

**Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held (via Microsoft Teams) on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 8.30am**

Present:	Jeremy Cartwright, Chair David Boughey Steve Sawbridge Julie Obada Stephanie Talbot Rob Fisher (until 10am) Sue Blake Jason Lancaster David Rogers Andy McKay (joined at 8.45am) Denise Brown, Principal/CEO Sibgha Amin Dave Hopley		
In Attendance:	Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation Antoinette Lythgoe, Chief Financial Officer (from 8.45am) Rob Lawson, ETF observer		
<b>Min. No.</b>		<b>Action By Whom</b>	<b>Action By When</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>		
	The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. Sue Blake asked that it specifically be recorded that she is an ETF employee. Standing declarations were noted.		
<b>2</b>	<b>WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>		
	Apologies for absence were received from Pritpal Singh-Nagi, Jo Mounthey, Donna Hazledine, Shannon Mansfield and Aimee Lessels. Rob Lawson was welcomed to the meeting and round table introductions were made.		
<b>3</b>	<b>TRANSFORMATION, FINANCE &amp; RESOURCES COMMITTEE CO-OPTEE</b>		
	The Clerk drew the Boards attention to the proposal to appoint		

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	<p>Tricia Phillipson as a Committee Co-optee. She explained that, originally, she had been interviewed with a view to joining the board as a full governor; however, because of her lack of local connections, the view taken by her is that, in the first instance, her skills would be better utilised as a Transformation, Finance &amp; Resources Co-optee.</p> <p>AGREED: to approve the appointment of Patricia Phillipson (Tricia) as a Transformation, Finance &amp; Resources Committee Co-optee from 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024.</p>		
<b>4</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2020 AND ANY MATTERS ARISING</b>		
	<p>The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.</p> <p>AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2020.</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>		
<b>5</b>	<b>ACTION PROGRESS REPORT</b>		
	<p>The Board were happy to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
<b>6</b>	<b>CHAIRS REPORT – GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b>		
	<p>The Committee Chair introduced his summary report and also the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020. He confirmed that much of the meeting was taken up by discussions regarding the Board review that is underway and is why Rob Lawson is attending the meeting today as an observer. Governors’ attention was drawn to the ETF review programme description, together with the content of a survey questionnaire to be circulated.</p> <p>Rob Lawson confirmed that the review was intended to look at a number of aspects and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A baseline survey.</li> <li>• Review of documentation.</li> <li>• Interviews.</li> <li>• Committee and Board meeting observations.</li> </ul> <p>He confirmed that the report will be created in conjunction with Governors and is very much intended to be a collaborative/co-operative process. The intention is to support to improve capacity and performance.</p> <p>The Board asked for a summary of the report writing and</p>		

