

29 June  
2023

# Public consultation report outcome

---

The proposed merger between  
City College Southampton,  
Eastleigh College and  
Fareham College



# Contents

- 2 Chairs' Introduction
- 3 Background
- 4 Responses to consultation questions
- 6 Positive merger feedback
- 8 Suggestions
- 10 Concerns and comments
- 12 Name change
- 14 Summary and next steps

## Chairs' introduction

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the public consultation on the proposed merger of City College Southampton, Eastleigh College and Fareham College.

During the consultation period we engaged with all our stakeholders and provided a range of opportunities for responses, and we are satisfied that all interested parties have had the opportunity to comment.

The feedback we received has reaffirmed our ambition to merge as planned.

We have listened to the positive comments, the concerns raised, and the questions asked, and all these points will feed into our ongoing, detailed planning.

We recognise that this is a starting point, not an end. There is a lot of work to do to ensure the merger is implemented successfully for the benefit of our students, staff, employers, and the communities we serve, but we believe that this exciting new partnership is the best way to achieve our goals.



Geraint Davies  
Chair of Corporation  
City College Southampton



Natalie Wigman  
Chair of Corporation  
Eastleigh College



Kevin Briscoe  
Chair of Corporation  
Fareham College

# Background

The Corporations of City College Southampton (CCS), Eastleigh College (EC) and Fareham College (FC) held a joint public consultation from 29 March 2023 until 02 May 2023 on the proposed merger between the three institutions including the consultation on the proposal to change the name of the Fareham College Corporation to the South Hampshire College Group.

A consultation document was produced that set out the context for the merger, the proposal, and the benefits. It also included the consultation on the proposed name change.

The consultation proposal was available to download from each of the colleges' websites and copies of the proposal were emailed to over a thousand stakeholders in schools, colleges and academies,

local authorities, MPs, the Local Enterprise Partnership, key employers, universities, trade unions, staff, and students, as well as the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the Department for Education (DfE) and the Secretary of State. Details of the consultation were also sent via a press release to local media to raise awareness amongst parents and the wider community. In addition, staff from all three corporations received information about the consultation via internal briefings. The launch of the consultation also appeared on the regional news channel: [BBC iPlayer - South Today - Lunchtime News: 29/03/2023](#) (at 4:31 mins).

A statutory notice of dissolution was placed in both The Telegraph and two local newspapers (Echo and The News) on 29 March 2023.

This report sets out and analyses the responses received during the consultation period.



# Responses to consultation questions

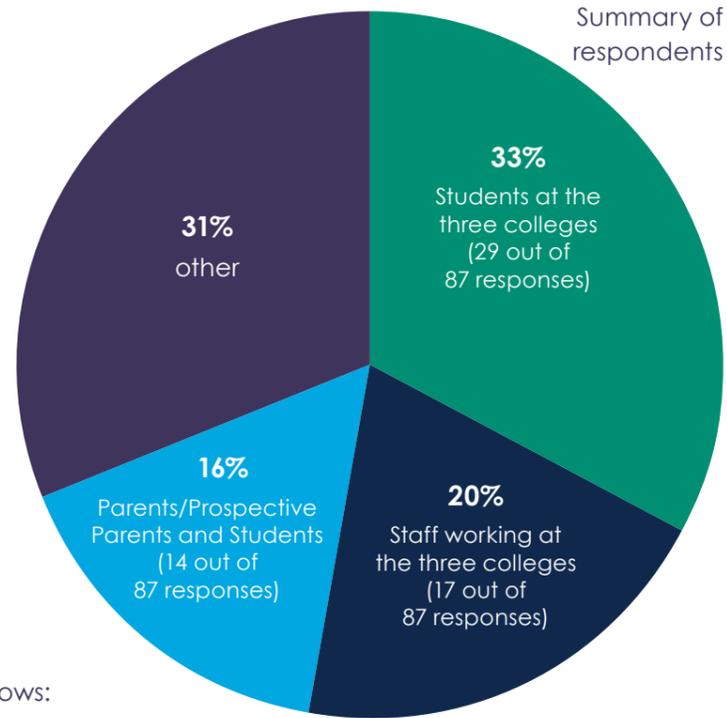
We received a total of 87 responses to the public consultations.

