Proposed Merger
North Nottinghamshire College and Rotherham College of Arts and Technology
Contents

04  Foreword
   Benefits of merger
05–07  The rationale for change
       Our vision for the merged college
       What the merged college will offer
08  The benefits and impact of our proposal
09  Managing the merger
11  Appendix 1
       Key facts and figures about each college
12  Appendix 2
       Chronology and proposed timescales of merger
13  Appendix 3
       Indicative list of stakeholders to be consulted
14  Appendix 4
       Information to be provided in accordance with
       The Further Education (Publication of Proposals)
       (England) Regulations 2012
15  Appendix 5
       How to respond to the consultation
17–18  Feedback proforma

An electronic version of this document is available at
www.rotherham.ac.uk/merger and www.nnc.ac.uk/merger
This document sets out the background to the proposal for a merger of North Nottinghamshire College and Rotherham College of Arts and Technology. It describes the rationale for the merger and the perceived benefits and opportunities for learners, employers and the wider community, and it seeks to draw informed comment from stakeholders.

Our intention is to merge North Nottinghamshire College and Rotherham College of Arts and Technology under the overarching name RNN Group. All the campuses will remain and retain their existing local identities.

The decision of the two Corporations to submit this proposal reflects a positive and deliberate strategy to deliver a stronger 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, one area-wide curriculum and a single-minded focus on quality, standards and excellence.

We believe the benefits of merger are:

• Combining the complementary strengths of two already good organisations to offer more educational and training opportunities to school leavers, higher education students and adults wanting to develop higher-level skills for employment or business.
• Enhancing the range of high-quality, effective training, customised courses and apprenticeships offered to employers locally, regionally and nationally.
• Creating an organisation with a combined turnover of around £46 million each year, which will enable more investment in learner resources and facilities, and enhance and ensure the continuity of local provision.
• Developing an organisation with greater capacity to engage nationally and regionally with partners, in order to bring greater benefits to our local communities.

We welcome and look forward to hearing your views.

Atholl Stott
Chair
North Nottinghamshire College

Ken Barrass
Chair
Rotherham College of Arts and Technology

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

• Increase the skills of our workforce, so businesses can be more productive and successful, and so that individuals can earn more and lead satisfying working lives. There is a need to address higher-level skills in business, creative, caring and technical disciplines such as engineering. We also need to help those entering the labour market to learn the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and IT, and the disciplines of team work and reliability.
• Ensure that young people – school leavers and those aged 18-25, have good access to education and training in the subjects and disciplines that are right for them as they prepare for their working lives or higher level study.
• Provide training and education in ways that students and employers require in the 21st Century, incorporating the latest learning technologies and techniques. Whether we use companies’ revenues, public funding or whether some learners pay fees, we need to operate efficiently and provide good value to individuals, businesses and the tax payer.

As separate colleges, we are already doing well at supporting progress and addressing these challenges, and doing so efficiently and in good financial health. However, we do face some future challenges of our own:

• Falling numbers of 16–18 year olds, potentially risking the range of courses we can offer.
• Projected public funding cuts for at least the next 3 years, potentially reducing capacity.

We believe that by proactively pursuing this merger, we will be able to overcome these challenges, better maintain our services and develop new ones to meet educational and training needs.
Our vision for the merged college

Our goals for the merged college are:

• Meeting skills and training needs across Rotherham and North Nottinghamshire.
• Providing excellent teaching and learning for all students.
• Ensuring positive course and employment outcomes for all students.
• Increasing progression opportunities including enhanced Higher Education and skills options.
• Being an inclusive college, providing opportunities for everyone.
• Significantly contributing to economic development and regeneration by working closely with key stakeholders e.g. employers, the Local Enterprise Partnerships and local authorities.
• Increasing opportunities for investment in specialist provision and areas of excellence.