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chair  
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	<p>publishing process. Rob Lawson confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report will be written in collaboration with the College and therefore there should be no surprises, with the College being the first to read the content.</li> <li>• The report will be read by three people at ETF and two people at DfE, who are separate from the FE Commissioner.</li> <li>• One FE Commissioner team member will receive a copy of the report but it will not be published or circulated. This is very much intended to be a development tool and is not connected to intervention.</li> </ul> <p>Governors considered the ETF review summary which provided the detail of the scope. The Board all agreed that this was a welcome opportunity for an external independent opinion. The Clerk confirmed that the link to the survey, which is now open, would be circulated by email later in the day.</p> <p>The Committee Chair indicated that there were a number of medium-term aspects considered at the meeting, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governor training – topics to be agreed for the March 2021 session scheduled.</li> <li>• Governor recruitment – potentially with a focus on the third sector and local links.</li> <li>• Continued use of Teams for Board and Committee meetings in 2020/21.</li> <li>• Terms of Office for the Chair and Vice Chair conclude in September 2021.</li> <li>• Governor one to ones with the Chair to be arranged.</li> <li>• Senior post holder performance reviews for 2019/20 are completed and targets/objectives for 2020/21 are to be presented and approved at the January 2021 meeting.</li> <li>• Outcomes of the Executive team building exercise being conducted by Mayvin.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee Chair acknowledged that Governors have been well engaged in what has been a difficult year.</p> <p>AGREED: A, to note the content of the update provided. B, to note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting  (Andy McKay joined the meeting at 8.45am)</p>		
<b>7</b>	<b>KEY MATTERS AND ACTIONS AGREED FROM THE STRATEGY REVIEW SESSIONS HELD ON 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER AND 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2020</b>		
	<p>The Chair provided a brief overview and key matters noted were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 30<sup>th</sup> November session provided an environmental review leading to strategic questions and themes.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020, the Board developed these themes further to provide a clear strategic steer.</li> <li>• Executive will now review the current strategy, develop and articulate ambitions and review the Estates strategy.</li> <li>• The Board will, in late January, receive a draft revised strategy and set of objectives for 2021 to 2023 for which time has already been scheduled.</li> </ul> <p>There are a number of themes arising from the sessions undertaken so far, based on a starting point of Stoke on Trent College being financially secure and with a 'Good' Ofsted grade Key themes are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capitalise on our position as the leading provider of adult education in the region.</li> <li>• Develop key curriculum specialties for which Stoke on Trent College will be famous.</li> <li>• Establish Stoke on Trent College as an anchor institution in the local, political and educational ecosystem.</li> <li>• Extend Stoke on Trent College as more than just a place to study or work.</li> </ul> <p>The Board acknowledged that the College is working in changing times and therefore it is important to remain agile and be able to react to new &amp; emerging circumstances. The Board all acknowledged that the sessions were really useful.</p> <p>A challenge from the Chair was to ensure that Student Governors are brought up to speed, as they missed the strategy review sessions. The Staff Governor was asked to undertake broader consultation with the Student Council in the new year. The suggestion made was for him to provide a presentation and then facilitate workshop discussions with feedback to the Board.</p> <p>One member of the Board indicated that it may be possible to take wider input from employers via the Chamber of Commerce.</p> <p>A challenge from the Board was that the College will need to be clear in terms of its messages i.e. increasing adult focus will not be at the expense of 16-18 provision.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>	Dave Hopley	January 2021
<b>8</b>	<b>COVID-19 OPERATIONAL UPDATE</b>		
	<p>The Principal drew Governors attention to her detailed report, key matters discussed were</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finance risks – these are specifically AEB and Commercial; Covid expenditure has been relatively modest. The College has not accessed furlough since the first lockdown but will review in January 2021.</li> <li>2. HR – there are regular and frequent communications</li> </ol>		

	<p>with staff. Staff wellbeing support is in place, with the College doing a lot to bring everyone together. Some staff have remained concerned and extra effort is in place to reassure these individuals.</p> <p>3. Students – provision now includes live streaming. The College is doing everything it can to ensure high quality learning continues but there are concerns regarding progress. An example given was the decline in maths and English GCSE attendance when it is provided remotely. The Board were advised that attendance for the vocational aspects is still high but remote learning gives different opportunities to ‘excuse attendance’. It was confirmed that this is something that is on the Risk Register. Ofsted have confirmed that they will utilise the 2021 data and therefore it is important that this is an improvement on prior years. The Government have advised that exams will still go ahead and everything is pointing to ‘normal’ summative assessments with outcomes shared and used. This does pose a risk for the College in terms of progress outcomes, engagement and attendance. It is clear that the College cannot ‘take its foot off the pedal’, including requiring students and staff to attend. The Principal described this as a real challenge for this academic year.</p> <p>The Board discussed the local context and it was acknowledged that Stoke on Trent COVID19 rates are still higher than many areas. It is believed that the relaxation of restrictions over Christmas will push the numbers up even further and therefore, the January and February position is likely to be worse. That said, testing will be easier and it was agreed that the College will need to use this to best effect. The Principal advised that there are challenges regarding some student group sizes; however, the College is trying to get students on site wherever it can. A challenge from the Board was that Apprenticeship provision could be impacted for years to come and therefore it is important to be able to fully explain and articulate this.</p> <p>The Board were advised that a Learner Conference took place yesterday, with a number of matters being highlighted by students, including access to devices and regularity of face to face on site activities. Provision of devices is an ongoing piece of work and the College will continue to review priorities and funds that can be accessed. A challenge from the Board was to make sure that there is the right balance, in terms of spend, to support students and staff. The Principal indicated that a meeting is being arranged with the PMO to secure their agreement to increase capital spend, as it is a limiting factor.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
<b>9</b>	<b>CHAIRS REPORT – CAPITAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE</b>		

