

DELIVERING  
EXCELLENCE IN  
FURTHER EDUCATION  
**IN WARRINGTON &  
MID CHESHIRE**



**Proposed Merger  
Consultation Document**  
March & April 2017



Warrington Collegiate



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## FOREWORD

At meetings held in December 2016, the Boards of Corporation at Warrington Collegiate and Mid Cheshire College unanimously supported a Type B merger of Mid Cheshire College into Warrington Collegiate with a vesting date of 1st August 2017.

The Boards of Corporation at Warrington Collegiate and Mid Cheshire College see this as a logical step which will enable the new college to determine its educational character in the best interests of learners from the communities it serves and to respond to local and national economic and skills priorities.

This consultation document provides the background to the intended merger between Warrington Collegiate and Mid Cheshire College.

The rationale for the two-college merger is based on and supports the principles of Area Based Review and wider post-sixteen reform as set out in the government publication "Reviewing Post-16 Education and Training Institutions".

The proposed merger will enable Warrington Collegiate and Mid Cheshire College to work together, taking early action to address financial issues, to create a larger, financially stable and economically resilient institution and in so doing, contribute positively to the financial health of the sector as a whole.

The public consultation begins on the 28th March and ends at 5.00 PM on the 28th April 2017.

In this consultation document you will find further detail about how you can take part and express your views about these plans, and view the proposed timeline to which both colleges are working. This is an exciting opportunity to shape the future of further education in Warrington, Northwich and Winsford.

**We look forward to receiving your views.**

Chair of Governors  
Warrington Collegiate



Mervyn Ward

Chair of Governors  
Mid Cheshire College



Alison Haynes



## STATUTORY NOTICE: FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION ACT 1992

Notice is hereby given by the Corporation of Mid Cheshire 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 Warrington Collegiate and the subsequent dissolution of the Further Education Corporation of Mid Cheshire College, Chester Road, Hartford Northwich, Cheshire CW8 1LJ.

Mid Cheshire College is a General Further Education College which delivers full and part-time courses and specialises in technical and vocational qualifications, from entry level to level 3, apprenticeships and higher education provision. The college operates from two sites located in Hartford and Winsford. There are 768 full-time learners and 1969 part-time learners at the college.

Dissolution of the Corporation of Mid Cheshire College is proposed in order that it may merge with Warrington Collegiate. The new college will deliver around one-third of the General Further Education provision across Cheshire and qualifications to around 10,000 learners. The new college will provide a range of strong curriculum routes linked with the Local Enterprise Partnership priorities.

Provision will be made within the new college for students who have not completed their courses by the end of this academic year (July 2017).

The date proposed for the dissolution of the Corporation of Mid Cheshire College is 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

To obtain a copy of the public consultation document about the proposed merger, email [merger@warringtonandmidcheshire.co.uk](mailto:merger@warringtonandmidcheshire.co.uk) or write to **Warrington Collegiate, Winwick Road Campus, Warrington, WA2 8QA.**

## THE STRATEGIC BUSINESS CASE: A CLEAR RATIONALE

### GEOGRAPHY

The partner colleges serve areas that are geographically adjacent to each other and are already characterised by a similar, broad curriculum offer and thus there is already a great deal of synergy between the partner colleges. The new college will take advantage of its greater reach, depth and scale to ensure viable, inclusive and high quality provision to address the economic and skills needs of the communities that it will serve.

### STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

The towns of Warrington, Northwich and Winsford are economically and strategically important for Cheshire, as is the geographical area in-between from the middle to the north and the north-east of the County. The area will benefit from investment in housing, industrial and business sites, infrastructure and the subsequent growth in population in each of these areas over the next 15 years. A new college for this area will be financially viable and deliver long-term, sustainable success. The college will be able to determine its own educational character to best serve the needs of the learners in, and communities of and around, Warrington, Northwich and Winsford, whilst meeting the skills requirements of employers in these areas and beyond.

### COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL

Some campuses of the partner colleges are situated in and around densely populated areas of deprivation with very similar demographics, low skill levels and high levels of unemployment. The new college will work in a focused and purposeful way with key stakeholders and residents to reduce the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) and address low skills and unemployment in adults, becoming a champion of social mobility, a beacon of educational excellence and indispensable to the communities that it serves.

### ESTATE RATIONALISATION

Guided by the principles of best value for money, the new college will embark upon a phased consolidation of its estate and in-parallel, curriculum specialisation at level three and above to match Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and national priorities. This, in turn, will facilitate investment in specialist 'best-in-class' facilities and resources to meet and exceed industry standards, closely matching and responding to the aspiration to raise skill levels articulated in the modern industrial strategy.

