

**MEETING OF THE CORPORATION OF MACCLESFIELD COLLEGE**

**TUESDAY 8 JULY 2025 AT 9:30AM**

**VELOCITY BOARDROOM**

**Clerk:** Ms S Gardiner

In attendance	C Johns, (Chair), M Wright, G Bristow, R Kay (Principal), P Hunter, R Milkins, , I Cass, I Jones, H Taylor
Apologies	D Rutley, E Kennedy, R Charlton, M Botwe, J Lewis, B Oultram (Student)
Non-governor attendance	A Farrar (Director of Finance)

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Business Continuity termly updates to be added to Corporation agendas in 2025/26	SG/DF	
Interim Deputy Principal to prepare attendance report to Corporation	SG/DP	October 2025
Director of Governance to send all meetings invites to Members	SG	July 2025

**MINUTES**

**Item Title**

**1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting. Apologies were received from D Rutley, M Botwe, R Charlton, J Lewis and B Oultram. I Jones joined the meeting at 10:00am.

**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 meetings held on 29 April 2025 and 13 May 2025.**

**To confirm and approve the Part 1 Minutes of the meetings held on 29 April 2025 and 13 May 2025.**

The minutes of the Corporation meetings held on 29 April 2025 and 13 May 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

#### **4. Matters arising from the meetings held on 29 April 2025 and 13 May 2025**

The Director of Governance confirmed that the outstanding action from the meeting on 29 April has now been completed, as part of the internal Business Continuity Audit.

The Principal provided an update on the action from 13 May 2025, confirming the a PR piece has been prepared on the Happiness Index outcomes and will be shared in the public domain in the coming days.

#### **5. Health and Safety Report**

The Director of Governance advised that the report writer was unable to attend the meeting to present this report, due to annual leave. The Director of Governance further advised that the H&S Link Member had shared feedback on the report prior to the meeting, as he was unable to attend today. All Members were satisfied with the content of the report.

#### **6. Teaching and Learning – Learner Voice Report**

The Director of Governance advised that this report was to be tabled in light of the fact that the report writer had now left the organisation. Members agreed that the content of the report was positive, noting that there was a high percentage of students who would recommend Macclesfield College to their peers.

#### **7. KPI**

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. The Principal confirmed that the attendance KPI will remain at 90% as this is the College expectation. The Principal advised that attendance remains a challenge across the sector, however during the last meeting with the FE Commissioner attendance was a fraction below the set KPI. The College was advised that this was high in comparison to other Colleges and we should be rating ourselves as outstanding on the College SAR.

**CHALLENGE: A Member queried if we were aware of what other Colleges were doing to tackle attendance and whether the AOC could assist with providing attendance data.** The Principal advised that attendance data has been requested from other Colleges and to date only one College has been in touch. The Principal confirmed that the interim Deputy Principal will prepare an attendance report in readiness for the October Corporation Meeting, detailing the process and capturing data on the impact of the new Attendance Officer, who will remain in post from September. The Principal also invited Members to attend Learning Walks in the new academic year to observe the lesson structures and see the impact of teaching on the students.

The Principal confirmed that the financial KPI's were positive, following a focused year. Learner numbers are positive, with applications for 25/26 higher than last year.

#### **8. Business**

##### **i. To receive the Management Accounts for period ending 30 June 2025**

The Director of Finance (AF) presented the Management Accounts for the period ending 31 May 2025 and noted the following points:

- The financial health of the College remains Good;
- 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 ahead of 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 65% due to the rise in National Insurance payments. The DfE have advised that a benchmark of between 65 – 67 is healthy.
- Catering expenditure has seen a proportional increase due to higher sales.
- Transport expenditure remain on budget.

AF also advised that the DfE have increased the 16-18 funding rate to 5.4% from 2025/26. It is expected that the College will receive the in-year growth payment in 2025/26, however this is subject to affordability. AF confirmed that this payment is not included in the forecast.

AF shared the College recently received a letter containing the FE Commissioner benchmarks and detailed the main points:

- The cash days benchmark will be raised to 40 for every day of the year, rather than just month end;
- the benchmark for college specific – EBIDA will remain at 6% of income;
- The staff cost to income benchmark will remain at 65% of income

**CHALLENGE: A Member raised the cash days as a possible weakness for the College. They also added that business continuity was an increasing threat and recommended that this be added as a standing item on the Corporation Agenda.** The Principal advised that the FE Commissioner recognised the prudence of funding. Going into 2025/26 the College will be in a stronger financial position. AF advised that the benchmarks are advisory and not a trigger for intervention.