	<p>The Committee Chair drew Governors attention to her summary slides and also the detailed minutes of the meetings held on 13<sup>th</sup> October and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020. She confirmed that the Committee was really pleased with the work done with Fusion and that their approach was different to previous strategy reviews. The Committee believe that there will be some really useful suggestions to come out of the work being completed.</p> <p>The Board were advised that expending capital funds by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 will be a challenge and that the College is to explore opportunities to extend this deadline for the building condition projects to take place.</p> <p>The Board were advised that there are some really positive options emerging in relation to J Block.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer provided an update in relation to the measures being taken to accelerate spend and these include recent interviews to appoint project managers. Four firms were interviewed, all of whom attended site. The College has appointed Poole Dick and there is a meeting scheduled with them for next week to take the projects forward.</p> <p>AGREED: A, to note the content of the update provided. B, to note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting</p>		
<b>10</b>	<b>ESTATES STRATEGY UPDATE</b>		
	<p>The Chief Financial Officer introduced this item and confirmed that the Capital Projects Committee is regularly overseeing the work being done. The Boards attention was drawn to the key issues identified by Matthew Hirst at Fusion, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The age and condition of much of the College estate is good, which restricts options for major change.</li> <li>• Some buildings need major capital investment to improve their physical condition and functional suitability. Any investment must be balanced with the need to rationalise the estate and reduce running costs.</li> <li>• Recent investment has been achieved with third party capital grant support, meaning there may be clawback provisions should proposals involve building removal.</li> <li>• Capital investment has been widespread across the estate, again limiting options to address some of the issues.</li> <li>• The College occupies too much floor space, particularly at the Burslem campus based on ESFA space norms.</li> <li>• The configuration of some buildings has a negative impact on space efficiency, particularly in relation to the ratio of teaching to non-teaching space.</li> </ul> <p>A question from one member of the Board was whether or not</p>		

	<p>being 'over spaced' was an issue, it being acknowledged that this has given the College greater flexibility to respond to COVID19 and has meant that additional costs incurred, as a result of COVID19, have been modest. The Board indicated that the College may in fact need more space if it is looking to expand its provision e.g. adults. The Chief Financial Officer advised that there is a lot of specialist space and that the general teaching areas are often overcrowded and are in the worst condition i.e. Taylor building and E Block. She indicated that it is important to have the right balance between quality and quantity. She confirmed that the strategy is subject to a number of review points.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
<b>11</b>	<b>CHAIRS REPORT – AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>		
	<p>The Committee Chair drew the Boards attention to his summary slides and the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020. He described the autumn term as 'quite a quiet period' as there is a shift in focus, with the College completing all works necessary for the prior academic year and then setting up for 2021 Internal Audit activity.</p> <p>Key matters brought to the Boards attention were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Internal Audit work planned for 2019/20 was completed with a positive annual opinion provided. In terms of the Internal Audit work undertaken, they confirmed a significant improvement on the prior year position.</li> <li>• There were audits/reviews of Partnership and Sub-contracting activity. These were very much process reviews, with some recommendations made for improvement, all of which have been addressed.</li> <li>• The Colleges Counter Fraud strategy has been updated and this is recommended for Board approval today.</li> <li>• There have been no instances of fraud, irregularity or whistleblowing. The strategy will be reviewed annually.</li> <li>• Risk is considered at every meeting and the maturity of Risk Management processes and approach was discussed.</li> <li>• COVID19 risks were fully articulated.</li> <li>• The Committee agreed the content of its annual report to Board; this is a summary of the year.</li> </ul> <p>AGREED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To note the content of the update provided.</li> <li>• Note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting.</li> <li>• Note the content of the Internal Audit annual report for 2019/20.</li> <li>• Note the content of the Audit Committees annual report for 2019/20.</li> <li>• Approve the updated Counter Fraud strategy as</li> </ul>		

