

Student Meetings with the Interim Principal

December 2017

Merger Rationale

Further Education has evolved and government changes to funding and policy have seen changes to the delivery of education. Some significant changes in recent years include a reduction to adult funding; a move towards loans and an increase in school participation age for 16-18 year olds.

For the last 5 years KCC has seen: a decline in income; a loss of contracts and a decline in turnover of circa £28m to £8m 2016/17.

The College's Kensington Centre site on Wornington Road is no longer fit for purpose and is costly to repair and maintain.

The College has also needed to improve its leadership and management and curriculum and quality provision receiving an overall Grade 3 'Requires Improvement' at the last four inspections and an 'Inadequate' grading for apprenticeships at the last inspection.

Why were KCC students not informed of the merger? This is the first I have heard of it – why has this meeting been so late?

The College has been engaged in discussions for merger with several potential partners for the last 5 years until now. The College aims to ensure students' courses continue as normal during any merger discussions.

The process of engagement for students is through your College representatives including the annually elected two student Corporation Board governors and your course student representatives. Your representatives have contributed to the discussions on proposed merger. Staff have communicated with students about the proposed merger. How and when communications take place with students will now be reconsidered.

Why is the merger happening so abruptly and during mid-year, surely this is disruptive to all?

The College has been financial challenged for several years and is depleting its cash reserves therefore a merger sooner than later would be beneficial for long term sustainability. There have been other colleges who have merged mid-year which have worked well.

What implications will the merger have on our courses, and for staff and students?

As mentioned previously there is no intention to disrupt students' studies. There will be no changes to your course and studies after the merger, they continue as normal.

Where does it tell us that the merger will benefit us? What are the positives if any?

I agreed to share with you merger documents which detail the positives to the proposed merger of KCC with EHWLC. Please find publications at the following link: <http://www.kcc.ac.uk/futurekcc/>.

Will staff lose their jobs? I do not want to have a different tutor. I am not saying no to merger we just do not want to lose our tutors.

All KCC staff contracts of employment would automatically transfer to Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College and there are no planned redundancies.

Your tutors will remain the same for the duration of your course.

The merger aims to secure jobs and increase opportunities for staff, we do not want to remain in our current state and have to make job cuts as has happened in recent years.

KCC have many specialist courses that Ealing Hammersmith and West London College do not offer and the aim is to grow this provision. Where we offer some of the same provision we aim to continue to grow that provision and benefit from sharing good practice and increased progression routes. Some provision is 15 miles apart and reaches a different market e.g. ESOL offered at Southall and North Kensington sites.

What happens if there is a clash in provision between the two colleges?

There is a no clash in provision, if anything there will be more opportunities for staff and students.

We would like reassurances that courses will not change and that our tutors will not lose their jobs.

Can we meet the CEO of Ealing, Hammersmith and West London?

Yes, we will try to arrange this for Monday next week and will confirm this tomorrow - Friday.

Why have so many courses been cancelled at short notice?

Courses will have been cancelled in the past either due to, low demand (not being able to viably fill groups), quality issues and staffing issues.

Poor leadership and management are responsible for the Ofsted gradings and decline in curriculum. We have excellent teachers here with high achievement rates.

Leadership and management needs to improve which was just one aspect of Ofsted's report.

The standard of teaching, learning and assessment is too varied across the College. Leadership and management and teaching, learning and assessment are areas that our College is working on to improve. You will be able to access copies of inspection reports on the Ofsted website <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130410>.

We do not believe that Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College (EHWLC) is a good choice as a merger partner – they are not in a better financial position to KCC and our tutors are better performing than theirs.

EHWLC have improved substantially, they are now in a satisfactory financial position and have improved their overall Ofsted Grading from 'Inadequate' to 'Good' - curriculum, quality and processes are good.

What will happen to the SOAS progression agreement?

This will continue.

Have you looked at other colleges and options?

As previously mentioned, KCC has been looking for potential merger partners for some years. The College was in discussions last year with City Lit but they withdrew after due diligence on KCC.

The KCC Governing Body conducted a selection process and in June 2017 EHWLC was chosen as a suitable college to merge with based on a range of criteria including: vision, mission, values, quality, finance and curriculum provision. EHWLC have made a commitment to sustain provision in North Kensington and existing courses where viable – they will seek to appoint a full-time permanent Principal to oversee KCC.

How much was the College Kensington Centre sold for and when does the College need to move out?

The College no longer own the North Kensington Centre site and our lease runs out at the end of 2018/19, with rent costing us £1.1m a year. We have made a request for an extension to the lease so that the College can stay for longer and we are still awaiting agreement from the Borough. I will let you have more details on the sale of the North Kensington site to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea as a follow up to this meeting.

We received letters from WLC to say that our loans are being reassessed and transferred, what is that about?

This is something we can revisit. (Meeting on Monday with CEO of EHWLC – loans in context of merger)

We have seen evidence that 50 staff are going to be made redundant. We have seen copies of Board Papers.

There are currently no discussions regarding redundancies of KCC staff. Board papers are published once agreed by the Board and are confidential until publication.

When is the decision to merge going to happen?

The decision to merge will be made by the Board of Governors of KCC and EHWLC and the decision is currently planned to be taken this December