

Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on Thursday 21st October 2021 at 4pm

Present:	Jeremy Cartwright, Chair (in person) Denise Brown, Principal/CEO (Teams) Steph Talbot, Governor (Teams) David Rogers, Governor (Teams) Steve Sawbridge, Governor (Teams) Sue Blake, Governor (Teams) David Boughey, Governor (Teams) Jo Mountney, Governor (Teams) Sibgha Amin, Governor (Teams) Dave Hopley, Staff Governor (in person) Todd Abel-White, Student Governor (Teams) Shannon Mansfield, Student Governor (Teams)		
In Attendance:	Antoinette Lythgoe, Chief Finance Officer (in person) Jason Lancaster, Deputy Principal (Teams)		
Min. No.		Action By Whom	Action By When
1	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST		
	The Chair reminded everyone again to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. Standing declarations were noted.		
2	WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE		
	Apologies for absence were received from Pritpal Singh Nagi, Tom Nadin, Neil Hoskinson and Maxine Bagshaw. Absent without apologies was Andy McKay and Rob Fisher. The Chair welcomed Todd Abel-White to his first Board meeting as a Student Governor and welcomed Shannon Mansfield back for her second term as a Student Governor.		
3	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH JULY 2021		
	The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.		

Signed :  Chair
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	<p>AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 2021.</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>		
4	ACTION PROGRESS REPORT		
	<p>The Chair directed the Board's attention to the Action Progress Report. It was noted that there were three items ongoing. With regards to lines 2 and 3, the Principal confirmed that she is still working on the communication aspects of the strategy. She advised that she did a session for part of the local authority last week and the College's Marketing and PR partners are helping with the communications. The Chair asked about timing of the launch, given the Principal's leave date. One Governor commented that it made sense to have a focal point towards the end of January 2022, when the Board has had its Strategic Away Day and the new Principal is in place and had any opportunity to get on board with everything. This was agreed. The Principal added that the College is beginning to do some filming for the corporate video and will progress with a planned release date towards the end of January 2022. With regards to line 4, the Principal updated the Board stating that she has been discussion with the Chief Human Resources Officer about approaching Staffordshire University and Keele University for a couple of research projects – one around staff engagement post lockdown and the other generally around life in lockdown.</p> <p>The Board were happy to note the content of the rest of the update provided.</p>	Principal	January 2022
5	STUDENT GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS		
	<p>The Chair introduced this item and advised that Todd Abel-White and Shannon Mansfield have been put forward as Student Governor's for this academic year.</p> <p>Both Todd and Shannon introduced themselves to the Board and provided some background in relation to the courses they are studying.</p> <p>It was noted that another Student Governor was suggested but they had to drop out due to other commitments. The Chair asked the Board for ratification of the two Student Governor appointments. The Board agreed to the appointments.</p> <p>AGREED: to appoint Todd Abel-White and Shannon Mansfield as Student Governors for this academic year until the 31st July 2022.</p>		

6	PRINCIPAL/CEO'S REPORT		
	<p>The Principal introduced this item and directed the Board to her detailed report:</p> <p><u>Ofsted Monitoring visit outcomes/report</u></p> <p>The Ofsted Monitoring visit was on the 15th and 16th September. The Principal said that this felt like a really positive visit and the report is included in the appendix. The Principal set out the three judgments the College received, which were two reasonable progress and one significant progress and the definitions of these judgments have been included in the Principal's report. She said that, whilst she is disappointed that the College did not get two significant progress and one reasonable progress, the inspectors looked at Business for theme 2 and the lead inspector advised that this was very much on the cusp of being a significant progress judgement. She said that the inspector was complementary about the work that had taken place and the College can take assurance from this.</p> <p>The Principal advised the Board that she feels like the 16-18 provision 'Good' but continued focus is needed improvements in Apprenticeship provision. The Principal added that, whilst the College is busy with audits, it is slowing down the progress of improvement in Apprenticeships, as the assessors and management team's time is split in two directions. The Deputy Principal added that an early inspection in January/February would be a risk for the College and currently, there is some strong and some weaker provision and it is this variability which is the key challenge. The principal added that it would be helpful/beneficial for the new Principal to have some time and space before a full inspection takes place. The Board agreed that a later inspection would be better for the College but acknowledged that we it could happen at any time and so the college needed to be ready.</p> <p><u>5 Pillar Plan – 2020/21 year-end report</u></p> <p>The Principal provided a summary of progress for the last year and advised that the detail behind this will go to the Transformation, Finance & Resources Committee. She said that the headline report demonstrates that, despite another year of Covid and lockdowns, the College continues to make progress against the strategic plan and 5 pillars. Notably, Finance was stable despite Covid, staff engagement improved and the significant action the College set to devise a Pay Strategy happened and is in the process of being implemented. She said that there has been good work towards the strategy objectives through the 5 pillars last year and this is credit to the entire staff team.</p> <p><u>Enrolment update</u></p>		

