



JUNE 2024

**CONSULTATION OUTCOME REPORT
MERGER OF WEYMOUTH COLLEGE
& KINGSTON MAURWARD COLLEGE
CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**



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Introduction

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the public consultation on the proposed merger of Kingston Maurward College and Weymouth College and on the name change for Weymouth College Corporation.

During the consultation period, we engaged with all our stakeholders and provided an opportunity for them to feedback views on the proposed merger and name change.

The feedback we received has reinforced our commitment to proceed with the merger as planned and change the corporation name to Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College (subject to formal approval).

We have taken note of the positive comments, concerns and questions raised, and all the comments will inform our ongoing and detailed planning.

We recognise that this is a starting point, not an end. There is much work ahead to ensure the successful implementation of merger for the benefit of our students, staff, employers, and the communities we serve. However, we believe that this exciting new partnership is the most effective way to achieve our goals.

Robert Lasseter
Chair of Corporation – Kingston Maurward College

Steve Webb
Chair of Corporation – Weymouth College

Background

The Corporations of Kingston Maurward College (KMC) and Weymouth College (WC) held a joint public consultation from 27th March 2024 until 30th April 2024 on the proposed merger between the two institutions and undertook a consultation on the name change from 27th April until 29th May 2024.

The context for the merger, the proposal, and the benefits of public consultation were all set out in a consultation document.

The consultation proposal was available to download from each of the colleges' websites and copies of the proposal, along with the consultation on the name change, were emailed to stakeholders in schools, colleges and academies, local authorities, MPs, the Local Enterprise Partnership,

key employers, universities, trade unions, staff, and students, as well as the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the Department for Education (DfE) and the Secretary of State. Details of the consultation were also sent via a press release to local media to raise awareness amongst parents and the wider community. In addition, staff from both corporations received information about the consultation via internal briefings.

A statutory notice of dissolution was placed in both The Telegraph and the local newspaper (Daily Echo) on 27th March 2024.

This report sets out and analyses the responses received during the consultation period, both for the proposed merger and name change.

Responses to the Public Consultation Questions

We received a total of 64 responses to the public consultations. There were 60 direct responses from stakeholders and four letters of support from key stakeholders.

The distribution of the 60 respondents was as follows:

Category	Number of Responses
Education Consultant	1
Employer / Local business	5
Farm Advisor with interest in training provision	1
Former student	1
Government body	1
Kingston Maurward College staff	6
Kingston Maurward College student	2
KMC ex staff	1
Member of the Public	1
Parent/Carer/Guardian	1
Prospective student or parent/carer/guardian	2
School	1
Trade union representative	1
Weymouth College staff	22
Weymouth College student	14
Grand Total	60

We also received letters of support for the merger from:

- Dorset LEP
- Dorset Chamber of Commerce
- University of Plymouth
- Dorset Council

In summary:

- 47% of responses were received from staff at the two colleges (28 out of 60 respondents)
- 27% of responses were received from students working at the two colleges (16 out of 60 responses)
- 8% of responses were received from employers (5 out of 60 responses)

As part of the consultation exercise, we ask **whether the proposed merger was supported**. The table below details the breakdown of the responses received:

Category of Staff	No	Yes	Total
Education Consultant		1	1
Employer / Local business		5	5
Farm Advisor with interest in training provision	1		1
Former student		1	1
Government body		1	1
Kingston Maurward College staff		6	6
Kingston Maurward College student		2	2
KMC ex staff	1		1
Member of the Public		1	1
Parent/Carer/Guardian		1	1
Prospective student or parent/carer/guardian		2	2
School		1	1
Trade union representative		1	1
Weymouth College staff	1	21	22
Weymouth College student	3	11	14
Grand Total	6	54	60

In summary:

- 90% of respondents supported the merger (54 out of 60 responses).
- 10% of respondents did not support the merger (6 out of 60 responses).
- The highest number of positive responses came from Weymouth College staff and students, which accounted for 59% of all responses (32 out of 54 responses), followed by KMC staff which accounted for 11% of positive responses (6 out of 54 responses), and employers which accounted for 9% (5 out of 54 responses).
- Weymouth College students were the primary respondents who stated they did not support the merger.

