



Proposal for merger of Epping Forest College & New City College

**A new vision for further
education in North-East
London & the Essex Borders**



A new vision for further education in
North-East London and the Essex borders

A proposal for merger between
Epping Forest College and
New City College

Proposed Merger

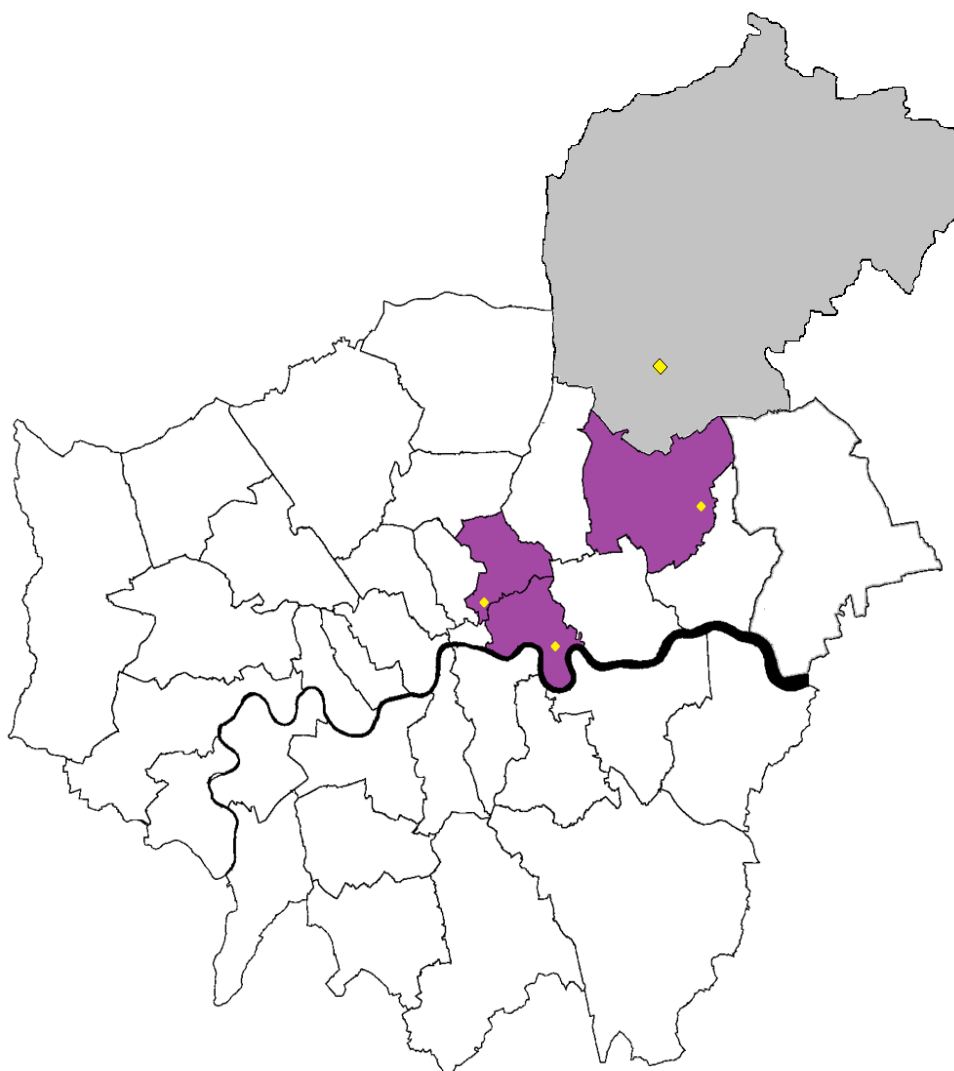
This publication outlines a proposal for merger between Epping Forest College and New City College to take place on 1 August 2018. It also sets within it a broader vision for further education provision in north-east London and its Essex borders.

The benefits and impact of a merger between Epping Forest and New City College for students, employers, staff and the broader community are reviewed within the publication.

Epping Forest Corporation have carried out an independent Structure and Prospects Appraisal Review which has recommended merger with New City College.

Consultation on this proposal will run from from 3 May until 4 June 2018. Feedback received during the consultation process will be reviewed by the Corporations of both colleges at meetings and the outcome of the consultation will be published in June 2018.

Details on how to respond to the consultation can be found at the end of the publication.



Joint Foreword from Chairs of Corporation and Principals of Epping Forest College and New City College

Epping Forest College has been on an exciting journey of change and improvement over the past 2 years. The recently published Ofsted inspection report validates rapid progress with regards to improving outcomes and ensuring a safe and inclusive learning environment. This merger proposal is based upon a desire to see Epping Forest College continue this positive journey and to become an outstanding place to learn. We believe that this can be best achieved within the New City College Group, which will provide financial stability, investment, growth opportunities and a scale to enable efficiencies to be made.