	<p>The Principal informed the Board that the final ILR was submitted today. She said that, having had initially a very positive enrolment, the College has, in the last couple of weeks, lost a number of 16-18 year olds but the College is still slightly up overall in terms of part time and full time learners. The Principal said that one of the reasons for the loss of 16-18 learners could be that the College enrolled earlier than some other providers, so some learners may have enrolled with another provider later. The College will survey why learners who enrolled didn't stay on the course, so that the College can reflect on this for next year. The Deputy Principal reported that other college's have talked about a similar pattern, so it appears that learners are less sure about what they want, which may relate to post-Covid anxiety. The Principal reassured the Board that this was not a disaster and it doesn't jeopardise the College's ability to get to contract. The Chief Financial Officer said that the College currently has 1662 full time study programme learners, 1485 of these are full time 16-18 year olds. The Principal added that the College will have in year numbers to add on some programmes along with part time 16-18 learners and possibly high needs learners. The Chair commented on the anecdotal intelligence that other providers are experiencing the same issues as Stoke on Trent College and asked about learners having multiple applications. The Principal advised that this is nothing new and is normal; however, post-Covid, learners may have signed up for a course but due to mental health issues/anxiety, or due to being out of routine, then withdraw. The Deputy Principal said that some learners have moved onto Traineeships and Apprenticeships, some learners didn't turn up and others won't answer calls. He said that the College is tackling greater student anxiety, which is leading to some issues around behaviour but also around learner's resilience to cope with class learning. There is a possible correlation between extra anxiety contributing to some students not feeling able to come in. In some areas, there are greater employment opportunities with reasonably low wages but they are tempting 16 year olds to get a job and there could be some impact post-Brexit too. One Governor asked if the College has the means to take learners in January, if they change their views. The Deputy Principal said that the College does and that the College doesn't have to wait until January, as there are options around Traineeships, the Princes Trust programme etc. The same Governor asked if it would be worth writing to learners who have left to advise them that they can come back to study with the College. The Principal and Deputy Principal agreed that this would be a good action to take. Another Governor commented that they are experiencing similar problems with young people in work in their sector and the turnover is high compared to pre-pandemic. Another Governor asked if the College was doing something different to support learners. The Deputy Principal</p>	Deputy Principal	17.12.2021
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confirmed that there is a lot of extra/pastoral support but the issues are manifesting themselves differently on each campus. At Cauldon, there are more students struggling to cope with being in lesson, whereas at Burslem there is more low-level behaviour issues, so the College is taking different approaches around pastoral care and how we handle disciplinarys. He added that the College also has extra funding from government around extra tuition support, so the College is trying to target students appropriately. He said that the College is particularly good at support, compared to other providers, and has good infrastructure in place for this. He commented that some colleges have seen a significant dip in attendance, whereas Stoke on Trent College's attendance has been better. One Governor asked if there is any pattern to it in terms of curriculum area or generally across the College. The Deputy Principal said that there are some hotspots – there has been a dip in Health & Social Care, but the support in this area is strong. The College will be looking at the time students left to see if this provides any information, as well as looking at attendance patterns within curriculum areas. He added that the College still feels good, sessions do look productive and teachers are handling any issues but it is more challenging than in previous years.