There were 79 direct responses from stakeholders and 8 letters from:

- Rt Hon Suella Braverman – KC MP Member of Parliament for Fareham
- Hampshire County Council
- Solent Local Enterprise Partnership
- Hampshire Chamber of Commerce
- Fareham Borough Council
- Eastleigh Borough Council
- UCU – Southern Region
- Portsmouth City Council

The distribution of the 87 respondents were as follows:

	Number of Responses
City College Southampton staff	9
Eastleigh College staff	2
Fareham College staff	6
City College Southampton student	18
Eastleigh College student	9
Fareham College student	2
Fareham College student, HE institution	1
Parent/Carer/Guardian	9
Prospective student or parent/carer/guardian	5
School	2
Other FE institution	3
Other FE institution, HE institution, Other	2
Private training provider	1
Employer / Local business	3
Trade Union representative	1
Local government	6
MP	1
Other	7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>87</b>



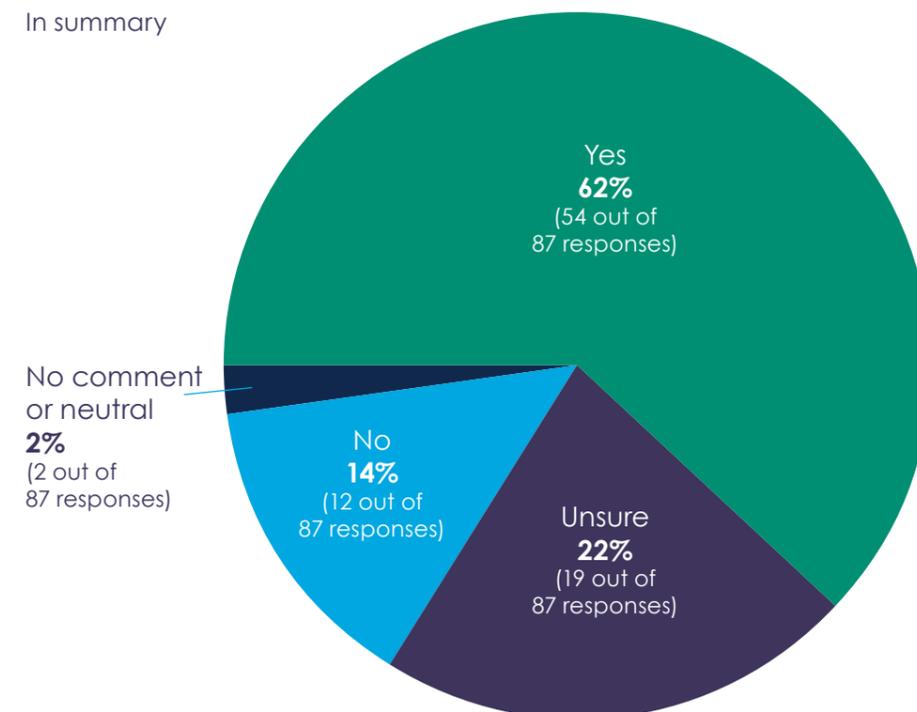
# Support for the proposed merger

As part of the consultation exercise, we asked whether the proposed merger was supported.

The table below details the breakdown of the responses received:

	No	Unsure	Yes	No response	Total
City College Southampton staff		1	8		9
Eastleigh College staff		1	1		2
Fareham College staff	1		5		6
City College Southampton student	3	6	9		18
Eastleigh College student		3	6		9
Fareham College student	2		1		3
Parent/Carer/Guardian	2	3	4		9
Prospective student or parent/carer/guardian	3	1	1		5
School			2		2
Other FE institution			3		3
Other FE institution, HE institution, Other		1	1		2
Private training provider			1		1
Employer / Local business		1	2		3
Trade Union representative			1		1
Local government		1	3	1 + 1 neutral	6
MP			1		1
Other	1	1	5		7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>87</b>

In summary



Parents and prospective students/parents and students were the main respondents that stated that they did not support the merger:

- Parent and Prospective Students/Parents **42%** (5 out of 12 responses)
- Students (Southampton and Fareham College) **42%** (5 out of 12 responses)

# Positive merger feedback

The following comments were made in relation to the benefits of the proposed merger:

Will offer a unified approach for education in the area and will help to strengthen provision.

It has the potential to secure and strengthen vocational and technical provision across the region and in the City of Southampton specifically.

Proposed merger will provide a viable and sustainable post-16 offer for a range of technical, applied and work-based programmes in the area.

