



MEETING OF THE CORPORATION OF MACCLESFIELD COLLEGE

TUESDAY 30 MARCH 2021 – 9.30 AM

TO BE HELD VIA ZOOM

PART I

Clerk: Mrs R Clare

Attendance:	M Sharples (Chair), C Trasler, N Schofield, K Williams, J Walters, S Musgrave, G White, R Kay, M Wright, M Grant, E Kennedy, Y Saxon, G Lagan, A Sutcliffe, N Mannion
In attendance:	L French, L Reed
Apologies:	P Newell

Actions:

Careers Strategy	
A Member pointed out some typos within the strategy. LR will review prior to the strategy being finalised.	LR
RK confirmed that the Strategic Plan was currently being reviewed and updated and will be shared with Corporation Members ahead of the Strategic Planning day.	RK

MINUTES

Item	Title
11/21	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting. Apologies for absence was received for P Newell.</p>
12/21	<p>Declaration of Members' Interest There were no declarations of Members' Interest.</p>
13/21	<p>Chair of the Corporation update To provide Governors with an update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AoC Chairs' Meeting and DfE Group update <p>The Chair of the Corporation provided an update from the recent AoC Chairs' Network and DfE Group meeting. He confirmed that finances remain high on the FE agenda and a priority, with the recent announcement of the AEB Clawback. It is widely recognised that colleges have faced considerable disruption due to the Pandemic and this has impacted greatly on adult education enrolment. The Principal confirmed that it is difficult to deliver AEB and it will be very difficult for the College to meet the 90% threshold. The Corporation recognised that Covid had impacted more on this this year than the year before. The College will continue to work hard to achieve the AEB budget. The Chair of the Corporation confirmed that some colleges had also been impacted financially due to</p>

commercial income and international delivery but Macclesfield College had not been impacted by this. The Chair confirmed that some colleges had reported big losses in these areas.

- **Governance Engagement Plan and Governance Impact Plan**

The Director of Governance circulated the Governance Engagement Plan and Governance Impact Plan in advance of the meeting. The Director of Governance confirmed the assigned roles within the plan. The Director of Governance will arrange the first meetings to take place during the summer term. It was explained that impact would be a standing item on every Corporation agenda. Members will have an opportunity to share their contribution and this will be recorded by the Director of Governance. Members were also asked to consider being a part of the 'core group' of three to Members who would attend wider engagement activities such as student and staff voice, open day events and curriculum events. KW confirmed his commitment to the 'core group'.

14/21 **Minutes**

To confirm and approve the Part 1 Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2021
The minutes of the Part 1 Corporation meeting held on 19 January 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

To confirm and approve the Part I Minutes of the Special Corporation meeting held on 11 March 2021

The Part I minutes of the Special Corporation meeting held on 11 March 2021 were approved as an accurate record. The Capital Bids had now been submitted and a further update will be shared upon a decision being made.

15/21 **Matters arising from the meeting held on 19 January 2021**

To discuss any matters arising from the meeting held on 19 January 2021

LR confirmed that the College Improvement Plan will be reviewed at this meeting.

RK confirmed that the KPIs will be next presented at the Corporation meeting in July.

A Member asked if the FE White Paper will be reviewed at the Strategic Planning day. The Principal confirmed that R Caulfield from the AoC will be in attendance to provide a regional review of the paper. Corporation Members will have an opportunity to dissect the paper in more detail.

The Macclesfield Academy

AS confirmed that a return Ofsted visit had taken place. The oral feedback from the visit was that The Macclesfield Academy were on course to achieve a 'Good' for the curriculum. R Hedge had now retired and M Galvin will now take The Macclesfield Academy forward from 19 April 2021. M Galvin had identified a number of priority areas including, curriculum design and reforms, behaviour, transition, teaching and learning, pastoral and post Covid action plan.

The Macclesfield Academy had applied for a Capital Bid through an infrastructure fund for Multi Academy Trusts.

AS confirmed the appointment of two new governors. M Brown will be appointed as a Sponsor Governor who has finance experience and A Webster will be appointed as a Co-opted Governor who has HR experience.

AS confirmed that The Macclesfield Academy had implemented a successful return to the school site and home testing was working well. There had been no issues upon the return to site for students and members of staff.

Q: Will The Macclesfield Academy join a Multi Academy Trust by the end of the academic year?

