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**Report to:** Cabinet **Date of Meeting:** 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017

**Subject:** South Sefton College and Hugh Baird College - Outcome of the Consultation on the Proposed Merger

**Report of:** Head of Schools & Families **Wards Affected:** Ford and neighbouring wards where pupils reside

**Is this a Key Decision?** Yes **Is it included in the Forward Plan?** Yes

**Exempt/Confidential?** No

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### **Purpose/Summary**

The purpose of this report is to report the outcome of the consultation on the proposed merger of South Sefton College and Hugh Baird College and to seek approval to publish a Statutory Notice relating to this proposal.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Cabinet is recommended to:

- Note the responses to the statutory consultation process;
- Agree to the merger between Hugh Baird College and South Sefton College as the option which is in the best interests of students and staff.
- Note the estimated financial implications associated with the two options presented within the report.
- Approve the funding of the potential merger as set out in the report, including the use of the Closed Schools Earmarked Reserve (£1.481m) and the Transforming Sefton Reserve (£0.645m)
- Authorise Officers to progress the merger negotiations with Hugh Baird and South Sefton College.
- Approve the publication of the Statutory Notice on the discontinuance of South Sefton College in order to enable the merger with Hugh Baird College to take place.

### **How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?**

	<b><u>Corporate Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Positive Impact</u></b>	<b><u>Neutral Impact</u></b>	<b><u>Negative Impact</u></b>
1	Creating a Learning Community	✓		
2	Jobs and Prosperity	✓		
3	Environmental Sustainability		✓	
4	Health and Well-Being		✓	
5	Children and Young People	✓		
6	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities	✓		

8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy	✓		
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**Reasons for the Recommendation:**

The Local Authority has the statutory power to close a maintained school following the statutory process detailed in the report.

**What will it cost and how will it be financed?**

**(A) Revenue Costs**

It is estimated that the cost of the merger proposal contained within the report will be approximately £2.126m. The Council currently holds a reserve that is in place to support the costs associated with the closure or transfer of schools, where the costs of deficits fall due to the local authority. The balance within this reserve is £1.481m and this will be used to meet the costs of this merger. The residual balance of funding required of £0.645m will be met from the council's earmarked reserves.

**(B) Capital Costs**

N/A

**Implications:**

The following implications of the proposals have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

**Legal:** The consultation on the proposal to close the school has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and specifically the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulation 2013/3109 as amended.

**Human Resources:** As part of the consultation process meetings have been held with staff in the school and their trade union representatives.

**Equality**

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. No Equality Implication                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

**Impact on Service Delivery:**

N/A

**What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD 4629/17) and Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD 3912/17) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

**Are there any other options available for consideration?**

There are no alternative viable options.

**Implementation Date for the Decision**

Immediately following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting.

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**Background Papers:**

None

## **1. Background**

1.1 Members will recall that approval to commence the consultation on the proposed merger of South Sefton College and Hugh Baird College was given on 16th February 2017. At this meeting Cabinet resolved to:

- note the contents of this report;
- approve the commencement of the statutory consultation process relating to the proposal to merge South Sefton College with Hugh Baird College.
- Delegate responsibility to officers to start negotiations with Hugh Baird as to the level of transitional financial support required in August 2017 to support this new venture in the first year of operation.

1.2 In order for the merger to take place it will be necessary for South Sefton College to be discontinued (following the statutory school closure process which the local authority have to determine) and then for Hugh Baird to expand its post 16 provision by providing an A-Level offer from the site.

1.2 In accordance with section 16(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 a proposer of a school closure must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The guidance in question is the School Organisation guidance issued in April 2016.