FEC/ESFA – update to the support and intervention policy

The Principal advised the Board that the ESFA have changed the policy around support and intervention; however, the College's status is unclear, as it is not clear if the College is in active support. She said that what has changed is in the appendix around the triggers for intervention. The trigger around quality is very simple – if you grade overall as inadequate, then you would go into intervention. The Finance governance triggers are the same as in the previous policy. The Principal said that, when the FE Commissioner visits in a couple of weeks' time, the College should explore what its status is and whether the FE Commissioner needs to keep visiting, as well as exploring with the ESFA where the College is in terms of the updated policy.

FE Commissioner planned visit – November 2021

The Principal informed the Board that the FE Commissioner will be visiting the College on the 12th November. They have asked for a tour of the Burslem campus the day before. The Chief Financial Officer said that some of the FE Commissioner finance team have been asked to evaluate the College's bids, so this could be why they want to look at the Burslem campus. Both the Deputy Principal and Chief Financial Officer will be carrying out the tour on the 11th November.

As part of the Principal's report, a summary of external engagement was provided identifying areas for development. One Governor asked for a definition of developing. The

Principal said that staff are attending meetings but not driving the agenda – we are helping and supporting but haven't defined Stoke on Trent College's role in these particular forums. A Governor commented that the extent of the engagement is very encouraging and a big step forward for the College from 3-4 years ago. The Principal noted that the Deputy Principal is involved in some of these as a College representative and, now that Finance is stable, the Chief Financial Officer will also get involved in some external relations. The Chief Financial Officer said that she does have relationships with the bank and ESFA, which are not on the list and a slightly different type of engagement; however, these are still important stakeholders. The Principal added that the Executive Director of MIS and Reporting is on the ESFA reference group for MIS and Data. She said that the College needs more individual relationships with Headteachers, more employer connections and connections in Birmingham and Manchester will also be an important aspect of development, as well as nationally. One Governor said that it would be useful for the incoming Principal to see this engagement document. He added that he would like to see better LEP engagement and the College joining the Stoke forum around Health & Social Care. He added that it would be useful to map Governor networks onto this document as well. Another Governor said that, over the last couple of weeks, he has been asked to take non-Executive oversight of the People Programme Board for the NHS for Stoke and Staffordshire, which should help in terms of the College involvement. The Principal said that she had attended three of the People Programme Board meetings and it was really helpful to see the College's courses/learners as an opportunity to broaden participation in the NHS workforce.

The Principal advised the Board that she would be sharing this engagement document with the new Principal. She informed the Board that she had a meeting with the new Principal today and agreed to share email/telephone numbers and start meetings and one of the areas that will be covered will be around engagement.

The discussion moved onto 'green' courses that have been discussed by the AoC, the Chair asked, when the College has these types of courses, are they being aimed at adult learners as well. The Principal said that they are but the College needs a policy position in terms of green energy/sustainability to drive curriculum, both in terms of specific courses and in terms of wider tutorial/enrichment activities and general understanding of sustainability at Stoke on Trent College. She said that there is work to be done in this area. One Governor informed the Board of an email he had received from NHS head office in relation to sustainability and climate change with a number of points that need addressing to reduce the