	presented.		
<b>12</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>		
	<p>The Audit Committee Chair explained that the Risk Register incorporates the Board Assurance Framework and there is a planned review to see if the two aspects can be separated. A challenge from the Board was to ensure that there are consistent ways of tracking actions so as to avoid duplication. A challenge from one member of the Board was that the register looks to be very 'spreadsheet driven' and they asked whether a software solution would be more efficient so that activity could be centralised. The Chief Financial Officer agreed to review options and costs in relation to this. The Board all acknowledged that there were options available that would reduce the requirement of staff time input and would remove the risks of duplication and/or conflicting information.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the risk management update provided.</p>	CFO	January 2021
<b>13</b>	<b>CHAIRS REPORT – JOINT MEETING OF AUDIT AND TRANSFORMATION, FINANCE &amp; RESOURCES COMMITTEE</b>		
	<p>The meeting Chair drew members' attention to his summary slides and also the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020. He confirmed that the joint Committees had been able to consider the annual accounts in 'almost a final form' and were happy to recommend their approval to the Board. The Committee also considered the reconciliation with the July 2020 Management Accounts and were pleased to see the level of alignment and accuracy. Regularity position was reviewed with a positive position/outcome reported.</p> <p>The Committee Chair advised that there are two audit opinions and that the Board needs to be satisfied in relation to these. More disclosures were required this year by the ESFA. All were considered and the Committee was happy to recommend accuracy and signature by the Chair and Principal. The Board were reminded that there were no irregularity issues.</p> <p>AGREED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To note the content of the summary slides.</li> <li>• Note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting held 27th November 2020.</li> <li>• Note the content of the External Audit management letter.</li> <li>• Approve the contents of the regularity annual review.</li> </ul> <p>(Rob Fisher left the meeting at 10am)</p>		
<b>14</b>	<b>2019/20 YEAREND FINANCIAL REPORTING</b>		

The Chief Financial Officer introduced this item and drew Governors attention to the year-end accounts and members report. She explained that these were 'almost at the point of finalisation' but with some further work still to do in a small number of areas, including testing the leverage covenant.

Governors attention was specifically drawn to:

- Page 17 – disclosure of information to auditors.
- Page 24 – confirmation of effective framework.
- Page 26 – statement of regularity.

The Chief Financial Officer explained that, in terms of 'going concern', the members report includes the required audit working and therefore it should not be regarded as a negative. There are no concerns in this area.

In terms of the numbers, key matters brought to the Boards attention were:

- Accounts compare the position with the previous year.
- 2019/20 has been compared to an adjusted 2018/19 position (with the impact of the RF deal stripped out).
- Improved deficit position.
- Cash position £2.7 million in 2019/20, which should be compared with £3.5 million at July 2019. Very healthy cash position representing 54 days in hand. The Board were reminded that the ESFA threshold for this is 20 days.
- Underlying position is a significant improvement in terms of reoccurring position
- Cash sweep has been provided for at £1 million in the accounts.
- Staff costs reduced by £2 million following restructure

Between the two years, income is down by circa £3 million, which is made up of:

- Cash sweep (£1 million)
- Lower 16-19 funding (£760k) and
- £1.1 million ESF project in 2018/19

The Chief Financial Officer advised that the College met with the PMO yesterday and discussed the potential of 'accepting the model' if they were prepared to give greater flexibility regarding the capital spend e.g. increasing the amount to £750k. The Chief Financial Officer indicated that greater flexibility is required so that the College can invest in IT for learners and staff. The PMO officer indicated that they do not have authority to agree a change to the capital spend limit and that it requires a business case submission to the Funding Cases Committee. Rob Griffiths has been commissioned to support the submission of this business case. The aim is to try and get the College application to the Funding Case Committee in January.

The Chief Financial Officer indicated that a further element to consider regarding the cash sweep is the expectations regarding repayment and that this has to be on the basis of bank covenant requirements and the avoidance of any breach. Having conducted a review of bank covenants, the view of the College is that the amount to be repaid (which would avoid any bank covenant breaches) is £21k as at 31<sup>st</sup> July. College calculations in relation to this have been sent to the PMO and the bank. The Chief Financial Officer explained that their views are required and needs to be confirmed in writing, as it impacts upon the disclosures required within the accounts and the split between short-term and long-term creditors. The Chief Financial Officer advised that a response from the PMO and bank was not possible before this meeting and, as a consequence, the proposal is to provide delegated authority to the Chair and the Principal to approve and sign the 2019/20 year-end accounts and members report once these aspects are clarified.

By way of summary, she indicated that, for 2019/20, the College owes circa £500k by way of cash sweep but would only repay £21k of this because to pay more would lead to a breach in bank covenants. The liability however will sit within the accounts for up to 6 years.