The following bodies and individuals were consulted:

- Parents/carers of pupils at South Sefton College;
- Staff of South Sefton College,
- Governors of South Sefton College,
- Pupils at the college;
- Archdiocese and CE Diocese;
- Directors of neighbouring local authorities (Liverpool, Lancashire and Knowsley)
- Trade union representatives,
- Local MP,
- Ward Councillors,
- General letter to all Head teachers of Sefton schools,
- General consultation invite on Sefton Council's website

1.3 The consultation process was discussed at the Consultation and Engagement panel. A copy of the consultation leaflet is attached to this report for information at Appendix A. The consultation process enabled all stakeholders to express their views and also consisted of meetings with staff, governors and families, and provided the opportunity for discussion and written representation. A joint consultation was carried out with Hugh Baird College as they are also required to consult on the merger process.

1.4 The consultation period ended on 5th April 2017.

## **2. Rationale for the merger**

2.1 The Governing Bodies of Hugh Baird College and South Sefton College are proposing to merge and form an exciting new partnership. By working

together they can provide a broad range of high quality post 16 education provision for South Sefton and surrounding areas. The decision of the two Colleges to propose a merger is based on a strategy to offer the very best post 16 education for the South Sefton area

- 2.2 Mergers are now being widely encouraged within the Further Education sector, therefore the proposal is entirely consistent with the Government's agenda. This proposal has been produced following a significant amount of proactive work undertaken by each College prior to the Government's official area review. Two years ago an independent report was commissioned by the Colleges to identify how they could further co-operate to best serve the local area. This report informed the Liverpool City Region Area Review.
- 2.3 Uniting Hugh Baird College and South Sefton College through a merger is the best way to secure the Colleges' distinctive offers. It will also create a secure and sustainable financial base for the vital continued investment in the modern facilities and accommodation that staff, students and employers expect.
- 2.4 The merger will ensure a broad curriculum offer for school-leavers with high quality 'A' level and vocational provision for South Sefton. The merger will ensure that all school leavers in South Sefton and the surrounding area can be guaranteed a place in a specialist centre on a course that is right for them and their career ambitions.
- 2.5 There has been a decline in the numbers of 16-18 students studying at the two colleges, due to a continuing demographic decline and the increase in numbers of advanced level students leaving the area to study elsewhere. The merged college intends to reverse this trend and grow the numbers of 16-18 students through providing a high quality well-resourced local sixth form offer, enabling students to stay closer to home and achieve their potential and ambition.
- 2.6 Following the merger, South Sefton College will continue to operate as a provider of Advanced level programmes, with the opportunity to expand this provision. More detail is provided in the attached consultation pack at Appendix A.

### **3.0 Outcome of the Consultation**

3.1 The following is a synopsis of the consultation process:

#### **3.2 Consultation meeting with staff held on 13th March 2017**

The staff meeting was attended by around 45 staff. Also present were trade union representatives from both teaching and non-teaching unions as well as Local Authority representatives and Hugh Baird. Staff understood the position the college was in and were generally concerned about securing a sustainable future for the college and themselves. There was a lot of discussion about TUPE and how the merger would be undertaken.

### **3.3 Consultation meeting with Parents, Carers and Pupils held on 13th March 2017**

The College sent out a detailed information pack to students and families and facilitated opportunities for students to ask questions in college if they had any concerns or issues. Consequently the meeting was attended by only three parents. The meeting was led by College Leaders and attended by Hugh Baird and the local authority. The main issue parents wanted assurance on was that the merger would not impact on their children who were in their first year at the college.

### **3.4 During the consultation period comments were also invited via an internet web page set up by Hugh Baird College**

Eight comments were received including two from Hugh Baird staff, two from parents, two from local residents and one was anonymous. Three were in favour of the merger, three were against the merger and two were unsure.

Parents were concerned about staff turnover, lack of full time teachers at Hugh Baird and the disruption to their child's education. They wanted reassurance that the current range of A Levels would remain on offer (if not increased) and that A Levels would continue to be delivered at the South Sefton site with no requirement for students to transfer between sites. They also asked about the support available to help students with the transition. Another questioned whether the local authority had considered re-opening the school sixth forms in the area and asked why parents were not given the information about the proposed merger prior to enrolment at the start of September.

Staff raised issues regarding integration and terms and conditions...

