

MINUTES

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Date: Thursday 24 September 2020 **Time:** 1500

Location: Boardroom, University House/online Teams Meeting

Notes:

1. Items marked with an asterisk (starred items) were for information only or regarded as noncontentious.
2. Items classified as Confidential, and their subsequent minutes (highlighted here in blue), will be redacted before publication of the agenda and minutes on the University's public website.

Members		
Professor Liz Barnes	Vice Chancellor	P
Connor Bayliss	Student Governor (President, Students' Union)	P
Glenn Earlam	External Member	P
Tony Evans	External Member	P
Tuesday Forrest	Student Governor (Vice-President, Students' Union)	P
Hannah Gibbard	Staff Governor (professional support staff)	P
Kevin Gould	External Member	P
John Henderson (Deputy	External Member	P
Dr Cathryn Hickey	External Member	P
Professor Dame Sue Hill	External Member	A
Colin Hughes (Chair)	External Member	P
Baljinder Kuller	External Member	P
Dr Simon Smith	Staff Governor (academic staff)	P
Jonathan Vardon	External Member	P
Sara Williams	External Member	P
In attendance		
Ian Blachford	Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board of Governors	IA
Andrea Caulfield-Smith	Executive Director of Marketing, Recruitment and Communications (<i>KYB and item 2608 only</i>)	IA
Professor Ieuan Ellis	Pro Vice Chancellor – Place & Engagement	IA
Professor Martin Jones	Deputy Vice Chancellor	IA
Sally McGill	Chief Financial Officer	IA
Andrew Proctor	Pro Vice Chancellor - Digital	IA
Lauren Rooke	Assistant Clerk to the Board of Governors (<i>minutes</i>)	IA

P = Present (via Teams); A = Apologies; IA = In Attendance (via Teams)

Know Your Business (1500 - 1530) – A presentation on first impressions in the role and key priorities was received from Andrea Caulfield-Smith, Director of Marketing and Communications, including sections on efficiencies, empowerment and strategy.

Members commented as follows:

- Discussion focused around empowerment (of both students and staff), the most effective ways to gather student feedback, the growing importance of seeing the student as a customer or stakeholder, and the concept of co-creation between staff and students.

1 MEETING MANAGEMENT																			
2602	Apologies for Absence were received from Sue Hill.																		
2603	There were no new Declarations of Interest .																		
2604	<p>The following Membership of the Board of Governors for 2020/21 was noted:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Constitution</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Membership</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">External Members</td> <td>Glenn Earlam Tony Evans Kevin Gould John Henderson (Deputy Chair) Joanne Hannaford Dr Cathryn Hickey Professor Dame Sue Hill Colin Hughes (Chair) Baljinder Kuller Jonathan Vardon Sara Williams</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Student Governors</td> <td>Connor Bayliss (President, Students' Union) Tuesday Forrest (Vice President, Students' Union)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Staff Governors</td> <td>Dr Simon Smith (Academic Staff governor) Hannah Gibbard (Professional Support governor)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Vice Chancellor</td> <td>Professor Liz Barnes</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">In attendance</td> <td>Ian Blachford, Chief Operating Officer & Clerk to the Board Professor Ieuan Ellis, Pro Vice Chancellor – Place & Engagement Professor Martin Jones, Deputy Vice Chancellor Sally McGill, Chief Financial Officer Andrew Proctor, Pro Vice Chancellor – Digital</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">The following were noted as Co-opted Committee Members for 2020-21:</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Jonathan Chapman</td> <td>Audit and Risk Committee</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Mike Herbert</td> <td>Sustainability and Resources Committee</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Constitution	Membership	External Members	Glenn Earlam Tony Evans Kevin Gould John Henderson (Deputy Chair) Joanne Hannaford Dr Cathryn Hickey Professor Dame Sue Hill Colin Hughes (Chair) Baljinder Kuller Jonathan Vardon Sara Williams	Student Governors	Connor Bayliss (President, Students' Union) Tuesday Forrest (Vice President, Students' Union)	Staff Governors	Dr Simon Smith (Academic Staff governor) Hannah Gibbard (Professional Support governor)	Vice Chancellor	Professor Liz Barnes	In attendance	Ian Blachford, Chief Operating Officer & Clerk to the Board Professor Ieuan Ellis, Pro Vice Chancellor – Place & Engagement Professor Martin Jones, Deputy Vice Chancellor Sally McGill, Chief Financial Officer Andrew Proctor, Pro Vice Chancellor – Digital	The following were noted as Co-opted Committee Members for 2020-21:		Jonathan Chapman	Audit and Risk Committee	Mike Herbert	Sustainability and Resources Committee
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Jonathan Chapman	Audit and Risk Committee																		
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2605	The Minutes of the last meeting of the Board of Governors , 24 June 2020 BG/118/01 and 21 August 2020 BG/118/02, were signed as true and accurate records.																		
2606	<p>Matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that the Mid-Year Strategic Event had taken place on 4 August 2020. 																		
2 STRATEGIC OVERVIEW																			
2607	<p>The Board received a report on Strategic Developments and Organisational Performance BG/118/03 from the Vice Chancellor, covering the following main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student recruitment • Government regulation and review • Return to campus for students and staff (and student celebration event 2020) • University performance, including GUG 2020 and THE Awards shortlisting • Business reviews • LEP funding • AdvanceHE Race Equality Charter Mark 																		

