


Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on Friday 17th December 2021 at 11am via Microsoft Teams

Present:	Jeremy Cartwright, Chair Sue Blake, Governor David Rogers, Governor Tom Nadin, Governor Denise Brown, Principal/CEO Nikki Brady, Governor Jo Mountney, Governor Steph Talbot, Governor Steve Sawbridge, Governor Dave Hopley, Staff Governor (from 11.30am) Todd Abel-White, Student Governor (from 11.30am) Shannon Mansfield, Student Governor (from 11.30am)		
In Attendance:	Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation Jason Lancaster, Deputy Principal Antoinette Lythgoe, Chief Financial Officer Nova Abela, Chief HR Officer		
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		
	The Chair welcomed Nikki Brady to her first Board meeting as a new external Governor. Apologies for absence were received from David Boughey, Pritpal Singh Nagi, Rob Fisher, Neil Hoskinson and Andy McKay.		
3	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21ST OCTOBER 2021		

Signed :  Chair
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	<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 the 21st October 2021.</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>		
4	ACTION PROGRESS REPORT		
	The Board happy to note the content of the update provided.		
5	STUDENT VOICE		
	<p>The Deputy Principal introduced the Student Feedback video for Governors to view and advised that a balanced view has been provided in the video.</p> <p>Following the video presentation, the Director of Student Services confirmed that the 'talking heads' video was about how students are settling into the College. Also provided for Governors is the Learner Voice and enrichment report for this term, which the two Student Governors discussed and highlighted the main topics for the Board note.</p> <p>The first Student Governor said that he thought highly of the enrichment activities at the College and provided details of the enrichment activities available at the College. He also advised Governors of the Student Governor conference which took place in Birmingham in November. He said that the first day of the two-day conference was an introduction including quizzes etc and the second day focused on the role of the Student Governor, which he found very useful, as well as meeting Student Governors from other colleges.</p> <p>The other Student Governor informed the Board that there are two ways in which students can give their voice. The first is via the Learner Voice Conference, which takes place three times per year, with over 30 students including the President, Vice President, Student Union Executive Officers, Peer Mentors and other students. At the Learner Voice, students are updated on upcoming events/trips, any changes/improvements that are taking place at the College, as well as having votes on such things as fundraisers and which charity the funds go to. The second is via the Student Council, which has over 25 students across both campuses from a range of courses. The Student Council training took place on the 4th October 2021, which went well as 100% of students said that they felt comfortable working together as a team and 100% of students said that they understood their role. The Student Council meetings take place every month at both campuses. The meetings have an agenda, a set of minutes and the you said/we did form. The</p>		

<p>Student Council provides a space for open discussion about any arising issues and any feedback students have about the College.</p> <p>The first Student Governor also commented on the first big tutorial, which took place on the 18th October 2021 at both campuses and was hosted by former gymnastic Olympian, Craig Heap. He said that this event helped students understand the how to cope with all types of pressure and how to get to the stage Craig got to. He added that understanding how Craig got to the top of his game has helped him to try and get to the top of his game at the College and in his studies.</p> <p>The Director of Student Services directed the Board to the you said/we did report, which documents any actions from Learner Voice Conferences or the Student Council, as well as the Course Representative meetings. He said that the document logs any suggestions/actions and is a rolling record of where the College is at with each of the actions, which are RAG rated. He said that feedback is positive, as well as constructive, with suggestions on how to improve the College.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal said that there were specific issues highlighted in the video around ablution facilities for Muslim students, which has been discussed at the Executive Board and the College is looking to proceed with a plan around this. He said that the College has dealt with the issues with students who use cash cards in the canteen and the other issue around the LRC will be dealt with in the future. He added that there was much more footage than what was presented in the video, so there are other issues that have been picked up, some of which are course related, others that aren't. Overall, he said that the team found the exercise useful.</p> <p>The Chair of the Board commented that he thought the video was excellent and thanked the two Student Governors for their input. He said that he has never heard any student say anything negative about the College, there have only been constructive comments. He asked if this is how it really is, is everyone positive. One of the Student Governors said that what the College has to offer is amazing – there are good trips, the Students Union is excellent, there are amazing staff and everyone he speaks to loves and enjoys the College. The Director of Student Services said that the Course Representatives/Student Council Representatives have training at the start of the academic year and part of this trains the students on how to raise an issue constructively with the College. He said that the students are encouraged to be open and honest and tell the College if something isn't working but to do this in a constructive way.</p> <p>One member of the Board asked if there were any</p>		
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opportunities for students to meet with learners from other colleges in order to get a wider perspective. It was noted that both the Student Governors had had experience of this at the Student Governor conference in Birmingham. The Chair of the Board asked if the Student Governors received similar feedback from the other Student Governors from other colleges at the conference. One of the Student Governors said that the colleges all had different strong points, as each college specialises in something different. He said that Stoke on Trent College's enrichment and courses have a lot more to offer than other colleges. The Principal added that, over the last couple of years, students have taken part in competitions, in maths and English particularly, with other colleges in the Stoke on Trent area, which gave the students a real opportunity to mingle. She said that course to course or through the sports team activities, there is an opportunity for students to visit other colleges and talk to other students. She added that the Student Union have organised inter-college activities, so there is opportunity there and this is where the College can test itself against other colleges with feedback that comes from the learners. The Director of Student Services added that the College has collaborated on particular topics such as mental health with learners from Newcastle and Stafford College Group and the Sixth Form College contributing. One Governor said that it is right that the College seeks out opportunities to spend time with learners from other colleges in order to get other perspectives. One of the Student Governors added that enrichment is a key part of this. He said that, if the College gets enough learners involved in enrichment activities, then the College can host games i.e. the netball team was going to play against the Sixth Form. He said that collaboration with other colleges also helps with fundraising.

