



Formal Response: Consultation on Proposed Merger

Havering Sixth Form College

Havering College of Further & Higher Education

New City College

Response to the Consultation

We would like to thank all those who have responded to the recent public consultation on our proposal to merge Havering Sixth Form College, Havering College of Further & Higher Education and New City College.

Formal, public consultation took place between the 1st December 2018 and the 14th January 2019.

The consultation is an integral part of our merger process, whilst we have not had a high level of response we are pleased to have heard from a range of stakeholders. In addition to the formal consultation we consulted widely with staff at both Havering Colleges through online platforms, focus groups and a Question Time event at Havering Sixth Form College.

Feedback was in favour of the proposal and has reaffirmed our desire to move forward with the merger of the two Havering colleges with New City College.

We are satisfied that the consultation gave people a good opportunity to respond. We have carefully reviewed all of the comments made during the consultation, these will help to shape our future plans. We have responded privately to all questions posed by individuals but summarise our responses here also.

This consultation is just the beginning, we will now be working together to ensure that we secure the anticipated benefits for students, staff and the wider community provided by the merger.

We thank you for your comments, your interest and your support.

Stan Rose
Chair of Governors, Havering College of Further & Higher Education

Keith Darvill
Chair of Governors, Havering Sixth Form College

Meena Chavda
Chair of Governors, New City College

Executive Summary

The corporations of both Havering College of Further & Higher Education and Havering Sixth Form College held a formal public consultation from the 1st December 2018 to the 14th January 2019 on a proposal to merge the two Havering Colleges with New City College (NCC).

The 30-page consultation document: A strong future for further education in Havering was widely distributed and set out:

- The rationale for change
- The new vision for further education in Havering
- Benefits and impact of the merger
- Key facts and information about the three colleges
- Proposed time-scale to merger
- Statutory Notices in accordance with the Further and Higher Education Act 1992
- How to respond to the consultation

The public consultation document was distributed to a wide range of stakeholders including the Department for Education, ESFA (funding agency) all local secondary schools, colleges and other providers in the neighboring boroughs, national bodies representing the sector, local enterprise partnerships, local government, local Members of Parliament, Trade Unions, employers and employer bodies.

In addition, it was made available through all three college websites and public notices were posted in national and local media. The document was briefed to staff and staff were also provided with additional opportunities to contribute to the consultation outside of the formal consultation process, many taking the opportunity to do so.

Views from any stakeholder could be submitted through a number of channels: by visiting any of our websites and completing the online form, by emailing directly to consultation@havering-sfc.ac.uk, consultation@havering-college.ac.uk, consultation@ncclondon.ac.uk or by making use of the hard copy of the feedback form provided in the consultation document.

The vast majority of responses were received through the online response form, with one hard copy response, two letters via email and one letter being received by mail, this was a letter from the Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills, the Rt Hon Anne Milton MP who expressed her interest in the consultation and wished us every success as the project moves forward.

There were 22 responses in total received during the consultation process.

Of these, 14 responses were solely to HSFC, 6 solely to HCFHE and 5 to both Havering colleges: Minister of State, EFSA and Commissioning Officers for Education in Havering and Barking & Dagenham College. No responses were received by NCC,

RESPONSES – BOTH COLLEGES BY TYPE		
Type	Respondents	Response
Skills Minister	1	In favour of (1)
ESFA – Funding Agency	1	In favour of (1)
Commissioning Officers for Education & Director for Educational Services	3	In favour of (3)
Head teacher	3	In favour of (1)
Staff	4	In favour of (1)
Resident	1	In favour of (1)
Sixth Form College	1	In favour of (1)
NEU union	1	Neutral – questions raised
Parent	4	Neutral (3) Not in favour (1)
Former Student	1	Not in favour
Student	5	Not in favour

RESPONSES – TO BOTH COLLEGES		
Type	Respondents	Response
Skills Minister	1	In favour of (1)
ESFA – Funding Agency	1	In favour of (1)
Commissioning Officers for Education & Director for Educational Services	3	In favour of (3)

RESPONSES – HSFC ONLY		
Type	Respondents	Response
Head teacher	3	In favour of (1)
Staff	4	In favour of (1)
Resident	1	In favour of (1)
Sixth Form College	1	In favour of (1)
NEU union	1	Neutral (1) questions raised
Parent	3	Neutral (3) questions raised
Student	1	Not in favour

The student not in favour of the proposal was concerned about student numbers expressing that they would prefer the College to stay as it is.

RESPONSES – HCFHE ONLY		
Type	Respondents	Response
Parent	1	Not in favour (1)
Former Student	1	Not in favour (1)
Student	4	Not in favour

The issues raised by the parent and student although received via the merger platform were not merger related but were in connection with the closure of the Quarles campus of Havering College of Further and Higher Education.

RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION

This report summarises the feedback received during the consultation period. It provides a response to the questions and comments raised and sets out the next steps.