The proposed merger will create a single college with an annual turnover in excess of £46 million. The increased scale of the new college will enable it to offer enhanced opportunities for learners, employers, communities and staff, and bring about a number of operational benefits:

• Ability to pool expertise and best practice to fulfil the ambition of being an ‘outstanding’ college.
• Opportunities to offer an area-wide curriculum strategy, with improved progression pathways for students.
• Greater strategic and managerial capacity to invest in economic sectors with local skills shortages and to pursue beneficial projects, funding opportunities and other initiatives.
• Opportunities for greater economies of scale and efficiencies, so we can ensure that resources are not diverted from educational activities.
• Being able to better maintain critical mass, breadth of provision and to employ staff in more specialised roles.

We believe the newly formed college group will have the resilience, capacity, flexibility and responsiveness to meet the challenges ahead and to continue to provide high quality learning opportunities.

What the merged college will offer

The merged college will deliver:

• High-quality workplace and higher skills training for thousands of businesses locally, regionally and nationally.
• A full range of apprenticeship frameworks, involving thousands of apprentices and hundreds of employers each year, fuelling business growth and productivity.
• Over 150 different Study Programmes for school leavers at 16 and 17, covering virtually every vocational discipline offering rigorous qualifications, English and maths development, work experience and skills to enable work readiness or enable progression to Higher Education (HE). As a single college, over 3,500 16-18s will study with us annually.
• Higher-level skills and training for adults wishing to progress their careers, start or grow their own businesses. This includes Access to HE courses offering a fast, effective route to degrees in key employment sectors such as Nursing and Science.
• Upwards of 50 degree and other HE courses, many validated by major universities but delivered in our local areas and tailored to career and employer needs.
• Effective provision for those entering the employment market and needing basic skills in English, maths, IT and employability expectations.
• The largest provision in the locality for 16-25 year-olds with learning difficulties, focused on social enterprise and developing the skills, confidence and resilience needed for independent living and worthwhile work.
• Opportunities to work in partnership with schools and the community to offer a wider curriculum to meet individual needs.
• Inspiring engagement with local events, charities and volunteering at the heart of our communities.
The benefits and impact of our proposal

For students
- Maintenance and enhancement of a wide curriculum in the areas served by the College retaining industry-qualified staff to offer high-quality learning across the college.
- Improved resources and facilities to support learning and progression.
- More opportunities to develop essential enterprise and employability skills.
- Increased opportunities for enrichment and support.
- An expanded commitment to listen to learners and respond to their needs.
- Learning experiences that deliver even better progression and employment outcomes.

For employers: both businesses and the public sector
We will be a larger provider, able to:
- Be more responsive to specific training needs.
- Offer a wider range of training and apprenticeship frameworks.
- Provide more co-investment opportunities to meet skills needs.
- Link employers with a large bank of work-ready students.
- Be a single point of contact, to make managing training easier.

For communities
- A strong say in the educational future through extensive engagement.
- More high-quality learning opportunities for local people.
- Increased resources for community learning and development.
- More capacity to work with local organisations and to celebrate success.

For staff
- Further opportunities for professional development and peer support.
- Opportunities for networking and the sharing of practice and resources.
- Enhanced career or specialism opportunities.
- Longer-term job stability.

For strategic stakeholders
- One skills partner for economic development and regeneration across our area.
- A stable skills partner, financially secure and delivering high-quality education.
- A curriculum responsive to strategic priorities.
- Expertise in strengthening school partnerships.
- The ability to leverage funding to support area-wide priorities.

Managing the merger

We want to ensure
Our proposals address any concerns our stakeholders may have

How we will do this
Extensive external stakeholder engagement and consultation has been undertaken as part of the Structure & Prospects Appraisal. Ongoing consultation is a fundamental aspect to this proposal and this will be the mechanism to identify and address any concerns. Queries from staff have been addressed through an open dialogue, which will be maintained throughout the consultation period, as will a planned communication process.

Managers will work to take the strongest elements of our curriculum planning, business monitoring and quality improvement and assurance processes, combine them, and apply them across the merged organisation. This will be a well-planned and appropriately paced process, with high levels of communication. Ambitious but realistic performance targets will be agreed and set. Performance monitoring and responsive actions will be a high priority for the combined senior team. Clear and transparent reporting of progress against targets to the college Governors will continue.

The merged college will evaluate skills and learning needs across the sub-region and respond with a broad vocational offer. A new curriculum strategy and detailed plan will involve increased consultation with employers, communities and other stakeholders, and take account of developing local, regional and national priorities.