The Chair of the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee advised the Board that Learner Voice was on the Committee agenda last week and is a real strength of the College, particularly the enrichment activity. He said that the College's Challenge programme has been constrained in relation to South Africa and Poland; however, it was good to hear about the work the students are doing in the City itself i.e. with the Lou Macari Centre, which is commendable. He said that, with regards to the negative side of the student experience, one of the powerful ways of getting a handle on this is by having a drop out follow up discussion i.e. asking those students who dropped out of course what their experience has been compared to the students who have been retained and assessing where improvement can be made. He added that the Peer mentoring is commendable and the best support learners can get is from trusted peers, so this is a good/strong initiative. The Director of Student Services said that the Challenge Stoke on Trent is supported by learners and is about

	<p>them giving something back to the local community and the fundraising that will be going on for another homeless pod at the Lou Macari Centre. The Board were informed that both of the Student Governors are part of Challenge Stoke on Trent and recently visited the Hanley museum, the Bet365 stadium and the Lou Macari Centre, where they looked at homelessness in the City and if there was anything that the students could do to raise money for a new pod. In February 2022, students are taking part in the 'Big Sleep Out' at the stadium, as well as doing a step challenge at the stadium to raise as much money as possible.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal noted that the Governors comment about the drop out activity is useful and will be something that the College will look into. He said that, for the next video, the Student Services team will try to get a different cohort of student, so that Governors are provided with feedback from different angles, as it is important to get diversity of voices.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>	<p>Deputy Principal</p> <p>Director of Student Services</p>	<p>February 2022</p> <p>February 2022</p>
6	PRINCIPAL/CEO'S REPORT		
	<p>The Principal introduced her detailed report and highlighted discussions around the following:</p> <p><u>Feedback from FE Commissioner visit</u></p> <p>The Principal advised that the conclusion to this is that the visit was positive; the FE Commissioner team gave very constructive feedback and were complimentary in terms of the impact of some of the changes the College has made. She said that the fact the FE Commissioner didn't offer any further recommendations shows the progress the College is making and, in the report, the FE Commissioner offered to return if the College would find it useful to do so, which is something for the new Principal and Board to consider. She said that the report is incredibly positive and a testament to the work of the College, from the Board to the staff team, this was a whole College effort.</p> <p><u>Update on student numbers</u></p> <p>The Principal provided a brief update on student numbers. She said that adult learners is where the College will have concerns if there are any further restrictions put in place as a result of Covid and the Omicron variant, as this is where it would impact, as well as the remaining recruitment for 16-18 year olds. She said that the College recruits approximately 8% of its contract/numbers for 16-18s between October and July, so the College will need the opportunity to continue to recruit into the new year and the case is similar for 19+, as this is very</p>		