Comments synopsis

21 respondents commented on the proposal. Of those comments 5 were unconnected with the merger, relating instead to the closure of the Quarles campus of Havering College of Further and Higher Education.

Of the remaining 16 comments, 14 were in favour of the merger.

A secure future

There was a strong sense from respondents that the merger would provide a level of security in relation to the future provision of post-16 education within the borough thus being beneficial to both students and staff alike.

Curriculum offer

There was a strong sense from respondents that having one provider of post 16 opportunities was a sensible and efficient option for Havering enabling coherent curriculum planning that would benefit the local community,

Partnerships

Respondents representing the commissioning offices of both the London Borough of Havering and the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham and local schools all sought assurance that we maintain the strong existing relationships and partnerships that exist in Havering and with local boroughs.

Guaranteed place for Havering residents and students educated in the borough

Respondents sought assurance that the offer of a guaranteed place to Havering residents and those educated in the borough would be maintained post-merger and that students would not have to travel between sites.

Other

A concern was raised that there would be the necessity for building works resulting from the merger.

A further concern was raised that NCC, having only formed in 2016 might not have the capacity to maintain all of the colleges.

QUESTIONS RAISED

During the consultation a number of specific questions were raised. These have been summarised below with our responses to the issues raised given here.

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

Q: NCC was formed in 2016, is this a sufficient length of time to demonstrate the ability to maintain all of the colleges? (STUDENT, HSFC)

As New City College has grown, the Group has enhanced its capacity to make sure it has the resources and expertise to thrive where its constituent colleges would have struggled had they stood alone. Quality and outcomes for students have been consistently improved within an infrastructure that is robust enough to support opportunities through investment and innovation.

Q: Are there alternative means of raising the finances to meet the deficit that Havering College of Further and Higher Education has set for the year 2018/19? (FORMER STUDENT, HCFHE)

The Governors of all of the colleges believe that merger is the best means of securing investment and having a sustainable level of debt with less dependency on government agency funding. In the processes that took place leading up to the decision to source merger partners, HCFHE engaged in a SPA (Structure & Prospects Appraisal) with the FE Commissioner and HSFC and NCC were chosen as merger partners, this being seen as the best solution.

PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS/OFFER

Q: Would the current partnership offer of a guaranteed place for every young person who lives or is educated in the borough still stand? (HSFC, PARENTS & COMMISSIONING OFFICERS)

Our partnership work is a key strength in both colleges – OFSTED commented upon this during our recent inspection. This merger is seen as an opportunity to cement the already strong partnership between the two Havering colleges in a formal way. It is envisaged that we will continue with our offer of a guaranteed place to every young person in Havering who meets the entry criteria for their chosen study programme.

Irrespective of merger, the two colleges have always sought to provide a coherent curriculum offer that serves the borough.

Q: WILL THERE BE AN INCREASE IN STUDENT NUMBERS? (STUDENT, HSFC)

There are no planned increases to student numbers on the Wingletye Lane site as a result of the merger. HSFC has increased its student numbers target by approx. 100 from this year to 2500 but this is not connected with the merger. The number is significantly less (over 200) than the number of students we had in 2015.

CURRICULUM

Q: Will this merger create a gap in provision locally and create displacement for our most vulnerable residents? (COMMISSIONING OFFICERS)

No, Curriculum leaders at both colleges have been meeting for some time to discuss the curriculum offer to ensure that our provision meets the diverse needs of our community. It is not envisaged that there will be any gaps in provision, indeed the merged entity in Havering will be better placed to meet local and sub-regional needs.

Q: Will there be a loss of vocational provision at entry level/Level 1 & Level 2 at the Havering Campuses? (COMMISSIONING OFFICERS)

It is not envisaged that there will be any change to provision at entry level, Level 1 or Level 2 as a result of the merger. There is a commitment to meet the diverse needs of our community.

Q: In future would some course only be offered at certain locations? (PARENT, HSFC)

The merger will create one college in Havering with two or more sites. It is planned that students will enroll at a particular site e.g. Wingletye Lane or Ardleigh Green and that this will be the place of study for the student for the duration of their study programme. Havering College of Further and Higher Education has sold the Quarles campus and irrespective of the merger, courses will have to move out of Quarles. The merger will make it easier to find places for those courses nearby.

STAFF

Q: What opportunities are likely in terms of staff development as a result of the merger for staff at all levels? (STAFF, HSFC)

Being part of a larger group brings opportunities for networking, peer support, the sharing of practice and resources and enhanced professional development and career opportunities for staff. All staff across all of the NCC colleges would be able to access staff development opportunities offered.

ESTATE & FACILITIES

Q: Would any building work be needed and if so, how would disruption to current students be minimized? (STUDENT, HSFC)

Whilst there are no planned building work arising from the merger at this time, all parties are committed to developing all sites to create world-class facilities for their students. At HSFC there is a plan to extend its newest building – Berners-Lee House that stands at the front of the College to provide improved facilities for existing students. At HCFHE there is a plan to complete construction of a campus on a new site in Rainham.