AS confirmed that The Macclesfield Academy will be happy to proceed for September but awaiting confirmation on a decision from the ESFA.

i. To note the report shared with the Corporation via email on 1 March 2021. Covid Business update/reopening of the College campus and verbal update from the Principal

The Principal confirmed that the Covid Business plan had been successful and there had been no issues with the safe return of students and members of staff. Home testing was working well and

students and members of staff were happy to return. The actions that had been put in place around the campus were positively received by members of staff and students and were being adhered to.

ii. Ofqual update

LR confirmed that the College is working towards grade submission for 18 June 2021 and 12 August 2021 for enrolment. Enrolment had been adjusted so that it was in line with GSCE results day. The appeal process will also be aligned. LR is waiting on final confirmation from awarding bodies.

16/21

Audit Committee

To receive the minutes of the Audit Committee on 9 March 2021 and note any actions from the meeting

The Chair of the Audit Committee provide an update on the Audit Committee that took place on 9 March 2021. There were no matters reported relating to Fraud or GDPR under item 4/21. Under item 6/21 as part of the agreed Internal Audit Annual Programme, the Cyber Security Audit has been completed and a draft report has been received by ELT and will be considered by the Head of IT before sharing with the Audit Committee and subsequently with the Corporation Board. However, verbal reassurance was received from LF that no high-risk recommendations had been received and that there were not any major concerns arising from the audit.

Under Item 8/21 the Risk Management Heat Map was reviewed. One new risk has been added and the net risk score for two risks have been increased. The new risk is:

Risk 4.2 Ref: 38 Risk title Inadequate welfare and mental health support, consequence students with emotional needs will not remain in education, leading to poor retention and achievement and poor Ofsted grade.

The net risk score has been increased from 9 to 12 on:

Risk 6.2 Ref: 231 Risk Title: Achievement of bank covenants and breach of these could lead to bank calling in college Loan of which the consequence is financial viability risk.

Risk 6.1 Ref: 240 Risk Title: Reduced student recruitment for adult learners funded through the Adult Education Budget leading to inability to meet business plan/ financial viability.

LF reported that this had been recognised in the financial forecast and financial forecasts have been amended accordingly.

i. To approve the External Audit tender

There is a recommendation from the Audit Committee for approval by the Corporation for a contract with External Auditors Wylie and Bisset to commence on 1 May 2021.

The College has gone out to tender again using Tenet Services and received two tenders from Wylie and Bisset and Beever and Struthers.

Two clarification meetings were organised with the two external auditors and clarification questions were agreed and submitted in advance of the meeting. Following the questions being submitted, Beever and Struthers pulled out of the tender due to their lack of experience in the FE Sector.

The clarification meeting with Wylie and Bisset went ahead with MW, LF, RC and MG in attendance on behalf of the College. The Wylie and Bisset team have experience of FE and the Engagement Partner and Relationship Partner had 28 years' experience of working with FE. The Audit Manager had 8 years' experience of working with FE. The Audit Committee considered the presentation from the External Auditors Wylie and Bisset to be excellent. Wylie and Bisset are also part of the ESFA Forum and have knowledge of key issues in the sector.

The cost of the contract, including VAT, for 2020-21 would be £19,914. For comparison, the contract cost with RSM for the year 2019-2020 was £20,400. The External Auditors had referenced value for

money as outlined in the new Audit Code of Practice and had confirmed value for money in their presentation.

The start date of 1 May 2021 provides time for the new auditors to become familiar with Macclesfield College and to prepare appropriately for the External Audit which takes place in the early Autumn.

The Audit Committee have reviewed the contents of the External Audit Tender report and all Members have approved the recommendation to the Corporation to engage Wylie and Bisset as External Auditors of Macclesfield College for an initial period of 3 years commencing 2020-21.

The Corporation approved the External Audit Contract with Wylie and Bisset to commence on 1 May 2021 for an initial period of 3 years.

