

Growing Together Achieving Together

East Surrey College and John Ruskin College
Consultation Document



Growing Together, Achieving Together

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John Ruskin College, South Croydon



East Surrey College, Redhill



GROWING TOGETHER – ACHIEVING TOGETHER

Foreword from the two Chairs

We are very pleased to propose this partnership between East Surrey College and John Ruskin College that builds on the strengths of both our Colleges to create a high-quality, sustainable learning community while still retaining the heritage, character and identity of each organisation. Within an environment where funding resources are constrained and to provide enhanced opportunities for students, staff, employers and our wider communities, this proposal reflects a positive decision by both Colleges to secure a strategy for growth. As a larger College, we will be more able to budget for investment in learning facilities and quality improvement and serve as a louder voice in support of education and training in our localities.

The merged College will offer increased choice and more support services for students who live and study in the areas in which we overlap geographically as well as those in areas where we operate separately. Both existing campuses will be retained – Growing Together – Achieving Together.

We will work closely with employers in our local areas and beyond to collaborate in curriculum development and student employment, generating a wider range of career and training possibilities, greater access for employers to talented, well-trained potential employees and increased opportunities for our staff to develop their careers. The merged College will offer a comprehensive range of core skills, technical and professional qualifications and courses, as well as Apprenticeships ranging from Entry level up to Degree level courses including Degree Apprenticeships.

We believe that together we will stand as a major asset for our many and varied communities. We are therefore proud to present the details of our proposal and would welcome your thoughts and suggestions, which will be taken into account when deciding how to proceed.



Andrew Baird
East Surrey College



Alec Stow
John Ruskin College



OUR ORGANISATIONS

East Surrey College

East Surrey College is a medium-sized, Further Education College delivering vocational learning and training to young people and adults from Entry level to Foundation/Degree levels. A strong reputation for quality and financial stability has contributed to consistent growth. The student community is diverse; our approach is inclusive. Leaders, managers and governors are focused on quality of experience, improving opportunities and fulfilling potential. We run successful vocational and alternative learning programmes for 14-16 year old students, working in close partnership with schools. The College operates an Adult Education Centre, drawing students from a wide geographic area through our community learning contracts. East Surrey College incorporates the respected Reigate School of Art which merged with East Surrey College over fifteen years ago, retaining its identity.

At the last full Ofsted inspection in December 2014, the College was graded Good with a series of Outstanding grades awarded for curriculum areas. The many strengths and commitment to improvement were endorsed at Short Inspection in October 2017, with the Corporation approving a self-assessment grade of Outstanding for 2016/17.

Apprenticeships have seen over 400% growth over the past three years, working with Levy and Non-Levy employers and with valuable contracts secured with employers in Surrey, Sussex and Greater London. In partnership with a number of universities, we have grown our Degree Apprenticeship and Higher Education portfolio serving communities as their local 'university'. Based in the thriving town of Redhill and on the borders of Gatwick to the south, the College and our recruitment benefits from direct transport links into and from Croydon and south London.



John Ruskin College

John Ruskin College is a Sixth Form College situated in the London Borough of Croydon on the Surrey and Kent borders. Although the College is situated in the more affluent South Croydon, most of the College's students use public transport to travel to the College from other parts of the Borough and beyond. 89% of our students come from a 5-mile radius of the College. 11% come from beyond this radius, making this journey on public transport.

The College offers a broad curriculum with courses from Entry Level to Level 3. It is a vocational Sixth Form College. 25% of students are at Level 3, 25% at Level 2 and the other 50% are on Entry Level and Level 1 programmes. Around 50% of students are enrolled on English and Maths as they have not yet achieved grade 9-4. John Ruskin College is not a typical Sixth Form College. It is also an Apprenticeship provider and delivers a range of Apprenticeships to meet local skills needs.

We are passionate about giving everyone the education, skills and confidence they need to progress to a fulfilling career. Leaders, Managers and Governors believe that education is profoundly important and life changing for the young people that we serve, improving opportunities for all is at the heart of our ethos, and the core values of equality and inclusiveness inform the way the College treats its students, staff, employers and others who have a stake in its future.



WHY WE ARE JOINING TOGETHER

PROMOTING QUALITY

By working together, we will share our expertise and pool our strengths in order to continually raise all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. We will have the capability and capacity to deliver outstanding outcomes and learning experiences for all our students, taught by teachers with significant subject and industry expertise.