- Developments as a result of the Employee Engagement Survey/Cultural Development Programme
- Staffing changes

Members commented as follows:

- Liz Barnes underlined how proud she was of the University's staff following several months of having to work and collaborate quite differently, with the vast majority of students still receiving the best student experience possible. Liz further noted that the University was well-positioned for blended learning and that students were feeding back overwhelmingly positively on the approach taken and processes in place.
- John Henderson commended the University on its shortlisting in four categories in the *Times Higher Education* awards, as well as the widening of Executive to University Executive Board (UEB). Liz Barnes confirmed that this latter restructure would give UEB ownership of more strategic matters (and also of papers for Board of Governors and its committees), whilst key decisions around student experience would still be made by the (now wider) SLT. Simon Smith asked about the difference between the roles of Transformation and Strategic Planning, and this was clarified by Liz Barnes.
- Kevin noted his disappointment that Rachel Gowers was leaving and asked whether there were any plans to develop that role or the approach taken with Staffordshire University London (SUL). It was clarified that some of the provision had been moved (e.g. eSports had moved to the School of Digital, Technologies and Arts) and that the University had invested heavily in staff at SUL, but a senior presence was certainly still needed. Liz Barnes noted that on a related note, a Business Development Manager role was being created for each School, in order to help build relationships with the relevant businesses and networks.
- [REDACTED]
- Members discussed NSS results and league table performance, noting that it was clear that the Education Secretary's focus within HE was currently on graduate outcomes, but a minimal response rate and a lack of context to the 'pilot' HESA survey, that has replaced the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey meant that the results provided a somewhat distorted picture.
- Simon Smith asked about what in particular had led to the University of the Year shortlisting and Liz Barnes clarified that this was in large part due to the bronze to gold TEF trajectory and our status as a digitally leading institution.

