

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Following the announcement that the governing bodies of Kingston Maurward College and Weymouth College have agreed to merge in principle, we wanted to provide you with answers to some frequently asked questions.

You may like to read this alongside the public consultation document found here: .....

If you have any further queries over the coming weeks, please do not hesitate to contact us. Beyond the public consultation, we are keen that everyone interested in our college, either now or in the future, is well informed and given a proper chance to have their say.

### **What does a merged college mean for the people of Dorset?**

By combining the existing resources and expertise of both partners, the merged college will give students, employers, and the residents of Dorset even better education and training opportunities. We will continue to work innovatively and meet the needs of our communities and employers, as well as the local, regional, and national economies.

### **Are there any downsides to the merger?**

As with all projects of this size, the merger process does carry some risks which have been identified as part of the merger plan. Experienced project managers are working closely with both college Principals to support with this, all overseen by a Joint Steering Group with joint governor representatives from both colleges.

We have comprehensive plans in place to mitigate and manage the identified risks and ensure the merger is delivered smoothly. Both colleges strongly believe that merger benefits significantly outweigh any potential risks.

### **When will we know if the merger is definitely happening?**

The public consultation outcome finishes on 30 April 2024, and an update regarding the outcome will be provided by 27 June 2024.

### **How will merger progress and developments be communicated?**

The Joint Steering Group, which has equal representation from each College Board, is committed to ensuring all staff and stakeholders are informed of any developments. A regularly reviewed communication plan is in place to keep everyone up-to-date using a range of channels.

### **What are the dates of the mergers?**

If agreed, the merger is proposed to take place on 1 August 2024.

### **How will the new college ensure that quality is challenged and maintained?**

The newly merged college will retain good practices that already exist in both institutions. These will be evaluated, and the most appropriate and best processes utilised to further improve services. Governors and leaders will ensure that quality is maintained and improved. By building on strong foundations and learning from each other, both colleges will share best practice, resources, and improve learning environments for students and apprentices.

### **When would changes start to take effect?**

Merging two colleges is highly complex. Although the merger is due to take place on 1 August 2024, operationally and practically, there will be considerable work to ensure we gain the maximum benefit. We are keen that the two campuses retain their unique character and curriculum offer within the new college.

### **How large will the merged college be?**

The combined college will have a turnover of around £24m. If it takes place, the merger will be the biggest change in further education in Dorset since the 1940s.

### **Progressing the merger will be a time-consuming and complicated process that could take resource away from core college business. How will you ensure students are unaffected and remain the focus?**

Governors and the leadership teams are incredibly mindful of current and new students' best interests. We have clear priorities for further quality improvement and student support. To help achieve these, the merger process is being overseen by a Joint Steering Group which is supported by specialist project managers.

### **How will the proposed merger affect students applying for September 2024?**

We are committed to ensuring it is "business as usual" for our students and employers. During the merger process, students should apply in the usual way and follow the existing application guidance of each college. Our priority is that students continue to have the high-quality education and training they expect.

Applicants will be kept up-to-date with the latest news, and both college websites will be updated with any useful information as it arises. The majority of students will continue to have their programmes delivered on the campus they currently expect to attend.