

**MEETING OF THE CORPORATION OF MACCLESFIELD COLLEGE (the College)**

**TUESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2024 – 9.30AM**

**VELOCITY**

**PART I**

**Clerk:** Mrs C Gritton

In attendance	M Sharples (Chair of the Corporation), R Charlton, I Jones, M Wright, G Crossman, P Hunter, E Kennedy, G Bristow, J Lewis, I Cass, J Bennett, C Johns, R Kay (Principal), N Schofield, G Lagan, H Taylor
Absent	H De Botte
Non-governor attendance	L Reed (Deputy Principal)  V Hayhoe (Director of Finance and Estates)  M Sheehan-Slade (MSS) (Items 1, 2 and 3 only)

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility and confirmed complete at 6/2/24 meeting.</b>
It was noted that this report was required to be forwarded to the DfE (ESFA).	<b>VH.</b>  <b>Confirmed complete.</b>
The Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2023 and Annex C Macclesfield College Self-Assessment Questionnaire will be signed by the Chair of the Corporation on behalf of the Corporation.	<b>RC/VH</b>  <b>Confirmed complete.</b>
The Audit Findings Report (including the Regularity Audit) and Letters of Representation for the year ended 31 July 2023, presented by Wylie and Bisset were approved and will be duly signed by the Chair of the Corporation.	<b>RC/VH</b>  <b>Confirmed complete.</b>
Q: Please can you bring the stress testing back to the Corporation? Yes, I will include this within the Management Accounts. It was agreed that it would be useful for the Corporation to see the trends from previous years in order to plan ahead.	<b>VH. Confirmed trends from previous years will be included.</b>

Governors would like to review the long-term strategy to better prepare the College for future curriculum planning. It was agreed to look at areas that are a priority nationally and will potentially be areas of growth in the future.	<b>ELT</b> <b>The next strategic away day will be around curriculum planning.</b>
The first KPI document for 2023/24 will be presented at the Corporation meeting in February 2023.	<b>ELT</b> <b>Presented at 6/2/24 meeting.</b>
G Crossman suggested the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Teaching and Learning Committee be called the Learner Experience Committee.</li> <li>• The Ofsted Plan to go deeper, in order for this to be unpicked at a further level. There needs to be further scrutiny of the action plan.</li> <li>• Check wording of the report to ensure that it reflects the College and challenge words that we disagree with.</li> </ul>	<b>ELT/CG/Corporation</b> <b>Final Ofsted report awaited as at 6/2/24.</b>
The newly appointed Director of Governance would now need to combine these actions with the existing Governance Action Plan and provide updates to the Corporation at regular intervals throughout the academic year on the progress of these actions.	<b>CG</b> <b>To be actioned after receipt of final Ofsted report.</b>

## MINUTES

- Item 1/24 Title**  
**Welcome and Apologies for Absence**  
The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence.
- The Chair of the Corporation confirmed that** this was his final meeting as Chair of the Corporation and wished Mrs Johns and the Board every success for the future. The Corporation recorded their appreciation and thanks to the Chair for his hard work and commitment to Macclesfield College (the College), during his successive terms of office.
- 2/24 Declaration of Members' Interest**  
There were no declarations of Members' interest.  
Papers received had been uploaded to Trust Governor and were available to Governors 1 week prior to the meeting.
- 3/24 HR Report and Equality and Diversity Annual Report**  
**The Board received Papers 3i 2022-2023 Annual HR Report and 3ii 2022-2023 Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Report.**
- The Director of HR reported that** staff turnover figures have decreased in comparison to last year. Staff left for a number of reasons including voluntary redundancy and retirement, following

restructuring. Performance management processes are well managed. 91 roles were offered in the academic year 2022/2023, compared to 100 roles in the 2021/2022 year.

Retention remains a key factor to strengthening inefficiencies. Surveys are carried out to ascertain reasons for staff choosing to leave within the first 3 years of working at the College and a key factor mirrors the national picture of teaching staff returning to, or entering non-teaching roles as the education sector pay is not competitive with other sectors. However, the College is competitive in terms of the real living wage and the positive impact of the HR focus on staff health and wellbeing can be evidenced in the year on year decrease in staff sickness absence figures. Staff feedback regarding the health and wellbeing initiatives is very positive and staff move to work at the College as opposed to other colleges. 46 colleague star awards were awarded in the last year and a number of long-service staff were celebrated.

