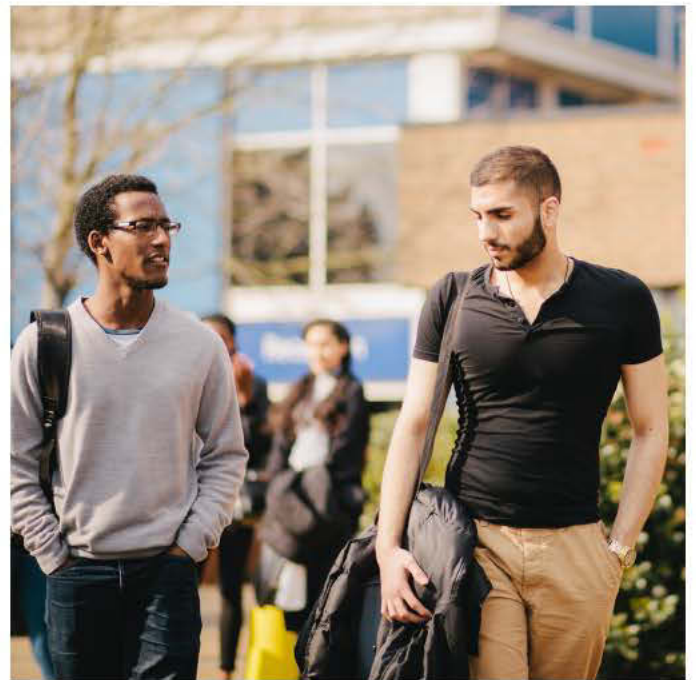
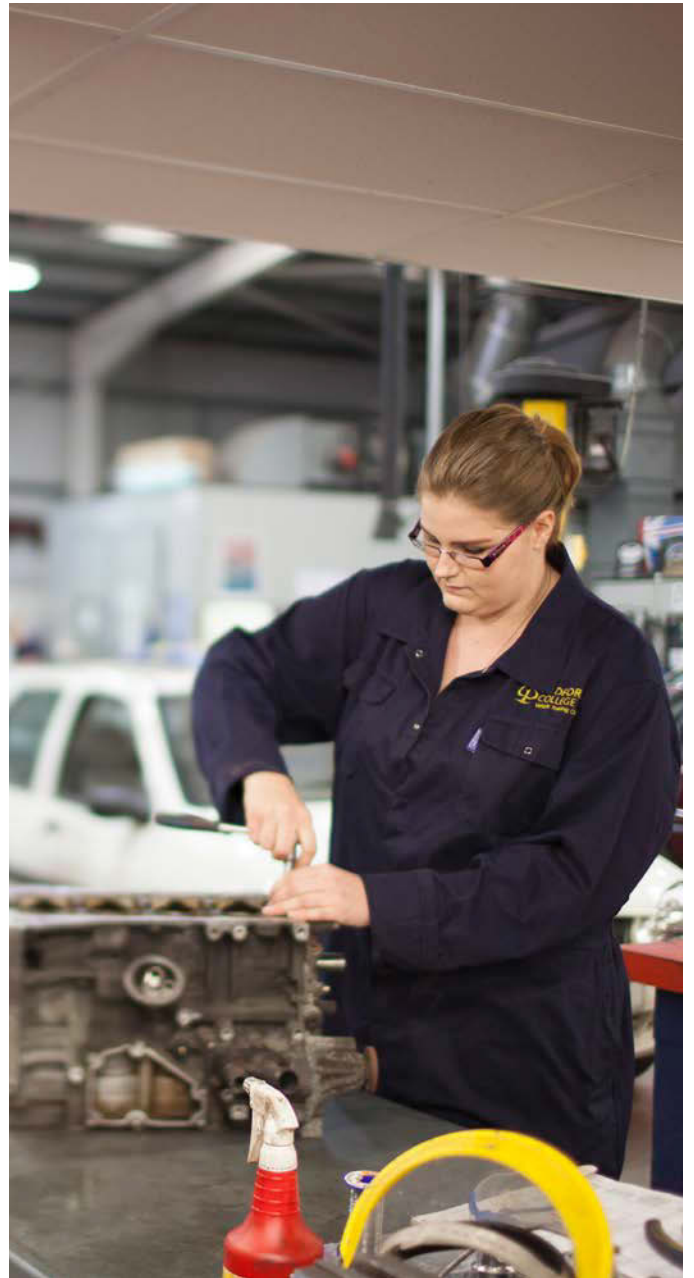


BEDFORD COLLEGE AND TRESHAM COLLEGE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION MERGER CONSULTATION





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FOREWORD

This document sets out the background to the proposal for a merger between Bedford College and Tresham College of Further and Higher Education (Tresham College). It describes the rationale for the merger and the benefits and opportunities it will bring for students, employers and the wider community.

