MEETING OF THE CORPORATION OF MACCLESFIELD COLLEGE

TUESDAY 29 APRIL 2025 AT 9:30AM

MACCLESFIELD COLLEGE - PART I

Clerk: Ms S Gardiner

In attendance	C Johns, (Chair), M Wright, P Hunter, G Bristow, R Kay (Principal), D Rutley, E Kennedy, R Milkins, R Charlton, I Cass, I Jones, J Lewis
Apologies	H Taylor, M Botwe, B Oultram (Student)
Non-governor attendance	L Reed (Deputy Principal) A Farrar (Director of Finance) H Fazackerley (for Item 5 only) T Cosgrave (for Item 6 only) H Hampson (for Item 7 only)

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILE	DEADLINE
Business Continuity Policy to be reviewed to ensure recovery, restoration and review is included	SG/SL	July 2025

MINUTES

Item Title

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting. Apologies were received from M Botwe, H Taylor and B Oultram.

2. Declaration of Members' Interest

There were no declarations of Members' interest.

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

3. Minutes from the Meeting held on 4 February 2025

To confirm and approve the Part 1 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2025.

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 4 February 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising from the Meeting held of 4 February 2025

The Director of Governance confirmed that all actions had now been completed. The Deputy Principal provided an update on the proposed 2 week half term in October. It has been agreed that the second week will remain a teaching week, with a focus on professional development.

5. In Depth Presentation – Corporate Services, Learner Enragement, Marketing and Applications

Helen Fazackerley, Director of Corporate Services (HF) joined the meeting for this item only to present an update on these areas. The presentation included an overview of the student journey, the new "Choose Macc" marketing campaign which included website updates, ad vans, billboards and leaflet drops for adult courses. HF confirmed that the application process for 2025/26 has been updated so students can now apply to a curriculum area rather than a course. There is clearer information on the website and an improvement to IAG during interview evenings. To date, the College has 980 applicants for 2025/26, 100 more than this time last year. Key growth areas are A Levels, Art, Electrical and Hair and Beauty. There has been a significant increase in school engagement this year, with 62 meaningful encounters with the team, reaching 10,000+ students and parents. A new engagement approach for parents has been introduced with parent evenings, SEND careers fair, a focus on Year 10 and 11 students, lunch time drops in, zoom presentations and assemblies. Open Events continue to be successful with this year's attendance double to that of 2 years ago. Applications completed at open events have increased by 19% (311 to date).

CHALLENGE: A Member queried whether we were targeting areas such as Kidsgrove and Biddulph, given the easy accessibility via train to Macclesfield. HF advised that her team had visited the Leek area, following the College's transfer over to Newcastle-under-Lyme. HF confirmed that they will look into Kidsgrove and Biddulph.

CHALLENGE: A Member queried whether parents are asking for more information around employment destinations/options. HF confirmed that a lot of parents wish to know the opportunities available to students following completion of their course.

CHALLENGE: A Member queried whether return visits are carried out with perspective students? HF confirmed that school visits take place between September – December. The College will then visit again in the second term, either via assemblies or parents evenings, for example.

CHALLENGE: A Member asked the percentage of student that come to Macclesfield who have been rejected by their first choice. HF advised that most schools encourage students to apply to at least 3 options, therefore knowing their first choice could be difficult to record. HF added that the College also allows multiple applications (2 separate applications for different curriculum areas).

6. In Depth Presentation Apprenticeships, Quality Assurance and Finance

Tracy Cosgrave, Vice Principal for Commercial and Employer Services (TC) attended the meeting for this item only to provide an update on the apprenticeship provision. TC confirmed that there are currently 704 apprentices on programme with attendance across all ages above 95%. TC advised that the best-case achievement rates is 72.4%, which is significantly above the national average.

TC shared that there has been a real focus on personal development for apprentices this year, with a number of charity events, additional programmes around setting up a business and a variety of guest speakers.

TC advised that the apprenticeship target saw an increase this year, however taking into account those learners who will not achieve within this academic year, the College will be approximately £100K over that set target.

CHALLENGE: A Member queried whether the rise in costs for employers has had an impact on apprenticeship numbers. TC advised that there has been no real impact on numbers. Apprentices are not required to pay national insurance therefore there are no increased costs for employers.