The Chief Financial Officer indicated that the PMO's position is that there is a repayment requirement with 30 days-notice. This is of the balance due and not just the £21k; however, the College disagrees with this position. The Chief Financial Officer advised that this would materially change whether the cash sweep amount is treated as short-term or long-term debt. Auditors have suggested a workaround on the basis that the cash sweep is once a year. If after 6 years, there are still amounts shown as owing on the accounts, then the College will ask for them to be written off. The Board were advised that, unless the College has a significant increase in income or a significant reduction in costs, then it is not likely to have to pay the full amounts because of bank covenants. Cash sweep amount of £1 million provided for in the accounts is on the basis of £500k in 2019/20 and £500k in 2020/21 (based on forecast) but at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021 the position will be tested again. She indicated that, in 2021/22, the College has an opportunity to submit a new model to the PMO.

A challenge from the Board was to be careful not to operate to manage the cash sweep rather than managing the College. All agreed that this could not become an overriding consideration. The Board all agreed that this was an issue to resolve, as learners are being disadvantaged because the PMO limits are not permitting IT investment required.

A challenge from the Board was that all felt that the interaction and processes with the PMO were unacceptable. It was agreed

	<p>to ask for a defined process with defined timelines from the PMO. It was agreed that this would be through the ESFA Case Conference, with a request being made for the PMO to provide a calendar/flow chart. All agreed that this was needed to manage the intricacies of College operations. It was agreed that the Chief Financial Officer and the Principal would draft wording in relation to this request.</p> <p>In concluding year-end discussions, the Board were happy to approve the members report and financial statements in principle, but noted that they were subject to potential changes. It was agreed that, if any changes required were minor, then the Board would give delegated authority to the Chair and the Principal to approve. If there were any major changes, then the request was made for the document to come back to Board for review.</p> <p>AGREED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To note the content of the update provided.</li> <li>• To, in principle, approve the 2019/20 members report and financial statements (subject to changes discussed in the meeting).</li> <li>• To delegate authority to the Chair and the Principal to approve minor changes.</li> <li>• To request that any major changes be brought back to Board for consideration.</li> </ul>	Principal / CFO	Dec. 2020
<b>15</b>	<b>CHAIRS REPORT – TRANSFORMATION, FINANCE &amp; RESOURCES COMMITTEE</b>		
	<p>The Committee Chair drew Governors attention to his summary slides and detailed minutes of the meeting. He highlighted a number of specific aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 pillar plan continues to be a useful tool to monitor the transformation journey, with good progress made despite COVID19; however, an area of exception is data availability and this needs to be a focus to resolve.</li> <li>• Generally, a positive response to the SUMO initiative.</li> <li>• Achievement of some of the 2019/20 KPIs have been impacted by COVID19, particularly in areas where data is not available. The Principal has been asked to review the 2020/21 draft KPIs and will consider what is achievable and compare with others in the sector.</li> <li>• Student numbers generally positive. Cautious budgetary position taken regarding Apprenticeships, although the College seems to be bucking the trend. There are however issues with data locks.</li> <li>• The Committee considered the October 2020 Management Accounts and, whilst there are areas of risk, there are also opportunities in relation to tuition fees and educational contracts. Cash position is still positive.</li> <li>• Assurance was provided in relation to the Health and</li> </ul>		