<p>dependent on recruitment between January to July. She added that, if no further restrictions are put in place on the organisation, then the College should hit contract for 16-18s and 19+ but if there are further restrictions, then the College would have to consider contingencies and areas of sub-contracted provision. She informed the Board that, last year, the College used Learning Curve as a sub-contractor and she would suggest that the College used a high-quality provider, like Learning Curve, again should restrictions be imposed.</p> <p>The Principal continued by saying that Apprenticeship recruitment has been healthy, as the College has improved the paperwork for starts and getting learners onto ILR with the correct documents, so it is not expected that the College will need to withdraw learners due to lack of funding evidence this year; therefore, the College's budgeted figure for Apprenticeship recruitment should be reached – the question is whether the College would want to go beyond the budgeted provision for Apprenticeships or whether that would be too challenging from a quality perspective. The Principal said that, as the year goes on, these conversations can take place.</p> <p>The Principal said that the College has done research on last years outcomes, as the College was seeing some changes to recruitment profiles. The research took place in November and looked at actual destinations of learners and the report produced is provided in the Board pack. She advised that this report hasn't been received by the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee, so this will need to go to this meeting for further discussion in the new year; however, it is presented to Board today so that Governors can reflect on this prior to the Committee meeting and also as part of the story of Stoke on Trent College. She said that, in previous meetings, the College thought that 16-18s had chosen to go into employment, rather than enrol at College and the research would suggest that this is the case, with more 16-18s going into employment due to earning a wage, rather than going into education and training.</p> <p>The Principal informed the Board that she attended the West Midlands workshop for Principals and Governors in relation to the Skills Bill and next steps. She said that the conversation focused on collaboration and the impact of the Local Skills Plans, so the Board will need to spend a little time considering who the College collaborates with and why, as well as looking at the College's curriculum in relation to the Skills Plan.</p> <p>Referring back to the student destination report, the Principal said that approximately 40% of 16-18 learners changed curriculum/subject at the end of their course. It was not clear if this was linked to a job opportunity that has become available or whether this is linked to IAG. She said that,</p>	<p>Deputy Principal</p>	<p>February 2022</p>
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increasingly, the College's curriculum has to be aligned with local economic need, so the College needs to make sure that this is part of the planning process to support this. She said that the Board need to secure assurance that the planning process is taking proper recognition of local economic needs.

Agenda/Plan for the Strategy Day scheduled for the 20th January 2022

The Principal directed the Board to the agenda/plan for the Strategy day on the 20th January. She said that this schedule picks up the issues and is a starting point for a conversation. She said that the intention is to have an initial day and then a follow up day so that decisions can be made on the direction of travel for the College.

The Chair of the Board said that he is envisaging the Strategy day to be two days, split into two separate sessions. He said that the second Strategy day will take place in early spring, after the new Principal has settled in. He said that the framework for the January meeting is largely about external input.

One Governor said that, in his AoC Governor Council role, he chaired a workshop for colleges involved in the Learning Skills and Improvement Plan (LSIPs) pilots and some interesting points came out of these workshops in terms of collaboration and some good examples around the country where groups of colleges are in a network but there are also some real difficulties. He said that, for Stoke on Trent College, there are some issues that need to be tackled in the Stoke area around who provides what to whom and how Stoke on Trent College fits in with the other providers in the area. He said that there is definitely a move towards colleges having three-year funding allocations, with one-year firm and two years indicative, which, if this happens, will provide the College with a much better platform to think about how they collaborate and what this generates in terms of future income.

The Principal commented that, through the Black CEO group she is part of, there is a Principal who has been a pilot college for the revised Common Inspection Framework. She said that the inspection was almost all about progression and destinations, not just about what the College has got in the ILR. It was about what the College can show about how the curriculum is enabling learners to secure a place at university or secure a job relevant to the course they have started/completed. The Principal said that this is an early warning for the College that the sooner more data can be collected, the more the College integrates local economic needs with the curriculum offer and track learners through, the better. She said that, although the College has started to