These are challenging times for further education colleges. Continuous funding pressures and changing markets require colleges to look afresh at their strategic direction and how best they can serve their communities. This merger proposal is grounded in better meeting the needs of our students and the communities that we serve, so that we can enable economic and social mobility, allowing individuals to improve their life chances and thrive in a dynamic yet competitive regional employment market.

Government policy supports the development of larger institutions that are both financially viable and able to adapt to address the national and regional skills needs. Our merger proposal aims to secure and enhance provision designed to meet local skills needs in the areas that we serve. The merger will support Epping Forest College to continue its transformational journey, providing skills and training to support people into employment. Our plans will support local businesses and the economic prospects of people through college-based courses and apprenticeships in key sectors such as; the arts, health & care, the service sector, financial & professional services and construction.

Our guiding principle throughout this merger proposal is whether it will enhance opportunities for students. As part of the New City College Group, specialisms can be developed at the Epping Forest campus, in order to facilitate higher level skills provision, apprenticeships and higher education opportunities. New City College will bring investment opportunities and the chance be part of a larger organisation bringing platforms to share good practice and greater efficiencies through shared services.

By merging, Epping Forest College will be better placed to engage with employers and ensure that students are ready for the job opportunities of the future. Our proposed college will maintain the Epping Forest identity, whilst seeking to grow areas, such as apprenticeships, within a cross-New City College Group approach.

Both governing bodies are confident that this proposal will strengthen provision at Epping Forest College by seeing it join a College Group that is financially strong, brings new opportunities for students, staff, employers and communities.

We believe that our proposals will create a financially sustainable platform to continue the recent improvements and secure the long-term future of provision at Epping Forest College.

We want to hear your views about this merger proposal and we encourage you to participate.


Martin Rosner

Chair of Governors – Epping Forest College



Meena Chavda

Chair of Governors – New City College



Gerry McDonald

Principal & CEO – New City College



Saboochi Famili

Principal & CEO – Epping Forest College



New City College Group profile:

New City College was formed following the mergers of Tower Hamlets College and Hackney Community College in August 2016, and then Redbridge College in April 2017. The group supports around 16,000 students, comprising 4,000 16-18 year olds, 12,000 adults and 1,000 apprentices.

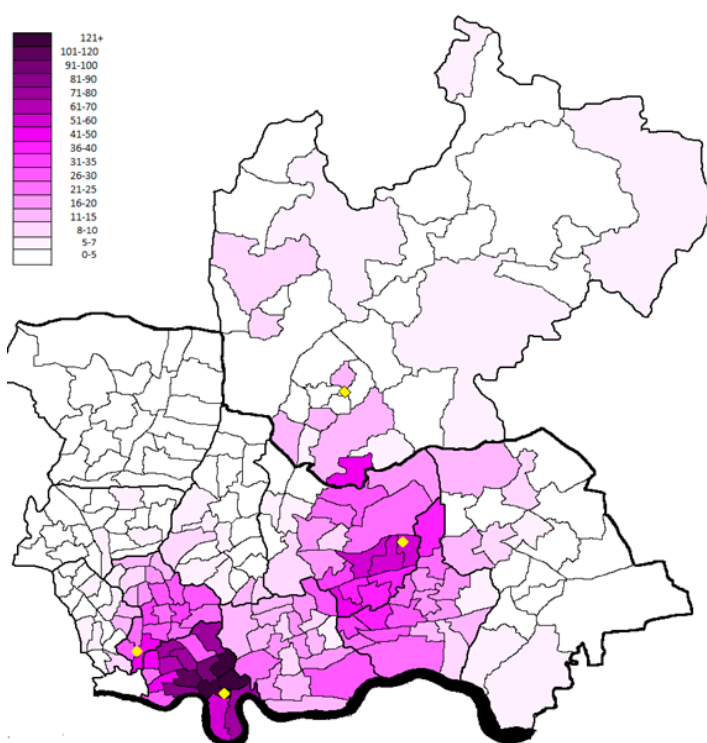
Prior to merger, all three Colleges were graded as Good in their most recent Ofsted inspections and there has been relentless focus on teaching and learning, resulting in further improvements in outcomes across the group.

Gerry McDonald is Group Principal and CEO and was previously Principal and CEO at Tower Hamlets College (from 2013). Three Borough Principals manage local curriculum and student support teams. At Group level quality, finance, HR and MIS leads ensure consistency and stability across the organisation.

Each of the campuses offers a broad-based curriculum with areas of specialism, which have scope for further development, including increased provision at higher levels. These include; business, health and social care at Tower Hamlets; construction trades and computing at Hackney and hospitality and science at Redbridge.

Over 1,000 apprentices train with the New City College in areas such as early years, hospitality, construction trades and housing, as well as numerous office-based roles. The College Group is on the Register of Training Providers for levy and non-levy delivery.

New City College enrolments by location:



College profile:

(2017/18)	16-18	Adult
Full-time	3,706	446
Part-time	297	4,654
Apprentices	1,311	
HE		2,674
Overall Ofsted grade	2/2/2	

Epping Forest College profile:

Epping Forest College is a small general further education college in Essex offering a wide range of vocational qualifications. The majority of full-time learners are on Study Programmes and make up 88% of the College's income, with the largest curriculum areas Construction, Creative Arts and Sport.