### FINANCIAL STABILITY

Actions to implement significant cost savings are planned imminently, which will help stabilise the financial position of the partner colleges and mitigate against the need for exceptional financial support at Mid Cheshire College.



## THE MERGED COLLEGE: A VISION

The new college will provide around one third of the General Further Education (GFE) provision across Cheshire and plans to deliver qualifications to around 10,000 learners. However, the new college will not just be bigger, the merger is driven by a belief that in determining its own educational character, there is significant scope to maximise opportunities and raise aspirations for the communities that it serves.

The new college will become financially stable, more resilient and better for Warrington and Cheshire, ultimately becoming an effective and strategically significant learning organisation rooted firmly in the aims and aspirations of the modern industrial strategy.

The vision will be shaped by key stakeholders and may be articulated locally, regionally and nationally as follows:

### LOCALLY

Defining our own educational character rooted in the best interests of learners and key stakeholders, becoming indispensable:

- Building on existing 'cultural fit';
- Agreeing our values, driving behaviour and cultural change;
- Putting learners at the heart of all we do: meeting their needs; raising their aspirations, ambition and improving their life chances;
- Putting employers at the heart of all we do: engaging with them; meeting their needs; improving productivity and sharing in their success;
- Working together to build on the strengths of each partner college and their location;
- Developing a curriculum that is inclusive, available locally, facilitates positive progression; and
- Sharing our talents and expertise, truly developing staff, and creating a culture of co-prosperity.

### REGIONALLY

Becoming financially stable, more resilient and better for Warrington and Cheshire:

- Securing the necessary financial support to invest wisely in physical and human resources;
- Taking advantage of greater reach, depth and scale to ensure maximum value for the public purse;
- Creating a gateway for business and industry - diversifying and growing apprenticeship provision and income earning commercial programmes; and
- Exploring additional funding routes to reduce reliance on public agency funding.

### NATIONALLY

Becoming an effective and strategically significant learning organisation in the Further Education sector:

- Rooted firmly in the aims and aspirations of the modern industrial strategy; and
- Becoming a champion of social mobility, a beacon for good practice and an example to others across the Further Education sector.

## CURRICULUM PRINCIPLES

The principles underpinning the curriculum offer and design at the new college are firmly rooted in the aims and aspirations of the modern industrial strategy, lifelong learning and the Post-Sixteen Skills Plan.

As such, the curriculum plan and the framework of qualifications and opportunities that underpin it provide a coherent response to raise skill levels and enrich the learning experience whilst meeting the needs of our growing and changing economy, post-Brexit.

Learners, parents and employers will have a clear view on progression and feel empowered to make confident and informed choices through the provision of high quality careers advice and guidance.

## INTEGRATED LEARNING STRATEGY TO ENSURE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Placing the learners' holistic learning experience at its heart, the partner colleges will work together to develop an integrated learning strategy for excellence in learning design and delivery, assessment and learning support.

The strategy will harness the skills and expertise of staff in the new college to shape and improve pedagogical practice and innovation, the cornerstones of which will be sharing best and research-led practice through an informed, structured programme of CPD, professional discussion and reflection.

Teachers at the new college will have the opportunity to engage in CPD at higher levels to achieve new qualifications designed to meet the needs of industry and engage in substantial industrial updating.



# APPENDIX 1

## THE PARTNER COLLEGES TODAY

### WARRINGTON COLLEGIATE

Established in 1993, Warrington Collegiate, located in Orford to the north of Warrington borough, is the largest provider of education in Warrington and delivers a range of qualifications to young people, adults and employers.

The college offers both full and part-time courses and specialises in technical, vocational and professional qualifications, from entry level to level 4, apprenticeships and higher education provision.



The college engages increasingly with employers locally and from further afield. The college also delivers a range of adult community learning programmes with key partners and serves the communities identified in Warrington as areas of deprivation, with concentrations of low skills and worklessness.

The college has an improved self-assessment grade of 'Good' for overall effectiveness, externally validated in November 2016, although the most recent Ofsted inspection report (published February 2016) concurred with the college's self-assessment report at the time, judging the college to 'require improvement'.

The college enjoys productive relationships with both national and regional agencies, the DfE, SFA and LEP; a range of partners across Warrington and further afield, including the local authority; 12 partner high schools including a UTC and a comprehensive and a growing number of employers.

### MID CHESHIRE COLLEGE

The Hartford campus at Mid Cheshire College opened in 1962, although campuses in Winsford and Northwich were established earlier than this. Mid Cheshire College now has its main site in Hartford (geographically adjacent to the South of Warrington), a secondary site in Winsford and delivers a range of qualifications to young people, adults and employers.