	<p>Safety arrangements in place.</p> <p>There are some medium-term areas for the College to consider and the Committee agreed that it was important to get in to the mindset of being a 'post grade 2 College' and that the Marketing strategy is a key part of this. The Committee acknowledges that investment is required to be able to implement the HR strategy/people plan.</p> <p>Longer term, the College acknowledges that there is a piece of work to do in terms of workforce ethnic diversity, with it being agreed to look more broadly at recruitment and retention.</p> <p>Key risks and issues are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely data availability.</li> <li>• Maintaining current student numbers.</li> <li>• Data locks on the DAS system and cash flow implications.</li> <li>• Assumptions made regarding the BT contract.</li> <li>• Managing the impact of lagged funding for additional 16-18 year olds.</li> <li>• Cash sweep implications for the balance sheet.</li> <li>• Bank covenants.</li> <li>• Solvency/going concern.</li> </ul> <p>The Board discussed the importance of the Marketing strategy and the Principal advised that, once the Board agrees the refreshed strategic plan, then it will also be necessary to provide the enabling strategies which underpin this, including Marketing, Curriculum, Estates, HR, Business Development etc. A challenge from the Board was to make sure all of these align, with the target date being strategic sign off in February 2021.</p> <p>The Board considered the discussion which took place regarding KPIs and they expressed some concern regarding data accuracy and the role of data, which forms the basis of Governors decisions. The Principal expressed the view that the underlying data which informs the KPI report is accurate but that there has been human error in transposing some information into the document. The Principal expressed the view that it was a presentational issue but acknowledged that errors should not be happening.</p> <p>The Committee Chair confirmed that there had been a conversation about a closer alignment between the 5 pillar plan and the strategic plan and objectives. The Principal confirmed that this document, once created, would be used by the Executive going forward.</p> <p>A challenge from one member of the Board was that KPIs should be spread across the relevant Committees for scrutiny and challenge and not simply sit at the Transformation, Finance &amp; Resources Committee, for example quality and standards KPIs</p>	<p>Principal</p> <p>Comm Chairs</p>	<p>Dec. 2020</p> <p>2021</p>
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	<p>to be monitored by the Curriculum, Quality &amp; Standards Committee.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
<b>16</b>	<b>EDUCATION BUSINESS SERVICES (STOKE) LIMITED BOARD</b>		
	<p>The Board were happy to note the content of the meeting minutes held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020, together with the year-end financial accounts, monthly management accounts and letter of representation.</p>		
<b>17</b>	<b>CHAIRS REPORT – CURRICULUM, QUALITY &amp; STANDARDS COMMITTEE</b>		
	<p>The Committee Chair introduced this item and drew Governors attention to the summary slides and detailed minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020. He confirmed that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the main focus of the meeting was the Self-Assessment Report for 2019/20.</li> <li>• the college has done 'as much as most' in relation to continuity of learning.</li> <li>• Whilst there is improved Teaching, Learning and Assessment and outcomes, there is still more to do in terms of functional skills.</li> <li>• Learner support and engagement is a real College strength.</li> </ul> <p>In terms of Committee priorities going forward, these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• January – Quality Improvement Plan flowing from self-assessment process</li> <li>• March – curriculum plan for 2021/22 (including embedding outcomes from successful LEP bids in the curriculum plans), progression targets and Apprenticeship strategy and implementation plan to be completed and presented.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee Chair expressed the view that it would be useful for Governors to be invited to the curriculum planning process. The Committee Chair advised that the College has committed to an external Ofsted type review, which would go some way to provide the Board with assurance. He described quality and Ofsted as the number one risk on the register and therefore it is important that everyone has a focus on this. There was a challenge again in terms of the timely provision of accurate data.</p> <p>The Committee Chair advised that there is some inconsistency in terms of delivery at Burslem that needs to be addressed. The interim Vice Principal is supporting in relation to this and it was confirmed that she will remain with the College until at least April but that it is dependent beyond that on the notice period</p>		

	<p>for the permanent Deputy Principal appointment.</p> <p>The Board discussed the plan to undertake an external inspection and it was agreed that this would be discussed at the Curriculum, Quality &amp; Standards Committee, particularly how the Board obtains assurance on this. The Principal confirmed that the College is also expecting a formal Ofsted monitoring visit, which will be graded.</p> <p>The Board discussed the Apprenticeship strategy and it was noted that one of the Governors has recently met with the Managing Director Commercial and is very supportive of the hub proposals. All agreed that it was important to build on the good from this year. The Board felt that, both internally and externally, there is a need to be clear in terms of what good looks like and learn from best practice. The Board felt that there was merit in reviewing the structure of Apprenticeship provision and to pull in support services to a hub structure. It was confirmed that the review would also involve consideration of the offer.</p> <p>The Board, when discussing the QIP, felt that its finalisation in January was too late and a challenge from the Board was to complete an early review in June/July each year, as this would then allow a plan to be in place for the full year. They asked that staff look at the timing of this, as it would then drive the monitoring process. A challenge from one member of the Board was that the QIP should look at both the medium-term and short-term actions required.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>	Principal/ Heather Marks	January 2021
<b>18</b>	<b>SAR 2019/20</b>		
	<p>(Heather Marks joined the meeting)</p> <p>The Board were provided with a presentation which summarised the position and it was acknowledged that detailed discussions took place at the Curriculum, Quality &amp; Standards Committee. The Board acknowledged that the Colleges approach to Safeguarding and Prevent is really strong and robust. All felt that the SAR was self-reflective and it was agreed that any Governor questions would be facilitated by an email to the Clerk.</p> <p>Heather Marks confirmed that she was really pleased with the level of staff engagement in the SAR development this year and explained that the processes had been adapted. Key matters that she brought to the Boards attention included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a lens on feedback to ensure progress and appropriate interventions.</li> <li>• The College is ensuring pace and is using teacher on a</li> </ul>		