CHALLENGE: A Member queried parents understanding of apprenticeships and what the College is putting in place to ensure information in shared. TC confirmed that members of her team attend school events with the Learner Experience Team to ensure that learners are provided with all the information before deciding their next steps, along with open events and employer events.

CHALLENGE: A Member asked what the uptake was for the new plumbing provision. TC confirmed that this provision is full and will continue to grow next year, along with construction.

The Principal wished to congratulate TC along with her team following a request from the FE Commissioner to share their best practices on a national level. A great achievement for TC, her team and the College.

7. 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 slight decrease in overall concerns this academic year. Staff training has continued, with 13 members of the College Management Team completing their Level 3 Safeguarding training.

Members noted that the number of students who have a learning difficulty has risen to 50% which must have an impact on the teaching staff and need for support staff.

Governors commented that the content of the report provided was helpful and gave a clear overview of the support needs required from the College

HH noted that in addition to the report, new legislation had been received in relation to Martins Law and OFCOM have launched new legislation around record keeping and staying safe online, both of which will be reviewed by the College and training arranged where required.

CHALLENGE: A Member noted that in relation to bullying and harassment concerns, these appear to be at the start of the academic year and reduce as the year goes on. HH confirmed that any concerns are dealt with quickly. Difficulties between students are predominantly carried over from their previous education setting.

CHALLENGE: A Member raised concern over the increasing number of SEN students and asked whether the Aspirations Academy was still an option. The Principal confirmed that this was closed down due to there only being a small number of students requiring it. The decision was made last year during curriculum planning to widen the Level 1 offer to ensure that those students were integrated into College and could work towards progressing to Level 2 and 3. Those students who are not quite ready for College are referred to an appropriate support mechanisms, e.g. The Princes Trust.

8. Teaching and Learning

Lucy Reed, Deputy Principal (LR) presented a curriculum update which included an overview of the achievement rates in Cheshire and Warrington and the North West region. LR was pleased to share that Macclesfield College now sits at the top of the achievement rate table with 86.1% for Cheshire and Warrington and third in Greater Manchester. This is a significant increase to 2023/24 by over 6%.

i. Learner Progress Report

LR presented the Learner Progress Report, advising the Board on the College process on monitoring the learner journey. LR directed the Board to Appendix 1 of the report which provided details on learner progress to date across all levels. Appendix 2 of the report detailed the January examination results. LR advised that due to the College snow closure in early January, some exams were missed and will be sat later in the year.

CHALLENGE: A Member queried whether the College would achieve the KPI set around retention and achievement rates? LR advised that the College target for retention is high, however we are already over the national rate, with a main focus around adult learners. LR confirmed that there are no concerns at this stage around achievement rates.

9. KPI 2024/25

An updated KPI document was presented, providing an overview of the College's performance to date. Key Performance Indicators were discussed, including retention rates, apprenticeship data and attendance. Retention rates for 16-18 learners are above the national average, with the 19+ retention slightly below, however fluctuation is expected. Apprenticeship data is performing well, however attendance rates were slightly below target. LR advised that attendance remains a challenge. RK shared that to assist with attendance a new post has been trialed for an Attendance Officer, who monitors attendance and sweeps the College to ensure that all students are where they need to be. LR added that additional support has been provided in the study center for those students who struggle with maths and English.

Financial KPIs were also reviewed, with income targets and operating costs discussed. The Director of Finance (AF) confirmed that the DfE have increased the cash days benchmark to +25 days – the College is currently at 10 days. The College currently has 10 vacancies, 5 of which are new roles and turnover has reduced by 10%. The College's application numbers for the next academic year were strong, with a significant increase in applications compared to the previous year.

10. Audit Committee Update

i. To receive the minutes of the Audit Committee on 18 March 2025 and note any actions from the meeting.

The Audit Committee minutes from the meeting held on 18 March 2025 were received. MW advised that a full review of the audit calendar was undertaken. The Corporate Governance audit has been completed and had a positive outcome. The Business Continuity audit took place in March and at the time of the audit committee meeting was showing positive outcomes. Audits are due to be carried out between May and July for Student Records, Payroll, Expenses and Benefits and Counter Fraud Health Check. All reports from the audits will be presented to the audit committee in June.

MW confirmed that the Risk Register was reviewed and discussed. All recommendations were approved by the Audit Committee. Finances remain a high risk due to the changing guidance from the DfE. The in-year payment has been amended to two thirds and no date has been agreed as to when the College will receive this. The NI contributions update has been pushed back to May.