There were two comments about using the merger as an opportunity for establishing a broad curriculum offer so students can take a combination of academic and vocational courses. The merger was seen as an "exciting opportunity to establish an outstanding organisation which serves all young people in the area and can also offer educational and skills training for the wider community".

A request was made for clear plans and processes and good communication during the merger.

### **3.5 During the consultation period comments were invited via an internet web page on the Sefton Council website.**

The local authority established a dedicated webpage which enabled parents, carers, pupils, staff, governors, councillors and residents to view background information about the proposal to merge South Sefton and Hugh Baird Colleges. The Local Authority received only one comment form as follows:

One comment from a parent was received. They were concerned about the effect of the merger on their child's A- Level course and exam success as they would be half way through their course when the merger takes place.

This concern related to the possibility of changes to staff roles or terms and conditions as a result of the merger which could cause them to leave the college and the disruption this would cause to the students.

### 3.6 **Other consultees**

UNISON has requested that a condition is attached to the merger that Hugh Baird College do not make any compulsory redundancies for a period of two years after the date of transfer. Hugh Baird has stated that this is not practical as the staff required are linked to student numbers which may change.

## 4. **Options and Financial Position**

4.1 South Sefton College is struggling financially due to the drop in the number of students attending the College and although it has put a significant amount of work into reducing cost over the last three years the College had a financial deficit of £280,055 at the end of the 2016/17 financial year. Based on the ongoing costs of running the College and projected students numbers the College is facing a deficit position again in 2017/18, with this likely to continue into future years. These costs have to be met by the local authority.

4.2 Two options were identified going forward, closure of the College or merger with another FE institution. The preferred option was a merger of the College with Hugh Baird and Cabinet were aware that the Council would be asked to provide some financial support to facilitate the merger as the College would be running a deficit for the first few years. At the time of agreeing to consult, Cabinet were not aware of the details of this financial support and Hugh Baird had not undertaken their due diligence, Members, therefore, will need consider the “ask” from Hugh Baird against the alternative option of closure if the merger could not proceed.

4.3 These options are set out in more detail below.

### 4.4 **Option A – discontinuance of South Sefton College to facilitate a merger with Hugh Baird College**

4.4.1 This option is in line with the Liverpool City Region Area based review of post 16 education and training institutions which came up with recommendations for creating stronger, more sustainable institutions and an offer that meets the area’s educational and economic needs.

4.4.2 The proposal for Sefton is that the four FE institutions; Hugh Baird, KGV, Southport College and South Sefton College merge to form a single Sefton College that would be stronger, more sustainable and provide an offer that meets the educational needs of young people in Sefton and the economic needs of the area. This is in keeping with the Sefton 2030 vision. The colleges have proposed merging in two tranches: KGV and Southport College merging and Hugh Baird and South Sefton Colleges merging by September 2017, with these north/south colleges then merging to form the Sefton College in September 2018.

4.4.3 The merger would minimise impact on staff as TUPE would apply.

4.4.4 Hugh Baird have stated that they would invest in improving the curriculum offer for students and provide a free bus service to improve access to the College which will make it more attractive and increase student numbers over the coming years.

4.4.5 The offer for students would be enhanced.

#### **4.4.6 Financial Implications of the proposal**

In order to facilitate this proposal Hugh Baird has identified the transitional costs that would be incurred over an initial 3 year period. These include funding of the existing deficit, costs associated with a review of the workforce and potential future year's deficits (2017/18 to 2019/20). This initial estimate is shown below

2016/17 Deficit b/fwd	£280,000
Estimated future years funding shortfall 2017/8 to 2019/20	£1,800,000 (maximum)
Transitional costs for leadership and pension deficit	£46,000
Maximum total cost to the Council	£2,126,000

These sums are based on a business plan containing estimated student numbers which will be confirmed as part of the final negotiations and maybe the subject of revision.

4.4.7 In order to support the delivery of the agreed educational outcomes, during this 3 year period Hugh Baird will invest in improvements and develop new strategies in order to attract additional students. It is anticipated that this will make the College a viable ongoing proposition from 2020 onwards. In addition, Hugh Baird have indicated that they will invest around £450,000 in a range of other activities eg free bus service as well as IT and other improvements that will support the proposal.