	<p>NHS's impact on the climate and improve sustainability. He suggested that it would be a good idea for someone in the College to be looking into this. Another Governor commented that the AoC has done a lot of work around climate change and sustainability and what has come out today in terms of the lobby paper ahead of COP26 was just to position colleges as being central to the climate change and sustainability agenda. He said that the College needs to make sure these issues are embedded into the curriculum in an appropriate way. He said that the AoC has produced a roadmap which all colleges are encouraged to look at, which will help colleges assess where they are in terms of sustainability and it is really useful to get young people involved in the agenda. He added that 16-18 year olds are aware of this but the issue isn't about awareness, it is about empowerment and this roadmap can help young people take things forward in a more proactive way. The Governor said that Steve Frampton, who was a college Principal and AoC President, has led on this and would be happy to talk to Governing bodies or people within College on this issue. The Chair of the Board commented that this would be useful.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Principal for her report and said that it illustrates how far the College has come, despite Covid.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>	Clerk	17.12.2021
7	WHOLE BOARD SAR VALIDATION		
	<p>The Deputy Principal introduced this item and advised that, following discussions at the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee, there will be a different approach adopted for the SAR validation. The intention now is to provide the Board with an early draft of the SAR, with judgements that the Deputy Principal is happy with in terms of key questions and the overall College. The Board can then discuss the grades allocated for both the key question provision types, as well as individual departments in the College. The Deputy Principal said that there are 4 provision types – programmes for young people, programmes for adults, programmes for learners with high needs and Apprenticeships. He advised that the draft SAR provides Governors with the grades allocated and the Deputy Principal would be tightening up the strengths and weaknesses so that there is a short summary against each provision type to support the grade given. For this meeting, Governors were asked to review the draft document, provide feedback and then the Deputy Principal will incorporate this feedback into the SAR, which will go to the next Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee meeting and then come back to the Board at the next meeting in December 2021.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal said that, in terms of the content of the</p>	Deputy Principal	8.12.2021

section Governors have been provided, there is still work to do around examples and illustrative data, as the College is waiting for the R14 which will confirm this. The Deputy Principal said that, in terms of the preliminary data, he is happy with how the data 'stacks up' to where the provision types have been graded. He said that achievement will be somewhere around the low 80% for 16-18 year olds, which puts the College back to pre-pandemic levels. With regards to adult achievement rates, this will be marginally below 90%. He said that, when looking at performance gaps by different students, there are little issues but there isn't huge disparity – those that do exist are around curriculum type rather than specific issues related to groups of learners; this will be unpicked in the final data analysis. He reassured the Board that the data that is available supports the grades allocated. He added that Apprenticeships will be at 53% and, for providers in this climate, this is a good and is a result of legacy frameworks that the College has been getting students through which are still live, so the College will continue to see rates of 50% plus for some years to come.

Summarised in the Deputy Principal's paper is the grade proposed for each provision type and Governors are able to see the journey from 2018/19. There were no grades given last year due to the pandemic. On comparing the three-year trend, the College is showing improvement across the board. The area of concern is Apprenticeships, which has already been discussed. This has been positioned for a grade 3; reflective of the feedback from Ofsted's recent visit.

The Deputy Principal directed Governors to a table summarising departmental grades across the College. He said that each Head of Learning produces their own evaluation and this has been sharpened to be really evaluative; this has also gone through a moderation process to get to these grades. There are grade 2's across the board, with discrepancies around the following areas:

- English, as there is still work to do in this area,
- Engineering and Automotive, which has some significant challenges but there are some areas of strength; however, this inconsistency leads to a requires improvement grading
- Apprenticeships

The Chair of the Board commented on English and maths and said that clearly something positive happened in maths and would this be transferrable to English. The Deputy Principal said that the maths team identified topics of maths which would help students to pass exams, so in this context, the College can apply this to English and the team are starting to do this. He said that the English team have a little further to go in terms of strengthening the relevance of the subject