3 FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL (marked below accordingly)

2608

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

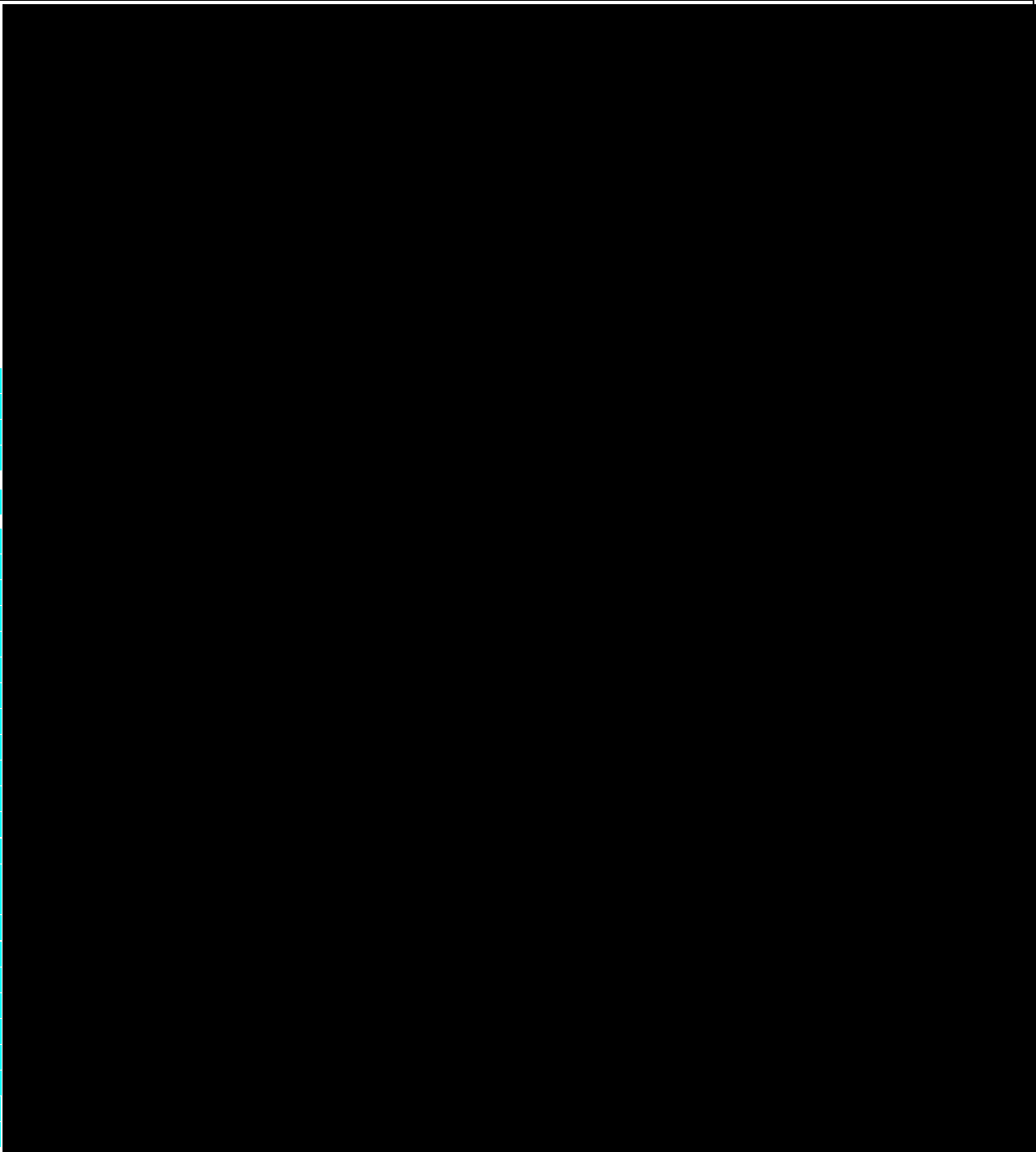
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2609	<p>The Board received for discussion a Shrewsbury Centre of Excellence – communications update BG/118/05 from the Pro Vice Chancellor – Place and Engagement. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper detailed the activity undertaken to communicate to date (09.09.2020) the decision to stop recruitment to courses at the Centre for Healthcare Excellence in Shrewsbury after September 2020. It noted that all identified stakeholders had received communication as per the communication plan and timeline. No risks were identified in the paper following the communication activity undertaken. <p>There were no comments from members.</p>
2610	<p>The Board received for discussion a paper on the Draft financial outturn of 2019-2020 BG/118/06, presented by the Chief Financial Officer. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Management Accounts for Period 12 had been prepared to show the University's Operational Surplus before pension & actuarial adjustments were made for Statutory Accounts purposes. • The draft financial outturn for 2019/20 showed a £6.9m operating surplus, £1.0m ahead of budget despite the reduced turnover, mainly due to the impact of COVID-19 on commercial income and a shortfall in research income, but offset by reduced costs relating to research activity and some of the planned operational activities not taking place due to COVID-19.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reduction in operating surplus of £1.7m against the latest forecast (prepared at the end of May) mostly reflected the additional year end provisions made for potential re-organisation costs, a further provision for overseas tax, and doubtful debts. • A walkthrough showing the movement from budget and forecast was given (and with more detail in the Executive Summary of the Management Accounts, Appendix A).
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash at the year-end is £77.9m, against a budgeted cash position of £58.1m mainly due to lower capital expenditure and the higher operating surplus. • All results are subject to audit. The results do not include the annual adjustments which are made for pension costs, which will appear in the statutory accounts. <p>There were no comments from members.</p>
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2611	<p>The Board received for approval the Draft budget 2020/21 BG/118/07, presented by the Chief Financial Officer. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •  <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenn Earlam enquired about the relatively high cash balance shown. Sally McGill clarified that originally this had been earmarked for capex projects, but this was currently being reviewed so that the cash could be reinvested appropriately. <p>The Board of Governors approved the draft budget 2020-21.</p>
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2612	<p>The Board received for discussion a paper entitled Developing commercial strategy BG/118/08, presented by the Chief Financial Officer. The following principle points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper built on the discussions which took place at the Strategic Event on 4 August 2020, which identified the need to think very differently about the future, creating a vision for the University which moved beyond the traditional business model and creates new expectations around income generation and investment. • It set out the University's ambitions and enabling strategies for its emerging commercial strategy as an aid to discussion, as well as the requirement for built-in sustainability and how to assess opportunities and measure success, via specially developed KPIs.
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	<p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sara Williams asked about plans for potential spinouts. Sally McGill confirmed that it was envisaged that the University would not be the sole investor in any potential spin-out companies and would be looking for others to invest as majority shareholders. The work currently being done on the Enterprise Ecosystem would look at this more closely. • Simon Smith noted that importance of any new course going to validation having a relationship to enterprise built in from the beginning. • Jonathan Vardon offered his support for potential methods of income diversification but highlighted the many external variables.
