



MEETING OF THE CORPORATION OF MACCLESFIELD COLLEGE

TUESDAY 30 APRIL 2024 – 9:30AM

VELOCITY - PART I

Clerk: Ms S Gardiner

In attendance	C Johns (Chair of the Corporation), M Wright, R Charlton, I Jones, G Crossman, P Hunter, E Kennedy, G Bristow, J Lewis, I Cass, J Bennett, R Kay (Principal), N Schofield, H Taylor
Apologies	G Lagan, L Reed (Deputy Principal)
Absent	H De Botte
Non-governor attendance	V Hayhoe (Director of Finance and Estates) H Fazackerley (Item 4 only) T Cosgrave (Item 4 only) H Hampson (Item 9 iii only)

Actions Raised on 30 April 2024	Responsibility	Due Date
Learner Experience Committee Update to be added as standing item on the Corporation Agenda	Director of Governance	9 July 2024
Director of Corporate Services to review options for informal advertisements on College transport	Director of Corporate Services	9 July 2024

MINUTES

Item Title

1. Ratification of the role of Director of Governance

The appointment of Sarah Gardiner as Director of Governance was approved by the Board.

2. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting. Apologies were received from G Lagan and L Reed (Deputy Principal).

3. Declaration of Members' Interest

There were no declarations of Members' interest.

Papers received had been uploaded to Trust Governor and were available to Governors one week prior to the meeting.

4. In Depth Reports

Presentation on Corporate Services, Learner Engagement, Marketing and Applications

The Director of Corporate Services (HF) joined the meeting for this item only to provide an update on the area.

The presentation included an update on the Student Journey, roles and responsibilities of the Learner Experience Team, School Engagement which has grown significantly over the past 12 months. HF shared that 84.9% of applications for 24/25 have come from the top 18 feeder schools in the region. College Events have also increased from 19 to 55 and now include additional careers event, parents' evenings and taster session for prospective students. The enhanced partnerships with schools has seen an increase in applications for 24/25. HF confirmed applications are already 206 ahead of this time last year. The move to online enrolment was a success last year, all paperwork is completed online which reduces enrolment time to under an hour. The marketing strategy has continued to evolve, with the addition of 'Ad Vans' to support enrolment promotion and events throughout the academic year. HF also wished to share the College recently won the High Commended Award for the new website, to which all Members passed on their congratulations.

CHALLENGE: Governors asked whether the College transport could be utilised for advertising and benefit from repetition marketing? HF advised that this avenue of marketing is effective, however has a high cost attached to it. Governors queried whether signage could be placed at the front of the buses as an informal advert. HF will review options and provide an update on costs.

CHALLENGE: Governors asked HF to clarify which curriculum areas are in high demand? HF confirmed that numbers in construction, plumbing, T Level Childcare and Health and Social Care continue to rise.

CHALLENGE: Governors asked what are the College's keeping warm strategies? HF advised that there are number of keeping warm points throughout the year, including advent calendars, Valentine's gift, good luck and exam tips cards. The College also runs a taster day in July which allows students to meet with their tutors and spend some time in their curriculum area.

CHALLENGE: Governors asked whether the schools were meeting the statutory requirements of the Gatsby benchmarks? HF advised that there are challenges with some schools in that they only send a select number of students to taster sessions, however hosting network events with Careers Leads has begun to break down some of these barriers.

HF added that the College has recently passed the Matrix Assessment and all feedback was positive.

CHALLENGE: Governors queried the College transport strategy, is this funded at all? HF confirmed that the College part funds the transport for those students who are eligible for financial assistance.

CHALLENGE: Governors suggested that due to Macclesfield Station being so central, the College could widen their marketing area to Stoke/Staffordshire area. RK commented that HF's team has made a significant improvement to the school liaison and online enrolment process. RK added that HF annually checks the number of students that will be available over the next 5 years, to ensure local market information of demographic trends.

A Member commented that parent engagement is a key factor in students enrolling at the College. Parents aren't always aware of the avenues for vocational courses and progression to university.

A Member added that parents also value speaking directly to students at the College events and ask about the pastoral care that is provided. This Member **asked whether pastoral care needs to be advertised more as this can change a young person's mind as to where they study.**

HF confirmed that information on the pastoral care is detailed within the student and parent guide and the Welfare Team attend Open Events and interview evenings in order to answer any queries students and/or parents may have.

10:15am HF left the meeting.

Presentation on Apprenticeships

The Director of Employer and Commercial Services (TC) joined the meeting for this item only to provide an update on the apprenticeship provision. TC confirmed that overall attendance for apprentices is currently 97.7% and the best cast achievement rates is 71%, with the predicted final position being 68/69% due to students rolling into next year.

CHALLENGE: Governors queried how this compares to last year achievement rates? TC confirmed that the national average is 53%.

TC confirmed that the 24/25 standards are now being delivered, which include Level 3, 4 and 5 apprenticeships.

CHALLENGE: Governors asked what the percentage of Level 2 to Level 3 is and whether Level 2 student progress to Level 3. TC confirmed that 440 of 675 apprentices' study at Level 3. TC added that not all Level 2 learners progress to Level 3 due to the maths and English requirements.