Our intention is to merge Bedford College and Tresham College, however the existing campuses will remain and retain their local identities.

The decision of the two governing bodies to make this proposal reflects a positive strategy to deliver a strengthened local skills offer in a climate when the stability of individual colleges may be challenged in the future. The boards and senior teams have recognised the strength and opportunities created by a single, larger college with one vision, a shared and relevant curriculum and a single focus on quality, standards and excellence.

The proposed merger offers the best opportunity for a truly sustainable, efficient and effective model for the two colleges, aligning provision and focus and providing joint financial stability in a changing sector – together they are stronger.

By merging, we will be better placed to engage with employers and ensure that students are ready for the job opportunities of the future. Our proposed new college will also combine the best of each college's heritage, supporting the skills of our communities. For better or worse, much has changed in the way in which students have been funded in recent years and continued change is to be expected. As a larger, more robust organisation, we will have greater ability to support our students in facing such changes.

The planned merger is supported by the FE Commissioner and is a recommendation from the ongoing Government led Area Review of Further Education colleges across England.



We believe the benefits of merger are:

- Combining complementary strengths to increase the range of education and training opportunities and progression routes for students and employers;
- Delivering a joint curriculum offer which builds on the established specialisms of both colleges;
- Greater capacity to develop provision to meet national and local priorities for growing apprenticeships, higher level professional and technical education. This will support economic growth and prosperity in North Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire and focus on delivering the skills needs identified by the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP);
- Greater capacity to engage nationally and regionally with partners and stakeholders, in order to bring greater benefits to the local communities;

- Combining the talented pool of staff, and the excellent facilities and resources, to widen opportunities for students and to ensure efficiency and value for money;
- Improved financial stability enhancing and ensuring the continuity of local provision.

Our guiding principle through this merger proposal is to enhance opportunities for students and employers. The new overarching organisation will enable specialisms to develop further and better facilitate the growth of higher level education skills provision, apprenticeships and higher education opportunities.

All students at Tresham College who have not completed their courses of study by the date of the proposed merger will continue with and complete their studies in their current locations.

We welcome and look forward to hearing your views.



Linda Hockey

Chair
Bedford College



Jane Gardner

Chair
Tresham College of Further
& Higher Education



WHAT IS THE PROPOSAL?

Bedford College and Tresham College have a long and proud history. Our proposal is that the colleges should combine to create a unique “small market towns” institution across the South East Midlands area with campuses in Bedford, Kettering, Corby and Wellingborough, plus a specialist land-based institution in Central Bedfordshire and a motorsport specialist training centre in Silverstone.

The combined institution will be a strategically important, £60m+ turnover, college serving communities in Bedfordshire and North Northamptonshire along the well-established East Midlands rail corridor. It will be strong financially from day one, and therefore be able to develop provision that is genuinely locally driven.

For the governing bodies of the two colleges, the over-riding consideration is the positive impact this change will have for current and future students in the geographic area. It is intended to secure a financially robust, viable, suitable, sustainable

and appropriate further and higher education curriculum offer across the local area, protecting the localism of the areas and yet providing choices.

Consultation on this proposal will run from 30th March 2017 until 5th May 2017. The governing bodies of both colleges will review feedback received during the consultation process and the outcome of the consultation will be published online by the 31st May 2017.

Details on how to respond to the consultation can be found at the end of this publication.



THE MERGER WILL CREATE ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING COLLEGES IN THE UK, WITH AN INCOME OF NEARLY £60M AND 16,000 STUDENTS

SO WHY MERGE?

The UK, our region and the people within it have great opportunities in the years ahead but also face challenges. We need to continue to:

- Ensure that our young people have good access to high quality education and training in the subjects and disciplines that are right for them as they start their journey towards higher education and/or the world of work;
- Address the current position at Tresham College which has recently experienced a challenging OFSTED inspection, falling student numbers and is currently an administered college under the guidance of the FE Commissioner. The merged college will focus on restoring growth to these campuses, growing the curriculum offer and increasing financial stability for the future;
- Increase the skills of our workforce, so businesses can be more productive and successful, and individuals can access the opportunities in the local labour market;
- Fully support the aspirations of students to access university courses, higher level apprenticeships, HND and HNC courses delivering higher education provision in a wide range of subjects;
- Incorporate the latest learning technologies and techniques to provide an engaging and dynamic learning experience;
- Provide a financially robust college which is fit to grow and adapt to suit the needs of the local area;
- Provide high quality and diverse course provision for school leavers and a curriculum that meets local economic needs;
- Support the delivery of the SEMLEP's Strategic Economic Plan for the area, meeting the skills needs of employers through robust, appropriate and high quality training.