Approximately 2,000 learners attend full and part time provision at the College with this number including apprenticeships. It is one of seven general further education colleges in Essex. In 2016/17, the number of learners on Study Programmes, the majority at Level 3, was 1,406.

The College is located in Debden, on the Essex/London borders and within the M25. The College's catchment area for 16-18 students is a mixture of Essex (predominantly Debden and Loughton), and the boroughs of north-east and east London. The majority of learners – over 50% - attending the college in 2016/17 came from neighbouring London Boroughs. 29.5% were from Epping Forest District followed by 27.1% from the London Borough of Redbridge and 26.1% from the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

Epping Forest is a local government district in Essex with Greater London to the south and southwest and the area around Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell, Waltham Abbey and Loughton considered to be part of London in all respects except governance and politics. The total population of the Epping Forest District (2016) was 128,000, with the skills level generally above the UK and Greater Essex average.

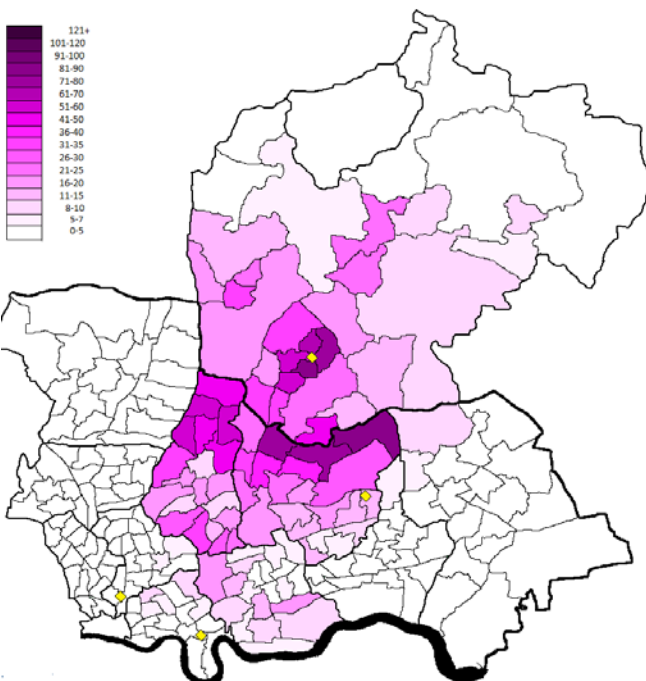
However, the working age population with NVQ2 levels is below average compared to Greater Essex and the UK. The area is predominantly wealthy with average earnings well above the UK average reflecting the high flow of commuters into London. However, there are pockets of deprivation in the area including Loughton Broadway where the College is located and parts of Waltham Abbey.

Epping Forest has had nearly 3000 new homes built since 2001 and a further 1300 are estimated leading up to 2021. The key employment sector in the area is construction. In 2016 65% of pupils in Essex schools achieved A*- C GCSE grades in English and maths, an increase of 4% on the previous year.

The most recent Ofsted inspection report published in early 2018 reported a positive direction of travel, with rapid improvement and progress at the college. The overall outcome was an improvement to Grade 3 or Requires Improvement.

Epping Forest College enrolments by location:

College profile:



(2017/18)	16-18	Adult
Full-time	1,595	64
Part time	48	522
Apprentices	122	
HE		14
Overall Ofsted grade	3	

Stronger together – a case for change

Vision for the future:

Our vision for the future of New City College and Epping Forest College is for a merged, sector-leading college that offers an outstanding student experience. The merged entity would be both financially stable and well connected to its local communities.

There is good strategic alignment between Epping Forest College and New City College; providing high quality post-16 academic, professional and technical pathways and the opportunity to bring together existing strengths to create a sustainable model through investment in specialised provision and quality improvement.

With existing New City College campuses in Redbridge, Hackney and Tower Hamlets, this merger proposal presents a new exciting vision for further education in the London/Essex borders and the north-east sub-region that will:

- Establish a more sustainable institution, with distinct local college identities
- Better meet the demands of employers and regional skills needs
- Provide a broad coherent curriculum offer
- Benefit the community with provision that helps them progress into work or further study

The merged college will be financially robust. It will be debt-free on net basis and less dependent on government agency funding. The enlarged organisation will have the resources to invest in improving provision and building the infrastructure needed to develop a modern, adaptive college that is fit for the demands of a complex 21st century economy.

Ensuring change and improvement:

The college sector operates in an increasingly challenging market place with changing learning preferences, increased choices from school/academy sixth forms and commercial training providers and the new expectations from government about the role of colleges.