2613	<p>The Board received for discussion the COVID-19 update report BG/118/09, presented by the Chief Operating Officer. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report provided an update on each of the workstreams that had supported the collective efforts of the University during both lockdown and return to campus for Semester One. All preparations were in place for students, new and continuing, to undertake their studies in Semester One on a blended learning basis. All staff, with effect from 7 September 2020, have commenced work on a blended working basis, in line with the new Blended Working Framework. • Whilst the University was actively monitoring the changing national and local position with regard to COVID-19, it was well prepared for Semester One and no issues were envisaged. Work was currently underway with the planning for an increased prevalence locally, local lockdown and a return to national lockdown. <p>There were no comments from members.</p>
2614	<p>The Board received for discussion the Student satisfaction report 2020 BG/118/10, presented by the Vice Chancellor. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report set out the results from the major surveys conducted by the institution – NSS, PTES, PRES, and the internal SVS. Whilst it was undeniable that COVID-19 would have impacted on these results, the majority of the survey respondents would have submitted their entry prior to lockdown. It was therefore difficult to know exactly how large and nuanced the impact had been. • National Student Survey (NSS) – The University had seen improvements in the NSS in the four main KPI areas (3 out of 4) and had improved in all measured areas against its benchmark group. In the “Overall Satisfaction” question the University has risen to 50 from the previous 55 despite a very small drop of 0.15%. • Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) – The number of universities with a sufficient response rate or who have engaged with the survey has dropped from to 68 from 84. This could be due to the impact of lockdown, institutions not planning to be involved this year or deciding to withdraw. Therefore, despite being ranked 34 compared to 36, we are exactly on, rather than within the top 50%. Overall, the University had managed to largely maintain its scores except for the Overall Satisfaction question which, despite a decrease, has performed better than the sector. • Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) – This survey, like PTES had had an even greater reduction in participants with only 38 institutions being included compared to 103 in the previous year (possibly for the same reasons given above). Comparing year on year within the University, there had been an improvement in 6 out of the 8 measures. However, the Overall Satisfaction question had seen a significant drop from 81% to 74% leading to a drop in relative position with the sector from 64 of 103 to 30 out of 34. • Student Viewfinder Survey (SVS) – This internal survey had seen a slight drop across all areas with only a 0.35% drop in Overall Satisfaction. However, the pattern was mixed across differing subject areas in Schools with LPF, LSE and CAE improving and SBS, HSC and CDT showing a reduced performance. This was in part contrary to the performance in the NSS with HSC and CDT seeing small increases. • Key areas for consideration – The University had performed well relative to the sector across most areas, improving its rankings, and would now consider what was leading to this and what lessons could be learnt. <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liz Barnes noted that Liverpool Media Academy’s poor NSS outcome had meant that the University had capped the number of students they recruited. Postgraduate results were disappointing, as were our internal SVS results – work would need to be undertaken with second and third years now to ensure improvements in next year’s survey. The course portfolio grid would be used to review and identify courses where action was required. • Cathryn Hickey asked about the disappointing results in the learning resources category and Liz Barnes clarified that these were mainly down to partners, as facilities could vary quite dramatically. • Glenn Earlam raised a query about the overall value of working with partners. Liz Barnes confirmed that conversations regarding partnerships were currently being had throughout the University, and that it was likely that tough decisions would need to be taken following comprehensive review. The SNCs had been very damaging to our relationships with some colleges (even though we closed more of our own courses than those with partners.) However, with the current Government focus on FE and the re-emergence of the Augar review there were potential risks in reducing our partnerships with FE colleges at this time.