IT WAS FELT THAT
MERGER WAS THE
BEST SOLUTION
TO PROVIDE
QUALITY LEARNING
OPPORTUNITIES TO
CURRENT AND NEW
STUDENTS.

WHY THIS PARTNERSHIP?

Tresham College has campuses in Kettering, Corby, Wellingborough and the National College for Motorsport at Silverstone. It provides full-time, part-time and higher education study programmes in addition to apprenticeship programmes and courses for business.

Having previously enjoyed many years of high success, the college was awarded a Grade 4 by OFSTED in the summer of 2016. Whilst it is already in the process of working to improve this grading, a reduction in student numbers and an uncertain financial future has led the college to consider a merger with another strong provider.

A strategic options review undertaken in the summer identified two strong further and higher education providers in the area who would make good partners for Tresham. The Board considered proposals from a number of organisations who were interested in merging and chose Bedford College as their preferred partner.

Bedford College is a consistently high performing college, currently serving communities broadly within a 20 mile radius of Bedford. Over the last six years the college has focussed on growing provision to meet local needs and is now one of the largest providers in the region for 16-18 provision, apprenticeships, higher education and part-time provision. The college has extensive experience of successful mergers with other training institutions including Shuttleworth College.

Bedford College's financial performance is very strong and it was rated as Good at its most recent OFSTED inspection.

It is felt that the merger will allow Tresham College to immediately benefit from partnership with Bedford College, and together they can achieve long term financial security and excellence in the quality of provision. There is a common synergy between the two colleges around vision and values based on striving for excellence and achieving the best possible outcomes for students – these are the right things to sit at the heart of this decision.

Both colleges serve small market towns and are concerned with building strong local relationships. Both are also fully committed to looking after their staff.

Employer links for both colleges will be developed and fostered to ensure that the curriculum offer

remains appropriate and relevant, responding to industry changes. Market research will also be undertaken to ascertain the type of provision and subjects wanted in North Northamptonshire to secure future growth.

The merger of two colleges in separate counties will create a truly dispersed regional institution of good scale. The combined college will be the largest in the SEMLEP zone and will have significant strategic importance and scale. The focus will be very much on growth, increasing the quality of provision at Tresham and increasing the breadth and depth of the curriculum on offer.



**FOCUS ON QUALITY,
PROGRESSION,
CURRICULUM
DEVELOPMENT AND
DATA CAN DELIVER
A VERY STRONG
COMBINED COLLEGE**

WHAT IS OUR VISION FOR THE MERGED COLLEGE?

Most importantly the merged college will have at its very heart the ambition to deliver first class education and training to meet the needs of its students, local businesses and the communities that it serves.

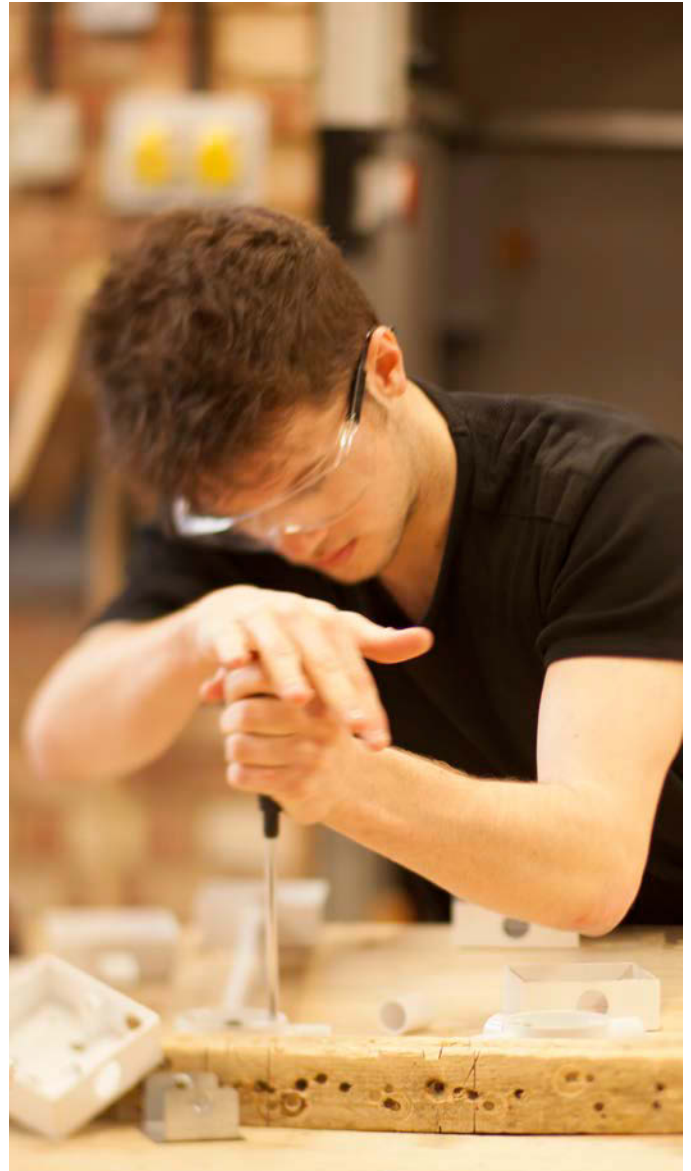
Our goals for the merged college are to:

- Provide excellent teaching and learning for all;
- Ensure positive course and employment outcomes;
- Meet the skills and training needs across North Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire;
- Increase progression opportunities, broadening and enhancing the higher education and skills options;
- Significantly contribute to economic development and regeneration through close working with key stakeholders, e.g. employers, employer groups, local councils, the Local Enterprise Partnership and local authorities;
- Provide opportunities for all as an inclusive organisation;
- Offer enhanced opportunities for students, employers, communities and staff and bring about a number of operational benefits.



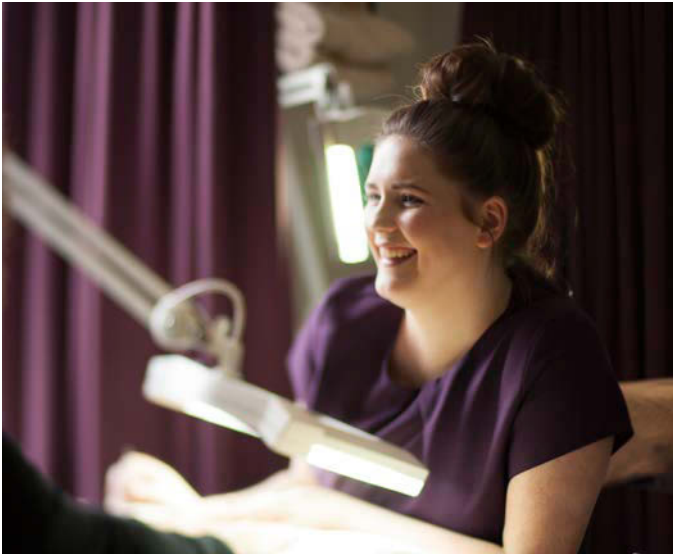
WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS MERGER FOR STUDENTS?

Combined complementary strengths will increase the range of education and training opportunities and progression routes for students and employers.



Delivery of a joint curriculum offer will build on the established specialisms of both colleges. There will continue to be a full range of course provision offered across our campuses.

Greater capacity to engage nationally and regionally with partners and stakeholders, will bring greater benefits to the local communities.



Combining the talented pool of staff, and the excellent facilities and resources, will widen opportunities for students and will ensure efficiency and value for money.

Greater capacity to develop provision to meet national and local priorities to support economic growth and prosperity in South East Midlands.

It will create an organisation with a turnover of circa £60M each year, which will enable more investment in student resources and facilities – enhancing and ensuring the continuity of local provision.





WHY NOW?

It is in the best interests of all our students that the planned merger takes place smoothly and speedily, minimising disruption to their studies and maximising opportunities to enhance their experience.

The uncertain financial future for Tresham College and the trend of shrinking curriculum provision needs to be reversed as soon as possible to ensure that the college meets the needs of its local communities and employers.

The Government is currently undertaking Area Based Reviews of all further education colleges and has identified the need to consolidate the provision of training for 16-18 year olds within the South East Midlands area. The FE Commissioner has indicated support for this merger as part of this review and consolidation process.



WHY DOES YOUR OPINION MATTER?

It is vitally important to us that we receive your views which will, in turn, help us to shape the future of our new partnership.

The new college will serve the local area and we want to ensure that it will meet the needs of all students, the local community and other valued stakeholders.



WHAT ARE THE TIMESCALES FOR THE MERGER?

The proposed timetable for the merger is set out below:

30th March 2017 - 5th May 2017: Consultation period

31st May 2017: Consultation outcomes published

1st August 2017: Merger of Bedford College and Tresham College into a single organisation

HOW TO RESPOND TO THIS CONSULTATION

Our plan for the merger of Bedford College and Tresham College will continue to be refined as views are given by the public and our key stakeholders. We now need your help to complete our proposals.

