

A STRONG, AMBITIOUS FUTURE TOGETHER

CONSULTATION
DOCUMENT



Alton College

Diversity Creativity Inspiration Community



HS
DC

HAVANT &
SOUTH DOWNS
COLLEGE

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Governing Bodies of two of Hampshire's most successful colleges, Alton College and Havant & South Downs College (HSDC), are exploring an exciting partnership.

This partnership is founded on a strong tradition of tertiary education which places teaching, learning and student success as our top priority. Serving South and East Hampshire, the two Colleges are linked by the A3 corridor and believe that the partnership will enable new opportunities, helping to generate greater prosperity in the lives of the people we serve and the communities in which they live. Working together, we will give our students a wider range of career pathways, give local businesses greater access to talent, provide greater opportunities for our staff and build a group of Colleges which are stronger together and even greater assets to our communities.

Principal and Chief Executive of HSDC, Mike Gaston, said "This exciting new venture will be stronger and more sustainable, providing benefits to learners, staff, businesses and the community through its greater scale and negotiating power, sharing of expertise and resources, and greater combined expertise in teaching, learning and assessment and combined services."

Chair of Governors at Alton College, Ian Gibson, stated "We are excited about the vision of enhancing and building on the outstanding academic provision at both institutions through this new partnership opportunity."

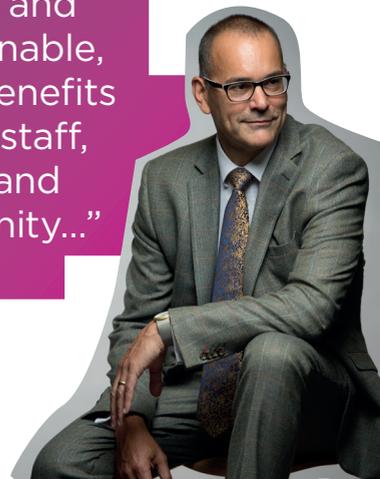
The Head of Campus at Alton College, Jon Myers, added "Alton College has a long and rich history as an outstanding tertiary and Sixth Form College, serving the needs of Alton and East Hampshire for forty years, and this partnership represents a new and exciting chapter for the College and the local community."

Principal and Chief Executive of HSDC, Mike Gaston, continued, stating, "The vision is to maintain the outstanding provision through the important partnership, not only to reinforce A Levels but to look at the expansion of Higher Education and T Levels. We are delighted that we have been asked to work with Alton College and are very excited about this opportunity."

Chair of the Board at HSDC, Mike Bateman, said "We look forward to working with Alton College to create one collective voice to ensure a strong and ambitious future together."

We would like to take this opportunity to seek your views.

"This exciting new venture will be stronger and more sustainable, providing benefits to learners, staff, businesses and the community..."





ONE GROUP, ONE VOICE, ONE FUTURE.

The world is changing fast. In a global economy with the rapid developments of the digital age, our country needs to build its future on high value-added industries, services and jobs.

This demands new and great things of our education and training system which will enable people to develop skills and attributes which will serve them, the economy and our society well into the future.

As we have considered our response to these rapid changes here in Hampshire, we have come to realise that we could provide better opportunities for our students, our industry partners and our communities by working together to do this. As a result, the Governing Bodies

of two of Hampshire's most successful colleges, Alton College and HSDC, are seeking to work together in a new partnership which will build on our two Colleges' strengths and develop an even more outstanding further education provision, as a core component of the infrastructure of Hampshire, to better meet employers' and residents' needs for high quality education and training.

We believe the best way to secure this partnership would be by formally uniting our Colleges through a merger. In so doing, we will want to ensure that what currently makes Alton College and HSDC attractive and successful is maintained as the very foundation of future success.

We believe this is the right way forward. The Colleges are very important parts of our communities and we need your views.



INTRODUCTION

Alton College and Havant & South Downs College are pursuing a much closer relationship with a view towards merging in March 2019 - to become part of a group retaining distinct campuses and wishing to protect both brands.