<p>do this, it needs to be continued, rather than just a research sample. The Chair asked if the Common Inspection Framework will be changing ahead of the College's next Ofsted inspection. The Principal said that, if the College is inspected after September 2022, then the College will be inspected under the new Common Inspection Framework. She said that Ofsted tend to move towards the goal posts, so that the new Framework will be in place for the summer term, before the official launch of the new Common Inspection Framework. She said that, if the College is inspected in summer/autumn term of 2022, then the aforementioned will be a key focus of the inspection. The Chair of the Board said, if the College continues with its strategy/direction, then the College is in line with Ofsted's style of thinking, so it is something the College should embrace. The Principal said that, what the College doesn't have, is the evidence of the outcomes to support the inputs and this is where the College needs to put its attention. The Deputy Principal added that he wouldn't expect 100% of Engineering students to go into Engineering, they should go into a range of employment. He said that the College trains students to go into wider employment; only a small number of students follow through into a career of the subject they studied. He added that the College is giving students skills for every type of future career. Our remit as a College is to get an many young people and adults to a high level of skill as possible.</p> <p>One Governor asked about LSIPs and whether the College had heard anything about how the trailblazer areas are going. The Principal said that Loughborough College are in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce around the LSIP, so they could be a good 'go to' in relation to this. The Governor said that he was happy to look at this from the Chamber of Commerce point of view to see how the relationships are working from the LSIP side.</p> <p>The Principal said that, on the point of the curriculum supporting local economic need, there doesn't need to be a direct line between the course studied and the job secured, she said that it is about how the College enables the learner to progress, so it is about progression skills and confidence building and this is where the enrichment programme is important, as it is creating well round individuals who have the confidence and skills to pursue careers in areas that suit them. She said that, when the College looks at the curriculum, there needs to be more emphasis on the development of employability skills in the round, rather than just vocational skills. She said that it is about how the College articulates itself and how the curriculum is articulated, as well as how the College supports learners with where they are going. One Governor said that it is about making the curriculum respond to actual destinations, as well as intended destinations. The</p>	Tom Nadin	17.2.2022
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	<p>Chair of the Board added that it is implicit in the College's mission statement that the College is creating opportunities for people for a lifetime of fulfilment, rather than pointing learners in a linear direction. Another Governor commented that people are moving into a world where the nature of work is changing and people need to embrace the idea of re-training at various stages in their careers, so this has to be built into the curriculum – it is better to have flexible skills than clearly defined skills. The Chair added that adaptability is key.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>		
7	SAFEGUARDING		
	<p>The Director of Student Services provided a verbal update on this item. He advised that, in October 2021, he put together a training session for Governors in order to provide a refresher on Safeguarding and the Governors role in Safeguarding, as well as updating Governors on the key changes in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021, which includes online safety and peer on peer abuse. Within the training, he also provided information on prevent development and gave a summary of the actions the College has taken so far in response to Keeping Children Safe in Education. He confirmed that the training presentation has been circulated to Governors and invited any feedback, additional comments or suggested actions.</p> <p>One Governor said that this is an area where the College is particularly strong. He said that it would be useful for the Governance Executive Assistant to re-circulate the training presentation to Governors again. The Chair of the Board concurred that both Safeguarding and the student view of the College has consistently felt quite strong, so the biggest risk is of complacency. The Deputy Principal assured Governors that the College remains strong in those areas and there are various positive indicators in terms of the level of reporting and the granular detail provided, which helps to identify bigger issues more rapidly. He said that the College has identified peer on peer sexual abuse and harassment as a focus and, locally, the issue around the incel agenda, which is something the College is pushing forward on.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>	Governance Executive Assistant	17.2.2022
8	CHAIRS REPORT – TRANSFORMATION, FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE		
	<p>In the Committee Chairs absence, the Chair of the Board directed Governors to the slides produced, following the Transformation, Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on the 29th November 2021. The Chair advised that the only matter to address is the sub-contract report presented to the</p>		