CHALLENGE: Governors asked why learners are unable to progress with their maths and English? TC advised that some learners were unable to achieve these GCSE in the 5 years that they are in secondary school. When they arrive at the College, they only have 12 – 18 months to achieve those qualifications. The College will always support learners to achieve their GSCE qualifications.

TC provided an overview of the Apprenticeship Income and the factors that can determine the targets set. TC shared the planning document, detailing that numbers are based on the previous years numbers.

CHALLENGE: Governors queried whether this document could be standardised? VH responded advising that there have been discussions at DfE level to simplify the finding model, however details of this have not yet been disclosed.

TC advised the end of year forecast best case is £91k below target and worst case is £189K below target, explaining that standard changes in year can alter the budget. TC added that students due to sit their EPA in May, June or July are not included in the final forecast, however £98k has been identified for early achievements.

CHALLENGE: Governors queried whether the £91k was a real loss or a loss against the plan and whether the College can model the plan to support a shortfall? VH advised that that the £91k is classed as a loss against budget, however phases into the following year. VH added that it is very difficult to plan due to the number of variants that need to be considered. RK added that if the College focused only on higher yielding apprenticeships, then the College would not be supporting the area skills needs. TC added that there is a skills needs for the care provision and therefore the College needs to continue to offer apprenticeships in Health and Social Care despite the lower funding for this standard. RK shared that plumbing is a critical offer for the College and we can now offer all skills requirements in the construction industry.

A Member added that the Board is aware of the financial pressures for apprenticeships and wished to congratulate the Maxim team on their achievements.

TC left at 10:40am.

5. Minutes

To confirm and approve the Part 1 Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024.

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 6 February 2024 were not approved as an accurate record. The new Director of Governance is to make the required amendments and the minutes will be presented for approval at the next Corporation Meeting.

6. Matters Arising from the Meeting held of 6 February 2024

Due to the minutes not being approved, any matters arising will be considered at the next Corporation Meeting.

7. **Audit Committee**

(i) To receive the minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 19 March 2024 and note any actions from the meeting.

The Audit Committee minutes from the meeting held on 19 March 2024 were received. MW noted that the College KPI's require refinement and that the Corporation focus on the 10 KPI's important at Corporation Level. These are to be reviewed at the Corporation Strategic Planning Day on 14 May with a view to produce a simplified dashboard that meet the DfE statutory requirements. MW added that the Risk Register has now been simplified and consists of 12 management risks.

(ii) To approve recommendation with regards to the reappointment of external auditors

The Director of Finance and Estates confirmed that the current auditors are subject to a 3 + 2 year contract with the College. They have now completed the first 3 years and VH recommended that the contract continue, following approval at the last Audit Committee Meeting.

This recommendation was approved by the Board.

8. **Business**

To receive the College accounts for the period ending January and February 2024, including mid-year financial review.

The Director of Finance and Estates (VH) presented the January and February management accounts. VH noted that the December year end forecast for the College's financial health was 'Good' but had highlighted a number of risks. Following the mid-year review, the forecast for the full year is now confirmed as 'Requires Improvement'. VH shared the main points from the Mid-Year Financial Review with Governors. This included the following points:

- From the review, income is currently tracking at £237K ahead of YTD budget. This is due to the increased allocation announced in September 2023 for 16-19 year olds which was not included in the original budget.
- The main AEB budget is currently £48K behind budget and the College has agreed a partnership with Learning Curve in order to meet the AEB budget requirements.
- HE and Advanced Learner Loans are £66K behind, with the forecast being £113K short due to the lack of enrolments.
- Fees and other income are currently ahead, however this is offsetting other income streams detailed above.
- Pay costs are currently over budget, due to recruitment issues in certain departments, additional agency costs, long term sick leave and maternity costs. The College has also seen a rise in support needs, therefore additional LF posts have been created which were not in the original budget.
- A revised cashflow has been completed which now includes all capital projects – IoT, T Level and LSIF.
- Cash is expected to be £300K at the end of the academic year. The year end balance has been reduced by £208K due to the timing of the capital expenditure on the LSIF project, as the claim cannot be made until, with the payment being made in August.

Cash is then expected to recover with the increase in funding rates and additional income.

VH provided an update on the capital projects taking place across the College. The IoT build has suffered a 2 week delay due to some groundwork issues. The DfE funded project for the reconfiguring of Peatfields have been agreed and includes the new area for the plumbing provisions. Tenders for the T Level projects have now been received and are under budget and are on schedule for September delivery.

CHALLENGE: Governors queried whether there is a contingency plan in place following the financial health rating of RI. VH confirmed that the College would need to achieve £300K from full cost courses, which is challenging at this time in the academic year. The AEB budget is already in the plan and income streams are fixed based on allocations. RK added that the apprenticeship funding stream would be the one to support growth, however the Board had a presentation on the current position and this would be unable to grow further at this point in the year.

