

Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on Friday 17th July 2020 (via Microsoft Teams) at 8.30am

Present:	Jeremy Cartwright, Chair Denise Brown, Principal & CEO David Boughey David Rogers Steve Sawbridge Julie Obada Pritpal Singh Nagi Sibgha Amin Jo Mountney Andrew McKay Stephanie Talbot Rob Fisher Sue Blake (until 10.30am) Dave Hopley		
In Attendance:	Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation Antoinette Lythgoe, Chief Financial Officer Peter Sherry, Managing Director Commercial		
Min. No.		Action By Whom	Action By When
1	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST		
	The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interest that they may have on matters to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.		
2	WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE		
	Apologies for absence were received from Jason Lancaster, Georgia Fletcher and Rhiannon Buccheri.		
3	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15TH MAY 2020		
	The minutes were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record of discussions. AGREED: to approve as presented the minutes of the meeting		

Signed :  Chair
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	held on 15 th May 2020. There were no matters arising.		
4	ACTION PROGRESS REPORT		
	The Board considered the updated document and agreed that line one could now be removed as it is embedded. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.		
5	SUB-CONTRACTING POLICY 2020/21		
	<p>The Managing Director Commercial introduced this item and confirmed that, as good practice requires, the policy is reviewed on an annual basis. Key matters that he brought to the Boards attention were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 4 – this details the operational controls and makes reference to the new operational guidance document issued to the sector. It explains the differences between sub-contracting, partnerships, commercial collaborations etc. <p>He advised that the College was just awaiting finalisation of an updated contract for each sub-contractor from Eversheds, following the new ESF guidance received, and then the College will have a comprehensive pack in place including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy • Operational guide • Marketing document for 2020/21 <p>He expressed the view that the updated documentation gives greater clarity regarding how each area fits within the Commercial strategy and he explained that it was best practice to have these documents in place.</p> <p>Additional aspects considered were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 3 – this makes reference to ‘standard management fees’ – he explained that 20% is the norm but that this can increase if the College is providing services over and above the ‘norm’. • Page 4, section 7 makes it clear that all areas of the College are involved in the activity and this makes it a real link between Quality, MIS etc. • Page 5, section 10 – the Board were advised that staff are currently working on the Procurement policy to ensure there is clarity and comprehensive guidance. • Pages 6, 7 and 8 cover the intervention strategy, prevent and rationale for using sub-contractors. He confirmed that there was more detail in relation to this in the marketing document. 		

Signed : _____ Chair
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	<p>A question and challenge from the Board was in terms of where the College obtains external assurance regarding the sub-contracting arrangements. The Board were advised that the College's Internal Auditors, ICCA, have been commissioned to complete a review and the Internal Audit fieldwork will take place in the next couple of weeks. It was confirmed that a compliance report following this audit will be presented to the next meeting of the Audit Committee. The Board were advised that a partnership review has also just taken place by an external consultant and a detailed report provided (17 pages). It was again agreed that a copy of this report would be presented to the Audit Committee.</p> <p>In relation to the partnership review, the Board asked whether there were any surprises. The Managing Director Commercial confirmed that the recommendations made were sensible and accepted, particularly in relation to the clearer guidance required between the three models. He expressed the view that it is good practice to have Eversheds review the contracts, particularly in relation to partnerships, as these are an important part of delivery.</p> <p>In considering the policy, a challenge from the Board was to ensure that it is a live policy that will drive behaviours. The Managing Director Commercial confirmed that guidance documents would be completed after Eversheds have finalised the three contracts and it was noted that it is likely to be another three weeks before the contracts are finalised.</p> <p>One member of the Board asked whether there were any contracts that the College was looking to establish in the next few months. It was confirmed that there are and the advice is to line the contracts up but only execute once the updated documents are provided by Eversheds.</p> <p>One member of the Board asked what the process would be for moving away from 'the norm' in terms of the management fees. It was confirmed that this would require approval from the Managing Director Commercial or the Principal. It was confirmed that contracts are negotiated by the Managing Director Commercial but are not signed by him to ensure that there are appropriate checks and balances in place.</p> <p>AGREED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) to note the content of the update provided b) approve the Sub-contracting Policy 2020/21 as presented. <p>(Peter Sherry left the meeting at 8.55am)</p>	<p>Managing Director Commercial</p> <p>Managing Director Commercial</p>	<p>Nov. 2020</p> <p>Nov. 2020</p>
6	COVID-19 OPERATIONAL UPDATE		