17/21 **Business**

i. receive the College accounts for the period ended February 2021

LF presented the College accounts for the period ended February 2021. It was reported that the College had a year to date surplus of £178K. The KPIs for financial performance are all shown green. The financial health remains as 'Good'. LF shared a new table on page 3 of Management Accounts which related to a letter that was shared with Corporation Members dated 22 February 2021 from the FE commissioner who wrote to chairs and principals regarding revised financial benchmarks. The table shared the sector benchmarks and the college's current forecast for 2020/21 against these benchmarks. The current position of 1,102 learners relates to learners enrolled as at 28 February 2021 and any withdrawals received at the close of the R07. The current position of the Adult Education Budget with factors applied is at £363K. The College is still 75% of forecast and still to be delivered. This remains a challenge for the College to achieve. The current position for Apprenticeships is at £1,629,267 with factors applied and ahead of forecast. LF reported that tuition fees remain a challenge. LF requested that Members review page 11 of the Management Accounts for pay costs. Year to Date actual pay costs are £3,862K compared to £3,863K year to date forecast. To date agency costs are £76K and this will continue to be closely monitored. Non-pay expenditure has been reviewed as part of the forecast review in January 2021 where some amendments have been made. A forecast budget of £50K has been included for fees associated with compilation of the college's Estates Strategy and associated surveys required; the compilation of capital bids in respect of the FE Capital Transformation bid and T level capital bids. Current committed expenditure is £35K with £15K additional forecast included for further professional fees for next steps. This will be carefully monitored. The College has 40 days cash in hand. The College is currently showing that it will meet the bank covenant but not by the end of the year. This will be reviewed closer to year end.

Q: Have we got a master plan for the AEB?

The College is aiming to catch up on the AEB after Easter. The adults are more nervous about practical elements and attending the campus, particularly for areas such as Hair and Beauty and Construction. Some courses will be continued to be delivered online. The College will not take any risks and continue to deliver what they are able to do safely. The clawback has been included in the forecast and does not change the College overall financial position. The Principal confirmed that there has been regional and national pressure on reversing the decision in relation to AEB and the Chair of Oldham College made some comments on this nationally through the AoC. This decision is likely to push some Colleges into financial intervention.

Q: Please can you share the details for the bank covenant?

Yes, the details remain unchanged at 3.18% for the debt total costs. LF confirmed that the aim is to improve the financial position upon the April review. Allied Irish will provide a letter of comfort and LF explained that the debt service takes into consideration non-compliance of the benchmarks. The College is continuing to do well for the Apprenticeship income but this is dependent on employer

engagement and can be changeable. The areas that the College provide Apprenticeships for have continued to do well during Covid such as child care, health care and social care. There are a number of Apprenticeship vacancies and the College is engaging with new employers.

ii. Update on bids

LF presented a live document with an update on all the bids that the College has currently applied for. A Member congratulated the ELT on the enormous amount of work that has been completed relating to the bids. A number of the bids related to infrastructure and development programmes such as RoATP for Apprenticeships and Accelerate bid with Chester University. The document was in line with the College Strategic Plan. The ELT will keep the Corporation up to date with any successful bids.

iii. HR action plan

The HR Action Plan was shared with the Corporation in advance of the meeting. The milestones and objectives had been updated. The report will be updated again in April 2021.

18/21 **Teaching and Learning**

i. Report on Learner Progress 2020/21

LR shared an update report on Learner Progress for 2020/21 which showed the attendance for 16-18 at 90+%. Attendance remained a challenge around the trade area within the curriculum. The attendance of maths and English during the closure was lower but it rising on the return to the College campus. LR explained that there were three units for the BTEC qualification. There is also a pass or fail for employability skills. The hours cannot currently be completed for the counselling qualification. The areas at risk include Engineering and Computing and these areas are on an enhanced plan for this academic year. Computing is currently behind on delivery and remains at risk. There is some tutorial funding for 16-19 and this is being used for small groups for maths and English for in access of 100 students who were being targeted for resits. The attendance for 16-18 has dropped by 4%.

Q: Is there anything that can be done differently to engage with the students to increase attendance?

LR confirmed that the College has engaged with parent/guardians and home visits take place. The communication with parents showed some impact. LR has also been providing 1:1 drop in sessions which proved successful. The curriculum model has been changes so that three focus areas can be targeted to avoid deflation.

Q: Do you work with other colleges and share good practice?

LR confirmed that comparatively Macclesfield College is outperforming other colleges for attendance. The AoC benchmark is 68%.

LR confirmed that completion is an ongoing goal and career progression remains a sector wide priority. Some at risk students have had a break in learning due to the impact of the pandemic. Members of staff will be providing catch up sessions during the Easter break. Some Apprenticeships students will also be in to complete their practical's. The College is using block delivery where they can to ensure students complete.

Q: Has the attendance improved since 9 March 2021?

The attendance has improved marginally.