4.4.8 If the Council agree to this proposal then a financial deficit repayment plan would be need to be agreed at the point of transfer. This would need to state the maximum support the Council would be required to provide in each of the three academic years in order to protect the Council against any further financial risk with this venture and would be paid retrospectively. If the financial position of the College improved against the agreed deficit position during this timescale then both parties would agree to a revision of the financial support from the Council.

4.4.9 On dissolution of the School the property and assets automatically transfer back to the Council by operation of law. The Council's Asset Disposal Policy informs the process for disposal and in this instance the transfer of the Asset by way of a Lease and Commercial Transfer Agreement will mirror the



procedure used for Academy Schools. The Council has an obligation under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to get the best consideration reasonably achievable for its assets. To satisfy the legislation for the Transfer an independent valuation will be required. If the valuation of the Asset exceeds £2m the Council will require the Secretary of State's consent to disposal. The Council can use General Disposal Consent 2003 if the undervalue is less than £2m and the disposal furthers the social economic and environmental wellbeing of the Borough.

#### **4.5 Option B – closure of South Sefton College because it is no longer viable as a standalone setting.**

4.5.1 If the merger does not take place then it will be necessary to progress with the closure given the financial position of South Sefton College as it is not viable as a standalone setting.

4.5.2 The implications of closure are that staff will be made redundant and students would need to move to other colleges.

4.5.3 There may be capacity issues in local school sixth forms and students may need to travel to KGV or into Liverpool to access a suitable A-level course.

4.5.4 If closure were to happen then it is suggested it would need to be from August 2018 at to allow time for students to make alternative arrangements and minimise the impact on their education.

4.5.5 The building, which is owned by the College, would revert to the Council and be mothballed pending a decision on its' future.

#### **4.5.6 Financial Implications of the proposal**

If the Council agrees to the closure of the College the earliest that this could happen would be 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018. Based on current student numbers and ongoing running costs of the College the financial deficit at this point is estimated to be approximately £1.4m. There would also be the costs associated with termination of staffing, mothballing costs of the building and possibly transitional support for students who would need to be placed in other educational establishments to complete their courses. A summary of the costs is shown below:

Write off deficit at point of closure	£1,416,000
Redundancy costs	£284,000
Transitional support for transferring students to other settings	£200,000
Finalising of contractual leases etc. and ongoing building security/mothballing over a 5 year period	£150,000
<b>Total cost to the Council</b>	<b>£2,050,000</b>

4.5.7 It can be seen that the cost of the potential closure of the College would be approximately £2.050m, The additional cost of the merger option is therefore approximately £76,000 whilst supporting the key educational and community benefits in addition those offered to students and staff.

## **5. Financing of the options available**

5.1 It can be seen from the previous analysis that both options are estimated to cost the council around £2.1m (these costs maybe the subject of revision as negotiations progress)

5.2 The Council currently holds a reserve specifically to support the costs associated with the closure or transfer of schools, where the costs of deficits fall due to the local authority. The balance within this reserve is currently £1.481m and this will be used to meet the costs of this merger. Based upon the initial financial analysis undertaken a residual balance of funding would be required of £0.645m and this will be met from the council's earmarked reserves.

## **6. Next Steps**

6.1 Cabinet need to consider the options set out above and determines the appropriate way forward.

6.2 The Council then need to publish a statutory proposal as detailed in section 4 below and then make a final decision where any representations to the statutory notice can be considered.

## **7. Statutory Notice**

7.1 A copy of the statutory notice and detailed proposal are attached to this report at Annex B. This draft is based on the recommendation that the merger option will progress. If Cabinet decide on the closure option then the statutory notice will be changed to reflect this.

7.2 Following publication of this notice in the Champion there will be a 4 week statutory period for representations to be made. The notice will also be posted at the College where members of the public can view it. Any representations will be reported to Cabinet in July for a final decision to be made.