	<p>matter to vocation; therefore, a functional approach to delivering English in a GCSE context will be the next step. One member of the Board asked if another column could be added to the end of the table titled 2021/22 and what the College's ambition is to achieve in the various areas, so that the College has a target to aim for. The Deputy Principal agreed it would give greater focus and would look into adding this column onto the document.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal advised the Board that the SAR will be externally validated by Tracey Mace-Akroyd from the RNN Group and there is also an agreement in place with the Luminare Group, so there will be challenge from both of these. The Board commented that there is nothing surprising in the report and that it is a good reflection of where the College is at.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal said that, in terms of provision types, in adults there is a vulnerability around some functional skills which stopped this area from being pushed up to a grade 1. There was a discussion around the high needs provision, as the College's discrete provision for learners who have specialist study programmes which are purely focused on supporting and developing needs and independence, there is really good provision and this has been given a grade 1; however, there is still work to do in terms of high needs students who are embedded in the College's vocational programmes. The Deputy Principal said that he feels there is still an opportunity to improve support for these students so that they consistently getting an outstanding experience. He added that there is some strong provision such as Adult and Community Learning and Foundation Studies, which are a credit to the College.</p> <p>With regards to the Quality Improvement Plan, the Deputy Principal said that he has tightly aligned the areas of improvement to key areas of weakness in the SAR. He said that this gives a sharp focus for improvement for the College. He added that this document will be a live document and will be the basis of the external work the College does with inspectors and the FE Commissioner. To give the Board assurance, the Deputy Principal said that this is an approach he has used in previous College's when moving from a grade 3 to 2. He said that, in future meetings, Governors will see implementation and impact but there may be a lag with regards to the impact. He added that he will also RAG rate progress monitoring, so that Governors can see where the College is at against where it should be. One Governor asked if the updated document will come back to future Board or Committee meetings. The Deputy Principal advised that the document will be going to the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee but he is happy to bring it back to</p>	Deputy Principal	8.12.2021
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	<p>Board meetings for review. The Chair said that it would be good to continue to see the document, especially in the lead up to Ofsted in order to get a sense of movement.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>	Deputy Principal	17.12.2021
8	CHAIRS REPORT – CURRICULUM, QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE		
	<p>The Chair of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee directed the Board to his slide presentation. He advised his presentation covers two meetings of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee – one that took place in summer in order to look at start of year arrangements, which has been covered by the Principal’s report, and there was a further meeting which took place this week. The only matter not covered in previous discussions is in relation to the financial side of the Apprenticeships provision, as there are two particular issues to pick up – one around audit, which will be covered by the Chief Financial Officer later in the meeting, and the other is around the pricing of the Apprenticeships provision in terms of what the College charges and what it costs to deliver. The Chair of the Committee said that, as well as looking at the curriculum and quality aspects of Apprenticeships through the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee, the Board need to make sure that the financial side of the Apprenticeship provision is picked up through the Transformation, Finance and Resources Committee.</p> <p>The Chair of the Committee said that the Quality Improvement Plan is ready to go and a lot of the actions will already be underway. He said that the Deputy Principal had given quite a challenge in terms of completing actions and moving it forward, so although the Self-Assessment report may be a little delayed, the Quality Improvement Plan is not.</p> <p><u>Medium term</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact and outcomes – the Committee Chair said that the FE sector is moving into a different climate where the emphasis is on impact and outcomes that go above and beyond just obtaining qualifications such as progression onto further levels of study, employment, personal skills that students acquire, so how the Board assess the College’s performance will need to focus on impact and outcomes. • Implementation plan for curriculum and quality elements of the new Strategic Plan / Aligning the curriculum offer with employer demand / Higher Education strategy – the College need to be aware of how it aligns the curriculum offer with employer demand, bearing in mind that colleges are being pushed to do this increasingly through the Skills bill 	Clerk	31.1.2022

