

## CORPORATION

### Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 9 July 2025 at 2.00pm

**Present physically:** E D'Souza, **Chair** (part)  
J Gazzard  
J Wakelam

K Chapman  
N Savvas, CEO (part)

**Present virtually:** A Duffety (part)  
C Chua (part)  
C Higgins, **Vice Chair** (part)  
M Chatt  
M Downes

M Searcey  
R Cannon  
R Hetherington  
S Howard (part)  
S Snowden

**In Attendance:** A McGarel, CFO (part)  
C Shaw, Principal Sixth Form Provision (part)  
G Grainger, Chief Information Officer (part)  
L Chapman, Regional Director - SEND (part)  
L Moody, Group Principal University and Professional Development (part)  
S Gales, Governance Professional (part)  
S Graham, Chief People Officer

**Apologies:** J Drake  
M Williams, Staff Governor  
S Daley, **Vice Chair**

### **Absent:**

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

A Duffety, C Higgins, E D'Souza, J Wakelam, M Chatt, and S Snowden declared their roles as Trustees of the Eastern Education Group Trust.

J Gazzard and S Howard declared their roles as a Member of the Eastern Education Group Trust.

N Savvas declared his role as CEO of Eastern Education Group Trust.

E D'Souza declared his role as a board reviewer for the Association of Colleges in relation to agenda item 6.6.

Apologies for absence were received from J Drake, M Williams and S Daley.

Members introduced themselves.

The Chair informed that there have been multiple news-worthy scandals in the sector which have led to DfE interventions and noted there is a paper in agenda item 6.6 providing more information on the lessons learned.

The Chair informed that agenda items 9 and 10 will switch order as the CEO, and 8.1 was last.

#### **2. Feedback from 'First Hand' activities**

Governors received and considered the First-Hand activity feedback from visits since March 2025 to the Group's schools and colleges.

J Wakelam and R Hetherington fed back on their visits and praised the professionalism of staff and the thoroughness of the College's quality assurance processes underpinning the Self-Assessment judgements.

### Action

K Chapman fed back on her attendance at the Celebration of Achievement event at the cathedral and praised the impact of the College on supporting students from all backgrounds to achieve.

The Chair fed back on his attendance of the EEG Staff Party and praised the positive staff culture.

**3. Minutes of the:**

- **Corporation meeting on 26 March 2025**
- **EEG Strategic Conference on 19 May 2025**
- **Extraordinary joint Corporation / Trust Board meeting on 2 June 2025**

The minutes of the Corporation meeting on 26 March 2025, the notes of the EEG Strategic Conference on 19 May 2025 and the minutes of the extraordinary joint Corporation / Trust Board meeting on 2 June 2025 were **agreed** as an accurate record.

**4. Matters Arising from meetings from the above meeting**

One of the two matters arising from the meetings were complete and one was closed.

**5. CEO's Briefing**

**5.1 EEG Highlights**

Governors received and considered the report which summarised student achievements, student development, trips and experiences, business and partnerships, shows and exhibitions, EDI, staff news, sustainability, and Group newsletters.

The CEO reflected that it had been a tremendously successful year which included being recognised, and graded by Ofsted, as Outstanding across all areas; celebrating the College turning 100; continued growth in student numbers and numerous student and staff successes.

The CEO reflected that as Group it had been a year of change, learning and integration after the six schools joined the Trust, and thanked Governors and Executive for their continued support of the College and the Group.

Governors discussed the 'thrive fest' event at UPDC and commended the focus on supporting students to volunteer and contribute to the community.

Governors discussed the importance of engaging students in wider issues to develop them as informed and rounded citizens and suggested this could be a future topic at one of the EEG Strategic Conference. The CEO and Chair to consider.

CEO  
Chair

**5.2 Strategic Update**

Governors received and considered the report which summarised key development in national policy and advocacy (including the immigration white paper and UK-wide college leaders letter), funding pay and growth (including 16-19 funding and pay, exceptional growth funding, pay negotiations, national insurance contributions grant, condition improvement fund, strategic priorities grant cuts, reallocation of funding, and DfE teacher pay award), looking ahead (including 2025/26 funding outlook), policy developments and regional impact (including apprenticeship reforms, construction skills funding, and skills England board), policy announcements and DfE updates (including DfE skills reform package, DfE attendance data, and other DfE updates), and other key updates (including mental health in FE, and EU-UK exchange programmes).

The CEO summarised the direction of national and local policy in development and outlined how we are positioning the Group to align and maximise potential opportunities.

Governors queried the anticipated impact of the apprenticeship reforms. The CEO explained the rationale for reforms and confirmed they will likely have minimal impact for the College.