BUILDING RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The larger College will benefit from economies of scale and efficiencies helping us to prioritise investment in learning. We will be better able to withstand the impact of national policy changes and funding reductions. Joint resourcing will help us to bid successfully for more and larger contracts and to seek new funding opportunities.

MEETING SKILLS GROWTH REQUIREMENTS

Our Colleges have significant experience of delivering Apprenticeships and together we can provide an Apprenticeship offer to employers that is complementary in content and aimed specifically at local skills needs and gaps. Both our Colleges are situated within the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and on the borders of the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP), while we each bring a range of relationships and other partnerships that broaden our scope and reach, confirming our growth potential. The merged College will play a key role in meeting LEP skills agendas.



WIDENING OUR OFFER TO THE COMMUNITY

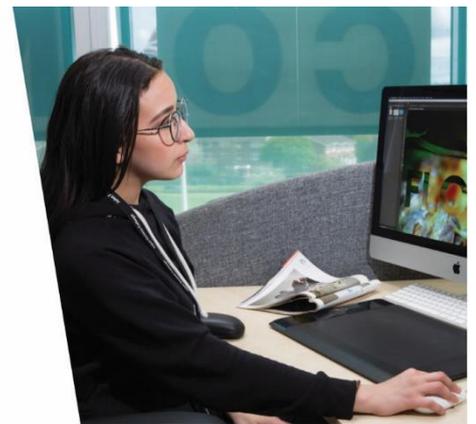
Both our Colleges value engaging and working with our communities. East Surrey College has for many years delivered a substantial range of adult learning courses within its Adult Learning Centre offer and has a successful and growing Higher Education and Professional course offer that together we will seek to extend to the John Ruskin College campus.

ACHIEVING AND MEETING GROWTH

The areas in which we operate are beginning to evidence demographic growth for 16-18 year old students. We will seek to reverse the decline in student numbers at John Ruskin College using successful methods deployed at East Surrey College over a number of years.

BUILDING ON SHARED VALUES AND SYNERGIES

There is significant synergy between our organisations. We hold common values and are both keen to retain our identities within a larger, merged organisation. Our student bodies are diverse. We value inclusion, ambition, respect and in supporting and motivating students to achieve their potential whatever their needs, backgrounds or the issues they face. There is overlap in the geographic areas we cover as well as distinct differences which makes this venture exciting but also ensures conditions for growth.



OUR STRENGTHS - EAST SURREY COLLEGE

- We are Ofsted graded Good and have since self-assessed as Outstanding (2016/17)
- The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA – the UK’s Quality Body for Higher Education) has endorsed the high quality of our Higher Education (2018)
- We are inclusive; our student achievements and progression rates into employment and higher education are consistently high and students with support needs achieve very well
- We have maintained a financial health grade of Outstanding for the past three years and the Financial Plan forecasts the same for 2018/19.
- We are Matrix accredited for the quality of our information, advice and guidance
- Our employer satisfaction rates are extremely high relative to other colleges and private training providers (FE Choices 2017)
- We are seeing substantial growth in our Apprenticeship numbers and have secured a range of valuable contracts with employers
- We work very closely with employers and sector skills organisations to ensure our curriculum meets their needs
- We work with a wide range of partners and value our close working relationships with schools, employers, local authorities and community organisations
- We are experienced in delivering a very wide range of qualifications from Entry to Level 6 as well as a substantial leisure and skills offer for adults



OUR STRENGTHS - JOHN RUSKIN COLLEGE

- Our students develop good personal, social and employability skills and undertake valuable work experience which gives them the confidence they need to progress towards the world of work
- We provide good advice and guidance that help students to progress to the next stage of their education, training or into employment
- We have designed a curriculum that helps address local economic and developmental priorities well and responds to the requirements of local employers
- We are an inclusive College that places a strong emphasis on identifying and supporting the needs of students
- Our progression rates into higher levels of study and employment are high
- We have well-established working relationships with local schools, the local authority, employers and community organisations
- We have been accredited with the full Matrix national quality kite mark (2017) as well as the Investors in Careers Standard (2016) relating to our excellent advice and guidance, and the Leaders in Diversity accreditation (2017)
- We are among the Top 100 organisations with which the National Centre for Diversity works, at the prestigious position of number 3



OUR VISION FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

Our two Colleges share a commitment to high quality learning, to valuing the individual and to protecting culture and identity. These shared values have attracted us to working with each other, benefiting from our geography which, at eleven miles apart, widens our joint engagement.