# MERGER PROPOSAL CONSULTATION

STAGE 1 CONSULTATION PERIOD  
27TH FEBRUARY TO 5TH APRIL 2017



## A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

To provide outstanding Further Education in South Sefton through the merger of Hugh Baird College and South Sefton College.

The Governing Bodies of Hugh Baird College and South Sefton College are proposing to merge and form an exciting new partnership.

By working together we can provide a broad range of high quality post 16 education provision for South Sefton and surrounding areas. We would like your views.

### INTRODUCTION

**This document sets out the background to the proposed merger of Hugh Baird College and South Sefton College. It describes the rationale for the merger and the benefits and opportunities for learners, employers and the wider community.**

The decision of the two Colleges to propose a merger is based on a strategy to offer the very best post 16 education for the South Sefton area.

Both Hugh Baird College and South Sefton College have a distinctive offer. The proposed merger keeps the two existing campuses and builds on the strengths of the two institutions to ensure the best quality provision.

The merger will ensure a broad curriculum offer for school-leavers with high quality A Level and vocational provision for South Sefton. The merger will also ensure that all school leavers in South Sefton and the surrounding area can be guaranteed a place in a specialist centre on a course that is right for them and their career ambitions.

We see this as a very positive move which will create a stronger, financially resilient modern College and allow for development and investment in both existing sites.

The Colleges are committed to offering outstanding post 16 education and will be working together to realise that vision.

Two years ago, an independent report was commissioned by the Colleges to identify how they could further co-operate to best serve the local area. This report informed the Liverpool City Region Area Review.



## BACKGROUND

### The rationale behind the national programme of Government Area Reviews is to:

- Provide clear, high quality professional and technical routes to employment, alongside robust academic routes, which allow individuals to progress to high level skills valued by employers.
- Expand the Apprenticeship programme.
- Be more responsive to local employer needs and economic priorities, for instance through local commissioning of adult provision, which will help give the sector the agility to meet changing skills requirements in the years ahead.
- Improve the nation's productivity.

These objectives can only be delivered by strong institutions, which have the high status and specialism required to deliver credible routes to employment, either directly or via further study.

Mergers are now being widely encouraged within the Further Education sector, therefore the proposal contained in this document is entirely consistent with the Government's agenda. This proposal has been produced following a significant amount of proactive work undertaken by each College prior to, and during, the Government's official area review. Uniting Hugh Baird College and South Sefton College through a merger is the best way to secure the Colleges' distinctive offers. It will also create a secure and sustainable financial base vital for the continued investment in the modern facilities and accommodation that staff, students and employers expect.

## THE PROPOSAL

### We believe the time is right for the two colleges to merge to provide a strong local, post 16 education offer.

There has been a decline in the numbers of 16-18 students studying in Sefton, due to a continuing demographic decline and the increase in numbers of advanced level students leaving the area to study elsewhere. The merged college intends to reverse this trend and grow the numbers of 16-18 students through providing a high quality well-resourced local sixth form offer, enabling students to stay closer to home and achieve their potential and ambition.

Because South Sefton College is constituted as a 'school' rather than an further education college, the statutory process to be followed to make the merger happen is to 'discontinue' South Sefton College as a school.

If the merger did not happen then South Sefton College would not viable as a standalone institution and, since it could not be subsidised by the Local Authority, would be closed.

Following the merger, South Sefton College will continue to operate as a provider of advanced level programmes, with the opportunity to expand this provision.

Hugh Baird  
COLLEGE



# THE COLLEGES INVOLVED



## HUGH BAIRD COLLEGE

**Hugh Baird College is a general further education (GFE) college situated in Bootle in the south of the borough of Sefton.**

The College is one of the largest providers of education and training in the area, delivering more than 400 courses to close to 5,000 students. Hugh Baird College offers courses that include entry level to level 3 vocational qualifications, apprenticeships, foundation degrees and full honours degrees. The College is also one of a small number in the UK to have a 14-16 College which enables those students with clear career goals to leave school and start working towards these on a full time basis from the age of 14.