The college offers both full and part-time courses and specialises in technical and vocational qualifications, from entry level to level 3, apprenticeships and higher education provision. The college also delivers a range of adult community learning programmes with key partners and serves some of the communities identified in Northwich and Winsford as areas of deprivation, with concentrations of low skills and worklessness.

The college's most recent Ofsted inspection report (published March 2016) judged the college as 'inadequate', although

apprenticeships were judged to be good. However, the college has, since then, been on a journey of rapid and sustained improvement. The Ofsted monitoring visit in October 2016 judged the college to have made reasonable progress in four out of the six areas inspected. The two areas where the college was judged to have made insufficient progress related to teaching, learning and assessment and learners' progress.

The college has been subject to a further Ofsted monitoring visit in January 2017 and has been judged to have made reasonable progress in all areas inspected.

The college enjoys productive relationships with both national and regional agencies, notably, given its current administered status, the SFA and FE Commissioner teams. The college engages with a range of partners across Northwich and Winsford and further afield, including the local authority, 15 partner high schools and a comprehensive and growing number of employers.



## APPENDIX 2 PROPOSED TIMELINE

### MARCH 2017

- Launch the public consultation about the proposed merger.
- Engage with various stakeholders - see appendix 3.
- Appointment of Principal Designate.

### APRIL 2017

- Launch staff and Trade Union consultation about the proposed merger.
- Appointment of Designate Executive Leadership Team.

### MAY 2017

- Appointment of Designate Senior Team.
- Publish response to public consultation.

### JUNE 2017

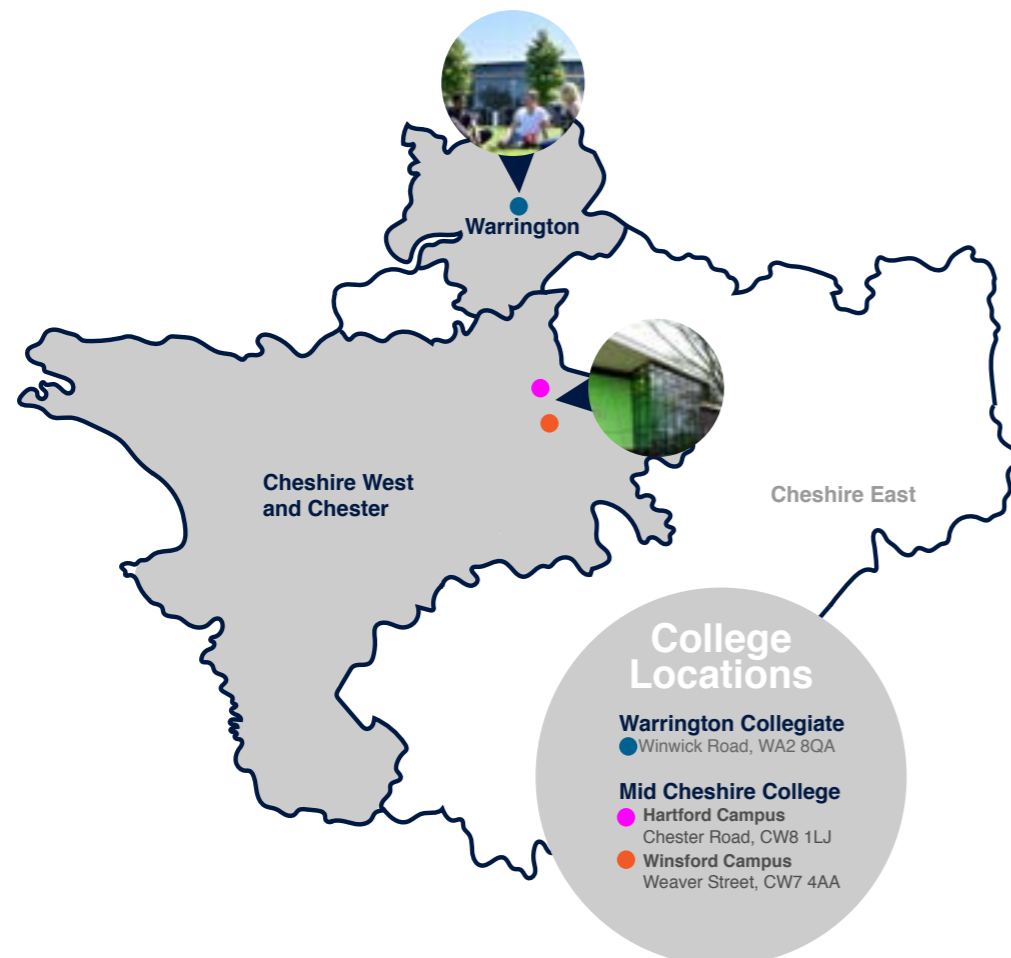
- Appointments of designate curriculum management, support staff and teaching staff.

