

Merger of College of North West London and City of Westminster College

Statutory Consultation Summary Report.

Published 25 May 2017

1. The Vision

The governing bodies of the College of North West London and City of Westminster College are planning to establish a merged college with the potential to evolve into a multi college group. This merger will build on current successes, together with a vision to provide a world-class skills offer for London. This commitment aligns with the Government's ambition of a higher-level technical and vocational skills and education offer, including the potential establishment of Institutes of Technology. It is a bold, positive and strategic choice that will increase our capacity and capability to respond to employers and build combined centres of excellence for our students, whilst securing greater benefits to the local communities we serve.

2. Consultation

Wide-ranging consultation of staff, students, community groups and other stakeholders on the nature of the merger of the two colleges has taken place over the past few months and will continue through the implementation phase of the merger. The responses received from all phases of consultation will be considered and inform how the merged college will best meet the skills needs of all our stakeholders.

3. Statutory Consultation on the Dissolution of a Corporation

In December 2016, CNWL resolved to go ahead with the merger with City of Westminster College, subject to consultation and due diligence. The merger is being planned to improve the education and training opportunities for learners, employers and the communities they serve. The model adopted is based on a partnership of equals. Both colleges' local names and branding, and campuses in each borough will be retained; governors will be appointed from each existing Board and a new Chair designate has been recruited. The merger is of a type which requires the dissolution of one corporation and its transfer of assets and liabilities to the other and it was agreed that the Corporation of the College of North West London should dissolve, subject to consultation.

A specific statutory consultation took place on the proposal of the dissolution of the College of North West London Corporation, so that the merger could take place through the continuation of the City of Westminster Corporation. This consultation ran from 12 March 2017 to 13 April 2017. The proposal was published and the consultation formally announced in accordance with The Further Education Corporations (Publication of Proposals) (England) Regulations 2012. The formal public notice of the proposal and statutory consultation was published in The Times Newspaper and Brent and Kilburn Times on 9th March 2017. It was also published on the College of North West London and City of Westminster College websites, and sent to staff and other stakeholders. These stakeholders are prescribed by the above regulations, and include local schools, local employers, the Local Authority, Members of Parliament, the Skills Funding Agency and the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills. The public notice clearly stated how a copy of the proposal could be obtained, and the closing date of the statutory consultation. The public notice is included at the end of this summary report.

4. Responses to the Statutory Consultation

20 written responses were received to the statutory consultation on the dissolution of a corporation to enable the merger of the two colleges.

From the Local Council - Support – ‘It enhances the breadth, quality and relevance of learning opportunities for residents in Central and West London and will help secure financial stability’.

From the GLA – ‘I entirely support the direction of travel re the merger’. ‘We welcome efforts to pursue increased college financial resilience and responsiveness to local need’.

From local Universities - Support – ‘We see the FE sector as key to developing the skills of young people in London and wish to work with the merged college to meet the skills need of London. We believe the merger will help lift standards, impact financial sustainability and encourage social mobility and enterprise’. ‘The University supports the merger and looks forward to contributing to your work with apprenticeships and in higher education’. ‘We hope it goes ahead successfully and look forward to working with the merged entity’.

From the Minister of Apprenticeship and Skills – ‘The Secretary of State and I are content that you are following the statutory process as set out in the publication of proposals publication’.

13 responses received in regard to the statutory consultation are in support of the merger, 4 responses were in opposition and 3 were unsure about the dissolution of the Corporation of the College of North West London. Reassurance has been given to consultees directly, in response to their concerns.

Of those responses opposed to the dissolution of the Corporation, reasons related primarily to the impact on staffing at the colleges and concern around loss of provision. The unsure responses were all based on the perceived lack of detailed information in the consultation document, causing the consultees to feel unable to give a firm response either way.

5. Outcome of the Consultation

Consequently, the Boards of both colleges have agreed at their May Board meetings, to go ahead with the dissolution of the College of North West London Corporation, to enable the merger to take place through the continuation of the City of Westminster Corporation. It was also agreed to change the name of the continuing corporation to reflect the partnership of equals principle of the merger. The proposed new name United Colleges Group, formed part of the consultation document and will be put forward to the Secretary of State prior to the merger.

It should be noted that the final resolutions by the College of North West London to dissolve and by City of Westminster College to accept the assets and liabilities of the College of North West London, from 1st August 2017, have been reported to the FE Commissioner. This proposed merger has been included in the recommendations for the Central London and West London Area Reviews. It is the intention of both Boards to approve the Transfer Deed at their July Board meetings, to take effect from 1st August 2017.

6. Next steps

Plans are progressing for the implementation of the merger, which will take place on 1st August 2017. Consultation of staff, students and stakeholders will continue through this implementation phase, to help the management and Board of the merged college to successfully achieve its vision: increase our capacity and capability to respond to employers and build combined centres of excellence for our students, whilst securing greater benefits to the local communities we serve.

Copy of the Public Notice:

Statutory notice

Further & Higher Education Act 1992

The Corporation of the College of North West London FEC (“CNWL”), Dudden Hill Lane, London NW10 2XD, gives notice in accordance with the Further Education Corporations (Publication of Proposals)(England) Regulations 2012, SI 2012, No 1157, of the proposal for the transfer of its property, rights and liabilities to the Corporation of the City of Westminster College FEC (“CWC”), 25 Paddington Green, London W2 1NB, and the subsequent dissolution of CNWL. CNWL is a provider of further and higher vocational education for students aged 14 and over. It is currently providing for 6,043 students in total, comprising 1,174 fulltime students and 4,869 part-time students. CWC is currently, at this point in the year, providing for 6,259 students in total comprising 3,043 full-time students and 3,216 part-time students. Dissolution of CNWL is proposed so that CNWL may merge with CWC. The date proposed for the dissolution of CNWL is 1 August 2017. CNWL students who have not completed their courses on that date will be able to continue their courses of study on the same campus as planned. The consultation period runs from: 12 March 2017 – 13 April 2017. All responses and representations must be received by the closing date. CNWL will publish a summary of the feedback and its outcome within two months of the closing date. The summary will be available on both college websites. Responses to the consultation may be made by email to consultation@cnwl.ac.uk or alternatively by writing to Fiona Chalk, Clerk to the Corporation, College of North West London, Willesden Campus, Dudden Hill Lane, London NW10 2XD.