





October 2026

OUTCOME OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Proposed merger and name change of **Northampton College** and **Moulton College**

Northampton College

Moulton COLLEGE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Northampton College and Moulton College consulted on a proposal to merge through the dissolution of the Corporation of Moulton College and the transfer of its assets, rights and responsibilities to the Corporation of Northampton College. Subject to approval, it is proposed that the continuing corporation is renamed Northampton and Moulton Colleges Group with effect from 1 January 2027.

This report is based on 72 responses, including one letter. Of the 68 respondents who answered the question about support for the proposed merger, 34 were in favour, 15 were not in favour and 19 were unsure. This means that, among those who answered the question, 50% supported the proposal, 22% did not support it and 28% were unsure.

The report also includes key themes discussed at the various staff consultations that took place as part of this process. These were attended by 35 staff in total.

While the number of responses is relatively small, the feedback provides useful insight into the views, questions and priorities of those who chose to take part.

Are you supportive of the proposed merger?		
Response	**Number**	**Share of valid answers**
Yes	34	50%
No	15	22.1%
Unsure	19	27.9%
Valid Answers	68	100.0%

HEADLINE THEMES

- Supporters saw opportunities to create a stronger and more resilient college group, broaden learner opportunities, share expertise and facilities, and respond more effectively to employer and community needs.

- Respondents repeatedly stressed that Moulton College's identity, land-based heritage, specialist curriculum and campus character should be protected in practice as well as in name.

- Key implementation concerns included student experience, staffing and organisational structure, resources and investment, SEND support, transport, cross-campus delivery and the integration of two different college cultures.

- Emerging needs included SEND and mental health support; digital, data and AI skills; employability and apprenticeships; construction and engineering; health and sport; land-based and sustainability skills; and practical life skills.

- Feedback on the proposed corporation name was mixed but with the largest group of respondents supporting the proposed name. Those in support welcomed a name that visibly links both colleges while preserving their identities.

- A small minority of respondents suggested a county-wide identity such as Northamptonshire or Northants Colleges Group, or a separate umbrella brand. No respondent opposed the merger itself on grounds of the name.



BACKROUND AND PROPOSAL

Northampton College and Moulton College are proposing to merge to form a single college group for Northamptonshire. The proposed merger aims to create a stronger, more resilient organisation that can deliver an exceptional post-16 education and skills offer for learners, employers and communities across the county.

A six week public consultation ran from 10 August to 21 September 2026, covering the dissolution of the Moulton College corporation and the proposed name change. It comprised an online consultation document, a dedicated webpage and FAQs, in-person events at each campus, staff and student drop-ins, an online webinar and a monitored email address.

Direct invitations, comprising a proposed merger brochure with details for feedback, were issued to students, parents and carers, employers, Members of Parliament, local authorities, schools, the University of Northampton and neighbouring colleges, supported by a joint social media campaign.

This document sets out, analyses and responds to the feedback received during the consultation period for the proposed merger.

Stated aims of the proposal

- Greater resilience and capacity to invest in facilities, technology, curriculum and student support.
- Improved learner opportunities through wider choice, clearer progression and access to specialist expertise.
- Stronger alignment with employer and regional skills needs.
- Long-term sustainability in a changing funding and policy environment.
- Retention of the Northampton College and Moulton college brands and their distinctive strengths.

Scale of the proposed group

	Learners	Staff	Annual turnover	Campuses
Northampton College	Around 8,000	Approx. 838	Around £50m	Booth Lane, Lower Mounts, Daventry
Moulton College	Around 4,000	Approx. 442	Around £33m	Moulton, Higham Ferrers
Proposed group	More than 12,000	Approx. 1,300	Around £83m	Five campuses across Northamptonshire

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRS

As Chairs of the governing bodies of Northampton College and Moulton College, we would like to thank everyone who took the time to share their views during the public consultation.

The feedback received will be carefully reviewed and considered. It will provide valuable insight into what stakeholders welcome about the proposal, where they see opportunities, and where they would like further reassurance. We are grateful for the constructive way in which students, staff, parents and carers, employers, education partners and members of the wider community have engaged with this important conversation.

The proposal has always been focused on opportunity: bringing together the complementary strengths of both colleges to create a stronger, more resilient organisation for Northamptonshire, while retaining the established Northampton College and Moulton College names, identities and specialist strengths. The consultation feedback has reinforced the importance of protecting what makes each college distinctive, particularly Moulton College's land-based heritage and specialist provision, while also creating new opportunities for learners, staff, employers and communities across the county.

We recognise that proposals of this nature can raise questions and uncertainty. Themes around student experience, staffing, support, transport, investment, identity and culture are very clear. These areas will remain central to planning if the merger proceeds.

This report summarises the feedback received and sets out how the main themes will inform the next stage of decision-making and implementation planning. The final decision rests with the governing bodies of both colleges and will be made only after careful consideration of the consultation findings, the strategic case and the long-term interests of learners, staff, employers and the communities we serve.

Thank you again to everyone who contributed. Your feedback will help shape the future of further education and skills in Northamptonshire.



Professor Anne-Marie Kilday

Chair of Governors – Northampton College



Liz Male MBE

Chair of Governors – Moulton College

CONSULTATION ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK

This section provides an overview of engagement with the consultation process, explains who we heard from and helps put the findings in context.

The public consultation was conducted through various communication channels including print, email and digital including social media.

Overall engagement rates were as follows:

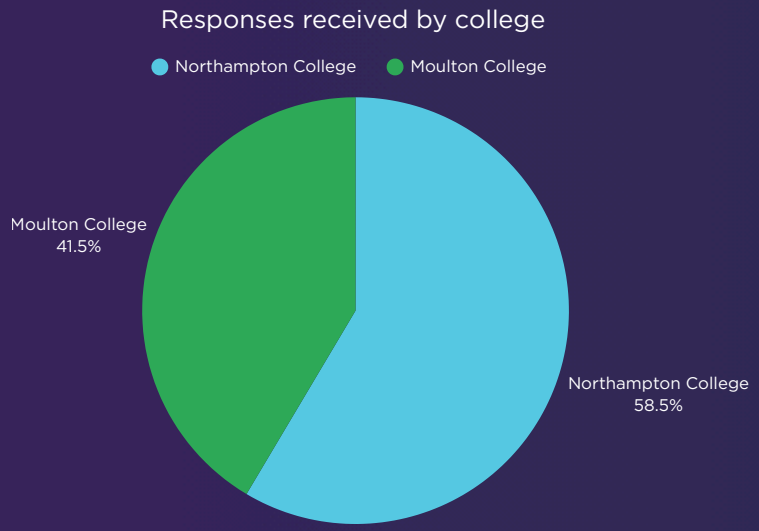
Measure	Result
Consultation website page views	688
Consultation FAQ page views	38
Email open rates	54%
Email click through rates	2%
Social media reach	59k

The analysis is based on 72 responses (including one letter) from students, parents and carers, staff, prospective students, employers and education or sector stakeholders.

The responses provide valuable insight into the views of those who chose to take part, while recognising that they do not represent a statistical sample of every stakeholder group.

In addition, 35 staff members attended drop-in consultation sessions where they were able to ask questions directly to senior management.

Respondent category	Responses	Share of all records
Parent/carer	19	26.8%
Northampton College staff	13	18.3%
Northampton College students	11	15.5%
Moulton College students	10	14.1%
Moulton College staff	7	9.9%
Education/sector stakeholder	5	5.6%
Prospective students	2	2.8%
Employer/local business	1	1.4%
Not stated	4	5.6%
Total	72	100.0%



SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED MERGER

Respondents were asked whether they supported the proposed merger of Northampton College and Moulton College. Of the 72 responses received, 68 answered Yes, No or Unsure. Of these, 50% supported the merger, 22% did not and 28% were unsure.

Staff attending the drop-in sessions generally felt positive about the merger proposal but welcomed the opportunity to ask questions.

A relatively high number of students and parents/carers selected 'No'; however, a review of their accompanying comments suggests that this did not always indicate opposition to the merger. In several cases, the comments suggest that the question may not have been fully understood. The result should therefore be interpreted with some caution.

It is worth noting that no stakeholders, prospective students or employers expressed opposition to the merger.

The findings show both support for the proposal and a clear need to address concerns through further information, reassurance and detailed implementation planning.

Category	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
Moulton College student	2	7	1	10
Northampton College student	2	5	4	11
Parent/carer	9	2	8	19
Northampton College staff	9	1	3	13
Moulton College staff	6	0	1	7
Education/sector stakeholder	4	0	1	5
Prospective student	1	0	1	2
Employer/local business	1	0	0	1
Total answering	33	15	19	68

SUPPORTIVE COMMENTS

"I feel having a bigger educational service will provide a much better and stronger team to support students to have the very best."

Parent/carer

"I believe the proposed merger is essential for both colleges and provides a stable and secure future for both colleges. It is, however, vital that Moulton retains its identity as a land-based college."

Moulton College staff

"Milton Keynes College Group very much supports this merger. We have a close history of working productively with both Moulton and Northampton Colleges and will continue to do so, through the LSIP 2.0, our existing Colleges of South Midlands Group (CoSEM) which includes college CEOs from MK, Northamptonshire, and Bedfordshire working together in partnership, and in anticipation of future devolution.

The merger will ensure financial sustainability for FE in Northamptonshire whilst retaining local specialisms, improved opportunities for students and staff across both entities and improved opportunities for local and regional employers."

Sally Alexander MBE, CEO and Group Principal of MK College Group

"Very positive, I think there could be many benefits on both sides."

Northampton College staff

"Overall, this makes sense - streamlining back office offers benefits. Both colleges deliver excellent construction skills training and would not want to lose this."

Employer

"We see considerable potential arising from this merger. A combined institution would be well placed to enhance curriculum breadth, strengthen specialist provision, improve progression pathways and increase its capacity to respond to the evolving skills needs of employers.

At a time when the sector faces significant challenges, including workforce development, productivity growth and changing economic demands, greater collaboration and scale can help colleges maximise their impact and deliver even greater value for their communities."

Yiannis Koursis OBE, Chief Executive Officer The Bedford College Group

"As a lecturer, I am positive about the potential opportunities that could arise from the proposed merger. Bringing together the strengths of both colleges could provide students with access to a broader range of experiences, facilities and progression opportunities, while creating new possibilities for collaboration between staff.

I am particularly interested in the potential for sharing good practice, developing innovative curriculum opportunities and strengthening links with employers and industry partners. I believe that, if managed effectively, the merger could create an even stronger educational offer for Northamptonshire while opening up exciting opportunities for both learners and staff."

Moulton College staff

"It is important that the new group can support students and local employers to meet existing and emerging skills needs, as identified through the LSIP2.0, the Industrial Strategy and through local and national government drivers."

Education Institution

SUPPORTIVE COMMENTS



"As the college group develops, there should be a continued focus on emerging skills linked to health, wellbeing, sport science, data and performance analysis, coaching, rehabilitation, active lifestyles and the growing demand for skills that support both physical and mental wellbeing.

There may also be opportunities to strengthen partnerships with employers to ensure learners are equipped with the skills needed in the evolving sport, fitness and health sectors."

Moulton College staff

"Growth potential for national training contracts with larger employers in construction. Therefore an exciting opportunity to share delivery/staffing resources and offer more block-release options to utilise Moulton College's accommodation."

Moulton College staff

CONCERNS

"Neurodivergent might prefer the smaller Moulton Campus and be overwhelmed if they get sent to Northampton College."

Moulton College staff

"I don't think it should happen because I don't think it would help either of the colleges."

Moulton College student

"I am concerned that Moulton as the smaller college joining Northampton will result in Moulton receiving less funding and being neglected to support the greater demand in Northampton. Far too often I've seen smaller organisations join larger organisations and the smaller one ends up having to do more with less and being neglected."

Moulton College student

"We feel the proposed merger could lead to cuts and fewer resources for Moulton College. We could also lose some of Moulton's unique identity, history and traditions. We have already been through a school split because resources were limited, with the aim of giving us better resources and opportunities. It is worrying that we may now face another change that could reduce the resources available to Moulton. We feel it is important to protect Moulton's identity, history and future."

Parent / Carer

"I don't believe the merger would be beneficial due to both colleges being well established in their own right and also having their own identities."

Northampton College student

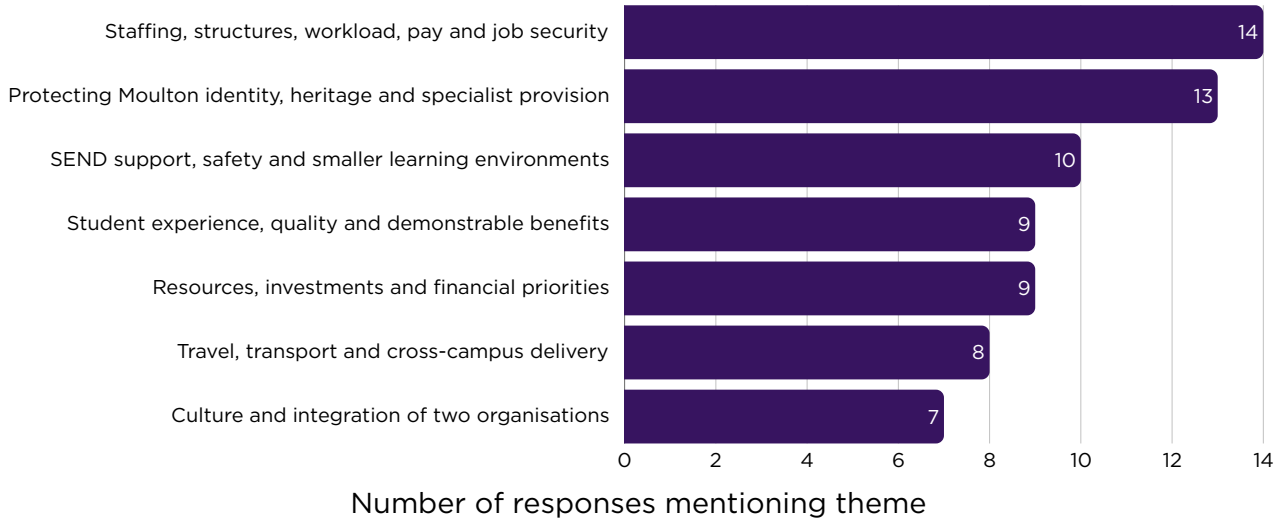
GENERAL FEEDBACK AND KEY THEMES

Many respondents welcomed the chance to create a stronger college group with wider opportunities, shared expertise and greater resilience. Others asked important questions about how the merger would work in practice, particularly around identity, support, staffing, transport, resources and the day-to-day experience of learners. The themes below bring together the main points raised.

What respondents welcomed

- The prospect of a stronger education and skills organisation serving Northamptonshire.
- Wider learner choice, progression routes and access to specialist facilities and expertise.
- Opportunities for staff collaboration, shared good practice and curriculum development.
- Greater capacity to work with employers and respond to regional workforce priorities.
- Potential for greater financial resilience, coordinated investment and more efficient use of resources.
- The intention to retain the identities of both colleges.

Recurring concerns and implementation priorities

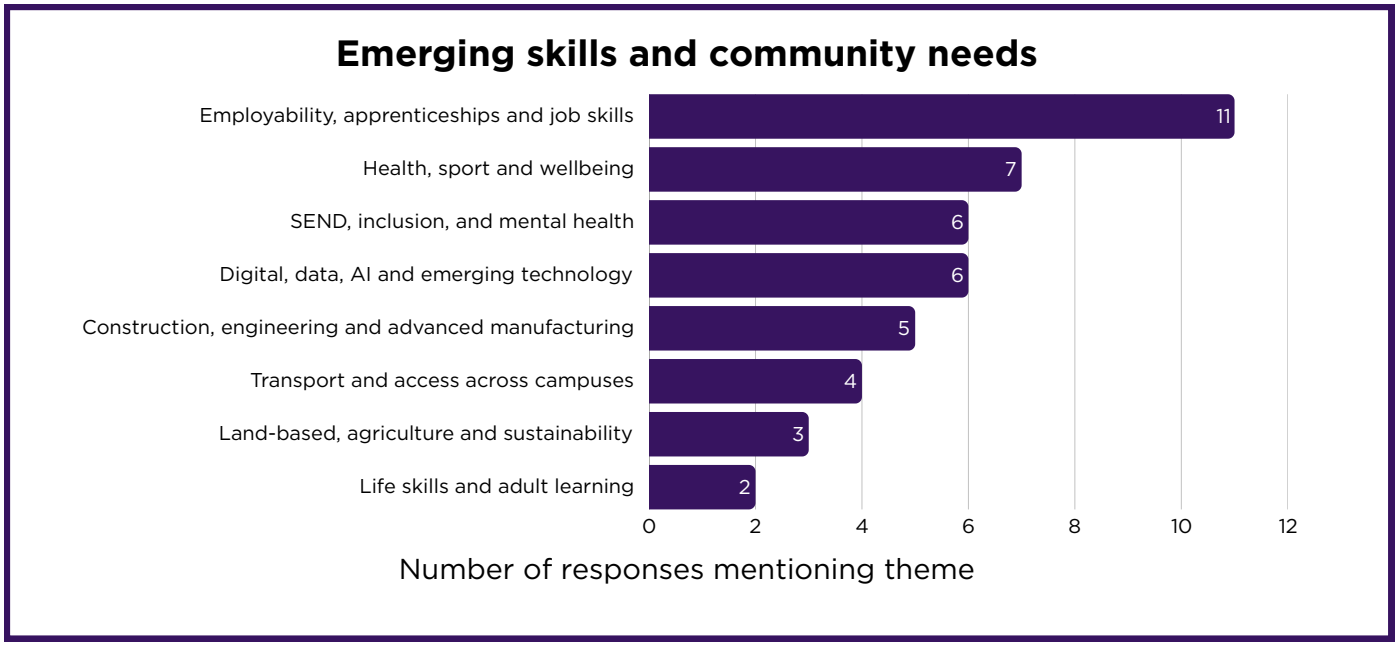


EMERGING SKILLS AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

Respondents were also invited to comment on the skills, training and community needs that a merged college group should consider in future planning.

41 respondents provided comments. Their feedback highlighted both curriculum priorities and practical isues affecting access to education, including support needs, transport, employability, emerging technologies and the importance of protecting specialist provision.

The themes below are indicative and overlapping, but they provide a useful guide to the areas stakeholders believe should shape future curriculum development, employer engagement and student support.



Theme	Indicative mentions	How the theme could inform future planning
SEND, inclusion and mental health	6	Ensure support is available within mainstream provision and across campuses, with attention to smaller learner environments and learner wellbeing.
Digital, data, AI and emerging technology	6	Embed digital and data capability alongside vocational specialisms and consider emerging technology pathways.
Employability, apprenticeships and job skills	11	Strengthen employer-led curriculum, placements, apprenticeships and practical preparation to work.
Transport and access	4	Consider rural access, travel between sites and the effect of curriculum location decisions.
Construction, engineering and manufacturing	5	Respond to demand in construction trades, engineering, advanced manufacturing and related technical skills.
Health, sport and wellbeing	7	Develop pathways linked to health, sport science, coaching, rehabilitation and wellbeing.
Land-based and sustainability	3	Protect specialist land-based provision and connect it to sustainability, green skills and agri-technology.
Life skills and adult learning	2	Consider practical life skills and accessible opportunities for adults to reskill and upskill.

PROPOSED CORPORATION NAME

As part of the consultation, respondents were asked what they thought about the proposed legal name for the continuing corporation: Northampton and Moulton Colleges Group.

Those in support welcomed a name that visibly links both colleges while preserving their identities. The recurring concern was that the proposed name is long and insufficiently distinctive, with some respondents suggesting a county-wide identity such as Northamptonshire or Northants Colleges Group, or a separate umbrella brand. No respondent opposed the merger itself on grounds of the name.

Sentiment	Comments	Share
Positive / supportive	22	44%
Negative / critical	19	38%
Mixed / neutral / unclear	9	18%
Total comments	50	100%

What respondents said

- Supporters valued a clear name that visibly links both colleges and acknowledges both identities.
- The strongest recurring criticism was length and memorability. Thirteen comments referred to the name as long, wordy, not catchy, uninspiring or lacking creativity.
- Nine comments suggested a shorter county-wide identity or a new umbrella name, including Northamptonshire, Northants, Northampton Colleges Group, NENE or NOVA.
- Some respondents considered the legal group name less important than the student experience, investment, governance and protection of Moulton's specialisms.
- A smaller but important group linked naming to a wider concern about whether Moulton's identity would be retained in practice.

"Sound corporation name to encompass both colleges' identities."

Moulton College staff

"They are known as very different colleges so I'm not sure this reflects that."

Parent/Carer

"I think it would be better if it was Northamptonshire Colleges Group or Northants Colleges Group."

Northampton College staff

"I don't like it at all. I would prefer a new name like the Nene College Group."

Moulton College staff

RETAINING THE INDIVIDUAL COLLEGE NAMES

Respondents were also asked about the proposal to keep the Northampton College and Moulton College names within the new group.

50 comments were supplied on this question. The feedback shows that names matter to many people because they are closely linked to trust, local identity, heritage and specialist reputation.

This was particularly clear in comments about Moulton College and its land-based provision.

Main messages

- There was strong qualitative support for retaining recognisable college identities, particularly the Moulton College name and its connection with specialist land-based education.
- Some respondents felt separate names might create confusion about whether the colleges were genuinely one organisation.
- Others preferred a single new identity or a campus-based naming system over time.
- Respondents stressed that retaining a name would not be sufficient unless curriculum, facilities, culture and investment were also protected.

"Not helpful as there will be different campuses."

Northampton College staff

"The proposed group name strikes a reasonable balance between creating a unified organisation and retaining the identities that students, parents, employers and local communities recognise and value."

Parent / Carer

"It would make more sense for them to be under one name with each campus being identified as its own entity."

Northampton College staff

"The name is cosmetic, what matters is is what students experience."

Parent / Carer

"They should have their own brands still."

Moulton College staff



NEXT STEPS

After careful consideration of the feedback received from learners, staff, parents and carers, employers, education partners and other stakeholders, the Corporations have found no material objections to the merger.

They will therefore continue to explore the merger working towards a proposed completion date of 1 January 2027.

The Corporations commit to continuing to provide updates on the merger process on the Northampton College and Moulton Colleges websites.

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY AND DATA NOTES

- The analysis is based on 71 records in the "Responses" worksheet plus the contents of one letter received.
- 68 responses contained a Yes, No or Unsure answer to the merger support question; four are blank for this question. The letter received was supportive of the merger and is included within the 68.
- Respondent roles were consolidated into reporting groups. "About to be a Moulton student" was grouped with prospective students. Education institution, previous education employee, retired careers adviser and charity responses were grouped as education/sector stakeholders.
- The respondent profile and support tables use direct counts from the spreadsheet.
- The corporation-name sentiment figures use the supplied "Name Feedback" worksheet, which records 50 comments: 22 positive, 19 negative and nine mixed, neutral or unclear.
- Theme counts are indicative, use overlapping keyword groups and have been accompanied by qualitative review. They should not be summed to calculate a total number of respondents.
- Personal names and contact details have not been reproduced except for extract from the official letter submission by The Bedford College Group. Quotations have been used sparingly and anonymously.
- This draft is not a statistical survey of the whole stakeholder population. It summarises the views of those represented in the supplied dataset.

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