Our vision is to promote and deliver an excellent offer and service within a successful, stable, merged College where our provision at our campuses will meet the needs and interests of our communities from south London/Croydon to Surrey and north Sussex. We will continue to uphold our commitment to embracing diversity and supporting equality.

Working together, we will combine our strengths, resources and our expertise to ensure a high quality and relevant vocational offer that gives local people more choice – in qualifications, levels and mode of delivery. Securing opportunities for diversification and growth are central to our partnership. Although our core student base will be aged 16-18, we will together offer Higher Education courses validated by high-performing universities, a substantial Apprenticeship range responding to growing employer requirements and LEP priorities and a leisure and skills offer for adults including Professional qualifications.

We will continue to work closely with our education partners to ensure a collaborative, comprehensive approach to learning and development in the geographic areas we cover that benefits our local economies.



OUR PROPOSAL FOR MERGER

We propose that East Surrey College and John Ruskin College merge on or before 1 February 2019.

The proposed merger is a type 'B' merger in which the Corporation of John Ruskin College will dissolve with property, rights, assets and liabilities transferring to East Surrey College. Students who are part-way through their qualification will remain at their current campus, ensuring continuity but benefiting from being part of a larger, more resilient learning organisation with more progression opportunities.

Each campus will retain its name within an overarching group name. There will be one governing body across the merged College. The new College will serve over 2,500 Full-time students at the time of merger as well as Apprentices, Higher Education, Alternative Learning 14-16s, adult leisure, Professional and qualification course students on Full and Part time provision.

We will work to ensure the financial viability of both campuses, enabling continuing investment in learning and in our estates. To do this, we will undertake a review of the provision on offer to assess where we see potential for expansion as well as any shared opportunities, drawing on what our employers, students and stakeholders are telling us. Growth will be targeted at 16-18s, Apprenticeships and Higher Education where as a merged College, there are already strong partnerships and contracts in place.



BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Our proposed merger will create a stronger, more resilient College serving our common and wider communities.

The Governing bodies of both Colleges see this as a positive and proactive step to ensuring the embedding and expansion of a wide, relevant and quality offer in the areas served and to ensuring a sustainable and successful future for both organisations within a merged College. We firmly believe that the opportunities this brings will be in the best interests of students, employers, staff and for our communities.



BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

FOR STUDENTS

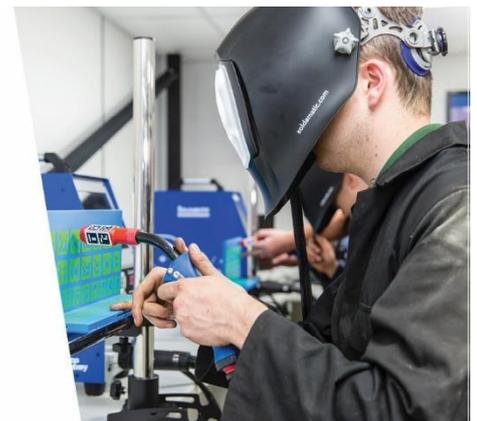
- A much wider range and choice of qualifications available locally that lead directly to further and higher study or into work/Apprenticeships including at degree level
- The merged College will be more able to secure investment for facilities and equipment to enhance the College experience
- An expanded and strengthened range of support services will help students to rapidly achieve their career and progression goals
- Students will be able to access a wider range of work experience placements and take part in work projects including many overseen by nationally recognised employers, expanding knowledge and enhancing CVs
- There will be more opportunities to progress into Apprenticeships and Supported Internships (for those requiring more support), with students benefiting from our integrated Employer Services/Job Zone service
- Opportunities to study university level courses locally will increase (including access to a range of guaranteed offers), validated by high performing universities, at lower cost, with smaller group sizes and more tailored individual support
- Students will benefit from taking part in a wider range of extra-curricular activities, sports, competitions, volunteering and community events



BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

FOR STAFF

- Academic and business support staff will have access to more opportunities for career progression or specialisation
- Reassurance that East Surrey College as a merger partner, is a stable organisation experienced in the post-16 environment in which both Colleges operate; like John Ruskin College, East Surrey College values heritage and respects culture and identity
- Belonging to a financially stronger organisation brings greater ability to invest in teaching, learning and support facilities
- Staff will benefit from increased opportunities for professional development, to take part in conference events and specialist training activities and to make suggestions about training needs
- There will be greater opportunities for sharing best practice, planning, verification/moderation and professional subject expertise; teachers will belong to a wider vocational teaching community
- There will be more opportunities to be involved in new curriculum developments and to participate in learning technology innovations and projects
- Staff will be able to access increased support from a dedicated, integrated work and industrial placements facility
- There will be opportunities to teach or train to teach at higher levels up to Level 6 and/or to teach adults



BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

FOR EMPLOYERS

- Employers will have improved access to a far larger pool of potential apprentices and employees (young people and adults) from an area spanning London to Gatwick and beyond
- A wider range of vocational and professional qualifications and courses will be available locally, increasing ability to meet local skills needs
- Employers in the south-east have consistently rated East Surrey College as their preferred Apprenticeship provider, awarding the College an outstanding rating in FE Choices surveys relative to other colleges and private training providers nationally
- The merged College will provide employers with a dedicated, high quality and local Apprenticeship service, experienced in supporting employer recruitment needs and offering all levels including Degree Apprenticeships
- East Surrey College is experienced in developing provision in partnership with employer sector organisations and universities; we can demonstrate significant expertise and experience in developing bespoke, tailored provision at all levels to meet employer requirements
- There will be more opportunities for employers to be part of College/employer sector 'academies' that give employers platforms to be involved in the design, offer and quality of local training



BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

FOR COMMUNITIES

- Both Colleges have a strong sense of community and heritage – our merged College will respect our individual journeys and positioning
- Together, we will stand as a high-quality, resilient and financially secure educational and training organisation, grounded in meeting the needs and interests of our communities
- By joining forces, we will be better able to meet local skills needs by pooling our knowledge, resources and experience
- Our adult communities will benefit from improved access to a substantial range of leisure, qualification and upskilling programmes available locally, including university level and professional courses
- Together we work with over sixty schools and deliver to over 2,500 full-time students; we will continue to enhance our school partnerships, providing extensive opportunities for school students to engage in a wider range of vocational learning, and to raise awareness of alternative ‘non-A level’ routes to Higher Education
- We recognise the importance of partnership and will continue to work closely with other education partners and local authorities to increase participation in education, including for those with high support needs to access local study linked to progression into work and greater independence



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

August to December 2018 - due diligence is carried out and teams from both organisations work together on the plans for the new, merged College

7 September 2018 - start of the public consultation to hear your views

7 October 2018 - public consultation closes following which the two Colleges consider your views

A summary of the consultation and its outcome will be published within two months.

December 2018 - Governing bodies of East Surrey College and John Ruskin College confirm their intention to merge

1 February 2019 – the two Colleges merge on or before this date



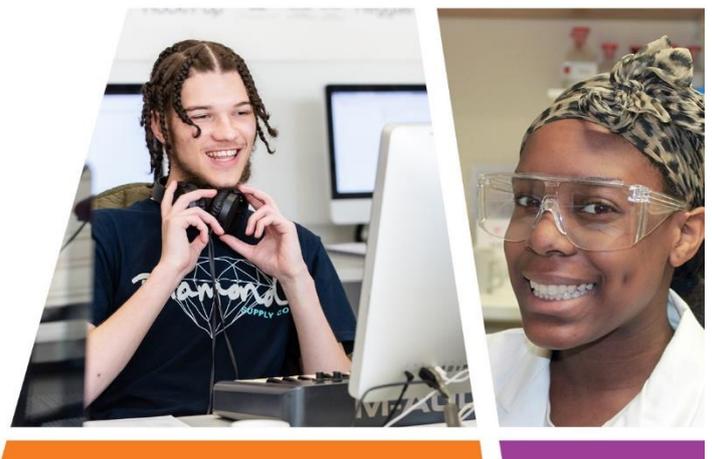
VIEWS OF STAKEHOLDERS

We welcome views about our proposal and we will be inviting the following stakeholders to respond:

- Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges
- Schools and academies
- Local authorities
- Members of Parliament
- Education and Skills Funding Agency
- FE Commissioner
- Office for Students
- Local Enterprise Partnership
- Our key partners and employers
- Secretary of State for Education

As part of the consultation process, we would also welcome views from any interested party including the following:

- Sixth Form College Association
- Association of Colleges
- Employers
- Employer representative groups
- Employee representative groups
- Ofsted
- Staff
- Students
- Parents
- Third sector organisations
- Universities



HOW TO GIVE US YOUR VIEWS

To respond to this consultation document, please provide your comments/feedback by 7 October 2018.

You can do this by completing an online form accessed via either of our College websites.

Once the consultation period has closed, we will publish the results of the consultation on our College websites www.esc.ac.uk and www.johnruskin.ac.uk.



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