In recent years, the College has worked closely with the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and employers in order to develop a demand led curriculum offer that ensures students have the best opportunity to progress into employment or further study.

**In its most recent Ofsted inspection (February 2015), the College was graded overall as 'Good'.**



## SOUTH SEFTON COLLEGE

**South Sefton College was established in 2009 in partnership with Sefton Local Authority and seven local secondary schools following a strategic area review by Ofsted in order to secure more opportunities for high quality academic level 3 provision in the area.**

South Sefton College will continue to be a centre of educational excellence offering a wide range of advanced level courses with a broad variety of enrichment opportunities.

The College offers a strong and supportive pastoral ethos and the highest quality additional learning support to ensure all our students fulfil their potential irrespective of ability or circumstances.

**In its most recent Ofsted inspection (November 2016), the College was graded overall as 'Requires Improvement'.**



## THE BENEFITS A MERGER WILL BRING

- a) We will offer an attractive and competitive post 16 offer for South Sefton and the surrounding area.
- b) We will develop and invest in both existing College sites as distinctive centres of excellence.
- c) We will offer students clear progression opportunities.
- d) We want to be recognised locally as the first choice for higher level academic, vocational and professional courses.
- e) We want employers to see our College as the natural partner for growth and success through the supply of highly skilled people.
- f) We want to achieve an Ofsted Outstanding rating across all our provision.
- g) We want our community to be proud of its College.

## THE RATIONALE - THE MERGED COLLEGE WOULD BE BETTER ABLE TO:

1. Offer an extensive range of professional, vocational and A Level courses across the two campuses.
2. Allow for the development and investment in first class facilities and centres of excellence in both existing College sites.
3. Build on the strengths and the distinctive ethos of the two institutions with Hugh Baird College leading in professional, technical and vocational courses and South Sefton College specialising in A Level subjects.
4. Work closely with employers to develop the employability of students, grow apprenticeships and better meet their recruitment and training needs.
5. Increase the numbers of 16-18 students across both colleges by strengthening the advanced level offer.
6. Continue to expand locally delivered higher education and degree opportunities through the development of the University Centre.
7. Support the continued quality improvements towards achieving an outstanding Ofsted Inspection.
8. Create a financially stable and sustainable college.

WE SEE THIS AS A CRUCIAL FIRST STEP TOWARDS ARRIVING AT A COHESIVE SEFTON WIDE STRUCTURE FOR FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Hugh Baird  
COLLEGE



## HOW WILL THE MERGER AFFECT CURRENT STUDENTS?

**All current students will be able to complete their course of study. The merger is designed to grow provision across both sites.**

## WOULD STUDENTS BE EXPECTED TO TRAVEL BETWEEN THE TWO MAIN CAMPUSES?

**No, it is intended students would be based at one of the campuses for their main programme of study. There may be some opportunities for students to join together to participate in events, sporting or other enrichment activities.**

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE COLLEGE SITES AFTER THE MERGER?

**The new College will maintain and develop the two existing College campuses. The combined College will continue to invest in improving the facilities and accommodation across both campuses.**

## WHAT WOULD THE NEW COLLEGE BE CALLED?

**There is no plan to introduce a new college name. We believe the Hugh Baird College and South Sefton College names represent their distinctive provision and this will be retained.**

## WHEN IS THE MERGER EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE?

**It is planned that the merger will be completed before the end of the current academic year and the new College will therefore be in place by August 2017.**

## HOW CAN I EXPRESS MY VIEWS?

**You can complete the questionnaire overleaf and return it to us.**



## STATUTORY PROCESS

**In order to facilitate the merger proposal the local authority (as the decision maker under the relevant legislation) has to follow the statutory process set out below:**

### STAGE 1

#### CONSULTATION / 27TH FEBRUARY 2017 TO 5TH APRIL 2017

This is the start of the process when the Local Authority (decision maker) provides information about what is being proposed and gathers the views of interested parties to help them develop the proposals. This period usually lasts for a minimum of six weeks.