	<p>Committee, which proposes some additional contracts for approval by the Board.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal discussed the sub-contractor report presented and advised that the report summarises the arrangements for the College last year, which included some sub-contracts around AEB and the College's study programme. For the current year, the College is 'running out' the Steelworks Performing Arts Academy contract for the second year. The additional contracts are around North Staffordshire Engineering Group (NSEG) and the proposal is to continue with the AEB approach the College has used in the previous year. The Deputy Principal advised that this is an extension of the programme, which has worked well and delivered good outcomes for students. He said that the College is proposing to put in sub-contracting apprentices in with NSEG in order to enable the College to have a more formal arrangement in delivering technical training on NSEGs Engineering programmes. He said that NSEG have a closed group of employers, which the College will be supporting through this arrangement, so it gives the College an opportunity. He advised that the plan is for NSEG to do the on the job training and the College will provide the off the job training. Together, NSEG and the College will deliver high quality Apprenticeships. He added that the College sees this as a growing partnership and it will give the College an opportunity to do some good work in the Stoke on Trent area around Engineering, Welding and Fabrication.</p> <p>One Governor said that the partnership with NSEG is good but asked whether the College needs to be thinking about contingencies for any AEB under delivery. The Deputy Principal said that this is something the College needs to keep in mind and a conversation has taken place about other options the College can deliver. He said that, right now, the College needs to see what happens after Christmas and what decisions are made then. He said that, in broader terms, the College has cleared the 4th January 2022 in order to make a decision based on what the government has advised. He added that, with the College's distance learning unit, the College does have an option to 'ramp up' internal distance learning delivery and then go external if needed.</p> <p>The Chair advised that there has also been a minor change to the Data Retention policy presented. The Deputy Principal said that body cameras have been incorporated into policy to make sure there is coverage around this.</p> <p>AGREED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) to note the content of the update provided b) to approve the additional sub-contractor contracts as presented 		
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	c) to approve the Data Retention policy as presented		
9	CHAIRS REPORT – AUDIT COMMITTEE		
	<p>The Chair of the Committee highlighted some points for the Board’s attention.</p> <p>He advised that another Governor, Rob Fisher, has joined the Audit Committee due to quoracy issues in the Committee. He also advised that, on the day the Audit Committee wasn’t quorate, the Committee used some time to talk about general aspects of the Committee and it appeared useful to, once or twice per year, have an informal get together of the Committee to enable members the capacity to talk about a few other matters that may be difficult to accommodate in the formal meeting. These meetings will be put in place in this academic year.</p> <p>The Chair of the Committee said that, in signing off the College accounts, Governor are reliant on the assurance from the Audit Committee that all the systems are ok, the External Auditors have looked at them and there is nothing for the Board to be concerned about to approve these accounts. He confirmed that the Audit Committee’s Annual Report presented provides this assurance and is now more of a forward-looking document.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer said that the Audit Committee positively received the updated Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework and this will be presented to the next Board meeting.</p> <p>AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.</p>	CFO	17.2.2022
10	YEAR-END FINANCIAL REPORTS		
	<p>The Chief Financial Officer said that the items presented to the Board today went to the joint Audit and Transformation, Finance & Resources Committee meeting earlier this week and a number of the matters are summarised in the Committee summary note provided.</p> <p><u>2020/21 Financial Statements Audit Management Letter</u></p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer drew the Board attention to the Audit Finding reports. She advised that Clair Parry from RSM, the College’s External Auditors, attended the joint Audit and Transformation, Finance & Resources Committee in order to discuss the Audit Findings report. The Chief Financial Officer informed the Board that the financial statements audit has not been completed, as PWCs funding audit outcome is still unknown and is likely to be concluded in January 2022, which</p>		

is when the Audit Findings report will be updated.

The Chief Financial Officer said that there were some matters that the External Auditor brought to the Committees attention including outstanding items such as the results of the Funding Audit, the going concern assessment and some Management letter points. She said that there were no unadjusted accounting misstatements in the accounts, only some classification matters, which is noted on page 17 of the Audit Findings report. The Chief Financial Officer said that there was an error in the Funding Audit but, out of funding of millions of pounds, this one error totalled approximately £2,300, which is a good result and, when extrapolated, comes to approximately £73k, which is not material enough to make changes to the financial statements.

2020/21 Members Report and Financial Statements (Draft)

The Chief Financial Officer said that she drew the joint Committees attention to various parts of the Members Report, which are important for members of the Board to note, particularly in relation to the Governors own responsibilities highlighted on page 24 of the financial statements, which says 'Based on the advice of the Audit Committee and the Principal, the Corporation is of the opinion that the College has an effective framework of governance, risk management and control and has fulfilled statutory responsibility for "the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the body and the safeguarding of their assets"'. This, as well as the numbers in the financial statements, were discussed at the joint Committee meeting. The Chief Financial Officer said that the final form of the financial statements will be presented to the Board for approval in January and, if there are any changes, these will be highlighted to the Board.