### JULY 2017

- Completion of all necessary legal documents to meet vesting date of 1<sup>st</sup> August 2017.

### 1<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 2017

- Vesting date and completion of merger.



## APPENDIX 3 INDICATIVE LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS TO BE CONSULTED

### INTERNAL

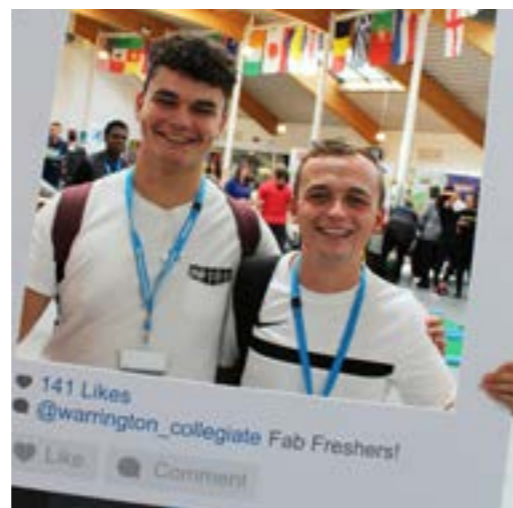
- Students currently studying at both colleges.
- Staff working at both colleges.
- Governors at both colleges.

### EXTERNAL

- Prospective students and their parents.
- Secondary schools in the Warrington, Northwich and Winsford areas and other feeder schools from further afield.
- Governing bodies of FE providers in the local area and governing bodies of maintained schools/academies providing full time education to people over compulsory school age in the local area.
- Key influencers such as local authorities, constituency MPs, the LEP, funding agencies, banks, universities and wider partnership networks.
- Employers across a range of sectors and employer associations such as the Chamber of Commerce.
- Secretary of State and members of parliament in whose constituency Mid Cheshire College and Warrington Collegiate are situated.
- The general public, especially those communities in which the partner colleges are situated.

A stakeholder engagement strategy is currently being implemented which includes bespoke activities for each stakeholder group, for example, the public consultation and online response documents, focus groups with students at each of the partner colleges, public meetings with head teachers and presentations to employers. Stakeholder engagement will be facilitated in many different ways: through written communication, face-to-face meetings, social media and websites. The outcomes and impact of stakeholder engagement will be monitored continuously.





# HAVE YOUR SAY

Governors at both colleges would be very grateful if you could read the public consultation document and respond to the questions below.



Please send your completed form to the address below by **5.00 PM 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017.**

Address: F.A.O Laura Churchill, Warrington Collegiate, Winwick Road, Warrington, WA2 8QA.  
Alternatively you may complete this form online at [www.warringtonandmidcheshire.co.uk](http://www.warringtonandmidcheshire.co.uk)  
or email your response to [merger@warringtonandmidcheshire.co.uk](mailto:merger@warringtonandmidcheshire.co.uk)

### IF YOU WOULD LIKE A REPLY, PLEASE SUPPLY YOUR PREFERRED CONTACT DETAILS.\*

YOUR NAME

PREFERRED CONTACT  
(email/postal address)

### PLEASE SELECT THE CATEGORY WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOU

- |                                   |   |  |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> LEARNER  | <input type="checkbox"/> COLLEGE STAFF          | <input type="checkbox"/> SCHOOL          | <input type="checkbox"/> LOCAL GOVERNMENT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PARENT   | <input type="checkbox"/> FE OR 6TH FORM COLLEGE | <input type="checkbox"/> LOCAL BUSINESS  | <input type="checkbox"/> LOCAL COMMUNITY  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYER | <input type="checkbox"/> HE INSTITUTION         | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT BODY | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER            |

### WHAT ADVANTAGES DO YOU SEE FROM THE MERGER OF OUR TWO COLLEGES?

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### WHAT DISADVANTAGES DO YOU SEE FROM THE MERGER OF OUR TWO COLLEGES?

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WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS REGARDING THE VISION FOR THE PROPOSED MERGED COLLEGE?

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WHAT ARE YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NAME OF THE PROPOSED MERGED COLLEGE?

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PLEASE INCLUDE ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE US TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.

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PRIVACY STATEMENT\*

Your data will only be used in relation to the merger consultation process and will not be used for any other purpose. Any responses will be anonymised in the consultation results documentation.

Under your rights of the Data Protection Act 1998, the information you have provided will only be processed and retained for the specified purpose.

Please see <https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public>



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