Through its increased resource base, the merged college will be able to sustain a broader curriculum offer than either college would be able to offer independently, and do so economically, sustainably and with high standards.

It is not anticipated that the merger will directly necessitate compulsory redundancies of teaching staff, as there are no proposals to reduce the curriculum offer or to close any of the campuses. Over time, some rationalisation of other functions may be possible, mostly through natural turnover.

Any restructuring which does prove necessary will be subject to the transparent consultation and communication processes, which have been adopted in the past by both colleges.

System compatibility will be addressed as a priority with a clear and deliverable plan to harmonise systems. Costs will be managed within the overall financial benefits of the merger. Funding agencies and our bankers have been consulted about the impact of a mid-financial year merger on our funding returns and accounting information, and agreed operating procedures will be established.

Identified risk
Negative stakeholder reactions to a merger of the two colleges

Performance of the merged organisation is lower than that of its previous constituent colleges

Rationalisation of provision across the merged college results in local needs not being met

Loss of staffing and expertise and decreasing morale due to structural aspects of the merger

Different systems result in poor availability of data, statutory returns and financial information
## Appendix 1
Further information about the colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality (OfSTED inspections, 2013)</th>
<th>Rotherham College</th>
<th>North Nottinghamshire College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall effectiveness</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes for learners</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of teaching and learning</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of Leadership and Management</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial health grades</td>
<td></td>
<td>*Predicted in financial plans submitted to the Skills Funding Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15*</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16*</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success Rates (Full time Courses)</td>
<td></td>
<td>National average 83.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 2
**Chronology and proposed timescales for merger**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td>Both corporations discussed future strategic options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct/Nov 2014</td>
<td>Further strategic discussion regarding a possible partnership between the Colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2015</td>
<td>Structure and Prospects Appraisal by KPMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2015</td>
<td>Structure and Prospects appraisal recommended merger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2015</td>
<td>Skills Funding Agency informed of the outcome and the respective Boards' decision to progress to Due Diligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May/Jun 2015</td>
<td>Due Diligence (legal and financial)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2015</td>
<td>Due Diligence reports considered by the respective Boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2015</td>
<td>Statutory Notice published and Public Consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 2015</td>
<td>Public Consultation feedback analysed and report on the outcomes published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Feb 2016</td>
<td>Proposed effective date of merger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix 3
**Indicative list of stakeholders to be consulted**

The following is an indicative list of stakeholders to whom a copy of this consultation document has been sent. It does not preclude any person or organisation not listed below from submitting comments or replies.

**Colleges**
- Barnsley College
- Chesterfield College
- Communication Specialist College Doncaster
- Dearne Valley College
- Doncaster College
- Lincoln College Group
- Longley Park Sixth Form College
- Northern College
- Portland College
- The Sheffield City College
- Thomas Rotherham College
- Vision West Notts

**Employer Bodies**
- Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce
- Confederation of British Industry
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Institute of Directors

**Government Departments, Agencies and Funding Bodies**
- Companies House
- Department for Business Innovation and Skills / Secretary of State
- Department for Education
- Education Funding Agency
- Emergency Services
- Higher Education Funding Council for England
- Skills Funding Agency / Chief Executive of Skills Funding

**Local Enterprise Partnerships**
- D2N2
- Sheffield City Region

**Local Government**
- Bassetlaw District Council
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

**Members of Parliament for the constituencies of**
- Bassetlaw
- Dearne Valley
- Rotherham
- Wentworth

**School Head Teachers**

**Staff and Students**

**Trade Unions including:**
- Association for College Management
- Association of Teachers and Lecturers
- UNISON
- University and College Union

**Universities**
- Derby University
- Nottingham Trent University
- Sheffield Hallam University
- University of Hull
Appendix 4
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 North Nottinghamshire College, 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 Rotherham College of Arts and Technology and the subsequent dissolution of the Further Education Corporation of North Nottinghamshire College.

North Nottinghamshire College is a General Further Education College, which delivers vocational education and skills training in Bassetlaw and more widely. The College has a number of subsidiary companies engaged in the delivery of training. It has 1,326 full-time students and 4,946 part-time students, giving a total of 6,272 students.