Members acknowledged LR hard work in increasing attendance.

ii. Receive updated College Quality Improvement Plan

LR provided a progress update of the College's improvement plan for 2020-21. Progress ratings of the Quality Improvement Plan have been updated using the red, amber green system for each action on what needs to be improved within the organisation. The QIP is updated at three formal monitoring points during the academic year and this report provides the update for March 2021. Where actions have been completed, these have been highlighted in green. Some actions are ongoing throughout the year and these have been coloured amber; the impact of some of these is not yet known. A number of actions have either not been implemented yet (due to the time of the academic year) or are not yet due for completion and these have not been coloured. LR confirmed the following point:

- Overall retention is 96.2%. 16-18 retention is 96.6% and 19+ retention is 95.1%
- Adult Level 1 retention is 94.3%
- Overall attendance is 84.9%. 16-18 attendance is 83.6% and 19+ attendance is 92.1%. Attendance was impacted during college closure with key vocational areas impacting on overall attendance rates.
- Attendance rates are low in Hair and Beauty (84.1%) and Motor Vehicle (75.5%), and attendance in these vocational trade areas have declined throughout closure. During the period of closure, attendance in Hair and Beauty was 80.8% and 71.8% in Motor Vehicle. Students have been unable to undertake practical and theoretical summative assessments since December 2020. Attendance needs to improve in these areas.
- Attendance in maths and English is too low and has declined during college closure. Attendance rates are 63.4% in maths and 66.8% in English. Communications with parents has been regular with limited impact.
- Attendance rates for learners in receipt of an EHCP is currently 85.2% and attendance rates for LACs is 77.2%
- November resits achievements rates are high: English: Achievement rate of 94% with 56% HG profile; maths: Achievement rate: 99% with 55% HG profile.
- Teaching and learning is judged to be good. 90.5% of observed sessions have been judged to be good or better.
- AEB spend to target is currently £363K (-£61,387K)
- Current best-case achievement rate for apprentices is 74.8%
- Appointment of 6 E Learning Champions to drive outstanding practice in online delivery.

Areas being monitored:

- Assessment plans of practical vocational programmes have been revised.
- Detail regarding awarding qualifications and mitigation proposals from the majority of awarding bodies remains outstanding.
- Areas 'at risk' continue to include Health and Social Care, Animal Care and Engineering. Computing is now subject to enhanced review.

Q: Will the College achieve 100% lesson observation target?

Yes, this will be achieved, it has not currently been met due to new staff joining over Easter.

Q: The high grades are predicted to be strong, what methods have been used to achieve this?

All students have completed a first mock assessment and been able to go back and review it. The students are set extension tasks within lessons. The high grades will be known once two mock assessments have been completed.

Q: Are lesson observations judged the same whether they are online or in the classroom?

Yes, it has been agreed that the lesson observation framework should remain the same and be reported in the same way.

Q: Is Hair and Beauty currently at risk?

It is being monitored but is not at risk at the moment.

LR confirmed that there is an E-Learning ambassador who shares good practice for online delivery of lessons and central records.

iii. Wellbeing Strategy

LR presented the Wellbeing Strategy which shared the College aims and responsibilities for well-being for members of staff and students.

iv. Careers Strategy

The Careers Strategy was shared with the Corporation. LR explained that the strategy includes the Gatsby Benchmarks and meets the requirements for the Matrix assessment on career guidance. The Matrix Assessment will take place on 26 April 2021 and the assessor will meet with 50 members of staff within the four days.

A Member pointed out some typos within the strategy. LR will review prior to the strategy being finalised.

RK confirmed that the Strategic Plan was currently being reviewed and updated and will be shared with Corporation Members ahead of the Strategic Planning day.

19/21 **Date and time of the next meeting**

The next Corporation meeting is due to take place on 11 May 2021 and the Strategic Planning day is due to take place on 15 June 2021.

<p>Impact of the meeting:</p> <p>Successful implementation and smooth return of members of staff and students to College campus and home testing working well.</p> <p>The Curriculum update including information relating to bids and projects.</p> <p>Monitoring to ensure that the College retain the financial health grade of 'Good'.</p> <p>Appointment of new External Auditors Wylie and Bisset.</p> <p>Comprehensive review of Learner Progress and Quality Improvement Plan with identified at risk areas and high target grades.</p> <p>Receive new Wellbeing and Careers Strategy. Corporation informed of Matrix Assessment.</p>

Signed by Chair:	
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