The proposed merger will bring significant advantages for students and their families, businesses and local communities, through:

- combining the complementary strengths of both organisations to provide high quality educational and training opportunities to school leavers, apprentices, higher education learners and adults wishing to secure qualifications, skills and progression to University or employment.
- development of high-quality teaching, learning & training and customised programmes, career pathways and apprenticeships.
- creating an organisation with a combined turnover of around £75 million (2018/19) each year, which will enable more investment in learner resources and facilities, and enhance and ensure the continuity of local provision at the Epping Forest campus
- signposting specialist vocational provision and progression routes at other New City College campuses to prospective or current students

A new vision for further education and skills in North-East London and the London/Essex borders:

The context in which FE colleges across England operates is changing at a rate not experienced during the past 20 years. Successive funding cuts to adult budgets, the introduction of income contingent loans for students over the age of 24 and the expectation of further reductions in state support for adult learning have placed colleges under considerable financial pressure. This is particularly the case in urban areas or where populations are more deprived.

Whilst Essex & north-east London have not seen the demographic decline in 16-18 numbers experienced elsewhere in the UK, a rapid increase in the number of schools with sixth forms and new free schools has placed pressure on 16-18 recruitment. In the Epping Forest District, all secondary schools and academies have a post-16 level 3 offer.

The labour market, too, is changing rapidly. The Greater London Authority estimates that London will create 35,000 new jobs per annum until 2036. Significant growth is predicted in digital, creative, science and technology opportunities with an increased focus on higher level skills that best support the development of a modern, value added based economy. It would be remiss, however, to overlook the need for entry level jobs that provide the backbone to the infrastructure London needs to function.

Essex & north-east London

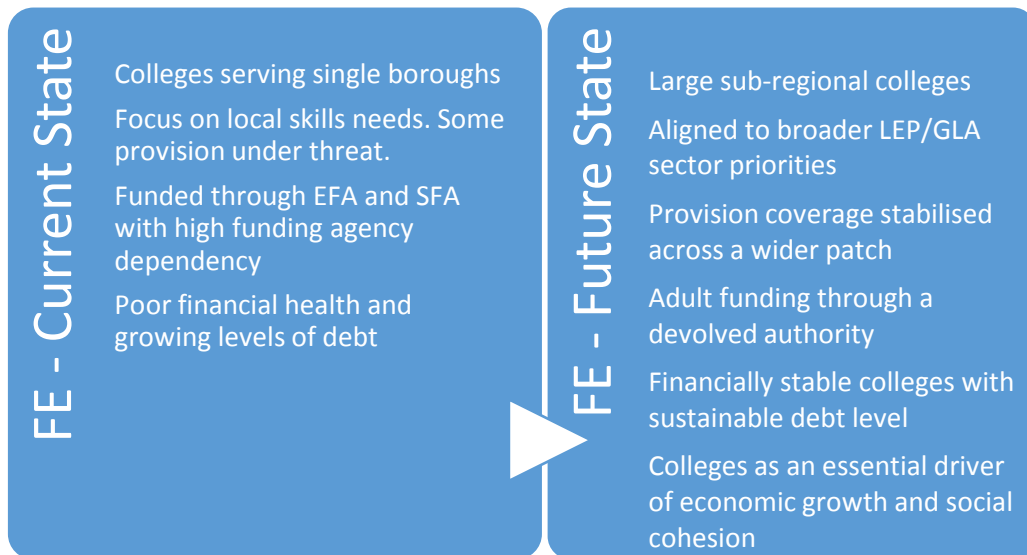
Epping Forest District, whilst sitting within Essex County, is strongly aligned into the London economy. Epping Forest College is well located within the London/Stansted/Cambridge corridor and with easy access to the dynamic, innovative and entrepreneurial London economy, with major hubs such as Canary Wharf, Stratford and The City within easy reach.

Our merger proposal brings real opportunities to support local people and communities to gain the training and skills that they need to access the array of career options and secure employment. Colleges are based in and serve their communities. They are uniquely placed to link adults to the labour market, service employer needs and enable young people to achieve their potential. Through working closely with the local authorities, the LEPs and employers, the merged college can develop the new T-level qualifications, embed high quality work placements, develop apprenticeship routes and deliver bespoke training to bring progression routes to students and to help employers meet their skills needs.

It is clear, however, that colleges which serve a single district will not be well placed to deliver on this important agenda.

This merger proposal seeks to address this issue but is also designed to be part of a broader solution for FE across the Essex & north-east London sub-region. New City College has already successfully brought together 3 previous colleges and has built a Group structure that has secured continued quality improvement and the retention of local identities, alongside driving efficiencies. This merger will enable Epping Forest College to benefit from economies of scale and the ability to really drive the skills agenda.

This is illustrated on the following page:



Our vision for FE in our area is one of strong college provision, integrated with the wider labour market and responsive to the needs of learners. This merger proposal is part of that vision. It will create a college strong in terms of finance and outcomes for students, focused on priority growth areas and able to leverage a coherent offer for young learners and adults to develop their employability and progression opportunities and resilience within the local community.

The merged college will continue to diversify its income base, reducing its dependency on funding agencies and provide a stable base for future growth. The combined college will be debt free and able to bid for capital funds from an unencumbered balance sheet. Specialisms, supported by employer demand and growth opportunities will form the focus of investment.