The new institution will build upon the role that the legacy colleges have played in ensuring access to high quality technical pathways including T levels and Apprenticeships; an employer facing skills offer and higher education programmes.



The proposals will enhance the strategic ability of all three colleges to raise participation and increase the numbers of learners into higher education, notably at levels four and five, therefore, responding directly to a strategic ambition of the LEP increase the workforce qualified level four and above.

Collaboration between the Solent's further education colleges would be required to achieve a sustainable infrastructure to meet the evolving and growing skills demands within the Solent economy.

The collaboration of the colleges will enhance and strengthen the range of provisions and delivery of quality courses throughout the region, and we welcome the formation of the network of campuses with 'centres of excellence' to assist in supporting the supply of skills needed to the support the local economy and support the Department for Education skills priorities and technical education reform.

The coming together of the three college will secure high quality Further Education provision in the region and see much needed investment for post 16 Further Education, ultimately benefiting regional economic improvement and improving social mobility.

The proposed merger will create a financially stronger organisation with strengthened leadership and governance, whilst still enhancing distinctive local brands and curriculum specialisms.



# Suggestions for improving engagement with the local community

As part of the consultation process, we asked for suggestions on how the merged group could improve its engagement with its local community. The table below details the suggestions which were received grouped in themes. We will consider these suggestions as we continue to develop our plans for the post-merger college.

Theme	Suggestions
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional funding to support and hold community events</li> <li>• Charitable projects, community gardens, working to place students with local businesses</li> <li>• Encourage staff/students to work more closely with the community, incentivise students who help support and create more clear partnerships, updating blogs on the website</li> <li>• Explain what the plans are for merger</li> <li>• More outreach to community leaders and groups, not just employers</li> <li>• Reach out to community, voluntary and faith groups, especially around adult education. Look to include older people and others who have protected characteristics</li> <li>• Regular networking events for businesses, perhaps in conjunction with an organisation like the Hampshire Chamber</li> <li>• Improve community engagement</li> </ul>
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College minibus to be able to transport students to trips</li> <li>• Sponsoring a sports team</li> <li>• Better support of disabled adult students for evening classes</li> <li>• Better communication with other students trying to support disabled students</li> <li>• Ensure strategic collaboration on curriculum offer to ensure the needs of our shared communities</li> <li>• Consult on changes which may affect student</li> <li>• Offer a Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) service to young people and adults and continue to work with feeder schools to promote work-based learning</li> </ul>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have roles designed for out-reach to ensure relationships are built with employers and establishing links like job coaches/work experience for each subject area</li> <li>• Better careers progression support replicated at all colleges – each college should have a level 6 qualified careers professional to deliver a varied careers enrichment programme and 1-1 guidance, supported by local employers</li> </ul>

Theme	Suggestions
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business forums to give updates on working collaboratively</li> <li>• Engage with local employers to support employability opportunities</li> <li>• Have working groups with key employees and training providers to help develop the course/programme and ensure everyone is kept up to date</li> <li>• Each campus to set up regular Employer Partnership meetings where they can learn about the programme and opportunities to support the college with a champion for each sector and working groups. Suggest subgroups for particular sectors including local authority, construction and housing</li> </ul>
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work more closely with schools</li> <li>• Improve marketing of courses</li> <li>• Have the dates and costs for 2024 courses</li> <li>• Host citywide schools' events</li> <li>• Engage in the youth alliance group</li> <li>• More open events for younger year groups</li> <li>• Open days, with trial lessons</li> <li>• Engaging more with universities</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group visits to the colleges that will merge</li> </ul>

## Employer training needs

As part of the consultation process, we also asked employers to note any training needs they wished the merged college to deliver. The list below details the responses received and these will be considered as part of the merged college curriculum and business planning process:

- Reduce duplication where possible and ensure a wide course offer can be offered
- Commercial law (export/import)
- Electrical
- Training in courses that cover multiple possibilities
- Safeguarding knowledge
- Mental health first aiders/ELSA training
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Academy Barbering model across all three colleges
- Work readiness with core skills in customer care, written and oral communication, organisation, project management and business administration
- Work experience/internship scheme
- IT, literacy and maths skills
- Construction, installation, and maintenance
- Personal finance
- Ensure support for apprenticeship with regards placement and progression routes

# Concerns and comments

A number of concerns were raised as part of the consultation exercise. The table below details the themes of these and the colleges responses to them:

Theme	Response
<p>Risk that the traditional principles of a locally base vocational FE provision will be undermined with specialisms requiring more students to travel away from their 'local' college.</p> <p>In relation to Centres of Excellence how will provision be split to make sure young people who can't travel far still access a broad curriculum</p>	<p>It is proposed that provision at level 1 remains at the individual colleges. Provision at level 2 and 3 and above will form part of a centre of excellence. This will ensure that a broad range of provision is maintained at each college.</p> <p>The location of the specialist centres has been chosen based on student travel patterns and to ensure accessibility</p>
<p>It is important for the City partnership that the college continues to offer support to NEET cohorts</p>	<p>We will continue to work with relevant partners to ensure we make a positive impact on NEETs cohorts in the region</p>
<p>Important that the merged college continues to be part of the 6th form partnership to support all the post-16 learners in the City</p>	<p>The new college intends to remain as an active partner in the network</p>
<p>The excellence from the colleges will be shared</p>	<p>Working groups are in place for each operational area of the colleges to develop plans for the integration of departments. These are attended by leads from each of the colleges. As part of the discussions and planning best practice is discussed and planned to ensure that this is not lost as departments integrate</p>
<p>Transparency of all progress of the merger and regular updates for reassurance are important.</p> <p>Ensure that staff are spoken and listened to</p> <p>Ensure staff don't feel vulnerable and leave</p>	<p>Monthly staff briefings are scheduled to update staff on progress. There is also a merger email address at each college for staff to ask any questions or make any suggestions.</p> <p>We will monitor staff turnover and ensure that any issues that arise are dealt with quickly</p>
<p>Set time for departments to build relationships with departments at the other two colleges to ensure there is synergy in messaging</p>	<p>As the preparation for merger progress a number of subgroups have been developed in addition to the working groups to ensure that more staff start working together to develop and progress plans for integration.</p> <p>In addition, staff will be encouraged to meet counterparts in other colleges over the forthcoming months</p>

Theme	Response
<p>Ensuring effective marketing and utilise skillset to create strong group campaigns</p>	<p>Marketing leads from the three colleges are meeting on a regular basis to plan the alignment of marketing functions including the alignment of campaigns</p>
<p>Concerns about pay and ensuring that other college staff are not penalised to ensure parity of pay across the three colleges.</p>	<p>TUPE regulations protect the existing terms and conditions of employment for all staff. There will be no changes to terms and conditions of existing staff as a result of the transfer</p>
<p>The need to upgrade the desktops and laptops at Fareham College which do not have High Specification Systems</p>	<p>The IT infrastructure at Fareham College is under regular review and cycle of replacement or upgrade. Any older systems will be updated under routine capital expenditure when they reach end of life. Not all systems will be High Specification but will meet the needs of their intended use</p>
<p>Concern that City &amp; Eastleigh are not as financially strong as Fareham and whether this will cause issues.</p> <p>Ensure that one college isn't disproportionately impacted and that all the colleges are levelled up</p>	<p>There are robust financial plans in place to ensure that the merged colleges are financially resilient and these form part of our application to the Education, Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA)</p> <p>All planning for the new entity has been based on the principle of One College, three centres with a balanced investment programme and very much a desire to 'level up'</p>
<p>Ensuring that the reputation of the merged college group</p>	<p>Each college will maintain its own unique identity and specialisms offered post-merger. This will be promoted through the marketing campaigns and ensure that any negativity is addressed.</p> <p>All three colleges have strength and believe that bringing together the three colleges will build capacity, create new opportunities and growth and be a financially stronger entity</p>
<p>Ensuring that the distinct culture of the colleges are maintained</p>	<p>The colleges will continue to maintain their unique identities post-merger. HR leads from the three colleges meet regularly to ensure that the best practice from the colleges are captured in the planning processes as the colleges departments are aligned</p>
<p>Assurance that EC continues to a core site for the merged group with minimal job losses are assured</p>	<p>All planning is based on a model that retains the current sites. The merger will require efficiencies to be made but we intend to manage the process in such a way as to avoid compulsory job losses wherever possible</p>

# Name change of Fareham College Corporation

As part of the consultation on the proposed merger consultation on a proposed name change of the Fareham College Corporation to South Hampshire College Group also took place.