As part of the consultation, we also asked respondents to comment on whether the merger between the two colleges would provide the best possible education for the area. The table below shows the responses to the question:

Category	Agree	Disagree	Unsure	Total
Education Consultant	1			1
Employer / Local business	4		1	5
Farm Advisor with interest in training provision			1	1
Former student	1			1
Government body	1			1
Kingston Maurward College staff	5		1	6
Kingston Maurward College student	1		1	2
KMC ex staff		1		1
Member of the Public	1			1
Parent/Carer/Guardian			1	1
Prospective student or parent/carer/guardian	2			2
School			1	1
Trade union representative	1			1
Weymouth College staff	16		6	22
Weymouth College student	11	1	2	14
Grand Total	44	2	14	60

In summary:

- 73% of respondents agreed that the merger would bring the best possible education (44 out of 60 respondents)
- 47% of respondents that agreed it would bring the best possible education were college staff (16 out of 44 respondents)
- 50% of respondents who disagreed that it would bring the best possible education were students (7 out of 14 respondents)

The following comments were made in relation to agreeing to the case for merger:

- Having one united college.
- Sharing of facilities, equipment, and staff to give the best possible experience to all students on both campuses.
- Potential cost savings through the removal of duplications between sites.
- More facilities for students
- Greater choice of curriculum, including more availability of courses and apprenticeship opportunities
- Greater financial stability for the college
- Providing a more strategic approach to education in Dorset and the protection of the land-based specialism
- Raised profile of the merged college
- Better able to support the local community (including students, employers and community groups) by being able to provide a wider range of training and services.
- Sharing of good practice

Concerns and Comments

A number of concerns were raised as part of the consultation exercise.

The table below details the themes of these and the colleges' responses to them:

Theme	Response
Concern over the transport to KMC.	The newly merged College will work towards ensuring that there is a shuttle service to enable staff/student movement between the two campuses.
Potential for the downgrading of agricultural and land-based provision at KMC.	Protecting land-based and agricultural provision has always been a priority aim for the boards and the leadership team. Plans are quite the opposite, with the merger securing the provision and hopefully expanding in the future.
Merging two colleges with weaknesses could detrimentally impact the student experience and education.	<p>Both colleges have maintained a focus on the student experience and quality of education throughout this process and will ensure that this is at the forefront of the vision for the merged college. Every college has challenges, and it is not considered that this is a merger of two colleges with weaknesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both Kingston Maurward and Weymouth College are graded Good by Ofsted. • Weymouth College has reported Good financial health for four years, including the projection for this year and is therefore considered to be financially stable and financially sustainable. • Weymouth College outcomes for both classroom-based and apprenticeship provision are strong and well above national averages. Weymouth College self-assessed as Outstanding for overall effectiveness for the academic year 2023/23.

Concerns and Comments Continued

Theme	Response
The CEO/Principal at point of merger.	<p>The Boards of Weymouth and Kingston Maurward Colleges are delighted to announce the selection of Kate Wills as Interim CEO/Principal of the merged College from 1 August 2024.</p> <p>With over 20 years' of experience in the Further and Higher Education sector, Kate brings with her a wealth of experience and passion for education. Kate's journey in education began after a successful career as a Registered Nurse. Recognising the transformative power of education, she transitioned into teaching, working in colleges across the South West. Kate's commitment to the sector led her to work at various levels with the Further Education (FE) sector, ultimately serving as Deputy Principal at The Cornwall College Group (TCCG), a large General Further Education College (GFE) and land-based college with ten campuses.</p>

Name Change of Weymouth College Corporation

In addition to the public consultation a consultation on a proposed name change of the Weymouth College Corporation to Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College also took place. The consultation exercise took place between 27th April until 29th May 2024.

In line with the statutory requirements, consultation took place with:

- Other educational organisations in the surrounding areas
- including universities, colleges and schools.
- An emergency service.
- Stakeholders associated with both colleges, including the local authorities, employers, MPs and land-based organisations.

In addition, staff at both colleges were also advised of the consultation through staff briefings and encouraged to respond to the consultation.

An email was sent to the above outlining the proposal inviting stakeholders to submit their feedback through an online form.

Responses Received

In total, 48 responses were received. 21 responses were in favour of the proposed name, with 27 not supporting the name. Of the 27 responses not supporting the name, none raised a formal objection – the reason given was due to a personal opinion on the name. Despite this balance, the Boards feel that it is strategically important to recognise both colleges coming together to form the new organisation.

It should be noted that there were no objections from any of the statutory consultees, and they received the required confirmation from the emergency services that they had no objections.

A breakdown of people responding to the name change consultation is as follows:

Category of Respondent	Number of Responses
Staff (Weymouth College and KMC)	34
Governor	2
Local Government	1
KMC Student	6
Parent	2
Emergency Service	1
Other	2
TOTAL	48

Summary and Next Steps

The Corporations are grateful for all the responses received during the consultation processes, including several letters of support from key stakeholders.

The Corporations have taken account of the views of students, parents/carers/guardians, staff, the community, and other stakeholders, and have concluded that it would be in the best interests of the colleges and the local communities to proceed with the proposal and to progress a formal application to the Secretary of State to change the name of Weymouth College Corporation to Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College.

The colleges are committed to merging on the proposed date of 1st August 2024.

On the day of merger, all assets and liabilities previously owned by Kingston Maurward College will transfer to Weymouth College and the Corporation of Weymouth College will change to Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College (subject to formal approval).

The merger pages on both colleges' websites will be kept up to date on progress.





THANK YOU