A new vision for further education in Essex & north-east London

A strong, FE College fully connected to the opportunities of the region and the Capital

Financially stable with a diverse income base

Provision that is at least Good and aspires to be Outstanding

Connected to the needs of its community

Positioned to influence the skills agenda in partnership with funding bodies and employers

Rationale for merger:

There is a clear strategic alignment between Epping Forest College and New City College in their strategic direction, proximity and the communities they serve:

A shared geography and demographics, with the potential to secure growth

The two colleges share a geography; Essex and north-east London – Epping Forest and Redbridge share a border, transport and many community links.

There is already a considerable movement of learners between north-east London and Epping Forest College with over 50% of Epping Forest College learners residing in north-east London Boroughs. With the financial strength of the New City College, Epping Forest College can flourish and secure the required investment in provision and resources.

Epping Forest College have established a partnership with Epping Forest District Council and Best Growth Hub to support a sub-regional hub for IT and digital technologies, this has commenced through initial employer engagement and training. Through merger with New City College, investment funds can be secured to further support this aspiration.

The colleges share similar economic characteristics and growth prospects

Both colleges serve communities and economies that are similar in their characteristics. There are high levels of economic activity amongst the population but with pockets of deprivation. The economic sub-region continues to benefit from regeneration and infrastructure projects within the London to Cambridge corridor such as Stansted Airport and Crossrail.

Epping Forest is a relatively affluent area, where unemployment is low. Many residents commute to jobs in London. Local employment is mainly in retail, the service sector, financial services and the public services. Most local businesses are SMEs with 9 or fewer employees, self-employment accounts for 14% of employment and is above Essex and national averages.

The Epping Forest District Council Corporate Plan (2015-2020) sets out to ensure that the locality continues to be 'a great place to live, work, play, study and do business'. The economic development strategy highlights the visitor economy, town centre development, business partnerships and young peoples' apprenticeships as priorities. Essex County Council strongly emphasises apprenticeships as a key driver for economic and social inclusion.

Epping Forest College in its 'Vision 2020' strategic plan seeks to increase employer input and a commitment to respond to local and regional skills shortages. We believe that through merger with New City College, the local college can play a significant role in securing this vision and these objectives.

Whilst Epping Forest is relatively affluent, two local wards; Shelley and Loughton Broadway are relatively deprived. A merger with New City College would enable further development of programmes to support economic and social mobility and inclusion through apprenticeships and alternative provision.

The population of Epping Forest is forecast to grow over the next 20 years. A successful and sustainable FE provision will provide essential infrastructure and social capital.

The colleges have complementary curriculum offers

Together New City College and Epping Forest College have a broad professional and technical curriculum offer covering all 15-subject sector areas. The curriculum offer across the two providers is largely complementary with both colleges offering a wide range of core subjects such as health and business studies but with more specialist areas. At the Redbridge campus, growth areas such as science and hospitality & catering complement provision at Epping Forest such as construction and early years education and broaden the offer within the sub-region.

Epping Forest College currently offers a wide provision and through the merger, New City College would aim to sustain this offer and support the current quality improvement strategies in place, with an aim of attracting more local residents to the College. New City College has identified a number of potential curriculum specialisms for Epping Forest, which would complement its current curriculum. These areas include:

- Construction and the built environment
- Services and leisure industries
- Digital and creative industries
- Health, education and public services
- Financial and professional services

As part of a larger group, there are opportunities to expand provision within these areas and develop high quality programmes, which will support the regional skills needs of north-east London and Essex. For example, within the current construction offer it may be possible to develop pathways which support growth areas such as sustainable building technologies. There is also potential to create curriculum hubs, which as part of a larger college group would attract additional capital investment.

Therefore, a merger would enable to distinct demand-led provision to be sustained and grown at the Epping Forest College campus.

Together, the colleges will be debt free and financially stable

New City College is graded as Good in terms of financial health by the ESFA and is moving towards Outstanding. Cash reserves are £11m or over 50 cash days. Epping Forest College is financially challenged and needs a strong merger partner to support its recovery and improvement. New City College has a good track record of achieving this in its previous mergers between Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Redbridge Colleges.

The combined college, with a total income of £75m will be better placed to adapt to a changing funding environment.

Colleges need to demonstrate they are aligned to employer needs if they are to flourish in the future. Large, stronger colleges which are able to operate across sub-regions such as Essex and north-east London will be able to engage with employers as they shape their skills needs for the next decade and beyond.

Through merger, the colleges will be better placed to address the skills needs of the Essex and London future labour markets

Colleges need to demonstrate they are aligned to employer needs if they are to flourish in the future. Large, stronger colleges which are able to operate across sub-regions such as Essex & north-east London will be able to engage with employers as they shape their skills needs for the next decade and beyond.