Governors queried whether we have applied to run a construction Technical Excellence College. The CEO confirmed that we have and are awaiting the outcome.

Governors discussed speculation that as part of the SEND reforms the government will look to remove ECHPs and queried the anticipated impact. The CEO explained that this it has not been confirmed, would likely face significant opposition, and any change would be implemented over

a number of years; so advised that it is hard to gauge the impact. The CEO explained that we have strong relationships with the Local Authorities which oversee SEND education and strong experience within the College and Group in leading Outstanding SEND education, so we feel confident that we could readily adapt to any changing policy.

Governors commended the clarity of the report and the 'what this means for schools and colleges' section and requested that future reports follow this format.

### 5.3 EEG Strategic Plan 2025-28

Governors received and considered the final draft of the EEG Strategic Plan – which had a vision of 'transforming lives through the power of exceptional education that ignites potential and drives prosperity for all' with strategic pillars: our Learners, our Team, our Communities and our Infrastructure – and continued our strategy to operate as 'one organisation, multiple locations'.

Governors commended the improved version and use of the 'we promise', 'we provide', and 'we deliver'.

Governors identified a typo on page 4 and asked the CEO to amend.

Governors queried whether the EEG Strategic Plan has been shared with stakeholders. The CEO explained that it will be shared with stakeholders over the coming weeks and L Moody informed that we shared a draft with HE students, and their comments were incorporated into this version.

The CEO explained that we plan to continue to review and finesse the EEG Strategic Plan as required to ensure it remains a live and relevant document.

Governors **approved** the EEG Strategic Plan 2025-28, subject to a final proofreading.

L Chapman left the meeting at 2.45pm

## 6. Committee Chair's Summary Reports

### 6.1. EEG Post-16 Educational Excellence Committee Overview

Governors received and considered the report provided which summarised the discussions and recommendations of the Committee meetings in the Summer Term.

The Committee considered the first-hand feedback from visits to the college and the risk register extract, reviewed progress against the quality improvement plan and updates in regard to student welfare, safeguarding and student support. The Committee considered reports and KPIs relating to monitoring student experience and progress of sixth form, adult, electively home educated, and high needs students, as well as reports relating to curriculum development including the accountability agreement, enrichment, careers, work experience, community engagement, teacher/staff development, quality, and complaints and compliments. The Committee also reviewed and recommended policies in agenda item 7.

J Wakelam, as Committee Vice Chair, summarised the discussions by the Committee and noted they have focussed on improving attendance, monitoring progress and attainment particularly for vulnerable students, continuous professional development for staff, and continued embedding of sustainability into the curriculum.

C Shaw informed that the impact has been improved attendance and advised that we forecast student outcomes to be strong. C Shaw praised and thanked the Committee for their robust and supportive challenge.

Governors discussed the data for high needs students and queried why our forecast achievement is significantly above the national average. C Shaw explained this is a result of the extensive support offered to students.

#### 6.1.1 Safeguarding Termly Report

Governors received and **noted** the termly report which was scrutinised by the Committee.

CEO

CEO

C Shaw explained the anticipated impact of new government Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, particularly in relation to Prevent.

J Wakelam, as Governance Lead for Safeguarding, praised the safeguarding team.

## **6.2. WSC Apprenticeship and HE Educational Excellence Committee Overview**

Governors received and considered the report provided which summarised the discussions and recommendations of the Committee meeting in the Summer Term.

The Committee considered the first-hand feedback from visits to the college and the risk register extract, reviewed and recommend the HE growth strategy. The Committee considered reports and KPIs relating to monitoring student experience and progress of apprenticeship and HE students, as well as reports relating to curriculum development including the teacher/staff development, and quality including complaints and compliments. The Committee also reviewed and recommended policies in agenda item 7.

C Chua, as Committee Chair, summarised the discussions by the Committee and noted that the expanded remit this year has been successful and explained that apprenticeships is performing well and, while there continue to be concerns about viability of our HE student numbers, the introduction of the HE growth strategy should address this. C Chua commended the continued improvements of the HE curriculum, particularly in counselling.

Governors commended the clarity of the HE growth strategy and thanked the Executive for drafting it. The Executive thanked Governors for their continued and robust supportive challenge.

### **6.2.1 HE Growth Strategy**

Governors received and **approved** the strategy which was reviewed and recommended by the Committee.

Governors queried whether there is opportunity to offer a PGCE qualification and to market this externally. L Moody confirmed that this is the intention and noted it underpins our Group ambition / strategy to 'grow our own' staff.