	<p>page, student learning walks and employer walks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress has been made against the areas for improvement.</li> <li>• In relation to teaching and learning, the College has introduced Power BI as this mirrors the Ofsted approach to collating data and evidence.</li> <li>• The College did not stop its drive for improvement during COVID19 restrictions.</li> <li>• Significant increase in staff use of digital platforms (Canvas) to support learners.</li> <li>• The College is very aware of the areas for improvement, with there being a real focus on the Burslem campus and data, particularly ownership and accountability.</li> </ul> <p>The Board were then provided with a summary of key themes and issues.</p> <p>An observation made by one member of the Board was that there are no grade profiles included. The Board were advised that this was a conscious decision. A challenge from the Board was to be confident that the College is taking the same approach as others. A challenge from one member of the Board was that the wording 'balance of grades' should be removed given the decision taken not to grade areas within the SAR this year.</p> <p>Governors cross referenced with the issues and themes discussed as part of the Curriculum, Quality &amp; Standards Committee update earlier and specifically in relation to data and consistency of quality. Heather Marks confirmed that the Executive now has much more confidence regarding the systems and processes to support quality. She acknowledged that there needs to be a relentless focus on this. Burslem Improvement Boards are new and staff are being coached in terms of expectations. There are a number of mechanisms to drive forward quality, including scorecards and teacher on a page.</p> <p>In terms of data, she confirmed that curriculum and quality staff are working closely with the MIS team, with meetings now taking place, which are chaired by the interim Vice Principal.</p> <p>The Board asked for an opinion on the most significant Ofsted risk. Heather Marks expressed the view that this is the Burslem campus, which is why it is a focus with a 'heavy presence' from the senior team. There are many mechanisms now introduced to obtain feedback and information to enable quick improvements to be made.</p> <p>A challenge from the Board was to better understand the proportionality and where the focus needs to be.</p>		
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	<p>When discussing the data, the Chief Financial Officer expressed the view that this was more to do with presentation rather than accuracy. She confirmed that the MIS team are very committed to providing the data needed on a timely basis.</p> <p>AGREED: to approve the SAR 2019/20 as presented.</p>		
<b>19</b>	<b>PRINCIPAL'S REPORT</b>		
	<p>The Principal's detailed report was considered and it was acknowledged that a number of aspects had been discussed earlier in the meeting as part of the Committee Chairs summary. Key matters that the Principal brought to the Boards attention were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual review of the 5-pillar plan.</li> <li>• Performance measures for 2019/20 (outturn) and 2020/21</li> <li>• FE Commissioner stocktake report – this is to be discussed in confidential items. The Principal confirmed that there is a plan in place to take the College out of intervention and this is a focus for 2021.</li> <li>• Comprehensive spending review.</li> </ul> <p>A question from one member of the Board was in relation to taking forward the LEP bid implementation. The Principal confirmed that the team are currently mapping against curriculum delivery and are also working with key leaders in the City.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
<b>20</b>	<b>SAFEGUARDING REPORT</b>		
	<p>The Board acknowledged the comprehensive nature of the information provided and, on this basis, were happy to note.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
<b>21</b>	<b>FORMAL RATIFICATION OF WRITTEN RESOLUTION</b>		
	<p>The Clerk provided a summary of the written resolution approved on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020, which was in relation to financial commitment for laptops. She explained the process and confirmed that any written resolution has to be formally ratified at the subsequent Board meeting.</p> <p>AGREED: to ratify the written resolution decision taken on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to purchase laptops.</p>		
<b>22</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>		
	<p>There were no matters of additional business.</p>		

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chair  
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<b>23</b>	<b>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</b>		
	The Clerk confirmed that the next scheduled meeting is Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 8.30 and reminded that there is also time set aside in the diary on 21 <sup>st</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2021 to continue with the strategic review.		
<b>24</b>	<b>CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS</b>		
	It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded on a separate basis.  (Staff and Rob Lawson left the meeting at 11.45am).		

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chair  
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Date: