

MERGER PROPOSAL AND CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

MARCH 2025

Loughborough College and
SMB College Group
Consultation Document

Building a
Transformative
Educational
Future for North
Leicestershire and
beyond

STRONGER TOGETHER



Stephen Smith,
Chair of Governors
Loughborough College



Ian Marron,
Chair of Governors
SMB College Group

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Loughborough College and SMB College Group are proposing to merge into a single new organisation.

CHAIRS’ FOREWORD

We are thrilled to be proposing a merger between Loughborough College and SMB College Group which we truly believe will strengthen the educational offering across the Leicestershire region.

The merged college group will promote exciting opportunities to our students, stakeholders and wider community and would bring significant benefits to the county.

OUR VISION FOR THIS MERGER IS:

The “Stronger Together” vision of the combined colleges will:

- Deliver innovative and ambitious high-quality post-16 education, meeting local, regional and national skills needs
- Harness the strengths of all staff, students and stakeholders, empowering individuals through a supportive culture of excellence
- Enhance collaboration and growth by working closely with stakeholders, communities and employers leading to regional development.

This unique opportunity will allow us to address the regional skills gaps and support high-demand industries by boosting local employment. It will also mean we can further invest in our students, prioritising advanced facilities and technologies for an enriched, student-centred learning environment.

Your views on our vision of ‘Stronger Together’ are important to us. This document details all of the key information about our proposal and has details at the end on how you can submit your opinions.



KEY DATES

24th March
Statutory
notice of merger

24th March – 30th April
Formal consultation
period



27th June
Consultation
outcome published

1st August
Official
date of merger



Why Should SMB College Group and Loughborough College Merge?

The recommendation for SMB College Group to merge with another college was one of the outcomes of a Structures and Prospects Appraisal (SPA) process led by the Further Education Commissioner. Loughborough College was selected as the preferred merger partner by the SMB College Group board due to similarities in both colleges' values and strategic goals, in addition to complimentary but distinct curriculum offerings across their four campuses.

It is envisioned that combining the resources and expertise of both colleges will offer a transformative opportunity to create a unified organisation which enhances opportunities for all key stakeholders across North Leicestershire and beyond, whilst also ensuring the long-term financial resilience of the merged entity.

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

- **STUDENT EXPERIENCE:** The merger will allow the joint organisation to prioritise high-level investment into both curriculum and student experience, ensuring that all learners have an excellent, well-rounded and enriching experience whilst gaining their nationally recognised qualifications.
- **INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS AND EMPLOYABILITY:** Students will benefit from the well-established reputations and course specialisms of each campus, which attract excellent industry partnerships and employability opportunities.
- **BROADER STUDY OPTIONS:** An enhanced course portfolio will be available for further education students, apprentices, higher education students, adult learners and international students to choose from. This will also contribute to enhanced progression opportunities for students.
- **ENHANCED RESOURCES AND FACILITIES:** Students will benefit from a wide range of staff expertise, bespoke industry-standard facilities and on-site accommodation at both colleges. In addition, planned developments and ongoing investment at both campuses will ensure high-quality learning environments, such as a new Agri-tech centre at Brooksby Campus and a new Sports facility at Loughborough.
- **CONTINUITY:** In the academic year immediately following the merger, students will see very little change in their course or campus of study.
- **EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS:** Merging the colleges' employer networks will provide additional work experience, apprenticeships and job opportunities for learners, increasing employability outcomes.
- **COMMITMENT TO EDI:** The merged entity will retain both colleges' commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and looks forward to championing this across its newly expanded student body.



BENEFITS FOR STAFF

- **QUALITY AND BEST PRACTICE:** Combining teaching resources and expertise, and sharing best practice, will allow the merged college to achieve the highest levels of quality.
- **SECTOR SPECIALISMS:** The merged entity will be positioned as a sector leader in multiple curriculum areas, bolstered by access to a broader range of resources across the newly merged college. This will lead to increased opportunities to attract and work alongside key employers within specialist sectors.
- **SHARED RESOURCES AND FACILITIES:** Staff will have the opportunity to access the modern, industry-standard facilities shared by both colleges. These modern, specialist facilities include Loughborough's T-Level Centre, the extensive land-based facilities at Brooksby and the trade and engineering capabilities at Stephenson. Future investments in infrastructure will also strengthen the merged entity.
- **FINANCIAL RESILIENCE:** The merger will provide enhanced financial stability for both colleges, with a focus on ensuring long-term financial adaptability and sustainability.
- **CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** The enhanced resources and curriculum offerings of the merged organisation will provide additional opportunities for staff to develop new skills and experience through professional qualifications, online learning, higher education and apprenticeships.
- **GROWTH AND PROGRESSION:** Additional opportunities provided by the larger merged organisation can provide staff with enhanced progression opportunities, including leadership development.



BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **SECTOR LEADERS:** Employers will have increased opportunities to enhance and develop working relationships with an organisation with multiple sector specialisms. Through a widening of curriculum capabilities, the merged college will be able to support businesses across a wide range of areas and departments via training, up-skilling, work experience and apprenticeship services.
- **LOCATION AND FACILITIES:** The merged organisation provides a centralised location for apprenticeships, training, staff development and conferences - with a wealth of resources, expertise and venue types to suit employer requirements. Employer partners will also have increased access to a range of industry-standard facilities across the college's four campuses for training and development purposes.
- **INCREASED CAPACITY:** The merged college will have an increased capacity to respond to employers' training and apprenticeship needs across North Leicestershire and beyond, with a centralised approach to reviewing business needs and implementing training and development plans.
- **SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY:** The merged college will have increased capabilities for collaborating with employers to address Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) priorities. Employers will be presented with more opportunities to collaboratively co-design and develop curriculums, allowing them to further influence skills development within the future workforce and contribute to economic development and stability within of the region.
- **NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES:** The amalgamation of both colleges' employer and partnership engagement activities will provide increased networking opportunities and allow employers access to wider pool of students to promote vacancies and placement opportunities.



WHO WE ARE

OUR LOCATIONS



LOUGHBOROUGH CAMPUS



STEPHENSON CAMPUS



MELTON CAMPUS



BROOKSBY CAMPUS



Students

11,000



Employees

900



Employers

1,800

LOUGHBOROUGH COLLEGE

Loughborough College is a dynamic and ambitious further education College, offering post-16 education in the heart of Leicestershire.

For more than 100 years the College has been providing high quality education and training. Core to the College's values is placing students at the heart of everything that they do, whilst promoting their highest ambitions both inside and outside the classroom.

Loughborough College has qualifications ranging from Level 1 through to studying an undergraduate degree. As well as its internationally renowned sports programmes, it boasts a vibrant Sixth Form, a successful Higher Education department and outstanding apprenticeships and work placements.



Students

3,400



Employees

454



Employers

1,500

SMB COLLEGE GROUP

SMB College Group is a Further and Higher Education college with three specialist campuses across Leicestershire; Brooksby, an 850-acre Land-based and Sport campus, Stephenson, a Construction and Professional Trades campus, and Melton, a Performing Arts Hub.

Specialising in land-based, technical, trades and creative arts, SMB College Group provides an extensive curriculum for students aged 16+, with subject areas spanning Agriculture to Animal Care, Construction to Sport, Hair & Beauty to Performing Arts and more. From Level 1 through to degree level, course types vary from full-time college courses such as T-Levels and BTECs, to Apprenticeships, HNDs, Professional qualifications, Adult Maths and English, and free Distance Learning programmes for adults.

SMB College Group also holds a number of impressive and long-standing industry partnerships with key players in their specialist industries, including Leicester Tigers, Barratt Redrow, Toyota Material Handling UK, Twycross Zoo, UKMHA, Kion Group, Logistics UK and more.

SMB COLLEGE GROUP: STATUTORY NOTICE

FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION ACT 1992

Notice is hereby given by the Corporation of SMB College Group (Thornborough Road, Coalville, LE67 3TN), in accordance with the Further Education Corporations (Publication of Proposals) (England) Regulations 2012, of the proposal for the transfer of the property, rights and liabilities to the Corporation of Loughborough College (Radmoor Road, Loughborough, LE11 3BT) and the subsequent dissolution of the Corporation of SMB College Group.

Dissolution of the Corporation of SMB College Group is proposed in order that it may merge with Loughborough College. The merger will create a strong institution delivering high-quality education and skills training for learners and employers across Leicestershire.

The date proposed for the dissolution of the Corporation of SMB College Group is 1st August 2025.

All students at SMB College Group who have not yet completed their course of study by the date of the proposed dissolution will continue their education in the merged college on the same campus where they studied immediately prior to the dissolution of the Corporation of SMB College Group. This will affect approximately 3400 students: 2100 16-18-year-olds (FE learners) and 1300 adults.

A copy of the consultation document on this proposal is available at strongertogether@smbgroup.ac.uk by writing to
Meg Morby, Marketing Manager, SMB College Group,
Stephenson Campus, Thornborough Road, LE67 3TN.

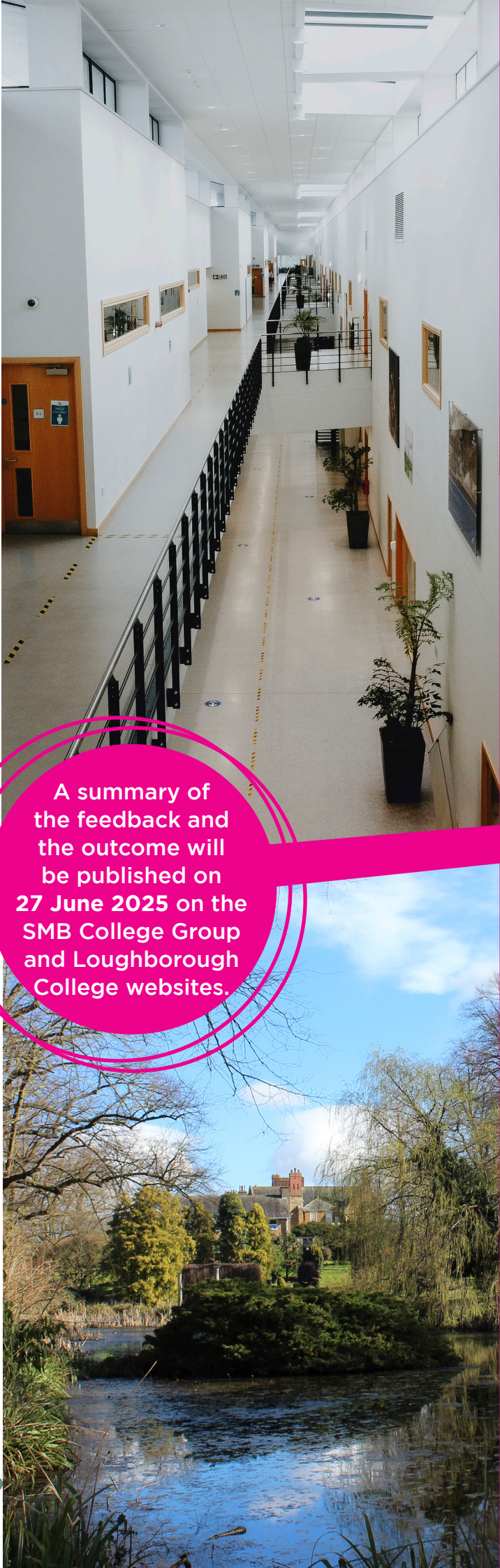
The consultation period runs from 24th March to 30th April 2025.

All responses and representations must be received by the closing date through:

- completing the online response form at <https://stronger-together.uk>
- or email to strongertogether@smbgroup.ac.uk
strongertogether@loucoll.ac.uk

A summary of the feedback and the outcome will be published on 27 June 2025 on the SMB College Group and Loughborough College websites. A copy of the document will be available free of charge to any person who requests it.

STRONGER TOGETHER



A summary of the feedback and the outcome will be published on 27 June 2025 on the SMB College Group and Loughborough College websites.

YOUR VIEWS AND QUESTIONS

Details of the proposed merger between Loughborough College and SMB College Group are outlined in this document and you can find further information on the merger website: <https://stronger-together.uk>

If you would like to submit your views or questions, please fill out the below form or complete the survey online at: <https://stronger-together.uk>

Name:

Address:

..... Postcode:

I am (tick as appropriate):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | <input type="checkbox"/> Further Education Institution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/ Carer | <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Education Institution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employer | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loughborough College Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Government Agency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SMB College Group Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Training Provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School | <input type="checkbox"/> Other - please specify |

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YOUR VIEWS

Additional Comments or Questions:

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Please return your views via post or email to either of the following addresses:

Stronger Together
Loughborough College,
Radmoor Road, Loughborough LE11 3BT
strongertogether@loucoll.ac.uk

Stronger Together
SMB College Group, Stephenson Campus,
Thornborough Road, Coalville, LE67 3TN
strongertogether@smbgroup.ac.uk



The deadline for responses is 30th April 2025

PRIVACY STATEMENT

Loughborough College and SMB College Group take the security of your data seriously. Both organisations have internal policies and controls in place to ensure that your data is not lost, accidentally destroyed, misused or disclosed, and is not accessed except by its employees in the performance of their duties. Whilst any comments and responses that you provide as a part of this consultation process will be made publicly available, no personal information will be published as a part of the outcome of the consultation. Your personal information will be kept for 12 months and then destroyed in a secure manner.

As a data subject, you have a number of rights. You can:

- Access and obtain a copy of your data on request
- Require the organisation to change incorrect or incomplete data
- Require the organisation to delete or stop processing your data, for example where the data is no longer necessary for the stated purposes of processing
- Object to the processing of your data where the organisation is relying on its legitimate interests as the legal ground for processing.
- The right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office in relation to how Loughborough College and SMB College Group have processed your data. You can do this by visiting: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint>.
- If you would like to exercise any of these rights, or if you have any questions about how we process your data, please contact our data protection officer:
- Loughborough College – dpo@loucoll.ac.uk
- SMB College Group - dpo@smbgroup.ac.uk.
- Our Data Protection Policy is available to view at microsite and can be obtained via the email addresses listed above.



STRONGER TOGETHER

Loughborough
COLLEGE est. 1909



SMB College Group
#One of the family