**CHALLENGE: Governors asked for further detail regarding the reasons staff leave, asking in particular about capability issues and whether there is a significant drift away from teaching. Capability details were shared under Part 2, but the Director of HR reported that** whilst staff leave due to family relocation, there are no concerns about staff leaving to work at other colleges. Staff do leave to work in better-paid sectors, but the College remains one of the higher payers, within the education pay-scales, across the North West.

**CHALLENGE: Governors asked whether the College is experiencing any specific issues with recruitment and in which areas. The Director of HR reported that** recruitment is not strong in the areas of Digital and Mechanical Engineering. Digital recruitment is challenging across the North West. HR are considering different initiatives to address those challenges, but Governors are aware that the College have had to use agency staff for Digital from September.

**CHALLENGE: Governors asked whether such challenges will become less critical with the qualifications' changes currently planned. It was reported that** colleges have to recruit increasingly specific skill sets for areas such as T Levels. Level 3 funding for Childcare is due to cease for the switch to T Level, which will also lead to additional recruitment needs. It is increasingly difficult to recruit staff with the skills needed to deliver higher level programmes.

**CHALLENGE: Governors asked whether there is a correlation between staff leaving particular curriculum areas and performance. It was reported that** correlations can always be made between leavers and outcomes and specific areas of note are in Sports, in which there are high levels of staff turnover, Animal Care, in which a member of staff was off long-term sick and Motor Vehicle, for which a replacement member of staff could not be sought for 5 months. These areas had the lowest outcomes last year. The Motor Vehicle department is developing well and staff undergo a strong training package, which in turn can create risk, so the College remains vigilant of the need to retain those staff. Construction is currently fully staffed.

**CHALLENGE: Governors asked whether the College has an 'ideal' turnover figure. It was reported that** a figure of 20% is acceptable but a lower figure is preferred for teaching staff, especially regarding the retention of vocational knowledge. Strategic conversations are held with the ESFA about staff turnover, as it is a sector-wide issue. The AoC have acknowledged an FE crisis, due to pay and staff turnover has been added to the College KPI document and will be reported regularly to the Board.

**CHALLENGE: Governors asked whether an annual focus survey of staff intentions is carried out. It was reported that** a survey is carried out annually and the results will be reported to the Board at the April Corporation meeting.

As reported in the December Corporation meeting, 3 courses were reported at Ofsted, inspection, as having quality and staff retention issues and the College is focusing on the process of addressing the

issues and the Board will remain apprised of progress. Governors thanked the Senior Management Team (SMT) for the commendable work already carried out, noting that the Commissioner had recently noted that the staffing figures were good. A more robust recruitment action plan is in place and everyone is confident that will assist.

**CHALLENGE: Governors asked whether part-time staff are recruited to help retain and develop skills, noting that skilled experts in other sectors may consider teaching part-time. It was reported that** the College already does that, but further consideration will be given to developing that area of recruitment. Lack of teaching qualifications may be an issue for those with otherwise excellent industry skills, so the College needs to be creative in how it recruits those people. It was noted that the College is already supporting a number of staff completing teacher training skills which are not too onerous, to encourage those with skills into the profession. Challenging student behaviour may be a factor in some people not entering the teaching profession, so consideration is also given to how to support staff with that.

**CHALLENGE: Governors asked whether the DfE are aware of FE staffing challenges and what is being done to combat them. The Director of Finance advised that** an increase in funding is expected next year, but increases are needed to cover uncontrollable funding as the inflation rate is not being met.

DBS costs are currently over budget, as the College aims to go above and beyond the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) recommendations to ensuring safeguarding, by carrying out all staff DBS checks every 3 years, rather than every 5, but signing all staff to the DBS update service will result in lower costs long-term.