2615	<p>The Board received for discussion a Guardian University Guide 2021 update BG/118/11, presented by the Vice Chancellor. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staffordshire University was ranked 55th in the latest Guardian League table, dropping 18 places.• There had been small rises in 3 of the 9 individual metrics.• There had been significant drops in the Career Prospects, Student Staff Ratio and Expenditure per Student metrics.• Staffordshire University was in the top 10 of 2 subject league tables (Social policy 4th and Fashion 5th), with a further 4 in the top 20.• Staffordshire University had risen to 4th out of 13 (5th out of 13 in 2020) when compared to its competitor set. <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion focused around the various areas for improvement (with the limitations of some reporting metrics being noted). It was clarified that Deans would be working more quickly within Schools to fill gaps in academic staffing, and accounting of expenditure per student was being reviewed.
2616	<p>The Board received for discussion an Estates update BG/118/12 from the Pro Vice Chancellor – Digital. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The report gave an overview of progress on the Catalyst building, a new Nursery, Health Innovation Centre, Blackheath Lane, Stafford and recladding of Blackstone Building, together with updates on the acquisition of Squires View, sale of land at the Lichfield campus and disposal of an ex-sports field off Newcastle Road in Cotes Heath, Eccleshall.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Catalyst - The project was on budget and considerable progress had been made on site however it was currently 8 weeks behind programme due to COVID-19 plus the small fire on site. VINCI, MACE and FCB had identified a number of specific measures to accelerate production in August, but it was unlikely that the original deadline would be achieved. The team continued to monitor VINCI's performance to keep pressure on to ensure contractual obligations were met and once a firmer date for completion had been established, contingency planning would begin in the event of the building not being ready for the beginning of the 2021 academic year.○ Health Innovation Centre, Blackheath Lane, Stafford – the planning application had been approved and the adjacent land had been acquired. A successful government bid for capital funding of £2.9m had taken place and construction was due to start late September 2020.○ New Nursery and Forest School – tenders had been received and were overbudget. An options report had been produced and was presented as a separate item on the agenda.○ [REDACTED] <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liz Barnes noted that it appeared that throughout the national construction industry, larger-scale project tenders were coming in at higher prices following COVID-19, whereas the opposite was true with smaller-scale projects.
2617	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Members commented as follows:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liz Barnes highlighted that UUK were looking at the options for sustainable construction within the HE sector, noting the increased costs associated with this and were likely to lobby the government on this. Liz further noted that it was likely that there would be opportunities to bid for funding for the forest school project. Sara Williams asked whether there were any potential links with the District Heat Network. Sally McGill would shortly join the DHN board and a possible partnership would be reassessed when appropriate. Kevin Gould asked about the impact of the value engineering, and it was clarified that this had not affected the sustainability of the building, which would still have net zero carbon status. Kevin also enquired about rates of return for the project, and Sally McGill confirmed that she would clarify this by email. Glenn Earlam asked whether VAT was payable on commercial new builds and it was confirmed that this was the case. Tuesday Forrest commended the University's commitment to sustainability, and to its role as a civic institution, with this project.
2618	<p>The Board received a report on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 (DISCUSSION) BG/118/14, presented by the Vice Chancellor. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Research Excellence Framework (REF) was a periodic exercise undertaken to assess the quality of research produced by UK HEIs. The revised submission deadline for the current exercise, REF2021, is March 2021. UK HEIs were able to submit research in up to 36 academic disciplines, or 'units of assessment (UOAs)', for assessment by academic experts. Submissions comprised of research outputs (e.g. journal articles, books); research environment (e.g. PhD completions, research income won and spent); and research 'impact', the non-academic benefit of research for policy and practice. An HEI's research reputation was heavily influenced by REF results. This reputation affected its ability to recruit staff and students, particularly research and international students; its position in league tables, particularly the international league tables, and the amount of guaranteed quality-related (QR) income it receives. The University would submit 109 staff, an increase of approximately 20% compared to REF2014. It was also expected that approximately twice as many of our research outputs (journal articles, publications) would be rated as internationally excellent or world leading (3* or 4*), ca. 70% this time vs 35% last time - a significant improvement. The University would produce a number of good examples of the external impact of its research, but there was more work to be done to ensure that our research/academic culture fully embraced impact, something which was particularly important to us as a Civic University. <p>There were no comments from members.</p>
2619	<p>The Board received the Collaborative academic provision register 2020-21 (APPROVAL) BG/118/15, presented by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Place and Engagement. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The attached Register of Collaborative Provision was an up-to-date and authoritative record of Staffordshire University's collaborative academic partnerships and apprentice employers. The data provided detailed the partners, courses and student numbers as of June 2020, with the addition of new partners and courses commencing in the Academic Year 2020/21. (An external version of this, without student number details, would be published on the University website.) The Board were asked to approve the Register as the definitive list of collaborative academic partnerships and the courses delivered in partnership. <p>There were no comments from members.</p> <p>The Board approved the Collaborative academic provision register 2020-21.</p>
4 FOR INFORMATION	
2620	<p>The Board received the Students' Union Report BG/118/16, presented by the President of the Students' Union. The following main areas were covered (with an additional verbal update on SU finances):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic matters (Student charter, learning and teaching, governance) Student experience (NSS, accommodation, Welcome Week) Union campaigns and priorities for the year ahead <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Henderson commended the Students' Union team on their approach to the student experience during very difficult circumstances.