Alton College and HSDC have set out a proposal to merge and create one group. This is a long-term vision which is shared by both Colleges. The proposed merger will create a larger, more capable and resilient organisation; where the best elements from the two current Colleges are combined, delivering consistently high quality teaching and improving outcomes for students across all three campuses.

Both Colleges have a strong record of success across complementary courses. They both offer high-standard campuses with exceptional environments for learning.

It is recognised that the two Colleges serve different communities. However, closer collaboration would build on their strengths and lay the foundations for an outstanding further education provision. It would enable the partners to continue to offer a varied range of high quality education and training including academic, vocational and professional qualifications and apprenticeships to young people and adults in their respective communities.

Building on this, it would enable new opportunities for a strong partnership with business and civic leaders, helping to generate greater prosperity in the lives of the people we serve and the communities in which they live.

We are inviting comments to inform our discussions, plans and the future of education and training in Hampshire. Feedback is particularly welcome from our staff, students, unions, neighbouring educational institutions, local community groups, employers, councils, funding bodies and other interested parties and individuals.

The implementation of a merger will be carefully considered to ensure stability for staff and students, best value and maximum local benefit. Havant & South Downs College (a GFE College) and Alton Sixth Form College are planning to merge on 1st March 2019. The merger proposed is a type B under which Alton College will be formally dissolved and its assets and liabilities transferred to Havant & South Downs College. The new merged College will be a General Further Education College.

We are already working closely together, with dedicated resources, to help ensure success in achieving our vision. We want to hear views from all of our stakeholders to inform our plans and ensure that we take account of issues which matter to you.

More detailed consultation with staff and students will also take place at this stage, with regular communication to inform both internal and external stakeholders of progress.

The aim is that the merger will increase opportunities. An important principle of any change is that no courses will be closed part-way through delivery.



“We are already working closely together, with dedicated resources, to help ensure success in achieving our vision.”



WHY ALTON COLLEGE AND HAVANT & SOUTH DOWNS COLLEGE?

Alton College provides high quality education and training in an inclusive, supportive and challenging environment, enabling young people and adults in its community to achieve their potential. HSDC fully supports this vision, which complements its own to be a leading provider of academic, technical and professional training. Both Colleges are ambitious and proactive with regard to opportunities and growth, and are strongly embedded in their local communities. We believe that any future partnership will enable both Colleges to maintain their individual identities, in a way which secures their positions geographically, physically and in the public perception.

OUR SHARED VISION

Both Colleges have built a strong reputation for academic achievement and we aim to continue and improve this further, in a way which is financially sustainable. Our shared vision is that by combining the education provision of both Colleges, students will have the most extensive choice of professional, technical, academic and apprenticeship courses in the County – delivered by two distinct Colleges operating within the same group.

For students, the merger of the two Colleges will mean more choice and opportunities through an expanded curriculum with coherent career pathways. Students will enjoy a better learning experience as a result of the shared focus on developing learning and teaching and through improved learning environments. They will also benefit from improved links with employment because of greater involvement of businesses in designing and delivering the learning experience. We believe we are very well placed as partners to support and develop provision for 16–19 year olds with a broad range of ability. Having many years of successful experience in developing and delivering full-time education, and now with significant additional opportunities via apprenticeships, traineeships and higher education provision, we have a proven track record of commitment to a comprehensive curriculum for all abilities and progression ambitions.

For businesses, the merger means the opportunity to work with a regional provider of apprenticeships specialising in leadership training as well as opportunities to shape the workforce of the future and directly influence the talent pipeline for their sector and business, thus giving access to a wider pool of potential employees. We want to engage better with the public sector and business, anticipating and meeting demands for skills through new training and qualifications. Together we are better equipped to facilitate that relationship with employers and to meet the demands for higher level skills and employability. We will deliver wide ranging enrichment opportunities benefitting from employer engagement to develop personal and social skills that enhance employability prospects. We want to compete for our economy, rather than with each other. We want business to see our Colleges as natural partners for their growth and success through the supply of highly skilled people.