The College workforce is increasingly diverse in a number of measurable areas; 115 colleagues are aged 50 and over, which has a positive impact on the teaching of vocational subjects in particular and student feedback on EDI is good. The gender pay gap is lower than the education sector for the North West region and training figures show good compliance with statutory training requirements. Staff policies are regularly reviewed. There has been an increase in the utilisation of the employee assistance utilisation service, evidencing a strong element of trust throughout the College.

The College is proud to continue to increase staff diversity and the new EDI Committee's current focus is unconscious bias and inclusive language training. The student EDI survey results have just been collated and will be mapped against the staff survey. Student survey response numbers were not as high as hoped, so staff are looking at how to encourage engagement; A Learner Voice board has been launched to drive engagement. Staff survey engagement was good. The report and action plan will be reviewed to ensure the information gathered continues to be of relevance, use and impact. Governors offered their support of the consideration of staff experience in relation to staff retention in particular.

10:25am MSS left the meeting.

4/24

#### **Minutes and matters arising from the previous minutes**

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 5 December 2023 were approved as an accurate record and a hard copy was signed by the Chair.

5/24 **The matters arising** were reviewed:

Action	Responsibility	Action Status
It was agreed that a report on the impact of the new Head of Quality role will be shared at the January Corporation meeting.	LR	Presented at 6/2/24 meeting.
The new KPI document for this academic year will be shared at the January Corporation meeting.	ELT	Presented at 6/2/24 meeting.

6/24 **KPIs 2023/2024**  
**Paper 2023 2024 KPIv4 was received.**

**CHALLENGE: Governors asked whether staff observations had been completed and whether Governors will receive further detail regarding staff who meet, or do not meet, performance and criteria. It was reported that** a more detailed report will be shared with the new Learner Experience Committee (scheduled for 1pm 6/2/24) and that Committee will look at how, what and when to report to the Board, to ensure proper oversight.

7/24 **Business**

**i. The 2023/2024 Term 1 Health and Safety Report was received.**

**It was reported that** all departments have been inspected and actions identified and listed. Of 31 actions listed, 30 have been actioned and completed. The action for the Brickwork department has been escalated appropriately and is being addressed. Accident reporting has been broken down into incident types and the outstanding safety goggles' matter is being addressed. There were no reportable incidents in term 1. Governors were provided with copies of the evacuation plans and there were no concerns. Governors recommended that Appendix 1, Responsive Maintenance list the departments, to ensure the Corporation has proper oversight of maintenance plans. There are no accident reporting concerns.

**CHALLENGE: Governors noted a rise in incidents in Brickwork and asked for confirmation that this is indicative of the department properly reporting and recording incidents, rather than an actual increase in accident numbers. Governors also noted that Construction has high staff turnover and the highest record of incidents, asking whether staff are trained and aware of the high numbers and accident reasons. It was confirmed that** improved, proper reporting is the reason for the rise in reported incident numbers. Staff are well trained and the member of staff with overall oversight in Construction, is very experienced.

**CHALLENGE: Governors noted that there had been a number of the same type of injury. It was reported that** this had been noted by staff and reported upwards. Investigation showed that there was no single cluster of incidents, but rather incidents on different dates, times and sessions, indicating no concerns of poor behaviour by a particular group of students. Health and safety training is attended by cross curriculum areas and technicians, so everyone is aware of potential issues.

**CHALLENGE: Governors noted that staff work from home on Fridays and asked for confirmation that health and safety checks have been carried out. It was confirmed that** risk assessments were completed and signed-off when the new way of working began. Staff are not permitted to work from home unless the correct forms have been completed and signed-off.

**Governors noted the good work** carried out with regard to health and safety

7/24

**ii. P5 Management Accounts for 2023 2024, were received.**

**It was reported that** the accounts have incorporated a minor change and include a commentary on page 2. The accounts show tracking is ahead on income, which is forecast to be over and above the position previously reported, driven by post budget setting, additional DfE allocation funding of which the College is now in receipt.

Of most concern is the Adult Education budget, which is behind budget, but work is ongoing to endeavour to get it back on track.

Over 18 and Advance Learners are also behind budget, but a shift in tuition fees will help mitigate the position, which will continue to be monitored.

Apprenticeships' income, the highest target, is on track and the department has recruited above target for January and February, due to large intakes for higher level courses. Elements of payment are currently excluded, such as early completers at End Point Assessment (EPA) stage as well as Maths and English payments for January to July for the new starters recruited, which should act as a comfort contingency to assist with achieving target budgets.

