard, Scrutton Bland
J McDonnell, Trainee Clerk and EA to Governance Professional
L Carroll, Group Director of Risk
L Cox, Scrutton Bland
N Savvas, CEO (part)
S Gales, Governance Professional
S Hope, Group Director of Compliance and GDPR

Apologies: G Kerkham, Larking Gowen

Absent:

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

The Governance Professional informed that the Trust Board appointed R Attwell as Chair and J Wakelam as Vice Chair for 2025/26, at its meeting in July 2025.

2. Declaration of Interests and Apologies for absence

J Wakelam declared her role as a Governor of West Suffolk College, P Frazer-Gale declared his role as a member of West Suffolk College's Audit and Risk Management Committee. R Inman declared his role for Stone King LLP. Members discussed and recognised their standing declarations. No other conflicts of interest in relation to the items of the agenda were declared.

Apologies were received by G Kerkham.

The Chair welcomed J Wyn-Beer and B Pritchard to the Committee. Members introduced themselves.

3. Terms of Reference, Committee Skillset and Agenda Planner

Members received and considered the Terms of Reference, Committee Skillset and Agenda cycle provided.

The Governance Professional informed that, further to discussions at WSC's Audit and Risk Management Committee, review of the 'insurance report' is to be added to the agenda cycle for review at the first and third meeting. Members **agreed** this addition.

The Governance Professional proposed that an additional responsibility be added to the Terms of Reference relating to oversight of novel, contentious and/or repercussive transactions. Members discussed how to report on this and agreed that it would be ad hoc. Members **approved** this addition.

Members received, considered and **approved** the Terms of Reference, Committee Skillset and Agenda cycle provided, subject to the amendments above.

Action

Gov. Prof.

4. **Minutes of the meetings held on 17 and 24 June 2025**

The minutes of the meetings on 17 and 24 June 2025 were **agreed** as an accurate record.

5. **Matters Arising from meeting on 17 and 24 June 2025**

Five of the eight matters arising were complete, Scrutton Bland gave a verbal update on one item, one is ongoing and due to be reported at the next meeting, and one is ongoing but not due for reporting until later in the academic year.

MA1 – Scrutton Bland informed the new auditing standards do not apply

MA3 – L Carroll advised that, further to discussions at WSC's Audit and Risk Management Committee, risk EEG00X (relating to capacity) will be further reviewed.

6. **Risk Management Update**

The Risk Register currently includes **0 red, 16 amber, 9 yellow** risks, with one proposed new risk (EEG00X relating to capacity to implement planned improvements) and no proposed changes to risk names and/or scores.

Members discussed EEG020 (relating to cultural integration) and queried if there is a typo, e.g. should it be 2025/26, and whether there has been sufficient integration to underpin the downgrade from red to amber. L Carroll confirmed it is a typo and agreed to amend. The CEO confirmed that the SEND schools have significantly integrated into EEG and summarised the positive impact of EEG's support e.g. reduced staff absenteeism. The CEO welcomed members to visit the schools and feedback on their experience of the culture.

Members queried the calculation used to determine the risk score. L Carroll explained the financial and qualitative considerations used to evaluate the risk score.

Members discussed the difference between the Group and Trust risk register. The CFO to provide additional clarification to new members in separate meeting.

CFO

7. **Audit Recommendations Tracking Report**

Members received and considered the report provided which showed that of the 55 outstanding audit recommendations, 24 are due to be revisited during the Follow Up audits and 6 are considered complete by EEG.

8. **Internal Auditor's Findings Report**

i. **Progress Report:**

Members received and considered the reports and L Cox summarised the report.

L Cox highlighted their new audit charter. Members **noted** the new audit charter.

Members discussed the notable sector risks and queried if the risk of cyber-attacks is significant enough to warrant being added to the risk register. L Carroll confirmed that it is on the risk register and confirmed that our cyber-security lead will present on this at the next meeting. Members queried if we have a live cyber security and business continuity plans. L Carroll confirmed that we do and informed that our cyber security action plan will be shared at November meeting, with the business continuity plan shared at the February meeting.

9. **Incident Management Report and Insurance Cases**

Members received and considered the report provided and L Carroll summarised the two reports.