For staff, this will be a fresh start with a new focus on the future, with the benefits of being part of a successful, ambitious organisation focused on changing lives through learning. The merger will bring greater stability to the Colleges, together with greater professional development, promotion and progression opportunities across the partnership. As we develop the campuses through the combination of sustaining what we have and growing new opportunities, there will be opportunities to develop new and existing skills, to take advantage of the digital world in teaching and learning, and to help shape the future with their talents and insights. We want to be the place where people want to work and move forward with their careers.

For the community, the merger will provide continued, and improved local provision with protected further education for Alton, Bordon, Petersfield, Havant and Waterlooville, building on the long-established heritage of both Colleges. The new Group will offer contemporary provision with more choice. Our vision ensures that learners in East Hampshire will have access to a broad, general sixth form education at the Alton campus. Though both Colleges have been well run and continue to enjoy relative financial strength, the downward pressure on public funding will mean that we can achieve better economies of scale together and make the investments needed to bring about new opportunities. All this will mean that each community will continue to have its own College meeting its local needs. We want each College to continue to be one of which the community is rightly proud.

Both Colleges see the merger as a “partnership of equals” and both Colleges bring considerable strengths and assets to the partnership. By working together for our communities, we can provide more and better opportunities with clear pathways for all young people through school and college and on into higher education, further training or employment and exciting opportunities for ongoing learning and development for Adult students.





WE WANT TO MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP PROVISION

HSDC is launching its new A Level Centre of Excellence on its Havant campus in September 2018, following a £1m investment programme. The aim is to maintain and develop a similar A Level Centre of Excellence at Alton College, together with its existing vocational provision, as well as look to expand Higher Education, Apprenticeships and T Levels there. The South Downs campus at HSDC will continue to focus on professional and technical courses and apprenticeships.

Both Colleges have strong track records of A Level results. We wish to engage in close partnership to ensure we make further improvements, protect minority subjects, and ensure that all students give a value-added performance. In 2017, students and staff at Alton College celebrated another year of outstanding results with a 99.2% pass rate for A Levels and earlier this year, figures from the Department for Education showed Havant & South Downs College to be a leading college for academic excellence in the Portsmouth area.

HSDC has a very strong track record of Level 3 vocational value-added on its South Downs campus. It also remains the largest provider of this provision in the

region, offering opportunities to maintain and develop high-quality provision in partnership with Alton College to meet the local needs of East Hampshire. The Havant campus has a reputation for excellent achievement of high grades and supporting students to achieve their progression goals such as entry to most prestigious Russell Group and Oxbridge universities.

HSDC is one of only two colleges in South Hampshire to be awarded permission to develop and pilot three T Levels from 2020.

Both Colleges are justifiably proud of their inclusivity, and the partnership seeks to broaden and strengthen this further as required. SEND provision is a key characteristic and strength at both Colleges and both are keen not only to protect but to expand in the future. For example, HSDC has developed a very successful Supported Internship Programme which has enabled many to progress to full-time employment. Alton College has significant strengths and a strong reputation in this area of provision and in particular with its partnership with Treloar College.

OUR SHARED VISION

Our merger will provide significant benefits to all stakeholders and the wider community:

- Developing two A Level Centres of Excellence that will offer the most extensive choice of A Level subjects
- Maintaining and developing two leading providers of higher level vocational, professional and technical courses in the county
- Offering students progression from GCSE through to Higher Education
- Building on the Colleges' strengths, including their inspirational teachers
- Achieving an Ofsted rating of 'Outstanding' at all campuses
- Building a new partnership with business where employers benefit from expanded apprenticeship programmes and ease of access to future employees
- Developing cutting edge digital delivery in partnership with Google and Microsoft
- Ensuring sustainable outstanding provision



KEY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What type of merger is being proposed?

Havant & South Downs College (a GFE College) and Alton Sixth Form College are planning to merge on 1st March 2019. The merger proposed is a Type B under which Alton College will be formally dissolved and its assets and liabilities transferred to Havant & South Downs College. The new merged College will be a General Further Education College.