Pay costs triangulated information provided in the HR presentation earlier in the meeting; agency costs are high, particularly in Computing and Mechanical Engineering, which will continue to the end of the year, resulting in a forecasted increase of £320k above budget. Pay remains within DfE benchmarks, but whilst additional income may provide some degree of mitigation, it is envisaged that agency costs will continue to rise.

Non-pay costs are a little over budget, due to new resources needed at the start of the year, but finance will continue to work to the current budget as drafted, as work is being carried out to get the non-pay budget back on track.

Cashflow is slightly above the December anticipated figure and whilst it is expected to dip January to March because of the ongoing capital projects, cashflow is manageable. The Director of Finance is checking the bank overdraft facility, to which the bank currently appears to agree.

Due to receipt of only 1 tender, which was over-budget, the College is not proceeding with the new Brickwork facility planned for the compound area, so consideration is being given to how to better utilise the space.

A mid-year review is being carried out and all budget lines are being carefully considered. Financial KPIs are all on track, other than pay, as herein discussed. The College is complaint with the bank covenant on quarter 1, but there are some concerns about quarter 2. Based on the end of March forecast figures, it is anticipated that the College will be RI. All FE colleges are facing challenges, but larger colleges have larger surpluses, which can be utilised for much needed, increasing costs. Future capital funding changes may support smaller colleges and time frames for spending income have been removed, but the DfE has acknowledged that more needs to be done to support FE finance.

8/24

**Teaching and Learning**

**i. Papers 8i Ofsted Report and 8ii Post Inspection Action Plan were received. It was reported that** report amendments had been suggested and accepted. Following careful consideration, the College decided to make a formal complaint to Ofsted, on a range of issues, predominately procedural; stepping out of process, conflict of interest and the apparent influence of a small proportion of learners' opinions on the overall report. No significant changes are anticipated, but the College feels strongly about the process review. Governors will be updated as to progress. Governors were disappointed that the Governance section did not reflect the Ofsted/Governor meetings and that some inspector criticisms appeared to have arisen without evidence which could have been refuted

if further evidence had been requested, in particular, with regard to Governor challenge and awareness of under-performing areas.

**Governors noted that** the Commissioner had acknowledged the College's work on staff wellbeing, in particular the new way of working is considered good practice and the Commissioner is looking at how the College might assist other colleges with their workforce development.

**Governors noted** Ofsted comments regarding student personal development enrichment and noted that the College offers opportunity for independent learning and extra curricula enrichment on Fridays, thanks to the new way of working, which should be highlighted on future reporting.

### **iii. Curriculum Update**

**Paper 8iii Curriculum Update was received.**

**It was reported that** staffing instabilities in Computing remain. Maths and English challenges also remain, exacerbated by the necessary use of agency staff. The risk has been managed in Sports and the College is not renewing the contract with the football club. It is disappointing that Ofsted did not recognise the improvements in Motor Vehicle. T' Levels remain strong and quality systems have been reframed and reviewed as a result of the Ofsted inspection.

Attendance is at 84%. Level 2 Business attendance is particularly poor, but work is ongoing to support and improve attendance, including the reintroduction of automated texts to parents, linked to attendance registers.

**CHALLENGE: Governors asked whether attendance references distance travelled. It was reported that** attendance snapshots are collated, endeavouring to quantify and qualify attendance over time periods.

It is anticipated that the new behavioural and sanctions processes will improve behaviour as they bed-in with staff and students.

GCSE resit results are strong and show improvement on last year's results in terms of the numbers of passes and higher grades. Mock GCSE examination results are expected in March and will be reported to the Board in April.

**It was reported that** dependant on how the various qualifications are weighted, the most important columns in the report are Assessments Done and Units Done. Governors were therefore reassured that: - the Level 2 Engineering Progress figure is listed as 0 because the assessments are end-loaded,

- due to the timing of assessments, Animal Care marking had not been completed at the time of writing the report and

- at Level 3, some units are completed but await appraisal.

