

## **Response of the Corporate Board of The Sixth Form College Solihull to the public consultation on proposals to convert into an academy and merge with The Ninestiles Trust – conducted in February & March 2017**

The Board of the College and The Ninestiles Academy Trust Board jointly commissioned Clarke Associates to conduct an extensive public consultation exercise as part of the proposals to merge the organisations. A summary of this process and the outcomes it generated are attached as a separate report. The report shows that the legal requirements for public consultation under the legislation managing this process have been met. The final element to complete this is the publication of a formal response to the consultation from the Board, which has to be shared with the Secretary of State. The outcomes of the consultation were discussed at the Sixth Form College, Solihull's Corporate Board meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. Their formal response is as follows:

1. The Board notes that a full consultation exercise was actively promoted using a range of approaches and media, and that all interested parties had many opportunities to respond. The limited response to parts of the consultation exercise (parents, students, and the general public), was not the result of lack of opportunity or poor availability of information. On balance, extensive opportunities to feedback on the proposals were given to all stakeholders, and only a small proportion chose to respond. This suggests most stakeholders held no strong opinion on the proposals.
2. Of those stakeholders who did complete the formal questionnaire, a significant majority expressed support for the proposals. The least positive response was related to the requirement to dissolve the corporation as part of the process of conversion and merger, and even on this question the majority of respondents were in favour of the proposal.
3. The most substantial set of responses to the consultation came from College staff whose employer will change as a result of the merger. Questions raised have been addressed by College leadership directly, and the formal response from one of the staff associations recognises this.
4. Overall, the consultation has not raised issues which would require the Corporate Board to reconsider the proposals. The bulk of responses have been broadly supportive, and the issues raised by staff have been addressed proactively.

5. Overall, the consultation indicates that the Corporate Board and The Ninestiles Academy Trust should continue to be proactive in their communications with stakeholders to ensure that the legal changes around dissolution of the Corporate Board are understood, and that the inevitable concerns from staff, parents and students related to these are addressed.
6. Many of the detailed concerns raised by stakeholders cover possible changes to practical arrangements at the College like the timetable, dress code and branding. The proposals have aimed to make clear that there are no plans to change any of these as a result of the merger, and further communication reassuring people of this would be beneficial. The Corporate Board of the Sixth Form College, Solihull wish to re-emphasise their recognition of the advantages of the uniqueness of a Sixth Form College culture and the development opportunities provided by being part of the Ninestiles Academy Trust.
7. To address these ongoing communication needs resulting from the proposals, a joint communication strategy will be deployed by the Corporate Board and The Ninestiles Academy Trust.