

Merger Proposal Feedback Report

King George V Sixth Form College and Southport College

Introduction

As part of the type B merger process Southport College and King George V (KGV) Sixth Form College undertook a formal Public Consultation with stakeholders.

A Consultation Document was released on the 14th of October 2016 and replies were due in by the 30th of November 2016. The document was seen by both Boards as an opportunity to explain the rationale behind the merger and the benefits of a merged college for the area.

The document included a Legal Notice of the intention to dissolve King George V College. The legal notice was also published in two local newspapers the Champion & the Visiter, and one national newspaper the Times.

The Corporations of both Colleges have formally considered the results of the Consultation exercise and actions arising out of it.

Information

There were 20 replies to the Consultation. The responses can be broken down as follows:

Respondent	No of replies
College staff	7 (3 KGV, 3 SC, 1 ex-member of staff)
College students	6 (all KGV)
Local residents	4
School staff	3
Other	1 (Bank)

In response to the question 'Do you agree that by merging the two colleges we will be better able to meet the needs of our students, employers and the community?' 9 said yes, 9 said no and 2 were not sure.

Concerns were expressed by KGV students, 2 KGV staff and a parent of a former KGV student who was also an ex-member of staff at both colleges.

The responses from Southport College staff, 1 KGV staff member, school staff and 2 local residents were positive about the merger and its purpose.

The response from the Bank and the one local resident were non-committal.

Actions

As the number of responses to the Consultation was relatively small it is difficult to draw too many firm conclusions from this exercise.

The most significant concerns expressed in the feedback were around KGV College losing its distinctiveness and position as an A level centre. This is a risk that has been identified and there is a clear commitment to maintaining a distinct sixth form college academic ethos and retaining the current KGV College site and separate brand identities.

It was recognised in the feedback that the merger provides an opportunity to secure and extend a broad curriculum offer and build upon the high standards now being delivered. This feedback was welcomed and supports a key purpose of the merger, namely to provide a comprehensive high quality offer to the local community.

It is important that ongoing communication with staff at both sites is maintained and that there is an opportunity for staff to express any concerns or raise any questions about the merger. The formal process of communication will form part of the legal due diligence. Alongside this regular briefings and staff meetings are planned at both colleges.

A Staff Satisfaction Survey has been completed at KGV College since the consultation. This survey confirmed that there are, understandably, concerns amongst some KGV staff about the merger and its impact on them. The survey found that 73% of staff felt that 'the College has a good future' and 74% that 'there is a clear vision which has been communicated to me of where the College is heading'. This indicates that there is a level of optimism about the merger that can be built upon. A similar survey will be carried out at Southport College.

Some concerns were expressed by KGV students over the impact of merger on the ethos of the KGV sixth form centre. These have been responded to and more generally meetings are being held with student representatives outlining the progress of the merger. These meetings provide an opportunity for questions or issues to be discussed, as well a way for students to be involved in helping shape the merger and promote the benefits of the colleges working together.

The response of schools to the merger is critical and meetings have now been held with the heads of all feeder schools in the area. These have been very positive, in keeping with response from schools to the consultation, and they have identified further ways to strengthen the relationship with schools.

Communication to local residents and other stakeholders is important and is ongoing. The student outcomes and results at both colleges are now amongst the best in the region but it is recognised that this is not fully appreciated and that there is a need to better promote this to the local community.

Finally both colleges are grateful for those people who have taken the time and trouble to respond and we will take on board the comments made as we continue the preparation for the merger.

John Clarke
Principal Southport College

Anne-Marie Francis
Acting Principal King George V Sixth Form College