Term 2 priorities include attendance, 16 to 18 learners in particular and extra curricula enrichment development. High expectations of staff continue and a matrix accreditation is due in April, regarding the College's provision of advice and guidance. The new Learner Experience Committee will further consider attendance and report to the Board.

### **iv. Learner Voice**

**Paper 8iv Learner Survey Report Feb 24 was received.**

**It was reported that** fewer learners completed the survey on September enrolment than in previous years. The induction survey showed good, early expectations and learners felt welcome and know how to access assistance and support. Comments and results regarding time table issues were less positive and this is being addressed. In the 16-19 mid-year survey, 92.6% of learners agreed that teachers know the material being taught and that group is positive about the support, delivery and

resources provided. Learners report improvements are needed in enrichment and lesson organisation, which are being addressed.

The Adult survey results were positive. Adult learners feel welcome and experienced great inductions and they know how to access support for personal issues, which, when accessed, are dealt with well. For Higher Level Adult learners, strengths include quality of learning and how well diverse backgrounds work together. These learners report well managed independent study time and workload.

**CHALLENGE: Governors asked whether follow up questions look to address where learners mark questions as 'NA', noting that benchmarks of positives would be useful.**

**CHALLENGE: Governors noted that over 30% of learners do not engage in enrichment activities and asked whether learners are aware of the range of activities available, to enrich their time at the College. It was reported that SMT are aware of the need to provide a broader offer, but are restricted by the new way of working, but there are plans to improve and deliver enrichment opportunities differently.**

**CHALLENGE: The Chair asked the Student Governor present, whether learners are clear as to the enrichment offers available. The Student Governor reported** enrichment offers are well advertised around the College, but learners may not feel they have time to partake, as the College also offers numerous work placement opportunities, which take up learner time. Furthermore, over the last few months, the College has begun to block out timetable time for enrichment and many learners do enrichment activities anyway on Fridays and weekends, so the blocked-out time is sometimes viewed, by some learners, as a 'break' and learners are not necessarily interested in clubs. Some enrichment activities take place during class time. The Deputy Principal explained that the College relies on collapsed days to fit that in. The Student Governor advised that learners struggle with regular commitment to enrichment activities, but find it easier to attend and enjoy one-off days for enrichment such as 1<sup>st</sup> aid training. Governors thanked the Student Governor for the input, which will be utilised for further enrichment activities' considerations.

Governors were keen to stress the importance of celebrating successes as well as working on improvements.

## 9/24 **Policies**

**The following policies were reviewed and approved by the Corporation:**

- Data Breach Policy
- IT Security Policy

## 10/24 **Search and Governance Committee Update**

**The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee (the S&G Committee) reported that** the Committee met on 30 January 2024. The S&G Committee Terms of Reference were reviewed, amendments were administrative only and they were recommended for approval by the Board.

**The S&G Committee Terms of Reference were received and approved by the Board.**

**The S&G Chair (Mr Wright) reported that** in order to support the Corporation with his skills and experience during the period of the appointment of a new Chair of the Corporation and with regard to the S&G Chair also being Chair of the Audit Committee, Mr Wright has agreed to being recommended by the S&G Committee, for reappointment to the Corporation Board, for a period of 2 years, immediately following the expiry of his current term of office on 9 July 2024.



**The Board approved the S&G Committee recommendation to reappoint Mr Wright for a period of 2 years, immediately following the expiry of his current term of office on 9 July 2024.**

**11/24 Date and time of the next meeting**

The next meeting will take place on 30 April 2024, at 9.30am.

**12/24 Impact of meeting**

Governors will await the outcome of the complaint to Ofsted, regarding the Report to ensure that the Ofsted Action Plan sufficiently addresses issue and swift action is taken to improve the current position.

The conversation around staffing and impact on learning and outcomes was particularly inciteful and informs the importance of continuing to monitor the current financial situation closely to ensure a prudent approach is taken.

The Learner Experience Committee will report to the Board for additional scrutiny and strong strategic oversight of teaching and learning and the progress in curriculum adjustments is good.

The Chair thanked the Board for their support and input over his tenure as Chair, noting the advances and improvements made in shape, quality and commitment of the Board.

Meeting closed at 12:00pm