Governors discussed the financial challenges impacting the university sector and the opportunity for the College, given its strong employer links, to meet local skills needs and provide accessible flexible HE courses for our community.

Governors queried whether this strategy would help us be more agile to meet emerging local need. C Chua advised that there are lead times for creating new and closing old HE courses, however advised that the clarity of the strategy would help us focus resources on specific areas.

## **6.3. EEG Resources Committee Overview**

Governors received and considered the report provided which summarised the discussions and recommendations of the Committee meeting in the Summer Term.

The Committee considered the risk register extract and received updates on people (including key performance indicators for HR and wellbeing), compliance (including the termly health and safety report), virtual infrastructure (including a data, systems and processes, and IT update) and physical infrastructure (including estates and property, and a sustainability update).

M Chatt, as Committee Chair, summarised the discussions by the Committee and noted that regarding staffing - staff turnover remains low, significant support is provided to staff to reduce staff absence and support staff wellbeing. M Chatt reflected that significant work is underway to develop the Group's AI strategy and has taken place to support integration and cohesion of the Group. M Chatt informed that the Committee discussed our cyber security and the developments to the estate including room moves and refurbishments in readiness for the new academic year.

Governors commended Nina Hart for her leadership of sustainability across the Group.

L Moody informed that works are progressing well in relation to developing UPD utilising Gene Haas Foundation funding.

Governors reflected that the Group Committee has been very effective in reducing workload though queried if the support of / focus on the College has been reduced by the Committee's wider remit. M Chatt reflected that the Committee remains live to this risk. The CEO explained that the Group Committee underpins our Group strategy and, while there may have been some delays this year as a result of onboarding the six schools into the Group, we continue to progress and improve our people and infrastructure to the benefit of the College.

#### 6.3.1 Health and Safety Termly Report

Governors received and **noted** the termly report which was scrutinised by the Committee.

C Higgins, as Governance lead for Health and Safety, and Governors commended the Health and Safety team for their thorough approach.

#### 6.3.2 Annual Sustainability Report

Governors received and **noted** the annual report.

S Howard left the meeting at 4.20pm

### 6.4. EEG Finance Committee Overview

Governors received and considered the report provided which summarised the discussions at and recommendations of the Committee meetings in the Summer Term.

The Committee considered the risk register extract and scrutinised the monthly financial accounts and KPI reports, as well as reports analysing enrolments and applications, updates relating to capital projects and the proposed budget assumptions. The Committee reviewed and recommended the 2025/26 budget and KPIs and 3 Year Financial Forecast, the EEG Financial Regulations and the subcontracting arrangements for 2025/26. The Committee also reviewed and recommended policies in agenda item 7.

A Duffety, as Committee Chair, summarised the discussions by the Committee and explained that the Committee rigorously reviewed the financial performance this academic year and assumptions underpinning the budgets for future academic years. A Duffety noted that the College is likely to achieve either Good or Outstanding as its DfE Financial Health grade.

A Duffety reflected that this was the first term of operating as a Group Committee and thanked the Executive for the quality of information, and the Committee for their robust supportive challenge. A Duffety explained that the new financial KPIs reflect the Committee's challenge and should provide additional clarity and insights for the Corporation.

A Duffety commended the strength of the student number forecasting which underpins the budgetary assumptions, and the developing of risks / opportunities sections to explain the sensitivity of the budget.

The CFO explained the impact of the staff pay uplift to the budget.

#### 6.4.1 2025/26 Budget and KPIs, and 3-Year Financial Forecast

Governors received, considered and **approved** the 2025/26 Budget and KPIs, and 3-Year Financial Forecast which was reviewed and recommended by the Committee.

#### 6.4.2 Financial Regulations

Governors received, considered and **approved** the 2025/26 Financial Regulations which was reviewed and recommended by the Committee.

#### 6.4.3 2025/26 Subcontracting Arrangements

Governors received, considered and **approved** the 2025/26 Subcontracting Arrangements which was reviewed and recommended by the Committee.

### 6.5. WSC Audit and Risk Management Overview

Governors received and considered the report provided which summarised the discussions at and recommendations of the Committee meetings in the Summer Term.

The Committee considered the findings reports of the internal auditors so far in 2024/25 and reviewed the Executive's audit recommendation tracking report to monitor implementation progress. The Committee received updates regarding GDPR, subject access requests, freedom of information and data breaches to ensure proper process was followed and effective measures put in place to lessen the risk to the organisation. The Committee scrutinised the Risk Register to ensure that pertinent risks were identified, and that appropriate and effective mitigations were in place to minimise risk; and recommends the Risk Register to the Board. The Committee also reviewed and recommended the appointment of external auditors, both the internal and auditors plans of work for 2025/26 and the amendment to our RPT agreement with EEGT.