The Principal introduced this item and key matters brought to the Boards attention were:

- Regular keep in touch meetings have taken place between the College and Committee Chairs
- There was a College meeting with the ESFA yesterday where re-opening was considered. Key aspects debated were:
 - Curriculum and the difficulties of maintaining 2 metre distances in classes rather than 1 metre. The College is unable to run groups as normal without dividing in to two and is therefore going to offer provision on a one week on, one week off (remote learning) basis. The concern is the potential impact that this may have upon retention and attendance.
 - Mitigation is to improve the quality and quantity of online delivery. The College is buying additional laptops and dongles for the vulnerable students.
 - Curriculum will be severely disrupted
 - Trade Unions are concerned that this could put extra pressure on teachers and, to try and mitigate this, the College is looking to enhance the offer via recorded delivery. Trade Unions feel that there will be pressure on staff to complete delivery with only half of the time available. The College has undertaken to work with UCU to provide the best facilities possible for learners.
 - Managing the environment is a focus. There will be handfuls of students on site to complete assessments and student behaviours will need to be managed to ensure guidelines are complied with. The College will put on an education programme and extra staff to monitor and manage this. Originally, it is envisaged that it will be a labour intensive process to ensure compliance until the new expectations are really embedded.
 - Still no requirement to have face coverings; however, this may be mandated as a requirement by the government in September.
 - The College continues to check compliance in relation to DfE guidelines. The College has to be sure that it has sufficient risk assessments in place and full communication regarding these. The intention is to make them available on the website.
 - Staff have returned to work from the 5th July. Staff are gradually returning but not everyone is expected to be on site. There are some areas that are still on skeleton staffing and the senior team have left it to the local departments to determine requirements.
 - The College is using remote activities to support student recruitment. There was a very well attended online parents evening, with 110 attendees for the first session run. The College will also be providing

online induction and 'find your feet' activities.

A challenge from the Board was that the College could have the best plans in place; however, the key is compliance, both in terms of students and staff. The Principal expressed the view that it is more likely that students will be the issue and that, to try and minimise this, there will be a specific induction programme in place to support.

A question from the Board was in terms of parental engagement with virtual events. Staff advised that statistics so far are positive and that the College is leading on this and is therefore making a good start. The virtual parents' evenings have had a much greater attendance level than is normally the case and therefore the College will probably continue with these in any event. It was acknowledged that this is an area where COVID is likely to change operational arrangements for the better going forward.

A question from one member of the Board was whether or not the College was providing the same offer to 'keep warm' employers. The Principal advised that the College has not yet had a collective event; however, Zoom meetings on a one to one have taken place with employers regarding individual apprentices. The Board encouraged wider dialogue with employers given the comparisons and challenges regarding the management of social distancing. The Principal expressed the view that the most significant challenge is the one-way systems introduced and compliance in relation to this.

One member of the Board made reference to the COVID testing centres and particularly how regimented they are. All agreed that, in the early days of return to site, the College was likely to have to go above and beyond to get the message across. The Chief Financial Officer indicated that the cost of additional resource to manage this has not been built in to the 2020/21 budget and that this needs to be a specific addition, as otherwise it will be left to existing staff to manage and they simply don't have the capacity.

The Board questioned the issue of capacity and asked whether it was staff or space that was the issue. The Principal confirmed that this has initially been looked at from a space perspective but indicated that, if the College had all the space in the world, it would not have enough staff to provide for the number of groups that would exist.

The Board asked whether there was an option to utilise J Block and also questioned what impact the change in arrangements would have on space utilisation calculations. The Principal confirmed that the FE Commissioner and the ESFA have acknowledged that it would not be reasonable to measure space