CHALLENGE: Governors questioned whether the College can manage with a low reserve and checked on any communication from the Bank on RI grade and risks covenants. VH confirmed that the low reserve could affect the bank loan as the covenant is driven by EBITDA. The risk is minimal however and VH is in discussion with the bank on a regular basis.

CHALLENGE: Governors asked if the RI grade is affected by Ofsted and whether this could alter staff recruitment. VH confirmed that the financial health rating is not affected by the Ofsted inspection outcome. VH added that the curriculum plan is now under review, following which staffing needs will be confirmed and budgets set for 2024/25. **Governors commented** that the lagged funding from this year will help support next year due to the higher number of students recruited. VH agreed, however staff numbers are then impacted.

9. Teaching and Learning

(i) **Learner Experience Committee Feedback, covering learner progress and College Improvement Plan.**

CJ advised that this committee was in its infancy, with two meetings taking place last term. GC provided an overview of the first two meetings. It was confirmed that the first meeting focused on the QIP and Ofsted Action Plan. Attendees at the first meeting were not balanced and therefore Centre Principals and Head of Quality were invited to join the Committee at the next meeting. This provided a clearer overview of the curriculum and an understanding of what is happening within the College.

GC advised that the Terms of Reference were then drafted and a calendar of events to review across the Academic Year. This will be provided to Board for their approval at the next meeting.

GC confirmed that she carried out learning walks on 29 April and reviewed the January exam results. Discussions followed with the Centre Principals and Head of Quality to confirm whether these results have been triangulated and what processes have been put in place to support those students who have not passed their exams.

GC confirmed that she stepped down as Chair of the Committee and Phil Hunter commenced the role of Chair following the meeting on 12 March. The Chair requested any feedback with regards to the new Committee.

CHALLENGE A Member wished to challenge the name of the Committee following a review of the recent Ofsted Inspection Report. It was noted from this review that the 10 main points raised by Ofsted were the following:

1. Attendance
2. Lack of respect from other students
3. Lack of ambition from the curriculum
4. Limited resources to develop skills
5. High needs - requirement to breakdown plans to manageable steps
6. Feedback from practical sessions to inform learner specific teaching
7. English and maths spelling and grammar correction
8. Assessment planning - more care needed on level and volume
9. Limited opportunities outside vocational curriculum
10. Governors not holding leaders to account for educational quality

This Member added that due to the report focusing on the quality of teaching, would it not be more prudent to call the committee the Quality of Education Committee. The Board need to be in a position where they are satisfied they can report of progress of the above points when Ofsted return and show how this has been evidenced.

GC accepted those points raised, however did not agree to the name change. The Learner Experience Committee is not a task and finish committee. They not only review quality of teaching and learning, behaviour and attitudes, enrichment and personal development is also reviewed. The overarching Terms of Reference also reflect this. All points raised in relation to Ofsted are detailed within the QIP.

The Chair requested that the Learner Experience Committee agenda items be shared with Board and that this be added as a standing item to the agenda for Board.

CHALLENGE: Governors questioned what the College is doing to drive improvement in readiness for the next Ofsted inspection. Focusing on the above 10 points will assist with this.

PH confirmed that this committee is a rolling group that reviews the learner experience as a whole, the College QIP and Ofsted Post Inspection Action Plan are aligned to ensure the above points are being met.

RK added that Ofsted had a clear focus of personal development and enrichment, as well as the quality of teaching. RK confirmed that the above points and the QIP will be reviewed at the Strategic Planning Day on 14 May. RK advised that the complaint raised with Ofsted was not upheld.

(ii) Mid-year Safeguarding Report

The Mid-year safeguarding report was received in advance of the meeting. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (HH) attended the meeting to provide a summary of the report to the Board. HH advised that there has been a rise in overall concerns this academic year. To help support this, 12 members of staff are now trained as mental health first aiders, with further training being offered to staff later in the year. **Governors noted that** a 25% of the student cohort have a learning difficulty which must have an impact of the maths and English achievement rates. HH confirmed that access arrangements and LF support has significantly increased this year which has affected the achievement rates.

Governors commented that the content of the report provided was helpful and gave a clear overview of the support needs required from the College. **Governors asked the student Member specifically** whether those challenges are felt within the College. JB confirmed that the College environment is safe and welcoming.

10. **Policies**

The following policies were reviewed and approved by the Corporation:

- Environmental Policy – **Governors queried** whether this policy is supported with an action plan. VH confirmed that this can be reviewed.
- Subcontracting Policy

11. **Date and time of the next meeting**

The next Corporation meeting will take place on 9 July 2024, at 9.30am.

The Strategic Planning Day will take place on 14 May at 9:30am at Macclesfield College.

12. **Impact of Meeting**

Governors agreed that as Board Members they need to be held accountable within their role and to ensure that they are fully appraised and understand the progress that is being made within the College. Governors added that hearing from the student Member was very useful and provided the Board with a clear insight into the learner journey at Macclesfield College.

13. **AOB**

The Chair wished to congratulate student Member J Bennett on her appointment to present at the AoC Governors Conference in May.

VH requested Board approval for the use of the company seal for the IoT contract. **This request was approved.**