### STAGE 2

#### PUBLICATION / 19TH APRIL 2017

A legal notice is published in the local paper (usually the Champion) and on the Council website which sets out brief details of the proposal for discontinuance to support the merger and where more information can be found. It also gives details of where objections and comments can be sent and the closing date for these. It marks the start of the representation period or formal consultation.

### STAGE 3

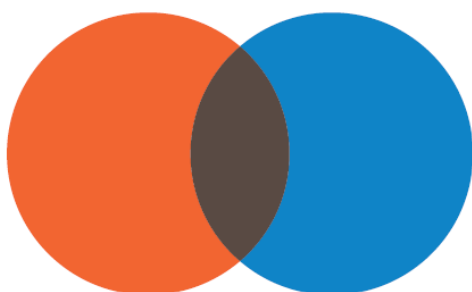
#### REPRESENTATION / 19TH APRIL 2017 TO 17TH MAY 2017

This is a four week period from the date the notice is published to allow interested parties the final opportunity to send comments or objections to be taken into consideration by the decision maker. It is classed as the formal part of the consultation process.

### STAGE 4

#### DECISION / CABINET TO MAKE FINAL DECISION - 22ND JUNE 2017

All the comments and objections gathered during the representation period are provided to the decision maker to enable them to make the final decision to agree the proposal or not.



Hugh Baird  
COLLEGE



# WE WANT YOUR VIEWS

Hugh Baird COLLEGE



The formal consultation will be held between 27th February and 5th April 2017. During this period you can let us know your views on the proposed merger.

1. Do you agree that by merging the two colleges we will be better able to meet the needs of our students, employers and the community?

Yes  No  Not sure

2. Are there any matters or issues you would particularly like to see addressed through the merger?

3. How might you or your organisation support this merger?

4. Do you have any other comments you would like us to take into consideration?

Your name

Organisation (if applicable)

Your address

Please indicate in what capacity you are responding:

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hugh Baird College Student      | <input type="checkbox"/> South Sefton College Staff Member | <input type="checkbox"/> HE Institution               | <input type="checkbox"/> Union Representative                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> South Sefton College Student    | <input type="checkbox"/> School                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Funding or Government Agency | <input type="checkbox"/> Another College or Training Provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hugh Baird College Staff Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Local resident                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Employer /Local Business     |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____    |  |   |   |

Please complete using the online survey at [www.hughbaird.ac.uk/merger](http://www.hughbaird.ac.uk/merger) or you can return the form with your comments to Dr. Frank McCann, Principal, South Sefton Sixth Form College, Sterrix Lane, Litherland, Liverpool, L30 2DB or Mrs Anne-Marie Nixon, Director of Governance at Hugh Baird College, Balliol Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 7EW, or to the School Organisation Team, Schools Regulatory Services, Town Hall, Oriol Road, Bootle, L20 7AE.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this and respond.**

## Appendix B – Draft Statutory Notice and Proposal

### Notice

#### **South Sefton College**

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Sefton Council intends to discontinue South Sefton College, Sterrix Lane, Litherland L30 2DB from 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

This is being proposed in order to facilitate a merger between South Sefton College and Hugh Baird College which are part of a wider review of post 16 training and education institutions in the area.

The proposal for Sefton is that the four FE institutions: Hugh Baird College, KGV, Southport College and South Sefton College merge to form a single Sefton College that would be stronger, more sustainable and provide an offer that meets the educational needs of young people in Sefton and the economic needs of the area.

The colleges have proposed merging in two tranches: KGV and Southport College merging and Hugh Baird and South Sefton Colleges merging by September 2017, with the full merger taking place by September 2018.