Letters of Representation

The Chief Financial Officer drew the Board attention to two Letters of Representation and advised that the Board is required to give representation to the auditors about various matters, which is a standard requirement. She said that, if there were any non-standard representations, then they would be drawn to the Board's attention but, at this stage, there are no non-standard representations.

Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire

The Chief Financial Officer said that, when auditors undertake financial statements work, they are not just looking at a true and fair view in terms of the accounts but also looking at the use of public money and making sure that this is regular; therefore, the Chief Financial Officer has completed the

Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire on the Board's behalf. She said that this was presented to the joint Committee meeting for review and has been recommended to the Board for approval.

Letter of Support for Education Business Services (Stoke) Limited

The Chief Financial Officer drew the Board's attention to the Letter of Support from the College for Education Business Services (Stoke) Limited. She advised that this is a standard requirement and provides support of the company's ability to confirm that it remains a going concern. Again, the joint Committee were happy to recommend the Board approve this Letter of Support.

Reconciliation with July 2021 Management Accounts

The Chief Financial Officer said that this is presented to show whether the audited outcomes look similar to the Management Accounts. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that they are similar and gives the Board assurance that, as the College prepares Management Accounts on a monthly basis, they are not different to the final outcome.

Going Concern report

The Chief Financial Officer said that this is provided to confirm that the College will remain in business for a period of at least 12 months.

Energy report

The Chief Financial Officer informed the Board that members of the joint Audit and Transformation, Finance & Resources Committee received an energy report. She said that the College was unlucky to come out of an energy contract at the time where there was a huge hike in energy prices. She said that the College is in discussion with a specialist energy procurement company, as recommended by Crescent Purchasing Consortium, who have given the College advice. She said that the difficulty with energy prices at the moment is that they are fixed for a matter of hours, so it would not be possible to bring an energy contract to Board for formal approval; therefore, she asked for the Board to delegate authority to two members of the Executive team to lock in a contract when the College gets the best deal. She said that the College's Financial Regulations currently require Board approval for contracts over £75k, this is why delegated authority is needed. The Chair of the Board asked what the scale of the approval would be. The Chief Financial Officer said that it would be for a two-year contract and the energy

contracts are expected to be around £1.2 million for gas electric for a two-year supply. The Chair of the Board asked what happens if the College does nothing. The Chief Financial Officer said that this has already been explored and the prices are even more astronomical than the fixed prices the College has received. She said that the specialist procurement company have advised that they think the energy prices might come down in the new year, so the procurement company have been asked to let the College know when the prices hit the College's budget level, so that this can be locked in. The Chief Financial Officer said that the College is currently forecasting £73k over budget but this is for prices quoted in November 2021 and the current prices quoted are significantly higher. One Governor said that the College just needs to take the advice that has been made available. The Clerk suggested that the College make sure that any advice received is in writing.

Following discussions, the Chief Financial Officer said that she needed Board approval of the following items at this meeting:

- Letters of Representation
- Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire
- Letter of Support for Education Business Services (Stoke) Limited

She added that, during the summer, the Board approved the College to furlough staff but there was a debate on whether the College would pay back Job Retention Scheme (JRS) monies if the College was successful with the AEB business case. The Chief Financial Officer said that the College has been successful with the AEB business case but the College has not repaid the JRS monies, as the College didn't furlough teaching staff. She advised that the intention back in summer was to repay money if the College furloughed teaching staff but not if the College furloughed business support staff. She said that the College did claim JRS for business support staff on the clear understanding that teachers would continue to teach online; however, the College then received late notification of the AEB threshold being 90%, so sought legal advice about whether, if the College was not able to hit this threshold, the College would be able to furlough teaching staff. She confirmed that the plan was to furlough teaching staff and legal advice said that the College could do this. If the College was successful in recovering the AEB position, then the College would repay the money if the College proceeded with furloughing teaching staff; however, the College didn't furlough teaching staff, so the obligation to repay the monies disappears. The Board confirmed that they were content with this position.