2621	<p>The Board received for information a report on Apprenticeships Performance BG/118/17, presented by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Place & Engagement. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the introduction of the employer levy in 2017, apprenticeships provision at Staffordshire had expanded from 150 apprenticeship starts in 2016 to 1479 on programme in July 2020. • The paper gave an overview of the position with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Police Constable Degree Apprenticeships (PCDA), which comprised 67% of all apprentice enrolments in 19/20. The University was working with all four forces to widen the entry routes into the PCDA and expected to meet the target set in November 2019 of 1374 apprentices. ○ Recruitment 20/21, which continued to be strong from public sector organisations comprising 86% of predicted enrolments in 20/21. For 20/21, an increase of 269 (37%) on 19/20 in enrolments was predicted. With the success of recent tenders such as the Shropshire Community NHS, the University was actively seeking to further develop non-policing apprenticeships to ensure a balanced provision not overly reliant on one sector. The new recruitment strategy introduced for this academic year aimed to streamline processes, prevent cohorts with very low numbers and focus recruitment on levy paying employers. ○ Performance 19/20, which was reported in the format required by ESFA for the annual qualification report (QAR) as the number of apprenticeship starts who completed the full apprenticeship, i.e. the end-point assessment (EPA), not just the university award. More detail was given in the paper on both performance and retention. ○ Risk - apprenticeships continued to pose a level of risk to the University because they were subject to so many external factors, including ongoing monitoring by Ofsted and an ESFA visit due. However, all the issues raised in Ofsted reports of visits in May 2019 and January 2020 had now been addressed including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the introduction of support for English and maths • robust processes for recording starting points and tracking progress • a procedure for observing teaching and learning ○ Agreed actions arising from the December 2019 internal financial assurance review (mock ESFA audit) were also now in place to monitor quality assurance and financial compliance including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhanced eligibility checks • co-investment contributions requested in advance • English and maths support <p>Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathryn Hickey asked for further information about the difference between the number of recruits and the number of completed students. Ieuan Ellis clarified that these were three-year programmes and it was therefore difficult to assess completions at this stage, but that the University was reasonably confident of strong completion rates. Cathryn further enquired about the issues with the particular awards referenced in the report and Ieuan Ellis confirmed that he would come back separately on this. • Liz Barnes noted that nationally there had been a huge drop in apprentices due to COVID-19 – as they had been the first to be laid off - but that the University had appeared to fare well in relation to other providers.
2622	The Board received for information the *Academic Board minutes (unconfirmed): 7 June 2020* BG/118/18.
2623	The Board received for information the *Calendar of corporate and public events 2020/21* BG/118/19.
5 ADDITIONAL MATTERS	
2624	<p>How have we made a positive impact on our students today?</p> <p>Particular matters that impacted on the students in a positive way were the new estates developments, the discussions regarding league table performance and contributing factors, and with time, the developing commercial strategy.</p>
2625	<p>Additional matters:</p> <p>a) Liz Barnes noted that following the last government announcement advising that people should work from home where possible, the University was not changing its stance on this – the Blended Working Framework would continue. The University was in liaison with Public Health England and as of week commencing 28 September 2020, would be reporting daily infection rates.</p>
2626	Next meeting: Tuesday 24 November 2020 (Boardroom, University House/online Teams meeting)