Dissolution of the Corporation of North Nottinghamshire College is proposed in order that it may merge with Rotherham College of Arts and Technology. 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 proposed name of the merged college is RNN Group.

The date proposed for the dissolution of the Corporation of North Nottinghamshire College is 1 February 2016.

The Corporation of Rotherham College of Arts and Technology is separately proposing to the Secretary of State a change of name for the Corporation to RNN Group on 1 February 2016.

All students at North Nottinghamshire College 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 the RNN Group.

Appendix 5
How to respond to the consultation

Our plan for the merger of Rotherham College of Arts and Technology and North Nottinghamshire College will continue to be refined as views are given by the public and our stakeholders. We now need your help to complete our proposals.

The formal Statutory Notice can be found in Appendix 4. The formal consultation period runs from 24th August 2015 to 2nd October 2015. All responses and representations must be received by the closing date.

You can respond in a number of ways:

• A consultation form is included on pages 17 and 18 of this document. Please return this to the address below.
• Other responses and representation can be made by email or post, again to the address below:
  Julie Dallinson
  Secretary to the Joint Strategic Board
  North Nottinghamshire College, Carlton Road, Worksop, Nottinghamshire. S81 7HP.

or via e-mail: consultation_replies@nnc.ac.uk

Further copies of this consultation document can be obtained free of charge from the Secretary to the Joint Strategic Board and can also be found online at: www.nnc.ac.uk/merger or www.rotherham.ac.uk/merger

There will be two public Stakeholder Consultation Meetings at which you can find out more about our proposals:

Rotherham College of Arts and Technology
22 September 2015
6.00pm
Studio Theatre, Eastwood Building, Town Centre Campus, Eastwood Lane, Rotherham, S65 1EG.

North Nottinghamshire College
24 September 2015
6.00pm
Main Campus, Carlton Road, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, S81 7HP.

The Corporation of each college will publish an online summary of the consultation and its outcome within two months of October 2nd 2015, (see web addresses above). The summary will also be provided by post free of charge to any person who requests it.
## Feedback Form

Please tell us a little about yourself (optional):
If you represent an organisation please tell us your role.

### Name

### Preferred contact details (such as address, contact number, email, Facebook, Twitter etc)

### Which of the following best describe you or your organisation?

- [ ] Learner
- [ ] Parent
- [ ] Employer
- [ ] College Staff
- [ ] FE or Sixth Form College
- [ ] HE Institution
- [ ] School
- [ ] Local Business
- [ ] Government Body/Agency
- [ ] Local Government
- [ ] Local Community
- [ ] Other

1. Do you support the proposal for the merger of Rotherham College of Arts and Technology and North Nottinghamshire College?

   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Not sure
   Comments:

2. The proposed name for the merged organisation is ‘RNN Group’. Local campuses will retain their names i.e. ‘Rotherham College’, ‘North Notts College’.

   Do you support this?

   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Not sure
   Comments:
3. As ‘RNN Group’, we plan to widen the range of opportunities for students and to expand our employer focused provision and services.
Do you support these aims?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Not sure

Please give details of the provision or services you would wish to see prioritised:

4. As ‘RNN Group’, we plan to share good practice across our campuses in order to further enhance the quality of learner and customer experience.
Do you support this aim?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Not sure

Please detail any areas, service or provision you would wish to see prioritised:

5. As ‘RNN Group’, we will focus on innovation, improve access to learning and provide opportunities for communities to come together.
Do you support these aims?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Not sure

Comments:

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

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Not sure

Comments

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

Please return this questionnaire to:
Julie Dallinson
Secretary to the
Joint Strategic Board
North Nottinghamshire College,
Carlton Road, Worksop,
Nottinghamshire,
S81 7HP

Please also use these contact details if you would like to request a copy of these documents in another format.
Locations of the colleges and existing transport links

Key
- Bus Route
- Northern Rail and Robin Hood Line
- Rotherham College Bus Route
- North Nottinghamshire College Bus Route
- North Nottinghamshire College Campus
- Rotherham College of Arts and Technology Campus