	<p>and expectations around the local Skills Improvement Plan. Also, the College has an opportunity to develop the Higher Education provision at level 4 and 5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding – responsibility for Governors around Safeguarding has increased over the years. There is an expectation for Governors to assure themselves that the College has appropriate plans and actions in place. The Committee Chair advised that Safeguarding is a standing item on the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee agenda and the annual report will be discussed at the Committee meeting in December. He said that, as a Board, Governors need to be assured that the policies and practices around Safeguarding are being implemented properly by the College, which he said he was sure that they are as this is a strength for the College. He added that he is expecting through the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee or through Board to look at the policies and procedures around Safeguarding in more detail in future. <p><u>Longer term</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising opportunities that open up as a result of achieving at least a Good Ofsted judgment • Development of Higher Education provision and direct funding – if we move beyond level 4 and 5 to degree level provision, having direct funding for this, not going through another institution. • Embedding the Digital strategy in curriculum development and delivery • Local Skills Improvement Plan – there is uncertainty around this and who should lead but there is a lot of pilot working going in the sector, so there should be further guidance in the spring/summer 2022. <p>Risk and issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted • Apprenticeship delivery • Recruitment and curriculum offer • Consistency in quality of teaching, learning and assessment across campuses and between curriculum areas • Data timeliness and accuracy • Impact of disrupted learners on learner starting points <p>The Principal picked up on the local Skills Improvement Plan and asked if the Board would like to invite Anne Boyd, the new Chief Executive on the LEP, to the January 2022 strategic away day. The Board agreed that it would be good to invite her to this event.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal referred to the Quality Improvement</p>	Clerk	2022
	<p>The Principal picked up on the local Skills Improvement Plan and asked if the Board would like to invite Anne Boyd, the new Chief Executive on the LEP, to the January 2022 strategic away day. The Board agreed that it would be good to invite her to this event.</p>	Principal	17.12.2021

	<p>strategy provided and advised that, following feedback from the last meeting, it was noted that the strategy document was too lengthy. The Deputy Principal has now added an Executive summary to the front of the document, which sets out the impact, the objectives and headlines; the rest of the document remains unchanged. The Board were happy to approve the Quality Improvement strategy. The Deputy Principal said that having a common structure across all strategies will be the next step. The Chair of the Board asked what use are the documents put to after they are created. The Deputy Principal said that they link through the Executive Board to make sure the College in moving in the right direction, making sure the key responsible people are reviewing their documents and 'keeping their eye on the ball'. He said that they are reference documents, which align to top level objectives and help to drive targets and actions. The Chair of the Committee said that there needs to be a clear line between the strategic objectives and what comes through the individual strategies, so that they tie together. The Chair of the Board said that it would be good to get all of the documents together to look and review at the strategic away day to make sure that they all link together. The Principal said that the enabling strategies and the lead officers for those strategies are charged with pulling together a delivery plan, for the most part, the delivery plan supports the 5 pillars, which in turn supports the strategic plan. The Chair of the Board commented that there shouldn't be too many strategies in order to ensure there is focus. The Principal agreed and said that the College could look at streamlining the HR policies/strategies as there are a number; however, a lot of these policies/strategies are used on a regular basis by the HR team.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided and approve the Quality Improvement strategy as presented.</p>	Principal / Deputy Principal	20.1.2022
9	KPI – 2021/22 PROPOSALS		
	<p>The Deputy Principal introduced this item and advised the Board that the Principal had reported on the previous years KPI performance at the last Transformation, Finance & Resources Committee. The Board have now been provided with a 'slimmed' down version for 2021/22, as the number of measures have been reduced in order to sharpen focus against each strategic objective and to pull out tangible measures so the senior team and Board can judge where the College is at.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal said that the table includes the outturn for 2020/21 and then provides targets for 2021/22 and, where possible, it includes the intended improvement/development. The key changes in are as</p>		

follows:

- The removal of measures that either reflect previous priorities, are no longer essential to the future direction of the organisation or have little tangible impact on learners and other stakeholders
- The removal of items that partially or fully duplicate other KPIs or artificially segregate them (e.g. Apprenticeship income by different funding streams)
- A sharpening of stakeholder survey-based items to focus on 'would recommend' as the prime measure
- A simplification of achievement rate measures, including the nesting of contributing rates (relevant discrepancies to be included in supporting commentary, as required)
- The removal of 'timely achievement' as a key measure for Apprenticeships in line with ESFA methodology for Apprenticeship standards
- A greater focus for all provision types on high grades and progress measures to focus us on maximising progress for every student – at the moment, there is no target given but the interim data suggests the outturn last year, excluding maths and English, was 38.2%, so the proposed target is 45%. Bearing in mind the College has TAGs, the Deputy Principal feels that this is a challenging target.
- The evolution of the 'teacher scorecard' holistic methodology for evaluating the standard of curriculum implementation by teachers as the prime quality measures for teaching, learning and assessment