Benefits for stakeholders

We believe that the merger proposal would bring the following benefits for the colleges' stakeholders:

Criteria	Impact of Proposals
Does the proposal offer a compelling vision for securing a sustainable future for provision in Essex and north-east London, which meets the needs of learners, employers and the wider community?	<p>The merger proposal presents a new vision for further education in Essex and north-east London that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a large, more sustainable institution • Better meet the demands of employers and their skills needs • Provide a broad coherent curriculum offer • Benefit the community with provision that helps them progress into work or further study.
Does the proposal offer high quality strategic leadership and management?	<p>The merger proposal is part of a broader solution for FE and skills provision for the Essex and north-east London economic sub-region. The management teams across the two colleges are well established, Epping Forest College has secured a much-improved Ofsted rating and New City College have secured a significant turnaround in the Group's finances and student outcomes.</p> <p>The new college will require a management model that is effective across two previously distinct colleges and that creates a common culture based on shared values and expectations.</p> <p>The Epping Forest College campus would have its own local Principal as in each of the three predecessor colleges to New City College. Campus or Borough Principals have been appointed to ensure strong and visible local leadership with the remit to forge effective local partnerships.</p> <p>New City College can ensure that Epping Forest College takes the next step on its development journey as part of a financially secure college that respects local need and ensures student success at all levels.</p>
How will financial viability, sustainability and value for money be secured?	<p>Together, the colleges will be debt free and less dependent on agency funding. The new college will be better placed to pursue an effective income diversification strategy as new opportunities emerge.</p> <p>Epping Forest College has had to set a deficit budget for 2017/18 and faces a further reduction of funding in 2018/19. The impact of these challenges should not be underestimated. New City College have experience of dealing with partners in financial distress. Hackney Community College was under severe financial pressure at the point of merger in 2016. Since then, costs have been reduced and the combined college is now able to demonstrate strong cross group savings that further contribute to its long-term stability.</p> <p>New City College is a financially stable and sustainable provider and in July 2017 the Group's finance was judged</p>

	<p>to be 'Good' by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Following the merger, the Corporation has taken a number of steps, including the sale of assets, to assure the Group's financial health and sustainability. On a net basis, New City College is debt free and has been able to begin a programme of investment to further improve resources for students and develop its main campuses.</p> <p>A merger will be financially positive with: £77m combined income and more than 5000 ESFA funded 16-18 students, low gearing and chances to increase efficiencies, invest in quality and diversify income streams.</p> <p>The merged college will have a strong financial position in terms of income, cash reserves and low levels of borrowing. The merger will secure a sustainable curriculum provision, and greater efficiency in management and support services will provide better value for money.</p> <p>The new college will be financially robust and be better placed than each college is presently to deal with future threats to funding. Shared support functions will help achieve best value and a common approach to curriculum planning across the new college will deliver further efficiencies without compromising the student experience.</p>
What is the impact of the proposal on staff?	<p>The proposal does not seek to reduce headcount through managing duplication but would aim to manage staff costs down by voluntary means over the near to medium term.</p> <p>The merger will bring further opportunities for Professional Development and peer support. Being part of New City College brings opportunities for networking, the sharing of practice and resources and enhanced career opportunities for staff.</p> <p>A successful merger with New City College will secure the future sustainability of Epping Forest College and therefore long-term job security.</p>
What is the impact of the proposal on learners?	<p>Merger with New City College will provide a platform to enhance the provision for learners studying at Epping Forest College. In addition to developing the local curriculum offer in response to demand and the regional skills needs, the merged college will be able to provide an extensive range of progression opportunities into specialist technical pathways, higher education programmes and apprenticeships.</p> <p>Increased economies of scale will bring positive benefits, supporting investment for new provision and the potential to create regional hubs and curriculum specialisms. Through the merger, New City College would seek to retain high quality local offer at Epping Forest College to provide current and prospective learners with a wide range of vocational options.</p> <p>There are a number of complementary curriculum areas across the proposed college and particularly with the</p>

	<p>Redbridge campus. The merger would create opportunities to further expand the local offer, and as outlined in section one the following areas have been identified as potential areas for growth and development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction and the built environment: - Services and leisure industries - Digital and Creative industries - Health, education and public services - Financial and professional services <p>Merger will bring increased investment to further improve resources and facilities to support learning and progression. There will be more opportunities to develop essential enterprise, citizenship and employability skills required to secure sustainable career outcomes.</p> <p>Across New City College there is a commitment to listen to learners and respond to their needs. Within any future merger plan we would seek to involve Epping Forest learners in the development and assessment of plans.</p>
What is the impact of the proposal on employers?	<p>The merged college would be more responsive to specific training needs with courses co-designed by employers, for employers and offering a wider range of training and apprenticeships for levy and non-levy employers.</p> <p>New City College have a designated division for employer facing provision and is currently working collaboratively with a wide range of employers and partners and training over 1000 apprentices.</p> <p>New City College would seek to build upon the positive employer relationships established by Epping Forest College and set in place the infrastructure to further develop work with private and public-sector employers in the Epping Forest economy.</p> <p>New City College is committed to creating strong employer links, to include the provision of high quality work experience and employability skills within all 16-18 study programmes and through the development of the T-levels. New City College has secured additional funding to pilot 'T level' style work placements and is planning to begin offering T levels from 2019.</p> <p>The merger would seek to establish Epping Forest College campus as an employability hub and to anchor appropriate T-level developments in areas such as Financial Services, Health, Digital Technology and Creative Industries. Employers will be central to the college's development, shaping provision and holding the new college to account for its work on skills priorities. The new college will seek to develop strategic partnerships, building on existing employer relationships and forging new ones, particularly in growth sectors.</p>
What is the impact of the proposal on the local community?	<p>The merger would seek to retain and strengthen distinctive college brands and identities. This has been achieved alongside the development of New City College, with local</p>