K Chapman, as Chair of the Committee, summarised the discussions by the Committee and reflected that there has been significant progress this year towards our Group approach to risk management; to highlight the impact of the risk and the development of the heat map helps explain the risk context aligned to our Group strategy. K Chapman commended the improved timeliness of implementing audit recommendations.

Governors commended Louise Carroll for her leadership of audit and risk across the Group, and the introduction of the Incident Management Group report.

#### 6.5.1 Risk Register

Governors received and **noted** the Risk Register.

#### 6.5.2 Internal Auditor's plan of works for 2025/26

Governors received, considered and **approved** the 2025/26 Internal Audit plan of works which was reviewed and recommended by the Committee.

#### 6.5.3 Appointment of External Auditors

Governors **agreed** to reappoint RSM UK Ltd as External Auditors for an initial term of 36 months, with two potential 12-month permissible extensions.

Governors discussed the tenure of RSM UK Ltd and the familiarity risk. K Chapman confirmed that this was discussed and challenged by the Committee. The CFO explained that RSM are live to this risk and recently changed our lead audit partner, and noted that the tender process was open to other providers, however RSM were deemed to be the most appropriately qualified firm.

#### 6.5.4 External Auditor's plan of works for 2025/26

Governors received, considered and **approved** the 2025/26 External Audit plan of works which was reviewed and recommended by the Committee.

#### 6.5.5 Amendment to our related party transaction agreement with EEGT

Governors **agreed** to remove the internal recharge limit to EEGT from WSC within our RPT agreement with EEGT.

### 6.6 **EEG Nominations and Governance Overview**

Governors received and considered the report provided which summarised the discussions at and recommendations of the Committee meetings in the Summer Term.

The Committee reviewed and recommended the membership of the Group's governance including the constitution and committee membership, discussed the feedback from the 2024/25 internal review of governance including the results of the surveys and lessons learned from DfE interventions, discussed and recommend the proposed 2025/26 governance structure including the governance meeting schedule, and discussed and recommend the updated governance documentation. The Committee also discussed and recommended the scope, format, timings and provider of the external review of governance due to be completed in 2025/26.

Governors **noted** the appointment of Ruby-Rose Head as Student Governor as elected by students of WSC.

Governors **noted** the resignation of Lisa Ireland and removal of Rachael Holden as members of the EEG Post-16 Educational Excellence Committee.



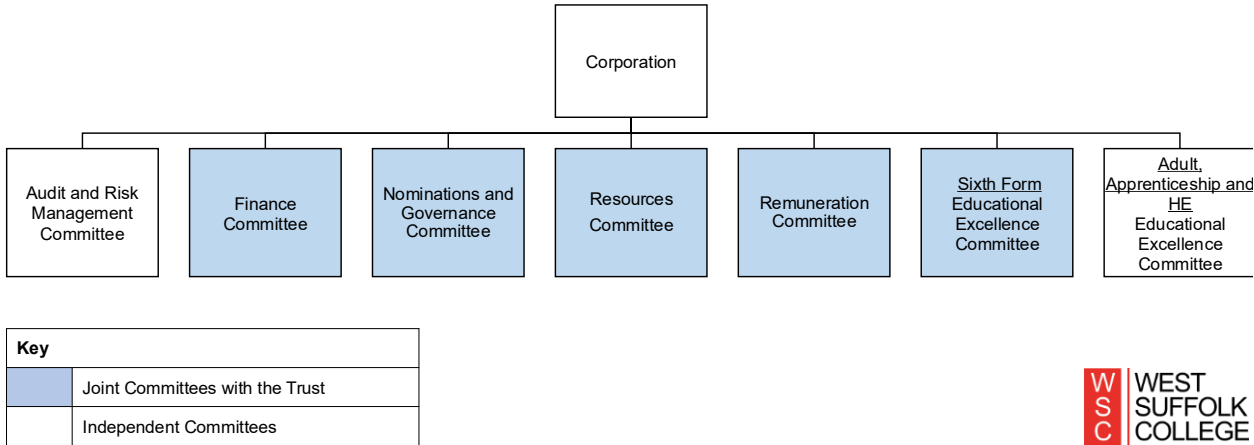
6.6.1 Internal Review of Governance for 2024/25  
Governors considered and **approved** the annual internal governance review for 2024/25.

Governors considered and **approved** the governance action plan for 2025/26.

6.6.2 Governance Structure for 2025/26  
Governors considered and **agreed** to establish the Adult, Apprenticeship and HE Educational Excellence Committee as described.