The Deputy Principal said that the intention is to move to more aspirational and progress focused, so the College is not just looking at whether a learner has passed or failed. A measure has been put in around maximum variation, which is around performance gaps between different groups of learners – a suggested maximum gap has been put in to ensure that there are not too many discrepancies between groups of learners. Measures have been introduced around Apprenticeship standards high grades, as these are now graded. The Deputy Principal said that, given where the provision is around Apprenticeships and the number of students past planned end date, it is important to have a top-level focus on reducing this down, so a measure has been introduced for this. The final two measures (413/414) are about moving towards a more ambitious grade focus, 'do students achieve their targets', which helps to sharpen the accuracy of the College's work with students.

The Deputy Principal advised that there are two versions of the KPI document provided. The items in bold on the second document have a breakdown target underneath, which are intended to be internal targets. The first document provides

	<p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided and approve the appointment of Nicola Brady as a new independent Governor.</p>		
11	<p>CHAIRS REPORT – TRANSFORMATION, FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE</p>		
	<p>The Chair of the Transformation, Finance & Resources Committee introduced this item and talked through his presentation.</p> <p><u>Here and now</u> The Chair of the Committee asked for the Board to approve the Data Protection and Data Retention policies, which have been reviewed by the Committee. The Board were happy to approve the policies as presented.</p> <p><u>Medium term</u> People strategy and salary review. The Committee Chair said that the work that had gone into these was a credit to the Chief Human Resources Officer and her team. He said that this will hopefully gain the staff retention the College is after and be fundamental going forward.</p> <p>Employer Engagement strategy. The Committee Chair advised that this will be tabled at the next meeting to go through in more detail. He said that this will be important in terms of the College moving forward. He added that it was encouraging to see the Principal’s engagement map and the level of engagement the College is now having, which is a significant step forward.</p> <p><u>Risk and issues</u> The Chair of the Committee highlighted the main concerns around the College’s cash sweep, Apprenticeships and the risks associated with this, as well as recruitment and retention of staff.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer said that, at several point during the year, she has said that the College’s AEB clawback might be significant. She advised that the R14 is being submitted today and she believes that the potential clawback will be around £160k. She said that she has submitted a business case to the ESFA to cover the shortfall, which was completed two weeks ago. She added that she does not expect this to be successful. She confirmed that if the AEB risk didn’t materialise, then the College would pay back the relevant furlough money. One Governor asked what the College’s final AEB outturn was. The Principal said that it was around 87/88%, approximately 2% below the 90% threshold. The Governor said that this was good news and a credit to the</p>		

	<p>people who have managed to turn this around.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided and approve the Data Protection and Data Retention policies as presented.</p>		
12	RSM AUDIT UPDATE		
	<p>The Chief Financial Officer informed the Board that RSM, the College's External Auditors, have had to do an Income Recognition audit in order to enable them to sign off the College's financial statements. The position at the moment is that RSM haven't finished. RSM gave the College a list of deliverables for the audit, which then changed mid-audit (the College has not yet got to the bottom of why the College was not provided with a full list of deliverables), so the team are still getting information together around Apprenticeships for RSM. In terms of 16-18 funding, there are currently no management letter points and no funding errors; however, this is draft feedback. This is the same position for AEB but as the College is still trying to get some information together for Apprenticeships, the Chief Financial Officer is not quite sure what might come back for this.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer also informed the Board that the College has been selected for a full funding audit. She said that, if RSM were just doing their Income Recognition audit and this could be signed off in the next week or two, then the College could look to sign off the financial statements at the next Board meeting in December; however, as PWC are doing the full funding audit, which starts on the 15th November, it has been made clear that there is almost no chance that the financial statements will be ready to sign by December, as there will be a lot of unknowns. She said that she had hoped that RSM, as they had done their own audit, would rely on their own work and sign off in December; however, they have now said that they want to wait to see the results from PWC. PWC have said that they are working to a deadline, which is in their contract with the ESFA, of the 31st January 2022. The Chief Financial Officer said that she had a planning meeting with PWC on Monday and made it clear that the College's financial statements need to be signed off by the 20th January 2022, as this is when the Principal leaves and, as Chief Accounting Officer, she needs to sign the financial statements. The Chief Financial Officer said that PWC took this on board. The Principal added that it depends on what PWC ask and how quickly the College can respond to their queries, which will dictate when they will finish their audit. The Chief Financial Officer said that the ESFA have been very clear about the rules around this audit, so the College will not get the sample until the 1st November 2021, which is based on the R14 being submitted today; the College then has two weeks to get all information together for 120 learners. When</p>		