In respect of the proposed name change, there was just two negative comments regarding the name as follows:

*It doesn't cover the whole of the South of Hampshire so may cause confusion with other colleges along this area*

This comment was raised by an individual who stated that they were from another FE College/Institution

Responses	Number of Responses
City College Southampton staff	8
I like it	1
I like the name.	1
It was the best of the 3 options	1
Sensible and makes sense	1
Think it is a positive name	1
No response	3
City College Southampton staff, City College Southampton student	1
Simple and easy to understand whoever is looking up the name.	1
City College Southampton student	17
Happy with this	1
I haven't a comment	1
I support it	1
No comment	1
Nothing	1
No response	12
City College Southampton student, Other	1
Fine	1

although this person is unknown and was not a formal response from a recognised stakeholder's representative.

Suggestion of the name: *Southwest Hampshire College's Group* from a key stakeholder in another local FE institution as it more accurately reflected the geography. A follow up email to the key stakeholder confirmed that this name was a suggestion only and there was no objection to the South Hampshire College Group name.

No objections were raised by any other stakeholders.

The table below details the responses we received:

Responses	Number of Responses
Eastleigh College staff	2
Simple and easy to remember	1
No response	1
Eastleigh College student	9
Solent College	1
Something that represents the South Coast	1
No response	7
Employer / Local business	3
None	1
Perfect	1
No response	1
Fareham College staff	6
Great name!	1
Seems like a poor name choice could have done better	1
The name is clear and says what it means, just need to find a way to make it short and clear as it is quite long	1
The proposed corporation name reflects the upcoming merger and sounds well established	1
No response	2

Responses	Number of Responses
Other	5
Do your own research	1
Feels more corporation/business than educational but realise it's a transition from Fareham College Corporation which is a positive move	1
Nothing to add	1
Seems sensible	1
No response	1
Parent/Carer/Guardian	9
Educational Polytechnic	1
I am fine with it	1
None	1
No response	6
Prospective student or parent/carer/guardian	4
No response	4
Prospective student or parent/carer/guardian, Parent/Carer/Guardian	1
No response	1
School	2
Sounds good	1
No response	1
Other FE institution	3
I approve of the name	1
It is an appropriate name for the new corporation	1
Southwest Hampshire College's Group	1

Responses	Number of Responses
Other FE institution, HE institution, Other	1
It doesn't cover the whole of the South of Hampshire so may cause confusion with other colleges along this area*	1
Fareham College student	2
N/a	1
No response	1
Local government	3
Sounds fine	1
The proposed corporation name should be inspiring for students and business/prospective employers to. To develop this further suggest consulting with these groups to get early buy in on the name	1
No response	1
Trade Union representative	1
UCU acknowledges the proposed corporation name. We have not had an opportunity to consult with our members on the proposed corporation name, so we have a neutral position	1
Private training provider	1
No response	1
Fareham College student, HE institution	1
No response	1

\*note not a formal response from an FE institution.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue have emailed the following response:

*Please accept this email as formal confirmation that we do not have any concerns regarding the proposed name change at this time.*

# Summary and next steps

The Corporations are grateful for all the responses received during the consultation process, including several letters of support from key stakeholders.

The Corporations have taken account of the views of students, parents/carers/guardians, staff, the community, and other stakeholders, and have concluded that it would be in the best interests of the colleges and the local communities to proceed with the proposal to merge and to progress a formal application to the Secretary of State to change the name of Fareham College Corporation to South Hampshire College Group. Note that the current college names and identities will not change.

The colleges are committed to merging on the proposed date of 01 August 2023.

On the day of merger, all assets and liabilities previously owned by City College Southampton and Eastleigh College will transfer to Fareham College Corporation/South Hampshire College Group (subject to formal approval).

The merger pages on all college's websites will be kept up to date on progress.

The following email addresses can be used to contact the colleges for any merger enquiries:



**City College Southampton**  
[southampton-city.ac.uk/merger](https://southampton-city.ac.uk/merger)  
[merger@southampton-city.ac.uk](mailto:merger@southampton-city.ac.uk)



**Fareham College**  
[fareham.ac.uk/merger](https://fareham.ac.uk/merger)  
[merger@fareham.ac.uk](mailto:merger@fareham.ac.uk)



**Eastleigh College**  
[eastleigh.ac.uk/merger](https://eastleigh.ac.uk/merger)  
[merger@eastleigh.ac.uk](mailto:merger@eastleigh.ac.uk)