The formal Statutory Notice can be found on page 14.

The formal consultation period runs from 30th March 2017 to the 5th May 2017. All responses and representations must be received by the closing date.

You can respond in a number of ways:

- You can complete an online survey form by following the links on the colleges' websites at:
www.bedford.ac.uk/consultation
www.tresham.ac.uk/consultation
- You can download a pdf version of the consultation document (same website address as above) and send this either by email or post to the address below;

- If you would prefer not to complete the consultation survey form you are welcome to send other responses and representation by email or post, again to the address below:

The governing bodies of each college will publish an online summary of the consultation and its outcome by the 31st May 2017 on their websites.

The summary can also be provided by post. To request a copy please send a stamped addressed envelope (A4) to the same address as below.

Sue Titmuss

Head of Marketing

Tresham College of Further & Higher Education, Oakley Road, Corby, Northamptonshire NN17 1NE

or via e-mail: stitmuss@tresham.ac.uk

INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FURTHER EDUCATION (PUBLICATION OF PROPOSALS) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2012

Statutory notice: Further and Higher Education Act 1992

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by the Corporation of Tresham College of Further and Higher Education, in accordance with the Further Education Corporations (Publication of Proposals) (England) Regulations 2012, SI 2012 No. 1157, of the proposal for the transfer of the property, rights and liabilities to the Corporation of Bedford College and the subsequent dissolution of the Further Education Corporation of Tresham College of Further and Higher Education.

Tresham College of Further & Higher Education is a General Further Education College, which delivers vocational education and skills training in North Northamptonshire. At the end of the 2015/16 academic year the college had 3,563 full-time students, 4,043 part-time students and 452 apprentices giving a total of 8,058 students.

Dissolution of the Corporation of Tresham College of Further and Higher Education is proposed in order that it may merge with Bedford College. This will allow the combined organisation to harness the equal strength of both institutions, their resources, expertise and quality, and their equally strong reputations and standing with employers, stakeholders and their communities. Utilising these, it will be strongly placed to offer an increased range of outstanding educational and training opportunities to individuals and employers, and to do so in an efficient way that provides good value to paying students and clients, to funding organisations and to tax payers.

The date proposed for the dissolution of the Corporation of Tresham College of Further & Higher Education is 31st July 2017.

All students at Tresham College of Further & Higher Education who have not completed their courses of study by the date of the proposed dissolution will continue with and complete their studies in their current locations under the auspices of Bedford College.

WE WANT YOUR VIEWS

Proposed Merger of Bedford College and Tresham College

Bedford College and Tresham College are proposing to merge in order to further the ambitions we both have for the communities we serve. Details of the proposed merger are outlined in the Merger Consultation Document which is available online on both colleges' websites. Once you have read the proposal, please answer the following questions:

ABOUT YOU

Name:

Email:

Postcode:

Which of the following best describes you or your organisation?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| College Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> | Local Community | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employer | <input type="checkbox"/> | Local Government | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| FE or Sixth Form College | <input type="checkbox"/> | Parent | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Government Body/Agency | <input type="checkbox"/> | School/University | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| HE Institution | <input type="checkbox"/> | Student | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local Business | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please specify _____

Please use this space to tell us a little about yourself (optional)

Please tell us your preferred contact details (such as address, contact number or email address)

If you represent an organisation, please tell us about your role

WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THE PROPOSED MERGER

Do you support the proposal for the merger of Bedford College and Tresham College?

Yes No Not sure

Please use this space to provide any further details on the reasons for your answer.

We plan to maintain and widen the range of opportunities for students and to expand our employer focussed provision and services. Do you support these aims?

Yes No Not sure

Please give details of the provision or services you would like to see prioritised.

We plan to share good practice across our campuses in order to further enhance the quality of the student and customer experience. Do you support this aim?

Yes No Not sure

Please give details of any areas, services or provision you would like to see prioritised.

Do you think any group, including students and staff, would be adversely affected by the merger plans?

Yes

No

Not sure

Please use this space to provide any further details on the reasons for your answer.

Please use this space to make any comments relevant to the plans in the Merger Consultation document or to expand on any of your previous answers.

Thank you for taking the time to give us your feedback.



Bedford College
Cauldwell Street
Bedford
Bedfordshire
MK42 9AH
Tel: 01234 291000
www.bedford.ac.uk



Tresham College of Further & Higher Education
Kettering Campus, Windmill Avenue
Kettering
Northamptonshire
NN15 6ER
Tel: 0345 658 8990
www.tresham.ac.uk