	<p>brands in Hackney, Redbridge and Tower Hamlets promoted alongside New City College.</p> <p>The travel to learn patterns for both colleges support a merger, with good transport links between Redbridge and Epping Forest and many learners living in Redbridge and north-east London choosing to enrol at Epping Forest College. There are also strong employment links with a large proportion of the community commuting into Inner or Outer London for employment.</p> <p>The merger would seek to build upon good relationships with the District and County Councils, along with other key stakeholders such as the SELEP and local schools.</p> <p>A sustainable and successful Epping Forest College will give the local community a strong, financially secure college that connects with their aspirations and which they hold in high esteem.</p>
What is the impact of the proposal on competitors?	<p>The merger would secure sustainable high quality post-16 academic, professional and technical pathways at Epping Forest College, alongside the choices from local school sixth-forms and other local colleges.</p> <p>New City College would seek to maintain and strengthen any collaborative arrangements with local school or the Essex based colleges through the FEDEX (Federation of Essex Colleges).</p> <p>The population of Epping Forest is forecast to grow over the next 20 years, this places an even greater importance of EFC securing a strong merger partner to ensure a locally available FE and skills provision.</p> <p>We do not envisage the proposal as detrimental to any neighbouring schools or colleges.</p>
What is the impact of the proposal on the quality of provision?	<p>Epping Forest College has been on a journey of change and improvement over the past 2 years, culminating in the recent much improved Ofsted report. New City College would ensure that the merger continued support these successful strategies designed to improve teaching and learning or outcomes.</p> <p>Through New City College there will be further investment in quality and curriculum development and through the wider organisation increased support and challenge through shared best practice.</p>

The merged college:

The new college will be financially robust with a broad and coherent curriculum offer. It will be free of debt and less dependent on government agency funding. The combined college will have the resources to co-invest, with employers and funding bodies, in the infrastructure needed to develop a modern, adaptive college that is fit for the demands of a complex 21st economy.

Curriculum

The development of the curriculum offer in both colleges has had a positive impact on learner outcomes. Programmes of study for young people and adults balance specialisms and employability and enable progression. The broad adult offer has been repositioned for unemployed people, including the provision of maths, IT and employability courses, coupled with work experience. This approach has helped significant numbers of learners find local employment.

The wide range of full-time vocational and academic qualifications offered for 16-19 learners and for adults at all levels up to Level 3 and 4 focuses on balancing the interests of learners with local employment needs, and higher education aspirations.

The curriculum offer will deliver to the communities the best of both colleges, retaining their distinct provision.

Quality of provision

Epping Forest College has been on a journey of improvement and has successfully secured an improvement in student outcomes and overall Ofsted judgement. As part of New City College, through embedding successful strategies and sharing good practice within the wider Group, there would be a clear pathway to securing a good at the next Ofsted inspection.

The overall effectiveness of the New City College is 'Good' and there has been a substantial improvement in overall achievement rates since the mergers. Based on aggregated historic performance data for the three legacy colleges achievement rates improved by 4 percentage points from 79.1% in 2015/16 to 83.1% in 2016/17. This increase is due to the improvements at both the Redbridge and Hackney campuses. With foundation English and mathematics qualifications excluded, the overall achievement rate for the College rises to 88.2%, a differential of 3 percentage points. This differential has significantly decreased since the merger, in 2015/16 when foundation English and mathematics qualifications were excluded rates increased to 85.5%, a differential of 7 percentage points. This demonstrates that the wide range of improvement actions put in place over the last academic year, have had a positive impact on student outcomes.

Finances

The new college will be financially robust and be better placed than each college is presently to deal with future threats to funding. Shared support functions will help achieve best value and a common approach to curriculum planning across the new college will maximise efficiency without compromising the student experience.

The new college will:

- Embark upon a strategy of growth of enrolments at the Epping Forest College campus
- Develop a joint apprenticeship delivery service, utilising Epping Forest College networks and employer links in this area

- Ensure that income diversification continues by expanding commercial, higher education and apprenticeship work
- Ensure that the new college is debt free with a financial grading of at least Good

Branding of the new college:

The naming of the college will be sensitive to the local heritage of Epping Forest College. Local branding and identity will be maintained within the New City College Group.

Legal form of merger:

It is intended that the merger will take the form of a Type B, whereby Epping Forest College Corporation will dissolve on 31 July 2018 and its assets and liabilities will transfer to New City College Corporation. The two colleges will become a single entity on 1 August 2018.