AGREED:

- a) to note the content of the update provided

	<p>b) to approve the Letters of Representation, the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire and the Letter of Support for Education Business Services (Stoke) Limited</p> <p>c) to delegate authority to two members of the Executive team to lock in an energy contract when the College gets the best deal</p>		
11	CHAIRS REPORT – CURRICULUM, QUALITY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE		
	<p>The Chair of the Committee directed the Board to his slides:</p> <p><u>Here and now</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed minutes of the meeting to follow • Self-Assessment Report 2020/21 and Quality Improvement Plan 2021/22 – to be discussed later in the meeting • Learner Voice – already discussed • Safeguarding and Prevent Annual Review – already discussed • Data Dashboard – data on a page – the Chair of the Committee said that the data is now presented in a simple, concise, consistent and accessible way • Apprenticeship Task and Finish Group – revised Terms of Reference for Board approval – the Chair of the Committee said that it has been agreed that this Group will continue until the College is inspected in order to provide some additional scrutiny over the development of the Apprenticeship provision. <p><u>Medium term</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum – the Chair of the Committee said that the focus for the next Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee meeting will be curriculum planning and, in terms of Ofsted, having a clear intent around the curriculum which matches aspirations, provides professional opportunities and aligns with the local economy and skills demand is critical. He said that the way the College involves employers in developing the curriculum is critical and a very inherent part of the LSIP process. He added that tying in employer engagement with the design and delivery of the curriculum will be key and the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee will want to have scrutiny of this. He said that it is worth noting that the curriculum is something that the Board owns and he is not sure if the Board spends enough time unpicking the curriculum for the whole of the Board; therefore, he has asked the Deputy Principal to provide a briefing note on the way the curriculum is planned and designed, so that when it comes to Ofsted in particular, everyone is clear about 	Deputy Principal	17.2.2022

	<p>the intent and the design behind the curriculum itself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability and Climate Change – to be covered in more detail at the Governor Strategy day in January. <p><u>Longer term</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Skills Improvement Plan and the impact on the College Strategy and curriculum • Maximising opportunities that open up as a result of achieving at least a Good Ofsted judgement • Development of Higher Education provision and direct funding – the Chair of the Committee said that this is an ambition for the College. He said that it was interesting to hear from West Notts College that they are taking a different approach to the delivery of Higher Education – rather than deliver themselves, they have contracted with Nottingham Trent University to deliver on their site. He said that, whatever the model the College has for delivering Higher Education, the opportunity for level 4 and 5 for the College in key curriculum areas is really important • Embedding the Digital strategy in curriculum development and delivery <p><u>Risk and issues</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further impact of Covid mitigation • Ofsted – readiness and delay – the Committee Chair said that the Ofsted visit could be deferred to the next academic year, instead of taking place in the next two terms, which does create some limitations but does give the College more of an opportunity to be Ofsted ready, particularly around Apprenticeship delivery • Apprenticeship delivery – quality and finance • Recruitment and curriculum offer – a curriculum offer that generates adequate demand and maintains financial viability is key • Impact of disrupted learners on learner starting points, achievement and progression • Implications of the Skills White Paper and Skills Bill on the curriculum offer • Increasing issue around staff recruitment and retention – if the College is to develop specialisms, especially around Construction and Engineering, recruitment of staff, with the right kind of skills in those areas, will be a risk and a lot of Colleges are finding it difficult, so it may mean that the College needs to look at alternative ways of delivering to employers i.e. delivering on employer premises or to groups of employers is another strategy to deal with recruitment and retention of staff issues. • Planned Institute of Technology that Newcastle and Stafford College Group are developing with Burton and South Derbyshire College, focusing on Construction, the 		
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Built Environment and Engineering. The Committee Chair said that this poses a significant risk to the College in those particular curriculum areas if this goes ahead, particularly at level 4 and 5 where the College has an ambition to have its own. He said that this is the start of collaboration and Institutes of Technology are a key vehicle for collaboration.

With regards to the planned Institute of Technology between Newcastle and Stafford College Group and Burton and South Derbyshire College, the Principal advised that this has been mentioned in previous meetings and that the College couldn't have joined in this bid due to being a grade 3. She said that she is not aware of what this looks like, she doesn't know what the capital spend might be but it would have to 'go some' to challenge the facilities the College has at Burslem, as the College has good, industry standard facilities for Construction and Engineering. She said that, once the College achieves a grade 2, it can align itself with this, as opposed to going into competition. The Principal said that this is a potential risk but it could also be a collaboration opportunity at curriculum level. The Committee Chair said that the 9 Institutes of Technology are being announced today and that it is a critical thing, as it could have an impact on the College's ability to develop in those areas. He agreed that the College does have industry standard provision at the Burslem campus but wouldn't like another college setting up something with employers elsewhere. He advised that Newcastle and Stafford College Group and Burton and South Derbyshire College will already have some employers on board as part of the bid.