Will the merger mean a new name for the College?

This merger is a partnership of equals. Both Colleges recognise the strong identity in their existing names reflecting their geographical foundations. Both the names of Alton College and Havant & South Downs College (HSDC) would remain and be fully utilised. It is also true that Alton College would become a constituent part of the legal entity known as the HSDC Group.

Might one of the Campuses be closed? Will all the Campuses be properly resourced?

One of our key focuses is to continue access to local learning for local people. Therefore, it is our intention to continue to run courses at all three campuses in Alton, Havant and South Downs. The combined Colleges have approximately 9,000 students across a wide geographical area and we want to continue to grow our high quality offer for students and employers across East and South Hampshire which we would be unable to do if we closed any of the campuses. In the longer term, the merged College will examine all aspects of its operations, and will make decisions based on the best interests of its students, employers and the communities we serve. Targeted investment will continue on all sites.



**Will courses be cancelled or relocated?
Would students have to travel to a
different campus?**

Courses currently advertised via the two Colleges' websites and prospectuses will continue to be offered, at the location advertised, in September 2018. All three campuses will continue to deliver courses. Some students currently choose to travel to attend a particular College or campus and we expect this to continue. Every FE college has to make decisions about the viability of courses based on student numbers and the College Group will be no different. However, as a larger college there will be a greater opportunity to offer alternatives to students in the rare situation where a course is not viable.

**Will staff be overstretched across
three sites?**

It is not envisaged that significant numbers of staff would teach on more than one campus. HSDC currently operates on two campuses, with the majority of staff working on one campus only. As courses will continue to be delivered across all three campuses, most staff are likely to continue to teach their current courses in their current locations.

**Could there be a negative impact
on students?**

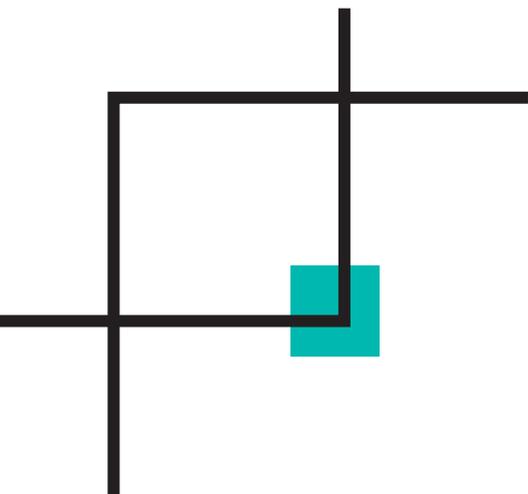
Both Colleges firmly believe that the proposed merger will bring significant benefits to students. These benefits include:

- Two A Level centres of excellence delivering high academic provision
- Technical and Professional provision focused on advanced skills and delivering high quality provision
- Evolving progression routes into professional and higher education, including degree apprenticeships
- Greater opportunities for specialisation
- Growing opportunities for enrichment, engagement with employers and career development
- A stronger profile for student voice and representation
- Local learning at local campuses within a larger college delivering consistently high quality provision

**Will students with special educational
needs or disabilities be well catered for?**

Both Colleges work closely with the local authority to deliver specialist education. Alton College also works closely with Treloar College and students from both Colleges study a wide range of courses alongside each other.

Both Colleges have strong additional learning support teams in place to assist students with their learning. This developing work will continue to be a significant focus for the combined college group.





WE'D LIKE YOUR VIEWS

Both Colleges recognise that by engaging staff, students, employers, other providers and local communities we will achieve a better informed, more well-developed outcome.

www.hsdac.ac.uk/merger-survey28
September 2018

If you are unable to access the online questionnaire, you can request a form by email from josie.nunn@hsdc.ac.uk, or collect one from Reception at either College. Please send your responses to the questions by email to pam.robertson@hsdc.ac.uk, or by post to:

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