Managing and governing the merged college:

A merger working party will be established to oversee implementation of the merger and set out arrangements for governance. At the point of merger, the designated number for the Corporation of New City College will be expanded to accommodate a number of Epping Forest governors who wish to serve. The Corporation will ensure that staff and students are represented from Epping Forest. This could include, if it is seen as desirable, a local advisory committee for Epping which would further ensure that the development of New City College is fully aligned to the needs of the localities it serves.

The management structure will follow similar arrangements to the other three constituent colleges in the New City College Group. With distinct and local leadership, alongside cross-group shared services.

Merged College		
<i>Shared business support services</i>		
All Campuses: Entry - Level 2 provision. English/ESOL and maths. Comprehensive local offer	Epping Forest Campus: Specialist and higher level provision in arts, construction, health & care and sport	New City College: Specialist Apprenticeship and employer responsive provision

Our merger commitment:

To maintain the high expectations we have of our students and our staff

We will take the best of the quality assurance, curriculum planning and business monitoring processes from both colleges and combine them across the merged organisation. We will minimise disruption to both learners and staff. Clear and transparent reporting against agreed performance targets to college Governors will continue.

To continue to meet the needs of the communities we serve

We will respond to skills and learning needs across the areas that we serve with a new curriculum plan which is based on increased consultation with communities, stakeholders, local schools and employers and which takes account of developing local and priorities.

To maintain effective, efficient operating systems

We will harmonise systems as a matter of priority so they become compatible within a realistic and deliverable timetable. Costs will be managed with regard to the financial benefits of the merger. We are working with our funding agencies and banks to establish clear and deliverable operating procedures.

To take on board the concerns our stakeholders express

On-going consultation is a fundamental aspect to this proposal and will be used to identify and address any concerns. An open dialogue will be maintained with staff throughout the consultation period together with a planned communication process for learners and other stakeholders.

Appendix I – Proposed timescale to merger

Consultation period	3 May to 4 June 2018
Consultation outcomes published	June 2018
Both college Corporations consider definitive resolutions to approve merger	June 2018
Formal notice of merger published	June 2018
Merger of New City College and Epping Forest College into a single institution	1 August 2018

Appendix II – Statutory notice

STATUTORY NOTICE FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION ACT 1992

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by the Corporation of Epping Forest College of Borders Lane, Loughton, Essex, IG10 3SA, in accordance with the Further Education Corporation (Publication of Proposals) (England) Regulations 2012, S1 2012 No.1157, of the proposal for the transfer of the property, rights and liabilities to the Corporation of New City College, Poplar High Street, London, E14 0AF and the subsequent dissolution of Epping Forest College.

Epping Forest College is a General Further Education College which delivers education and skills training for students aged 14 years and over. In 2016/17, it enrolled 2,756 students in total, comprising 1,786 full-time and 970 part-time students. In 2016/17, New City College provided for 8,976 students in total, comprising 4,797 full-time and 4,179 part-time students.

Dissolution of the Corporation of Epping Forest College is proposed so that it may merge with New City College. This will allow the combined organisation to harness the equal strength of both institutions, their resources, expertise and quality. 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 students and clients, to funding organisations and to tax payers.

The date proposed for the dissolution of the Corporation of Epping Forest College is 1st August 2018. Students of Epping Forest College who have not completed their courses on that date will be able to continue their courses of study on the same campus as planned.

Appendix III

How to respond to this consultation

You can respond to this consultation by:

Completing and returning the following page to:

**Merger Consultation, c/o Principal's office, Epping Forest College, Borders Lane,
Loughton, Essex, IG10 3SA**

Or emailing consultation@efc.ac.uk

Appendix IV Consultation Response Form

Proposed merger between Epping Forest College and New City College

Please complete and return this page to Merger Consultation, c/o Principal's office, Epping Forest College, Borders Lane, Loughton, Essex, IG10 3SA

Or email your comments or questions to consultation@efc.ac.uk

Your name/organisation name: _____

Email address (for us to acknowledge receipt of your response): _____

If you would like us to acknowledge your response by email, please tick this box: ☐

Please indicate the capacity in which you are responding by ticking one of the following boxes:

Learner/Student ☐ Employer / Local Business ☐

College Staff ☐ Funding or other Government Agency ☐

Local resident ☐ School ☐

HE Institution ☐ Another College or training provider ☐

Other (please specify) _____

Comments on the merger proposal

Questions arising from the proposal consultation

We value your views on the proposal set out in this document. We will carefully consider all responses to the consultation exercise and take account of views expressed in any representations received. We will publish a summary of the consultation and make it available to any person who requests it. You may request a summary by emailing consultation@efc.ac.uk

Privacy statement

Your personal details will only be used in relation to the merger consultation process outlined in this document and will enable us to respond to you. They will not be used for any other purpose, under the General Data Protection Regulation. Any responses will be anonymised in the consultation summary.



A new vision for further education in North-East London & the Essex Borders