A VISION

Outstanding learning on the north and south banks of the Tyne


See page 8 – reference approval of name
INTRODUCTION

We would like to thank everyone who responded to the public consultation for the proposed merger between South Tyneside College and Tyne Metropolitan College.

The public consultation took place between Monday, 6th February and Friday, 17th March 2017.

We are satisfied that we gave all stakeholders an opportunity to respond to the proposal and we are pleased to note we had a total of 227 responses, with a majority being positive, and fewer than 16% being negative.

This feedback has reaffirmed our desire to move forward with the merger of the two colleges on 1st August 2017.

We have listed and noted the positive, negative and constructive comments from the public consultation process and these will be used to inform our detailed planning of the merged college.

We realise that we still have a lot of work to do in the coming months prior to 1st August 2017 and post-merger date to ensure that the merged college will:

- Significantly improve and expand the learning opportunities, experience and environment for every student, enabling them to be first choice for employers and universities;
- Increase capacity to enable further investment into high-quality learning resources and expertise, demonstrating real value for public money whilst creating an organisation of first choice;
- Provide employers with an outstanding proposition operating a one-stop shop for all workforce development, including apprenticeships;
- Contribute to the redevelopment of North Tyneside and South Tyneside and the A19 area, by offering first-class, industry standard facilities to learners, employers and our communities;
- Create the opportunity for further development of staff - our key asset - sharing best practice, and becoming an employer that attracts and retains the best talent.

We have listed and noted the positive, negative and constructive comments from the public consultation process and these will be used to inform our detailed planning of the merged college.
THE BENEFITS AND IMPACT OF THIS PROPOSAL

The corporations of South Tyneside College and Tyne Metropolitan College held a public consultation from Monday, 6th February 2017 to Friday, 17th March 2017 on proposals to merge the two institutions to create a bigger, better, stronger college serving North Tyneside and South Tyneside and the wider region.

The consultation document “Proposed Merger Consultation Document: A Vision. Outstanding learning on the north and south banks of the Tyne” was widely circulated and set out:

- The case for organisational change;
- A vision for outstanding learning;
- The benefits of merger;
- Key facts and information about the two colleges;
- The proposed timeline;

In addition to the listed stakeholders, the public consultation document was made available on both colleges’ websites.

This report collates and analyses the response to the public consultation and addresses concerns raised in the responses. This report should be read in conjunction with the public consultation document as it refers directly to areas within the document.

RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Number of respondents:

227 people responded during the consultation process.

The vast majority of these were received via online survey.

Many of those who responded to the public consultation supported the view that:

- The merger will be beneficial for students, staff, employers and communities and will help close the skills’ gap and drive the local and regional economies;
- The opportunity to invest in the estate will improve facilities and learning environments for students;
- The sharing of good practice and resources can be pooled to deliver excellence in education and training;
- The merger will enhance the status of Further Education in the North East;
- The merger will allow the creation of a high-quality, financially resilient educational organisation that can respond to local needs and priorities.

The consultation also raised a number of concerns over the merger including:

- Possible effects on staff;
- The diminution of existing college brands;
- Reduction/discontinuation of provision.
The highest number of respondents was in the category of staff (38.33%), followed by learners (14.09%). Of the 227 respondents, 20 did not state their category.

The total number of responses stating their category were as shown below (top six only). Of the 227 respondents, 20 did not state their category.

- College Staff – 38.33%
- Learners – 14.09%
- Other Category – 11.01%
- Unknown – 8.81%
- Local Business – 7.49%
- Local Community – 6.61%

Q. Do you agree the proposed merger of our two colleges provides the best solution and will ensure the best future provision of Further Education for North Tyneside and South Tyneside?

198 people responded to the question about whether they were in agreement with the proposal:

- Yes – 63.64% (126)
- No – 15.15% (30)
- Unsure – 21.21% (42)

167 people chose to give further information on their decision. The main reasons given in supporting the merger were: the capacity to increase the curriculum offer / learning opportunities available including the ability to build on specialisms, being able to forge stronger business links to shape the curriculum and meet the region’s skills needs; being able to share knowledge, best practice, staff and resources; financial strength and resilience, attracting investment to meet North East Local Enterprise Partnerships (NE LEP) priorities, economies of scale leading to investment in campuses and education.

The 30 individuals who responded negatively were mostly learners and employees. Where respondents answered “no” or “unsure”, their concerns centred on issues such as: changes in terms and conditions of employment and job security (staff only); travel issues if staff and/or learners were forced to travel between sites; the discontinuation of specific curriculum areas such as A Levels and the loss of identity for individual brands of the colleges e.g. South Shields Marine School, Queen Alexandra Sixth Form.