In terms of the potential impact of Covid on Ofsted's timetable and the College's visit being pushed back and linking in to not being able to join the aforementioned bid due to the College being a grade 3, the Chair of the Board asked, if the College felt it was in a position to be a grade 2 but was being prevented in getting to this position due to Ofsted being unable to visit due to Covid, is there an opportunity where the College can argue a case or challenge the position. The Principal said that, on competitions like the one for the Institute of Technology, a College could submit an application and put in a business case for why a grade 3 is no longer relevant and back this up with evidence. She said that it depends on how fast the department provides criteria and their appetite at the time but there is nothing to stop a business case being made, it would depend on the competition for those bids. The Chair of the Board said that the more the College improves and projects the image of a good reputation for the College, the stronger the argument becomes for being judged solely on the Ofsted grade. The Deputy Principal added that, in some cases, there are hard and fast lines but on other things, it is recognised in the sector that grade 3 providers

	<p>have great provision, so there is an opportunity to target the ones the College can get to.</p> <p>In reference to the recruitment and retention of staff, the Deputy Principal said that the base rate for study programmes is going up next year, so it is recognised that there is an issue. He said that, from conversations locally and in the sector, Stoke on Trent College is not the only college struggling and the College is trying to be creative around aspects of this.</p> <p>AGREED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) to note the content of the update provided b) to approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Apprenticeship Task & Finish Group 		
12	SAR 2020/21		
	<p>The Deputy Principal introduced this item and discussed the process he had gone through to get to the final version of the SAR presented today. He said that the curriculum teams produced early evaluative self-assessments of their areas before the summer break and these were used in a productive session with Directors and Assistant Principals to work their way through the framework across the College and work out what the preliminary judgements looked like. By the time of the summer break, the College had this in place and knew what was needed to start to put in place the QIP from late August / early September. Since then, there has been a more detailed drafting process and each draft has been sense checked in College, with the Curriculum, Quality & Standards Committee and with the Board, taking feedback at each stage. The SAR has also been externally moderated twice – once with a very experienced, former HMI at the RNN Group and once with the College’s link at the Luminare Group. The Deputy Principal said that there is now greater alignment with Ofsted’s framework and further embedding of SEND throughout. He said that some feedback around destinations has been added, which has strengthened the report and he feels that it is a fair assessment of the College, as the judgements can be ‘stacked up’ and evidenced. He advised the Board that the R14 data pack and the QIP, with the first detail regarding progress monitoring, has been provided for Governors to peruse. He asked whether Governors recognised the College from the SAR. The Chair of the Board said that it is a good document and he does recognise the College from the report. Another Governor wish to recognise the amount of work that has been put into this report and stated that it is a commendable SAR. He added that the steps taken to get external validation have strengthened the SAR, as well as the information around progression and the grading is right. He said that, in comparison to where the College was a few years ago, this document reflects a big improvement and brings out the real</p>		

	<p>positives, as well as being objective in relation to what needs to be done in the future.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal commented that he has added in data around the level of deprivation in the City and said that the College should be proud, as it deals with some of the most deprived in the area. The Principal asked what the two external validators thought of the College's grades. The Deputy Principal said that they agreed with the grading and that they only said to be careful around the Apprenticeships piece to make sure that it doesn't look more negative than it is. One Governor said that, on reading the deprivation statistics and bearing in mind the area the College is in, as well as reflecting on what the Student Governors said earlier in the meeting, this should be something that the College is proud of, as it is potentially life changing for some young people.</p> <p>AGREED: to approve the SAR 2020/21 as presented</p>		
13	EDUCATION BUSINESS SERVICES (STOKE) LIMITED		
	<p>The Clerk informed the Board that there is one recommendation for approval, which is the appointment of an additional Director due to losing the Principal on the Education Business Services (Stoke) Limited Board when she leaves the College. The recommended appointment is Heather Marks.</p> <p>AGREED: to approve Heather Marks as a new Director on Education Business Services (Stoke) Limited Board</p>		
14	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 Thursday 17th February 2022 at 5pm.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 1.25pm</p>		