MW wished to share the good news that the DfE have confirmed that payments for 16 – 19 learners will increase by 3.8% for the next academic year.

The minutes from the Audit Committee Meeting held on 18 March 2025 were approved.

11. Business

i. To receive the College Management Accounts for period ending 28 February 2025

The Director of Finance (AF) presented the Management Accounts for the period ending 20 February 2025 and noted the following points:

- The financial health of the College remains Good, however this continues to be monitored closely by the Director of Finance and the DfE;
- A rise in enrolment numbers and those student with high needs has contributed to an increase in operating costs, through catering, student transport and other income sources.
- AEB is tracking in line with budget with the planned delivery for the remainder of the year expected to meet the annual target.
- Agency costs (YTD) have been reduced compared to this time last year. Significant improvements in staff retention and recruitment has contributed to a notable reduction in agency fees.
- Pay costs as a percentage of income is currently 63.44%.

In relation to the NI payments, the DfE have now confirmed that they will only pay an 80% contribution between April and July 2025.

AF also confirmed that the DfE have issued the FE College Condition Capital Allowance (FECCA) with a total budget of £302m. It has been confirmed that Macclesfield College will receive £592k which will be allocated for IT support.

CHALLENGE: A Member queried the costs for catering and asked why there is such a big differential between the Refectory and Starbucks. AF confirmed that costs are lower for the Refectory due to catering being in house. There has also been a raised bursary for student meals. AF confirmed that she will provide a breakdown of costs at the next meeting in May.

CHALLENGE: A Member requested an update on the bus tenders. AF confirmed that they have been tendered to a contractor who manages a fleet of buses. They have provided a 5 year plan for transport costs which will assist budgeting going forwards.

12. Link Governor Updates

The Director of Governance invited members to share any updates from their recent link governor meetings with staff.

- Ian Cass (IC) – IT & Cyber Security Link: IC attended the recent IT & Cyber Security Committee meeting and advised that there were a small number of non compliant areas, all of which are being addressed. IC has also requested that timescales are added to the report to ensure transparency.
- Richard Milkins (RM) – Corporate Services Link: RM met with the Director of Corporate Services and discussed commercial options for the College, for example, using the site

for external film companies. HF is currently reviewing this. RM wished to thank the team for all their hard work and their considerable contribution to the increase of student numbers and engagement.

- Rachael Charlton (RC) – Skills and Careers: RC met with the Vice Principal Commercial Services and discussed engagement and partnerships with industries to ensure curriculum continues to reflect employer needs, national changes the College is responding to e.g. maths and English requirements, success rates and benchmarking with other colleges, ambition of wider team to build on strong base and improve, teaching staff support and development, retention and recruitment and explored the impact of wider financial constraints across different sectors which may impact future sponsorship of apprenticeships.
- Phil Hunter (PH) – HR Link: PH met with the Director of HR prior to the Board meeting and was pleased to note that staff turnover has reduced to 11% from 32% 2 years ago. A number of interviews are being carried out this week for various roles. A new Centre Principal is now in post, together with an additional FT maths teacher and PT English teacher.
- Isabelle Jones (IJ) – SEND Link – IJ met with the new Specialist Provision Lead and discussed staff training and transition support. Year 11 reviews remain a challenge, with details not been updated by the previous providers which hinders the College staff. Access to work funding was also discussed and how this is going to affect students

13. Policies

The Director of Governance presented the new Business Continuity Plan, advising that this was a brand-new policy and a requirement from the recent Business Continuity Audit.

The Director of Governance requested any comment on the policy, with one Member stating that there didn't appear to be any reference to "recovery, restoration and review". The Director of Governance will report this to the policy writer and any updates will be presented to Board in due course.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next Corporation Meeting will be held on Tuesday 13 May 2025 at 9:30am at Alderley Park Hotel, followed by a Strategic Planning Meeting.

15. Impact of Meeting

The Board were very impressed with the improvements made to student engagement and marketing, which is clearly seen in the rise in student numbers and applications. The national success of the Apprenticeship provision is also a great achievement. The rise in the number of SEN students is a concern, with the increase in support needs and exams costs. A Member queried how the College will fund these additional needs. AF confirmed that the College has funding for ECHP learners, however no additional funding for SEN students is currently available. The DfE have also reduced the costs for support internships.