Q. What are your views regarding the proposed vision, mission and values of the proposed merged college?

Of the 156 people who responded to this question, 104 respondents provided extremely positive feedback and were supportive of the proposed vision, mission and values.

Ensuring financial stability; being representative of the ethos of both colleges; and benefiting students and the wider community were all common threads.

Further communication with staff was highlighted as important and it is the intention that continued and frequent communication will ensure all staff are fully engaged in working towards the vision, mission and values of the merged college.
Q. What are your thoughts regarding the name for the proposed college?

The proposed name is

**TYNE COAST COLLEGE**

167 people chose to give further information on their decision.

130 responses were deemed as positive, including an endorsement by Northumbria Police.

There were 40 individual alternative names suggested, although often there were only marginal variations. In light of the positive responses, ‘Tyne Coast College’ was put forward to the Secretary of State as the name for the merged College and received formal approval. This will take effect from 1 August 2017 subject to this being the date of completion of the merger between South Tyneside College and Tyne Metropolitan College.

Feedback echoed similar sentiments to those relayed in answer to the question of whether people thought the merger was the best solution for Further Education in North Tyneside and South Tyneside.

Common themes relayed in responses were: an opportunity to enhance the learning of students north and south of the River Tyne; being able to meet the skills challenge; financial stability; a positive impact on the regional economy.

There were some concerns around a compromise on quality of provision for learners and the possible need for learners to travel to and from different sites.

The shadow board stress that quality will be enhanced not compromised and there will be no additional travel demands on students.

Please include any other comments you would like us to take into account.

82 people replied to the any other comments section.
REDUCTION / DISCONTINUATION OF PROVISION

The possibility of a reduction or discontinuation of provision (particularly A Levels) was raised as a concern by some respondents.

As part of the core values of the merged college, the leaders and governors are committed to helping each student to achieve their potential. This will include building upon the highly successful A Level offer at Queen Alexandra Sixth Form College and the strong vocational offers on both sides of the river to improve the learning opportunities, experience and environment for every student.

We believe that choice is important for young people looking to continue their studies post 16 (and at aged 14), and the merged college will continue to offer a wide range of high-quality academic and vocational courses as well as strengthening and extending specialist opportunities, developing new and innovative T level qualifications, apprenticeships and higher education routes that offer students outstanding and exciting opportunities to study, progress and move into employment.

RESPONSES TO ISSUES RAISED

Some of the responses from the public consultation did raise specific issues. Following further consideration of these issues, the colleges offer the following responses:

Possible Effects On Staff

Staff raised concerns regarding job security and terms and conditions of employment, as well as questions around the requirement for movement between college sites.

The colleges have provided regular communications for staff and have held briefings and discussions with staff and trade union representatives. This dialogue has allowed parties to raise any issues, concerns and questions about the merger.

The shadow board has shared relevant information where possible; however, they recognise that a merger can be an unsettling time as plans continue to evolve. Staff should be assured that the shadow board is committed to maintaining communications and an open dialogue to ensure that colleagues are kept informed throughout the merger process.

We have consulted on the first phase of a redundancy and restructure process for managers and have accepted a number of voluntary redundancy requests as part of this process. We will commence the second phase of the restructure during May, where posts will be ring fenced to schools/departments in the first instance.

At this stage, there are no plans to move any staff to alternative sites. However, it will be necessary for some staff to travel between sites for meetings etc. If this situation changes, staff will be fully consulted prior to any changes being implemented.

As always, we are working closely with the trade unions.

Existing College Brands

The loss or diminution of well-respected college brands on both sides of the river was flagged as a concern by consultation respondents.

Both colleges have recently been graded as ‘Good’ by Ofsted and the merged college will ensure that the good practices already in place will continue and will take the best of existing arrangements and brands and develop them further to ensure that this will happen.

By combining the existing resources and expertise of both colleges, the merged college will give students, businesses and residents of the North East an even better education and training offer which will inevitably enhance the college brands and reputation.

The leaders and governors of the merged college will work to ensure that the quality of provision and brand reputation is challenged and improved across the whole brand family, namely; South Tyneside College (Professional and Vocational), South Shields Marine School, Tyne Metropolitan College and Queen Alexandra Sixth Form.

Also sub brands including: Career College North East, Marine Offshore Safety Training Centre, Ignite, North East Sports Academy and TMC.

Both colleges undoubtedly possess education and training brands that are well known and respected. These will effectively continue as the day to day recognised business brands to strengthen the combined colleges’ reputation for excellence. This exceptional ‘family’ of brands will sit under the corporation brand of Tyne Coast College.

One of the key benefits of the merged college for North Tyneside and South Tyneside is providing employers and businesses with a clear idea of the options available for training and apprenticeships and that as a bigger, better, stronger education provider we will be well positioned to support North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NE LEP) priorities with robust employer partnerships and an innovative curriculum.