Members commended the strength of our incident management response team.

Members discussed the lockdown practice at the sixth form colleges and asked the next report to update on the practice. S Hope also invited members to observe the lockdown practice.

Members queried whether cyber security incidents are included within these incident management report. L Carroll explained they are not and are reported to the Resources Committee.

L Carroll informed that we have strengthened our approach to monitoring and reporting on insurance cases and S Hope noted that by strengthening our policies we also improve our evidence base for future claims.

Members queried how we monitor 'near misses' linked to accidents which could result in injury/insurance claim. S Hope summarised how we monitor and report near misses.

Members reflected that the insurance case report is new to this Committee and queried what prompted the new report and whether the levels of claims are consistent with previous levels or are emerging concerns. L Carroll explained that the new report is to provide better transparency into governance and reflects the higher levels of claims in the Trust following the merger with SENDAT. S Hope explained that before the merger, levels of insurance claims were low and were sufficiently overseen by the Health and Safety team and reported to the Resources Committee. However post-merger, we are making multiple changes to respond to the higher levels of incidents and accidents, to improve oversight and risk control. Members supported this approach and reflected that next academic year it will be possible to analyse trends.

Members discussed the employee injury claims and the liability levels.

The CFO explained the difference in the insurance cover between WSC and the Trust.

10. **GDPR Update**

Members received and considered the report provided and S Hope summarised the key information including the number, type and cause of data breach; as well as details of the subject-access requests and freedom of information requests received, and the overall staff completion rate of the mandatory GDPR training.

S Hope informed that the Trust has transferred from Schools Choice to GDPRiS to oversee reporting of GDPR.

S Hope informed that 77 SEND school staff members data (as was held by Intradev pre-merger for SENDAT) was exposed as part of the national single central record data breach. Members queried why post-merger our data was retained. S Hope explained that this is still being established with the lawyers. Members queried whether we have strong agreements with data controllers and data processors. S Hope confirmed that the Trust does, however we are establishing the agreements which SENDAT had in place pre-merger. Members asked for an update at the next report.

Members discussed the levels of Data Protection training and noted that while compliance at the sixth forms and professional services are high; levels at the SEND schools is too low. Members asked for an update on training compliance in February.

Members queried if the 'Licence to Lead' courses are mandatory for managers. S Hope confirmed that they are.

S Hope

The CEO left the meeting at 5.40pm

11. **Compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook 'musts'**

Members received and considered the report provided. The Governance Professional advised that row 24 is a typo and should say 'fully compliant', the comment links to our succession plans for governance members.

Members **noted** the report.

<p>12. <u>Policies</u></p> <p>i. EEG Whistleblowing Policy</p> <p>ii. EEG Risk Policy</p> <p>Members received and considered the above policies.</p> <p>S Hope advised that, further to discussions at WSC's Audit and Risk Management Committee, they requested that reference to ESFA be removed from section 7.1 of the EEG Whistleblowing Policy and that the policy be amended to reflect the procedure within section 15.4 of our EEG Financial Regulations for allegations concerning the CEO and/or Trust Board.</p> <p>Members discussed the EEG Whistleblowing Policy and whether our External Auditor's should be named as an additional disclosure route. S Hope to discuss with the CPO and, if appropriate, the External Auditor.</p> <p>S Hope advised that, further to discussions at WSC's Audit and Risk Management Committee, they requested that references in the EEG Risk Policy to EEG's four pillars, be updated to reflect our 2025-28 Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Members queried how the EEG Risk Policy relates to our risk appetite. Members agreed to discuss risk appetite at our February meeting.</p> <p>Members received, considered and approved the above policies, and recommend them to the Trust Board, subject to the amendments above.</p>	<p>S Hope</p> <p>S Hope</p> <p>L Carroll S Hope</p> <p>A&RMC L Carroll</p>
<p>13. <u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>- Detailed review of the Risk Register</p> <p>The Chair proposed and members agreed to convene an extraordinary meeting to consider the 2025/26 Risk Register. The Governance Professional to schedule.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 5.58pm</p>	<p>Gov. Prof.</p>