The only way of merging South Sefton College, which is constituted as a school, and Hugh Baird College is for South Sefton College to be discontinued (following the statutory school closure process which the local authority have to determine) and then for Hugh Baird to expand its post 16 provision by providing an A-Level offer from the site. If the merger does not take place it will be necessary to progress with the discontinuance given the financial position of South Sefton College as it is not viable as a standalone setting.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: School Organisation and Capital Programme Team, Sefton Council, Town Hall, Oriol Road, Bootle L20 7AE. Telephone 0151 934 3427 or at [www.sefton.gov.uk/](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/)

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to School Organisation and Capital Programme Team, Sefton Council, Town Hall, Oriol Road, Bootle L20 7AE or by emailing: [school.organisation@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@sefton.gov.uk)

Signed: M Carney, Chief Executive and Authorised Officer of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council

Publication Date:

Complete Proposal

## **South Sefton College – Proposal to merge with Hugh Baird College**

### **Introduction**

Sefton Council is proposing to discontinue South Sefton College on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017 in order to facilitate the merger with Hugh Baird College.

### **Local Authority contact details**

The proposal to discontinue South Sefton College is being published by Sefton Council. Contact details: School Organisation & Capital Programme Team, Sefton Council, Town Hall, Oriol Road, Bootle L20 7AE. Email: [school.organisation@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@sefton.gov.uk)

### **School**

South Sefton College, Sterrix Lane, Litherland, L30 2DB.

### **Implementation**

It is proposed that the college be discontinued on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

### **Reason for closure**

This is being proposed in order to facilitate a merger between South Sefton College and Hugh Baird College which are part of a wider review of post 16 training and education institutions in the area.

The proposal for Sefton is that the four FE institutions: Hugh Baird College, KGV, Southport College and South Sefton College merge to form a single Sefton College that would be stronger, more sustainable and provide an offer that meets the educational needs of young people in Sefton and the economic needs of the area.

The colleges have proposed merging in two tranches: KGV and Southport College merging and Hugh Baird and South Sefton Colleges merging by September 2017, with the full merger taking place by September 2018.

Legally the only way of merging South Sefton College, which is constituted as a foundation school, and Hugh Baird College is for South Sefton College to be discontinued (following the statutory school closure process which the local authority have to determine) and then for Hugh Baird to expand its post 16 provision by providing an A-Level offer from the site. If the merger does not take place it will be necessary to progress with the discontinuance given the financial position of South Sefton College as it is not viable as a standalone setting.

### **Pupil numbers and admissions**

South Sefton College provides up to 617 places for sixth form pupils aged 16 to 19.

Pupils on roll as at January 2017 (School Census return)

Y12	Y13	Total
176	182	358

### **Consultation**

The consultation started on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and ended on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017. The following parties were consulted by letter:

Parents and Pupils

Staff of South Sefton College

Governors of South Sefton College

All Sefton schools

Peter Dowd, MP

Ward Councillors for Ford

Trade Unions

Neighbouring local authorities (Liverpool, Lancashire, Knowsley)

Archdiocese

CE Diocese

Consultation meetings for staff, governors, parents and pupils took place on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2017

During the consultation period two replies were received by the local authority from a trade union and another from a parent of a pupil currently attending the college in Y12.

Eight replies were received by Hugh Baird College: three from staff, two from parents, two from local residents and one was anonymous

### **Displaced pupils**

All current students will be able to complete their course of study. The merger is designed to grow provision across both sites. There has been a decline in the numbers of 16-18 students studying at the two colleges, due to a continuing demographic decline and the increase in numbers of advanced level students leaving the area to study elsewhere. The merged college intends to reverse this trend and grow the numbers of 16-18 students through providing a high quality well-resourced local sixth form offer, enabling students to stay closer to home and achieve their potential and ambition. Following the merger, South Sefton College will continue to operate as a provider of Advanced level programmes, with the opportunity to expand this provision.

### **Impact on the community**

The merger of the colleges should have a positive impact on the community as they will be able to offer an extensive range of professional, vocational and A-level courses across the two campuses which will improve opportunities for students in the area. It will build on the strengths of the two institutions with Hugh Baird College leading in professional, technical and vocational courses and South Sefton College specialising in in A Level subjects. This should lead to increased numbers of 16 to 18 students across both colleges which will enable further investment and development of facilities for students.

### **Sixth form provision**

See above. The merger will ensure that sixth form provision is maintained in the area.