Governors **authorised** the Governance Professional to amend the Sixth Form Educational Excellence Committee’s terms of reference accordingly (e.g. remove reference to adult) and Safeguarding Lead role descriptions (to make EEG sixth form and WSC adult, apprenticeship and HE).

Governors **agreed** the below governance structure for 2025/26:



Governors considered and **agreed** to reappoint Henry Nydam for a 1-year term of office serving on the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

Governors considered and **agreed** to reappoint Helen Arnold for a 1-year term of office serving on the Adult, Apprenticeship and HE Educational Excellence Committee.

Governors considered and **agreed** to reappoint Sarah Howard for a 1-year term of office as a Governor serving on the Nominations and Governance Committee and Remuneration Committee, and acting as WSC’s representative EEGT Member.

[The Chair declared his interest and did not participate in the discussion of vote relating the appointment of external board reviewer](#)

Governors considered and **agreed** to appoint Rob Lawson (AoC) to conduct the external board review in 2025/26 and **agreed** the proposal, scope and survey questions.

Governors **appointed** Sue Daley as Chair and Julia Wakelam as Vice Chair of EEG Sixth Form Educational Excellence Committee, Conrad Chua as Chair and Mark Searcey as Vice Chair of the WSC Adult, Apprenticeship and HE Educational Excellence Committee, Karen Chapman as Chair and Julia Wakelam as Vice Chair of the WSC Audit and Risk Management Committee, Alexandra Duffety as Chair and Jenny Drake as Vice Chair of the EEG Finance Committee, Elton D’Souza as Chair and Chris Higgins as Vice Chair of the EEG Nominations and Governance Committee, Sarah Howard as Chair and Sue Daley as Vice Chair of the EEG Remuneration Committee, and Martin Chatt as Chair and Alexandra Duffety as Vice Chair of the EEG Resources Committee for 2025/26.

Governors **agreed** the Terms of Reference and Committee Skillsets for 2025/26.

Governors **appointed** Sue Daley as EEG Governance lead for Careers Education and Guidance, Julia Wakelam as EEG Governance lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Chris Higgins as EEG Governance lead for Health and Safety, Karen Chapman as WSC Governor

lead for People, Julia Wakelam as EEG Governance lead for Safeguarding (sixth form), Mark Searcey as WSC Governor lead for Safeguarding (UPD), Conrad Chua as WSC Governor lead for Skills, Sue Snowden as EEG Governance lead for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Julia Wakelam as EEG Governance lead for Sustainability, and Karen Chapman as WSC Governor lead for Whistleblowing (linked to her role as Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee).

#### 6.6.3 Updated Governance Documentation

Governors received, considered and **approved** the WSC Appointment and Term of Office Policy, WSC Code of Conduct, WSC Conflicts of Interest Policy and EEG/WSC Governance Role Descriptors.

E D'Souza and C Higgins left the meeting at 4.55pm. The Governance Professional acted as chair for the vote.

#### 6.6.4 Election of Corporation Chair/Vice Chairs

Governors **elected** Elton D'Souza as Chair, and Chris Higgins and Sue Daley as Vice Chairs serving a 4-year term of office.

E D'Souza and C Higgins rejoined the meeting at 4.56pm.

#### 6.6.5 Updated DfE guidance and Letters from DfE

Governors considered and **noted** the updated guidance and letters from the DfE.

### 7. Policies

Governors received, considered and **approved** the EEG Careers policy, EEG Careers strategy, and EEG Student code of conduct and behaviour policy which were reviewed and recommended by the EEG Post-16 Educational Excellence Committee.

Governors received, considered and **approved** the US Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Policy, US Academic Appeals and Complaints Regulations, US Assessment Regulations policy, US Attendance and Course Engagement policy, US Extenuating Circumstances policy, US HE General Terms and Conditions inc. Tuition Fee policy, US Reasonable Adjustments policy, and US Submission of work for assessment policy which were reviewed and recommended by the WSC Apprenticeship and HE Educational Excellence Committee.

Governors received, considered and **approved** the EEG Bursary Policy which was reviewed and recommended by the EEG Finance Committee.

### 8. Any Other Business

#### 8.1 Review of the meeting

The Chair apologised that the meeting over-ran and sought feedback from Governors on areas to improve. Governors fed back that the reports were well written and presented, and the meeting was effective.

#### 8.2 Welcome back talks to staff

The Chair invited Governors to attend the welcome back talks at the start of autumn )term.

C Higgins, the CFO, the CIO, Governance Professional, C Shaw and L Moody left the meeting at 5.00pm

**Confidential items**

The meeting closed at 5.52pm