#### ii. To receive the Commentary for College Financial Plan to 31 July 2027

AF presented the commentary for the College Financial Plan to 31 July 2027. The following main points were shared with the Board:

- The introduction provides an overview of the financials over the past year;
- The plan sets out the College's milestones to actively support growth which are set to be achieved by 2026/27.
- Operating income has seen an increase this year, mainly due to the growth in 16-19 funding;
- Apprenticeship's income has also seen a growth of 12.57%;
- AEB has performed well during 2024/25 and has met allocation;
- Staffing costs have seen an increase of £123K due to the employer national insurance contributions and in year pay increase.
- Operating costs have increased by 6.89% from the original budget. Higher learner numbers have resulted in an increase in examination and licence costs. Catering costs have also seen an increase;
- The cash position is expected to be 18 cash days as of 31 July 2025;
- KPIs confirmed for 2025/26 Budget and 2026/27 Forecast;
- Financial health of the College for 2025/26 and 2026/27 forecasted to remain Good;
- Cash days in hand planned for 2025/26 is 31 and 25 for 2026/27.
- Operating income to reach £16m by 2026/27

**The Corporation approved the Commentary for College Financial Plan to 31 July 2025**

### iii. Debt Write Offs

The Director of Finance explained that as outlined in the Financial Regulations (4.5 the collection of debts), all requests to write-off debts over £1,000 must be referred in writing to the Principal and Chief Executive. Requests to write-off debts in excess of £10,000 must be approved by the Corporation (This applies to individual debts and to a group of debts where the total exceeds the thresholds outlined above).

At the Audit Committee meeting in November 2018, it was agreed that an annual report would be submitted to corporation detailing all debts to be written off, regardless of value, for which corporation approval would be sought.

For 2024/25, there are 3 debts which require approval for write off. All of these debts are fully covered by the bad debt provision within the college accounts. In line with the College's tuition fee policy, learners are liable for unpaid fees and the College will pursue collection of these debts via the debt collection agency used by the College.

The Corporation was asked to approve the total debt write off of £1,594. **This request was approved.**

## 9. Audit Committee

### i. To receive the minutes of the Audit Committee on 17 June 2025 and note any actions from the meeting.

The Audit Committee minutes from the meeting held on 17 June 2025 were received. MW advised that Wylie and Bissett presented the external auditors report which sets out the audit approach and focus. There were no real changes to the audit approach for 25/26.

MW confirmed that Validera presented an overview of the completed internal audits. The Corporate Governance audit was recorded as adequate with 4 minor findings – no gifts and hospitality policy in place, succession planning document to be produced and some minor administrative points. The Director of Governance has actioned or is the process of actioning these recommendations.

The Business Continuity audit was also recorded as adequate with 3 findings of areas of improvement – Business Impact Assessment, a formal Business Impact Analysis needs to take place. Business Continuity Testing not carried out – this has now been completed with the senior management team and Head of IT. The College does not utilise a post event form. All recommendations have been actioned/in the process of being actioned.

The findings from the Counter Fraud – Quality Assurance, Student Records and Payroll audits will be presented at the next Audit Committee meeting in November 2025.

MW advised that the Risk Management Committee met on 3 June and undertook a full review of the Risk Register. Three risks had been reduced and all other risks remain the same.

MW wished to seek Board opinion on including business continuity as a standing agenda item at Corporation Meetings. MW raised concern over the shifting climate around business continuity and requested that the Board be kept apprised on how the College is managing those risks.

**It was agreed that the Head of IT will report termly to the Corporation on business continuity, confirming the keys risks and strategies in place to reduce those risks.**

**ii. To receive and approve the External Audit Plan**

MW presented the External Audit Plan, confirming that it mirrored that of 2024/25.

**The External Audit Plan was approved by the Corporation.**

**10. Link Governor Updates**

The Director of Governance confirmed that there were no updates to present at this meeting

**11. Policies**

The following policies were reviewed and approved by the Corporation:

- Business Continuity Plan;
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

**12. Governance**

**i. To receive the Corporation Calendar of meetings for 2025/26**

The Director of Governance presented the Corporation Calendar of meetings for 2025/26, advising that the only variation was to the December Corporation Meeting which had been moved back a week. This is to ensure that updates from the Search and Governance and Remuneration Committee meetings could be presented in a timely manner.

**The Corporation Calendar for 2025/26 was approved by Board. The Director of Governance to send all meetings dates to Members prior to the start of the academic year.**

**ii. To receive the Search and Governance minutes from the meeting held on 29 April 2025 and note any recommendations**

The Director of Governance presented the minutes from the Search and Governance meeting held on 29 April. The Director of Governance confirmed that Member I Cass had been recommended to serve a second term on the Corporation and that Member R Milkins had been recommended to join the Remuneration Committee.

**All recommendations made by the Search and Governance Committee were approved.**

The Director of Governance also wished to share that Karen Macrae had been appointed to join the Audit Committee. Ms Macrae is a qualified accountant and brings with her a wealth of audit knowledge.

**iii. To receive and approve updated Instruments and Articles of Government**

The Director of Governance advised that the College had recently received an update from the DfE setting out changes to the I&A's. The Corporation were presented with the changes as follows:

- Appointment of Members of the Corporation – The DfE advised that the Secretary of State is no longer responsible for the appointment of Members should memberships fall below quorate. This responsibility now sits with the Corporation.
- Student Voting Rights – the DfE have confirmed that students under the age of 18 now have voting rights on all matters, except those that concern appeals and representations by student in disciplinary matters.

The Director of Governance confirmed that the I&A's had been updated in line with advice received from Eversheds.

**The updated Instruments and Articles of Government were fully approved.**

**13. Date and Time of the Next Meeting**

The next Corporation Meeting will take place on Tuesday 21 October 2025 at 9:30am, followed by a Strategic Planning Meeting in the afternoon.

**14. Impact**

The Corporation were all in agreement that the financial position of the College was good and could clearly see the improvements made over the year. Members also wished to highlight the academic success this year, resulting in Macclesfield College being the top College for achievement across Cheshire and Warrington.