	<p>PWC complete the audit work, the College has 5 days to provide additional evidence to any queries they have; if the College takes longer than 5 days to respond, then this will be recorded as an audit error. The Chair of the Board asked what happens if PWC don't complete their audit by the 20th January 2022. The Chief Financial Officer said that, if they are still talking about changes etc, then there is a process – the Principal will sign off the financial statements in respect of the period from the 1st August 2020 to the 20th January 2022, then someone else would take over.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
13	RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY		
	<p>The Chief Financial Officer advised the Board that the Risk Management policy was considered and reviewed by the Audit Committee over summer and it was subsequently review by RSM as part of their Risk Management update. RSM are satisfied with the policy; therefore, it is provided at this meeting for the Board to review and approve.</p> <p>AGREED: to approve the Risk Management policy as presented.</p>		
14	UPDATED HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY		
	<p>The Chief Financial Officer informed the Board that the updated Health & Safety policy has been reviewed by the Transformation, Finance & Resources Committee. The only change was to the introduction of the section relating to Covid 19, section 2.21; there are no other changes.</p> <p>AGREED: to approve the updated Health & Safety policy as presented.</p>		
15	GOVERNANCE ITEMS		
	<p>In the Clerks/Director of Governance absence, the Chair of the Board introduced this item. He advised that the report is asking the Board to ratify the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation relating to the withdrawal of AAT from the lease at Burslem on 23rd August 2021. <p>A special Board meeting was convened at short notice but unfortunately was not quorate. Proposed documentation was reviewed by Jeremy Cartwright, David Boughey, David Rogers and Steve Sawbridge with College solicitors, Mills and Reeve, also present to answer any queries. Following discussions, it was agreed to utilise Chairs action to approve and sign the</p>		

	<p>documents as presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship sub-contracting proposal – North Staffordshire Engineering Group Training Association on 14th September 2021. <p>AGREED: the Board agreed to ratify both of these items.</p> <p><u>AoC Code of Good Governance</u></p> <p>The Chair asked the Board if they would like to formally adopt this Code, as well as adopting the Clerk’s proposed lead Governors for various sections of the Code. One Governor highlighted the main changes in the Code have been the inclusion of sections on sustainability, as well as on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. He said that the Board need to be aware that the adoption of this Code or a Code are conditions of funding and the College is obliged to adopt one form of Code. He added that the Code also appears in the financial statements at the end of the year. He continued by adding that the Clerks suggestion of Governors adopting certain parts of the Code will help to bring the practice in the Code alive within the College; therefore, it is a useful way forward in terms of making this a live document in the College.</p> <p>AGREED: the Board agreed to adopt the Code as presented and go forward with the suggested Governors focusing on particular areas of the Code, as detailed within the Clerks report.</p>		
16	ANY OTHER BUSINESS		
	There were no items of additional business.		
17	DATE OF NEXT MEETING		
	<p>It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Board will take place on Friday 17th December 2021 at 11am.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 6.39pm</p>		