	<p>utilisation at the next visit. A challenge from the Board was 'what if' – i.e. if we took away the restraint/constraint, what would it mean and what would the College require. The Principal indicated that 50% of the Colleges staff costs relate to teaching, which equals £6 million; therefore, if there were no constraints regarding the estate, there would be a significant impact on finances in terms of actually trying to staff the offer. It was confirmed that there is no specific additional funding available to the sector per learner to facilitate social distancing. The Board were reminded that the College is deliberately moving to online delivery, as it is felt that this will facilitate better attendance. The key is providing a good quality experience without adding to the cost base.</p> <p>One member of the Board noted that the local authority and the LEP have COVID recovery groups in place. The College could submit an 'ask' and this might lead to either funding or flexibilities in policy. It was felt that this may require a collaborative approach with other Colleges in the area. It was noted that Opportunity Area funding is also available and could help with English and maths.</p> <p>The Principal confirmed that the Association of Staffordshire Colleges are working together and have asked for a meeting with the LEP; however, this has not yet been organised. A suggestion made was to brainstorm in terms of what information may be best received by the LEP e.g. long-term impact of lost learning. The Board expressed the view that the education strategy has to fall within the economic strategy. The area is waiting for this to evolve and it was agreed that it was important for the College to be part of the debate.</p> <p>An observation made by one member of the Board was that the pattern of the future was likely to be one of local lockdowns and they asked whether the College would be able to respond to this. The Principal confirmed that the College would be able to respond and that there is a policy in place to deal with a COVID-19 outbreak. She confirmed that there is an internal 'cobra like' group and she invited one Governor to be involved in this. Part of the remit of the group is to meet to agree next steps. This is intended to be a highly responsive group in situ, which can respond quickly. Volunteers identified at the meeting were Jo Mountney, Julie Obada, Jeremy Cartwright and Sue Blake. Julie Obada also made a recommendation regarding a public health link; this was Peta Kerney.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
7	TRANSFORMATION, FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE CHAIRS REPORT		
	The Committee Chair drew Governors attention to his summary		

presentation slides and the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2020. He expressed thanks to his colleagues on the Committee and indicated that there was nothing to be presented from the Committee to Board for approval today.

In terms of the 'here and now' it was confirmed that:

- Improved forecasts for the end of 2019/20
- Cash position remains strong
- Credit to the cost controls in place which give assurance
- Detailed discussions took place regarding 2020/21 budget planning and particularly the assumptions made. It was acknowledged that revenue is the most unpredictable element in the current circumstances.
- It is pleasing to see that there is good pursuance of opportunities, as well as mitigating challenges
- There remain challenges regarding the estate. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that, in relation to Health and Safety electrical testing, this has now been resolved and all certificates are in place.
- CCTV was discussed in detail at the meeting and the Chief Financial Officer advised that costs escalated following discussions and therefore this has been put to one side for now.

In relation to the 'medium term', aspects considered were:

- Apprenticeship provision and the uncertainties that currently exist and will continue to exist in 2020/21
- Commercial activities – there are opportunities as well as risks
- Digital strategy – all agreed that this was impressive and it was pleasing to see that what is proposed is more than a financial investment and in fact involves a change in culture. The Chief Financial Officer informed the Board that, unfortunately, the Director of IT has now resigned.
- J Block – the Committee were reassured regarding the valuation provided

Identified risks are:

- Revenue generation
- The need for effective marketing
- Replacement of the Director of IT and it was confirmed that the College was now actively looking to recruit to replace. It was confirmed that his notice period is 3 months, which takes his end of employment to the end of September. The Board asked whether there were likely to be any negative impacts on the projects currently underway. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the team will be able to conclude the network core project which is underway.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

<p>8</p>	<p>MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – MAY 2020</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer introduced this item and explained that, whilst the team were currently working on the June accounts, they were not yet finalised. Key matters that she brought to the Boards attention from the Management Accounts were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong cash • Income is good • Costs under control • Page 6 details the projected outturn, which is broadly in line with budget. £360k deficit forecast anticipated but with strong cash. <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
<p>9</p>	<p>BUDGET 2020/21</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer introduced her detailed report and drew Governors attention to the key highlights summary, which were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College’s financial health is forecast to improve from ‘Requires Improvement’ in the original plan to ‘Outstanding’ in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. • The College is confident that all bank and PMO covenants will be met. • All FE Commissioner benchmarks will be achieved, other than the operating surplus as a percentage of income where the target is 3-5%. • The forecast operating deficit for 2020/21 is £801k including £812k of FRS102 costs (2021/22 deficit is £721k including FRS102 costs of £812k); however, 2020/21 EBITDA is positive at £1,273k (2021/22 EBITDA is £1,403k). • Income has reduced in 2020/21 by £877k overall when compared to the IFMC January 2020 plan due mainly to reductions in anticipated Apprenticeship funding of £476k and tuition fee and education contracts income of £807k; however, 16-18 income has increased by £453k. • Staff costs have decreased by £333k in 2020/21 compared to the January IFMC due in part to the removal of the Foundation Bridge provision and Performing Arts sub-contracting. • The budget does not include any pay award in 2020/21 or address the requirements of the Pay strategy at the present time. The 2021/22 forecast includes a pay award of 1%. • The staffing budget includes the current established staff plus unfilled vacancies in support of the curriculum planning process. Unfilled vacancies of c.£600k are in the process of being filled subject to successful student 		

	<p>enrolment in September 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff costs (excluding restructuring and FRS102) as a percentage of income are 64.1% in 2020/21 and increase to 64.4% in the following year. • Non-pay costs of £5.8m are included in the budget. This represents a reduction of £584k compared to the January IFMC forecast for 2020/21. This is due to a 5% efficiency target reduction and elimination of one-off costs. 2021/22 non-pay costs are anticipated to reduce to £5.73m. • Capital expenditure from the College's own resources in 2020/21 has been assumed to be £400k. This level of capital expenditure is lower than required but is subject to negotiation with the PMO • It is possible that additional Government funding will be received in the year but this has not been included in the budget. The College has assumed that the £400k limit will be renegotiated upwards in 2021/22 and has therefore planned capital expenditure of £600k in that year. • The balance sheet has been reforecast for each year and significant working capital movements have been reflected. • The cash balance at the end of July 2021 is now forecast to be £3.134m. The adjusted expenditure cash days in hand is 59 (2021/22 is 62). The FE Commissioner benchmark is a minimum of 25 days. • The Adjusted Current Ratio for 2020/21 is 2.18 (2021/22 is 2.28). • Borrowings as a percentage of income remain at no more than 16.5% for 2020/21 and 2021/22. The FE Commissioner benchmark is that borrowings as a percentage of income should be no more than 40%. • Sensitivity analysis has been completed and is included in the appendices. <p>In general discussion she confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation regarding additional government funding for capital. It is believed that these will be ringfenced and therefore the College will have £400k plus this element. • Sensitivity analysis includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No pay award for 2020/21; however, 1% is included for 2021/22. The ambition is to consolidate this pay award. - 2019/20 pay award has been implemented early; this is in July 2020 rather than waiting until January 2021 after conclusion of the final accounts. - 1% = £120k - There may be more opportunities now to include an amount for 2020/21 but it is not currently included within the budget 		
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A challenge from one member of the Board was that the sensitivity analysis provided was limited and they asked what stress testing has been completed. The Chief Financial Officer provided assurance that significant testing has taken place, particularly at Executive Board, where key aspects considered were:

- Apprenticeship delivery
- AEB
- Recruitment (staff)
- Student numbers
- Costs – she confirmed that she had met with every budget holder

She expressed the view that a thorough review had been completed.

The Chief Financial Officer then drew Governors attention to an updated paper she had compiled in relation to the cash sweep risk and key matters that she brought to the Board's attention were:

- Following the 'deal' being signed, the College received no confirmation from the PMO of the baseline data for the cash sweep trigger (the lockdown model). Since then, the College has been monitored via its last submitted model and no or only a small cash sweep was anticipated.
- When completing the IFMC light submission, the PMO expressed the view that the lockdown model to be tested against included a trigger re. cash sweep at £1.674 million as at July 2020 and £1.616 million as at July 2021. The College's actual position is projected to be £2.9 million 2020 and £3.2 million 2021.
- The clause in the deal which triggers cash sweep relates to 'excess cash' at year-end with the PMO to receive 50% of the excess in April following the year-end. This could mean potential repayment of £600k in April 2021.
- If this payment is made, then the College would still be able to meet all bank covenants except one

The Board debated how these differences in views were arrived at. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that PMO monitoring on a quarterly basis has always been against the £2.9 million in 2020 and never £1.674 million. All agreed therefore that the PMO needed to be challenged.

In terms of the options

- There is a clause that, if the cash sweep triggers a breach of bank covenant, then the PMO will not recover the cash. The Chief Financial Officer has alerted the bank and auditors to this
- Because of the level of uncertainty, this has not been

reflected within the 2019/20 forecast outturn and 2020/21 budget presented today

The Board asked how much the £600k would need to reduce by to avoid a breach in covenant. The Chief Financial Officer reported that the answer will depend on the level of College cash at the time the sweep is due and how the sweep would then affect the bank covenants. The Chief Financial Officer expressed the view that there are sensible discussions to be had regarding deferment of recovery and that this could be up to six years. The Board acknowledged that, if the College continues to perform well, this would be a reoccurring issue to deal with. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that it would appear as an ongoing contingent liability and would increase the deficit position. Impact on financial health calculation would be 'good' in 2019/20, 'good' in 2020/21 and 'outstanding' in 2021/22.

The Chief Financial Officer advised that, in April 2020, the IFMC was submitted and the view at that stage was that the July 2020 cash balance would be £2.6 million and not £2.9 million and therefore there are strong arguments to say that anything above £2.6 million is in fact COVID related. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that significant sensitivity testing has taken place; however, it has not been possible to resolve the actual prior to this meeting.

The Board asked whether the Chief Financial Officer had any guidance on whether or not there is a need to change the budget based upon new information. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the first test by PMO will be when they receive the audited accounts in December 2020. The Chief Financial Officer made the recommendation not to make changes to the 2020/21 budget now but acknowledged that it was worth considering 'further down the line'. She indicated that there were limited actions that could now be taken now regarding the July 2020 cash position but that there are actions that can be taken regarding 2021.

A challenge from the Board was whether or not the College should increase its own spend rather than give over as a cash sweep i.e. for the College, it is more important to implement the Pay strategy. It was agreed that the College has already flagged up the need to address pay with the PMO.

A challenge from one member of the Board was that it appears unbelievable that an agreed final lockdown model cannot be found. Governors recollected that negotiations regarding the cash sweep clause were very contentious at the time but the College was given no option but to accept. A challenge from one member of the Board was that it now appears too late in the day to be asked to make decisions on changes. They asked whether the College had planned well enough for contingencies

	<p>given that cash sweep was known to be a risk. The Chief Financial Officer indicated that the amount at risk had only been considered to be £150k. The Board agreed that the time to change the budget is when there is an agreed and recognised cash sweep figure. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the sweep is based upon cash as at the end of July each year and that this is based upon the audited financial statements, which are agreed by the Board in December.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the proposed budget has been tested robustly and created in good faith. The recent information presented to the Board today has emerged but has not yet been proved. On this basis, it was agreed to approve the budget today and then review again in September. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the next IFMC submission was due at the end of September 2020.</p> <p>AGREED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To note the content of the update provided b) Approve the budget for 2020/21 as presented. 		
10	AUDIT COMMITTEE CHAIRS REPORT		
	<p>The Chair of the Committee drew Governors attention to his presentation slides and detailed minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2020. He confirmed that, during the meeting, he had reiterated the role of the Committee in terms of assurance to the Board, with the Risk Register being a key document, which is provided within the papers for today's meeting for information. The College has increased maturity in terms of its approach to risk, which includes the development of a Board Assurance Framework.</p> <p>He advised that the Risk Register is becoming more comprehensive and is helpful as a living document. This provides evidence that risk is monitored and this includes at all sub-committees of the Board.</p> <p>One concern that the Committee did initially have was in relation to Internal and External Audit capacity, with the move to online activity; however, this now appears to be addressed. Risks were well discussed and many are specifically COVID related. Shape of what the College does will change, as will the shape of education provided, for example continuing education and re-education. He confirmed that all the College can seek to do is be agile and responsive and that, in relation to this, maximising opportunities are key.</p> <p>In general discussion, the Board indicated that, when looking at the Risk Register, the IT risk is a concern, as the residual is still high even after financial investment. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that this risk has been deliberately left high even with</p>		

	<p>£200k proposed for investment in 2019/20 and £200k in 2020/21. She explained that there were significant legacy issues as a result of the low level of historic investment and that this is something that actually impacted upon the Ofsted grade. All agreed that IT development was a critical activity. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that, until this has a significant injection, it will remain a risk; this was the case before COVID and is more so now given the change in staff.</p> <p>The Boards attention was drawn to the updated Financial Regulations and it was explained that there were very few changes proposed.</p> <p>The Boards' attention was also drawn to the Data Retention Policy and it was explained that, what is now put forward for approval, is a more comprehensive version and is part and parcel of the GDPR improvements. An observation made the Committee was that, historically, data has been retained for a considerable period and therefore the changes proposed would allow the College to dispose of some data.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the Committees Terms of Reference and membership had been reviewed and that there are no recommendations for change. It was acknowledged that this would be picked up as part of the later governance agenda item.</p> <p>AGREED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) To note the content of the update provided b) Note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 28th June 2020 c) Approve the updated Financial Regulations presented today d) Approve the Data Retention Policy as presented. 		
11	CURRICULUM, QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE CHAIRS REPORT		
	<p>The Chair drew Governors attention to his presentation slides and also the detailed minutes of the meetings held on 20th May 2020 and 1st July 2020. He advised that there were a number of aspects to consider, including:</p> <p>The 'here and now':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of enrolment, the Committee had some good assurance but the difficulty the College will face will be the real mix of learners that arrive in September and the different levels of learning that each have had, given varying experiences during lockdown. It is anticipated that there will be more 16-year olds who 'walk in' who don't really know what they want to do and therefore the College will need to be flexible and provide guidance on second choices, if learners cannot progress with their 		

	<p>first choice. This will mean that IAG is critically important to ensure that students find a meaningful pathway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher assessed exam grades may not be as accurate as exam results in prior years and therefore induction assessments are critical. • There may be staff challenges regarding the week A and week B arrangements and this will need to be monitored • The College will need to be constantly mindful of inclusion, as this is important with the move to more digital learning. <p>Medium term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in terms of self-assessment, the College has developed a very good handbook and the SAR process will be a critical piece of work • CCF bid of +£300k has been submitted in partnership with Sandwell • Digital Learning strategy is well progressed but needs to align with the wider Digital strategy and wider Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategies to make sure it is fully integrated. • Government initiative 'plans for jobs' – is very much targeted at the 18-24 year olds but does have implications in terms of College flexibility and responsiveness. The government also announced the Kickstart programme, which could potentially impact on Apprenticeship provision. <p>The longer term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a marketing workshop planned for September and this will seek to clarify what the College is famous for and how this can be best utilised • In relation to HE, the College needs to work hard to diversify partners and secure its own numbers. • There is a need to develop the curriculum plan beyond 2020 • There is the option at looking to develop a centre for excellence in HCT <p>Risks and issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted plans to re-engage in September and it is likely that the College will receive a two-day visit • The FE Commissioner view on quality improvements and how the College can show the distance travelled at the next stocktake • The College is not likely to be inspected for a while and therefore what can the College do to show the progress on the grade 3 in place • A lot of work to be done in terms of the macro strategy including engagement with the LEP, local authority, chamber and other employer organisations. It is important for the College to become embedded within 		
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	<p>the social and economic infrastructure. This is an opportunity and the College needs to develop and pursue a strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship provision • Plans for jobs • FE white paper – it is likely to have an emphasis on local collaboration • Employer and partner engagement <p>A challenge from one member of the Board was that employers seem to really be struggling to understand their options and therefore it would be helpful to see how the College is supporting them and agreeing priorities. All acknowledged that there will be a lot of opportunities, as well as risks and that it is important that the College is well placed to respond to these.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.</p>		
12	PRINCIPALS REPORT		
	<p>The Principal provided a presentation, as well as a number of documents for consideration within this agenda item. She confirmed that the presentation was intended to provide a summary of the College in its context. Key aspects noted were:</p> <p>1) <u>National</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kickstart initiative in relation to skills and jobs - AoC put forward really strong proposals. A bit fragmented but nevertheless a package of support. - Currently uncertainty regarding how employers will respond to it and therefore the College has to go out and sell. - There will be some tensions for employers, particularly in relation to Apprenticeships versus work placements - Traineeships - Sector based work academies - Issue is whether or not there will be sufficient employers within the Stoke on Trent area to engage with the College on all of the initiatives available - Capital will be released on a formula basis - Reform is coming and expectations are that it will be radical; however, the details are not yet known - Reform of higher technical education – both an opportunity and a threat for Colleges. There will be competition with universities. Partnerships will be important if there are no changes to the numbers system. - NEY report – part of the findings were that ESFA have insufficient capacity to support Colleges and there is an expectation regarding more interaction. - College of the future has issued an interim report 		

	<p>with five key recommendations. Much of this is to do with governance and accountability. The College is currently on the fringe with universities being more prominent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FE Commissioner team have now resumed their work and the AoC are asking for a radical review of interventions. - Ofsted's inspection plans – it is anticipated that the College will receive a 'professional conversation visit' in the autumn term and all agreed that this would be welcomed, as it is an opportunity to provide feedback on Ofsted readiness. - The College could explore chartered College status; this would take about a year to secure. <p>2) <u>Regional</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stoke and Staffordshire LEP – FE is central to the area but this is not particularly recognised. A lot of activity is countywide rather than City. - The College has three 'shovel ready' bids - Universities have been hit hard by the current circumstances and Staffordshire University have pulled student numbers from the FE sector <p>3) <u>Local</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New local authority leader – John Rouse - Alternative provision strategy changes – this supports the Colleges strategy to close the Foundation Bridge Academy and alternative provision offer - Likely Stoke on Trent level of increased unemployment <p>4) <u>Internal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modest redundancy programme with 9 FTE posts removed, seven of which were on a voluntary basis. Good relationships retained with the staff teams. - There have been curriculum moves and this presents an opportunity to re-launch the Burslem campus - J Block is now almost completely empty and thanks and appreciation goes to the Estates team in relation to this - College financial health has made significant improvements and this is a big step forward - IT investment is planned, although doesn't necessarily go far enough <p>In general discussion, Governors all agreed that the LEP approach was very county based rather than City, which was not helpful and the suggestion made was to try and utilise the LEP sub-groups more to raise City and College profile. One member of the Board noted that there was a new opportunity with a French company in terms of welding and it was agreed</p>		
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	<p>that contacts in relation to this would be referred to the College. The Board were also advised that the local authority is undertaking a significant piece of work regarding transition and it was agreed that information regarding Year 11 would be shared.</p> <p>The Board were advised that careers enterprise funding has been extended and expanded for one more year and part of this will be a wave 3 hub and includes extra monies for transition. Local authority are developing their new strategies in terms of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-19 • Transition • And is also considering the need to add adults to this. <p>The Board all agreed that the College needed to be visible and take a lead at the discussion tables, both locally and regionally. All agreed that it was important that effective links need to be made so that the College can contribute to the development of the macro strategy.</p> <p>The Principal advised that Alan Rodgers is trying to arrange a 'virtual dinner' and felt that this would help to build relationships. The Board all agreed that, if at all possible, there should be FE representation on the LEP.</p> <p>Governors' attention was then drawn to the document providing an update on FE Commissioner recommendations. The Principal indicated that there were two emerging issues, these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback from staff and the Unions, which is an improving position • Vice Principal appointment – the way that the College is implementing the recommendation is not felt to be what they intended i.e. they were expecting a permanent full time recruit rather than an interim part time. It was acknowledged that, at some point in time, this may need to be revisited. <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided and the content of documents provided within the report, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of FE Commissioner recommendations and progress • Fit for the future paceometer • Performance measure targets – progress • Bridge Academy - minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2020 • Education Business Services (Stoke) Limited - minutes of the meeting held on 2nd June 2020 		
13	SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT REPORT		
	Governors' attention was drawn to the detailed documents and		

it was confirmed that the Safeguarding and Prevent action plans have now been updated. It was noted that the report highlights some amber items, including:

- The College site/alarm
- British Values/Prevent training. The Black Lives Matter movement will influence information provided to students next year and there is a need to create a local narrative in relation to the far right.
- The College intends to set up a sub-group to focus on Equality & Diversity and part of their work will be to raise awareness in terms of 'hot topics'. There is a piece to do on community cohesion.
- The College has developed a digital code of conduct with remote learning in mind
- Still work to do in terms of parental engagement
- Updated Keeping Children Safe in Education document, which will mean a revision to the Colleges policies
- Site changes should lead to improvements in behaviour
- The College continues to be aware of issues regarding knife crime
- There are things for the College and sector to learn from the Shrewsbury inspection. It was confirmed that the College has been through the report with a 'fine tooth comb' and has plans in place to make improvements where it is felt that this is possible. The Board were given assurance that the College is compliant; however, wants to build on good practice.
- The College continues to receive local information regarding Prevent. There are some concerns regarding the unknown COVID impact on some families and young people.
- The College has completed its planning for September and this includes two virtual parents evenings (for both sites) plus FAQ's which will be made available on the website.
- Student services have done a lot to maintain engagement and support
- There were no referrals to LADO
- No cases of FGM
- One student on the channel panel and one student referred
- Staff mandatory training remains a focus
- Staffordshire Youth Commission Report – focus needs to be on mental health and wellbeing. Students who need support need to be identified from day one and to support this initiative there has been the creation of a 'human poster'. All Governors acknowledged that this was quite a powerful tool.

A question from one member of the Board was whether or not the digital code of conduct could also be adapted in to a poster

	<p>type approach. It was confirmed that staff are working with Marketing to try and visualise a lot of the rules to simplify the key messages. The Board all agreed that they were really pleased to see the steps taken in terms of the learning from Shrewsbury College.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
14	GOVERNANCE ITEMS		
	<p>The Clerk drew Governors attention to her written report and the recommendations made.</p> <p>The Board were happy to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Approve the appointment of Shannon Mansfield (Student Union President) as a Student Governor for 2020/21 – this appointment will be from 1st September 2020 until 31st July 2021 (or until such time as she ceases to be a student, whichever is the earlier). 2) Approve the proposed amendment to the Instrument and Articles (subject to bank permission) to remove the current categorisation in place for Staff Governors. 3) Approve the appointment of Donna Hazledine as a Staff Governor from 17th July 2020 until 17th July 2024 (or until such time as she ceases to be an employee whichever is the earlier) 4) Approve the proposed calendar of meetings for 2020/21 as presented 5) Approve Committee membership and Terms of Reference for 2020/21 as presented 6) Note the contents of the minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on 15th May 2020. <p>(Nova Abela joined the meeting at 12.35pm)</p>		
15	STAFF SURVEY RESPONSES		
	<p>The Executive Director of HR presented the staff survey results and confirmed that the Executive team were really pleased with the response rate. She confirmed that there were some real positives; however, acknowledged that there was still more work to do. She explained that the findings were broken down in to categories and summary points brought to the Boards attention were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 2.1 – Leadership and Management – the College is now looking at more formal engagement with staff who are not Union members. The desire is to broaden input and have more meaningful discussions. Results seem to show that the view of leadership and management is that it is moving in the right direction. • Section 2.2 - Internal Communication and Understanding 		

	<p>– it is clear that staff now hear leadership in terms of the vision and values, although it was acknowledged that communication is always an area for improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 2.3 - Employee Support and Encouragement – this area is particularly showing improvement and really good feedback. • 2.4 - Team Working and Team Performance – Team Stoke on Trent College is really coming through as a positive, with it being felt that staff are pulling together. • 2.5 - Customer Care and Responsiveness – very positive results and clear staff buy in; however, there is still work to do in terms of how College reputation is perceived. • 2.6 - College Specific Statements – positive movement in terms of staff feeling that the College is a good place to work. It was explained that, in the next survey, a question will be included in terms of 'being proud' to work at the College. <p>In terms of overall trends: teachers, trainers and assessors need more work, as they are the least positive and it was acknowledged that pay is likely to be a factor that contributes to dissatisfaction. The next step is to publish the results and really involve every member of staff in the actions and solutions. The aim is to hold an all staff conference; however, the logistics in relation to this are being reviewed. Face to face workshops will also take place.</p> <p>The Board were advised that there has been a lot of encouragement to staff to ensure that they have a say and that managers have played an active role in this. Significant effort has been put in to staff engagement and this has contributed to the response rate increase. Staff appear open and willing to come forward and have their say.</p> <p>In terms of individual comments, it was explained that there are some very polarised views. There were instances where there were long comments submitted and this shows that staff were comfortable to take the time to articulate their position. It was explained that all of the responses are completely anonymous; however, this sits alongside other mechanisms to encourage open and honest discussions.</p> <p>In terms of the response rate, there is still more work to do in terms of staff at Burslem. The plan is to have a large boardroom and Executive offices at Burlsem so that there is more of an Executive presence in the academic year.</p> <p>One member of the Board asked when the next survey will take place. It was explained that the College is looking to introduce some pulse surveys and also an annual full survey.</p> <p>The Board felt that the outcomes reflect real strengths where</p>		
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	<p>staff have control e.g. Teams; however, there is more to do where staff do not have control e.g. communication. A challenge from the Board was that they would like to see an early pulse survey in the new academic year, particularly regarding the start of year experience and processes. An observation made was that March is likely to be the best time for a full survey.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
16	AOB		
	There were no items of additional business.		
17	DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING		
	As agreed earlier, the schedule now provides for the next Board meeting on Friday 9 th October 2020 at 8.30am.		
18	CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS		
	<p>It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded on a separate basis.</p> <p>(Nova Abela and Dave Hopley left the meeting at 12.55pm)</p>		

Signed : _____ Chair
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Date: