

Doncaster College & North Lindsey College

Proposal to Merge – June 2017



Creating a Partnership of Equals

Joint Foreword

We are delighted to share our proposal that Doncaster College and North Lindsey College merge. This document shares further details about this merger and explores the benefits that this would bring – for the learners and local communities of both colleges, to preserve sustainable, robust educational provision and to support economic growth across the wider region.

Both colleges are clear that the strongest future will come from a merger with the right partner. We have a unique opportunity to bring together two strong organisations to form a partnership of equals. This merger of two highly compatible organisations will allow both to preserve their distinctiveness while building on the individual strengths that each college brings to the partnership.

This merger will ensure that distinct, high quality teaching and learning provision continues locally, while maximising the positive impact and opportunities of being a major regional education provider. Our reach will extend beyond the usual geographical boundaries of our immediate local areas and establish an educational hub that links our students and staff with partners and employers from the Sheffield City Region to the Humber and Lincolnshire.

The benefits of this collaboration are clear. This merger will create a financially robust college, able to invest in curriculum and infrastructure. Provision for our local communities will continue while regional opportunities will grow. Current and future students will have access to a huge range of training and learning opportunities, with focused support to gain the skills and qualifications that meet the needs of employers and support their individual journeys to employment.

We have no doubt that together, we will achieve more for our students and communities than would be possible if we remain as independent colleges.

We welcome your views on this proposal, and look forward to hearing from you.



Paul Pascoe,
Chair of Governors at Doncaster College



Doncaster | **University**
College | **Centre**



Andy Tuscher,
Chair of Governors at North Lindsey College



North Lindsey
College

Together we will

- Raise ambition and aspirations for our students
- Provide outstanding education and training which transforms lives
- Deliver high quality teaching and learning
- Build resilience and sustainability to ensure our future
- Meet the needs and aspirations of the local economy and employers for skills and education

This merger provides a unique opportunity for our students to access a huge range of training, learning and employment opportunities. It will allow us to build a skills infrastructure across the east/west corridor from the Sheffield City Region to the Humber and Lincolnshire. It will connect our two communities, building on our shared ambition and aspiration to create an educational hub with a local, regional and global reach.

The potential for the future is significant, connecting power and strength in new industries including engineering, manufacturing, logistics and distribution and becoming a major force in the Northern Powerhouse.

Vision and Values

A Shared Foundation – Putting Students First

Closely aligned vision and values provide a strong foundation for our merged organisation.

Successful mergers are achieved when there is a shared vision, aspiration and culture. Both colleges are ambitious to raise learner aspirations and transform lives through excellence in education and training. Both staff teams encourage collective responsibility, embrace a strong safeguarding culture and have demonstrated they can work collaboratively and purposefully together.

Our staff are highly skilled and we jointly aspire to achieve the innovation and enterprise necessary for the next stage of our development. Our mutual respect and drive will help us to embrace change. We enjoy working together and have already developed ideas and initiatives that benefit our student and employer body.

Shared Vision and Values

Achievement
Collaboration
Excellence
Creativity
Community
Initiative
Progression
Potential
Ambition
Respectful
Enjoyment
Transforming lives
Caring
Open
Pride
Enterprising
Transparent
Innovation
Diversity
Positive
Inspire
Honest
Inclusive

“We share a common purpose”

We have already demonstrated:

- We put students first
- Our commitment to our local areas and economic regeneration
- Aspirations for our communities, our learners and our staff
- We deliver high quality teaching and learning: together we will achieve excellence
- We work well together to invest, share development opportunities and embrace wider ambitions

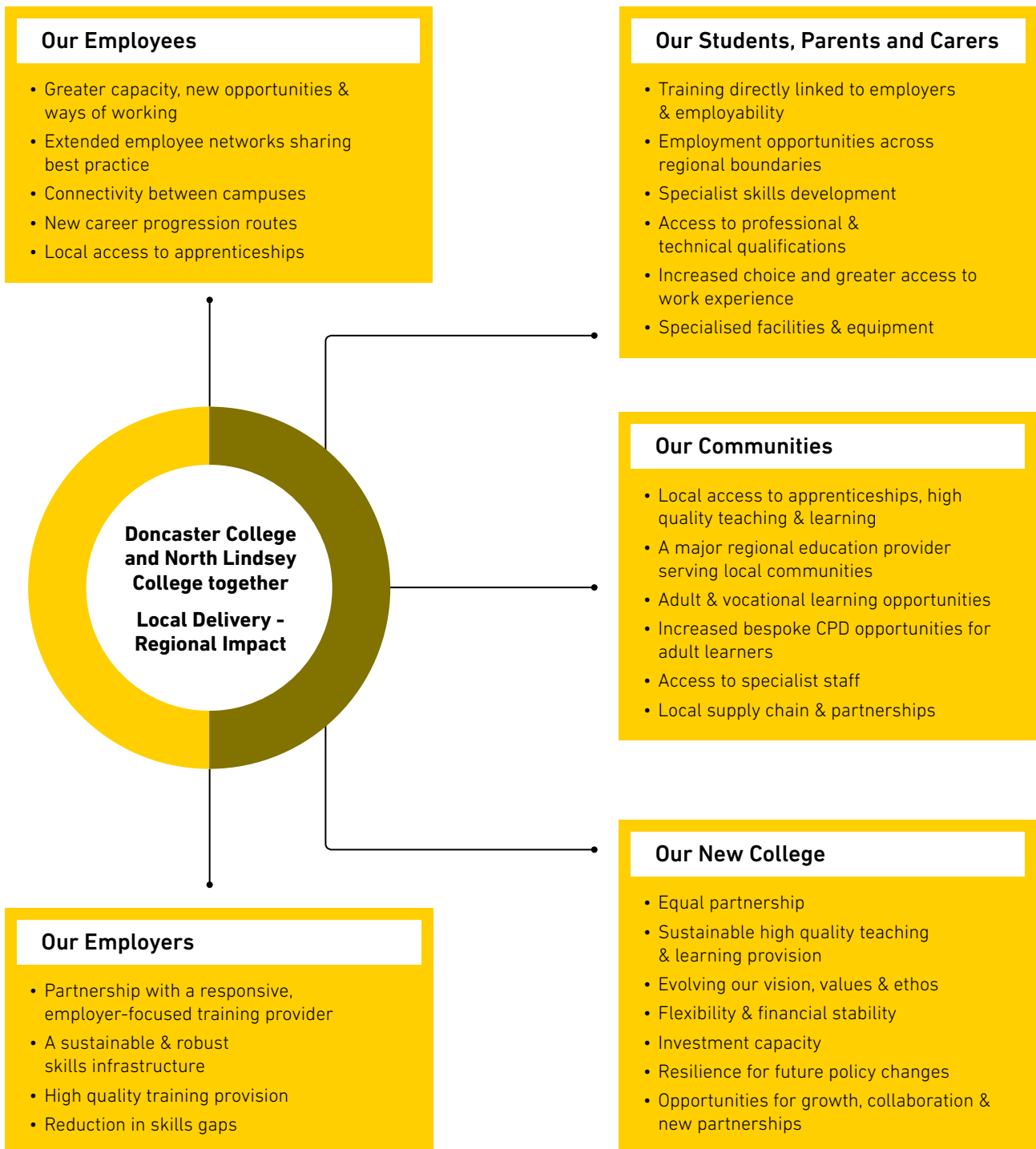
Children’s Universities

Both colleges are actively engaged in the Children’s University programmes, providing opportunities for children from local areas to experience exciting and innovative learning activities outside their normal school hours, developing new interests, skills and setting goals for the future.



Benefits and Impact

This merger will strengthen learning opportunities for students across our two localities, building a network of skills development and training that will benefit businesses and communities, supporting future employment needs within and across regional boundaries.



Strength Through Partnership

As one merged organisation, we will create teaching and learning opportunities that benefit our entire college communities and beyond, from students and staff to partners, local communities and regional industries.

Both college identities and locations will be retained, visibly demonstrating the importance that the combined college places on meeting the needs of our local communities and employers, with a commitment to retaining and enhancing local access and inclusion. When combined through formal merger, both colleges will work strategically to meet wider needs and enhance opportunities within our localities.

This merger will

- Strengthen external partnerships, establish a strong network of links and secure opportunities
- Create opportunities for investment
- Foster the sharing of good practice and staff expertise
- Maximise impact of initiatives through collaboration
- Drive partnerships with schools, employers and stakeholders in our localities

Supporting Students on Their Journey to Employment

Combining local delivery with regional impact, we will offer expanded choice to learners, including specialised options that meet local and regional skills requirements, leading to employment. Connecting students to businesses and communities, we will expand opportunities for students to gain employment.

Preserving Provision Within our Local Communities

A key principle behind the proposed merger is to ensure that sustainable, high quality local provision continues into the future. Stability will future-proof our local delivery, bringing flexibility and capacity and keeping our colleges at the heart of our local communities.

A Secure Financial Future

Our large, financially robust college will be able to invest in staff and curriculum development, infrastructure and resources to support future growth.

The Three Pillars

Adults and Apprenticeships

We will strengthen our apprenticeship offer and reach out to employers with enhanced access to higher apprenticeships, increased specialisation at higher levels and CPD opportunities for those seeking career advancement.

Both colleges have active engagement with Job Centre Plus and provide significant training for the unemployed. This local provision will grow as our combined employer facing services integrate training alongside wider employer partnerships, recruitment and job outcomes. We will provide that first important step on the skills ladder and enable progression to employment and higher level skills.

School Leavers

Both colleges value strong partnerships with schools and share the education ambition of their local areas to raise aspirations and standards.

With specialist resources, expertise in vocational learning and apprenticeships, we will ensure we participate and initiate developments to support this.

We will maintain our commitment and provision for those with learning disabilities, working closely with our partners in schools.

Higher Education

With over 2,000 learners currently engaged in higher education, our combined offer will ensure that in the longer term, we can invest in more specialisation at higher levels and use our extensive staff base to develop a university presence in our localities. Working closely with our university partners, including the Universities of Hull, Sheffield Hallam and Lincoln, we will embrace higher level apprenticeships and offer a more diverse portfolio of professional programmes.

We will create and strengthen local access to higher education and ensure that adults can benefit from financially viable higher education whilst meeting their diverse personal needs.

An Educational and Economic Profile of our Communities

Our college communities share a similar social and economic profile, challenged by educational disadvantage and the re-generation of traditional industries, driven by pride, ambition and desire for change.

Doncaster

Doncaster is a successful borough with a population of over 300,000. It is located within the Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area.

Challenges

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) clearly demonstrates its commitment to developing a thriving town and economy in seeking to create the conditions that encourage business investment and innovation and ensuring residents have the skills and abilities to meet current and future business needs. Much has already been achieved to harness Doncaster's asset base as a 'Place' where culture, business, education and communities can thrive.

DMBC is one of the most successful partners within the Sheffield City Region and Doncaster College is proud to support the Borough's developments to secure a Doncaster location for the National Rail College and University Technical College (UTC).

Whilst Doncaster is disadvantaged by low levels of earning, high benefits dependency and higher than average unemployment with a low proportion of adults holding higher level qualifications, this is not seen as a barrier to change. Enhanced road and rail connectivity and iPort developments are stimulating the location of major companies. The growth of the Doncaster-Sheffield Airport alongside future transport plans places Doncaster at the centre of economic regeneration. Employers' demand for skills and especially higher level skills has never been greater. The challenge is to ensure that more people enter the labour force equipped with the right skills for a digital economy, as we build upon a strong history of employment in rail, manufacturing and mining industries.

Opportunities

This merger of two strong colleges will help to meet the Borough's ambitions and contribute to the Sheffield City Region's target to create 70,000 additional jobs, meet the needs of an additional 30,000 highly skilled occupations and increase GVA to in excess of £3 billion.

As a combined college, we will have a turnover of over £45 million and the capacity to increase our training and apprenticeship offer for young people and adults, thus making a significant contribution to raising aspirations and meeting employers' needs. Our combined capacity of higher education and a base of over 2,000 current learners at degree level will ensure that our staff are able to adapt easily to the demand for higher apprenticeships and applied degrees. Working within Team Doncaster, we will remain a committed and active supporter of the One Doncaster ambition to raise levels of educational attainment and create the kind of joint systems leadership that will shape our Borough's success. We will continue to work well with the Borough's schools, colleges, training providers and other educational stakeholders, recognising their success in improving learner outcomes, to give wider opportunities to young people and increase progression to further and higher study for all.

As a combined college we will continue to have local commitment to inclusivity and ensure that our courses for the unemployed and those seeking career advancement remain and help people progress further.

With these commitments and our combined strengths - plus a determination to address the challenges and ambitions of our locality and region, the newly formed college will be an asset to Doncaster and the Sheffield City Region.

Sheffield City Region LEP: Driving Economic Growth Across the Region

With a unique position as a key business-to-business supply chain, designer and manufacturer hub, the region has sector specialisms (digital technologies, advanced manufacturing, engineering and materials) that are supporting traditional sectors, from energy to motor vehicles, construction to retail. The LEP is working across the region to accelerate this trend, to build on current strengths in 'foundation industries' and to restructure the economy towards high value, knowledge and data-led business activities.

Aspirations include the creation of 70,000 jobs, bringing an additional 6,000 businesses to the region and generating approximately 30,000 highly skilled occupations to create a more prosperous economy.

An Educational and Economic Profile of our Communities

The Humber and Greater Lincolnshire

North Lindsey College is located in the thriving County of North Lincolnshire, which has a rapidly growing population of nearly 170,000 and is positioned within both the Humber and Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas.

Challenges and Opportunities

The region is recognised for its strength in manufacturing and engineering, with 24% of North Lincolnshire's economy centred upon manufacturing compared to other UK regions of just over 8%. In the Industrial Garden Town of Scunthorpe, the Steel Industry has seen a decline over recent years and the resurgence of British Steel over the last 12 months has brought a new confidence as well as growth, greater productivity and investment. The manufacture of British Steel products makes a significant contribution to the British and North Lincolnshire economy. The British steel industry employs approximately 20,000 people including c. 4000 locally and additionally, supports domestic local businesses and employees throughout its supply chain.

North Lincolnshire is already the hub of power generation in the area. The South Humber Bank oil refineries provide 27% of the UK's refinery capacity – the largest refinery cluster. In addition, there are four gas power plants, the largest combined heat and power plant in Europe, all located within North Lincolnshire, providing almost 10% of the national grid's energy. With the largest Enterprise Zone in the UK and the development of a £450m Marine Energy and Logistics Parks, the Estuary is attracting new inward investment. It is set to achieve its vision of becoming a renowned national and international centre for renewable energy - bringing growth, productivity and economic regeneration.

The location and connectivity of the Humber, facing Northern Europe and midway between London and Edinburgh also makes it a critical transport and logistics hub. It is the largest trading estuary in the UK and is experiencing strong year-on-year growth. The Humber ports contribute £2.2 billion to the UK economy, supporting 33,000 jobs and together handle more than 65 million tonnes of cargo. The growth of logistics and distribution industries provides direct connectivity to the developments along the east/west corridor and developments in Doncaster and the Sheffield City Region.

As a result of these enormous opportunities, North Lincolnshire and the wider region needs to refocus its skills and training offer. With above average unemployment rates, the area has traditionally suffered from a lack of employment opportunities in technical, management and professional occupations. At the same time, the proportion of the population with qualifications at Levels 2, 3 and above is considerably lower than the national average, with qualifications at Level 4 and over at 10% below the national average. The population is growing and is forecast to increase by 32,000 people by 2026, bringing further opportunities and investment.

The Humber LEP Strategic Economic Plan acknowledges that building a skilled and productive workforce is critically important in order to tackle the skills gap. It has identified six priority sectors: port and logistics, chemicals, engineering and manufacturing, creative digital, food and the visitor economy.

The Greater Lincolnshire LEP Plan supports these priorities and recognises the importance of growing specific opportunities identified as future defining areas, such as the health and care sector as well as new markets in modern telecommunications.

These challenges are embraced by the LEPs and North Lincolnshire Council, who are realising the significant potential and capacity for inward investment in the region. There has been a higher than average growth in working age residents with higher level skills and in North Lincolnshire Secondary Schools, outcomes in GCSE attainment have consistently improved and are now well above the national average, with 93% of schools achieving good or outstanding Ofsted grades.

Aspirations Realised Through Increased Capacity and Capability

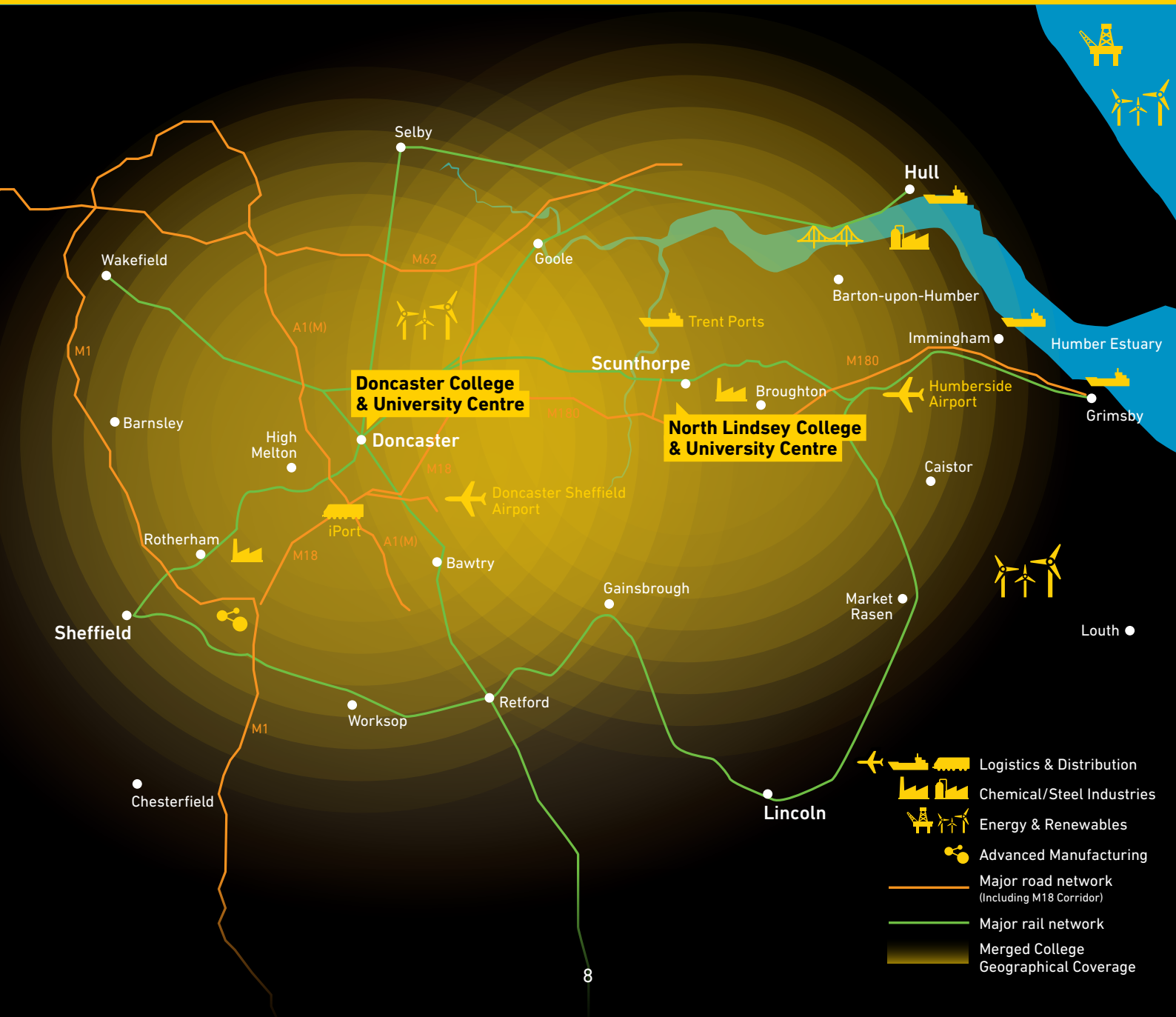
The proposed merger of two strong colleges, with a combined turnover of over £45 million, will build capacity and capability to realise the ambitions of the area at both a regional and local level. Working with the local Councils and the LEPs, we anticipate significant growth in our apprenticeships and our higher education provision, including higher and degree level apprenticeships. Our increased capacity and capability will further strengthen our joint ambitions to develop a strong university presence in our town centres in partnership with regional universities, schools and UTCs.

As a merged college we will continue to commit to ensuring that our curriculum is inclusive and supports the unemployed into employment and further training. We will also continue to engage in shaping the post-16 provision in the sub-region and enabling and inspiring individuals, employers and communities to develop their skills, unlock potential and realise their ambitions.

An Educational and Economic Profile of our Communities

This merger provides a unique opportunity for our students to access a huge range of training, learning and employment opportunities. It will allow us to build a skills infrastructure across the east/west corridor from the Sheffield City Region to the Humber and Lincolnshire. It will connect our two communities, building on our shared ambition and aspiration to create an educational hub with a local, regional and global reach.

The potential for the future is significant, connecting power and strength in new industries including engineering, manufacturing, logistics and distribution and becoming a major force in the Northern Powerhouse.



Employment at the Core of our Strategy

Connecting Education and Employment

Through the developing road and rail infrastructure along the M18/M180/A1/M1 corridor, our two campuses are focal points that enable a wider reach into the regions of Sheffield, the Humber, South Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire.

As this physical infrastructure creates economic growth, our combined college will penetrate employment sectors and boost the development of skills required by local industries, particularly through apprenticeships and higher level skills. We will be a major educational presence with an inter-regional reach.

Joint connections with regional universities from Sheffield Hallam, Hull and Lincoln, alongside our combined strength in higher education, reinforce this regional reach and access to higher level training opportunities, which are regionally sourced, locally delivered and innovatively designed.

Local Opportunities - Regional Partnerships

By capitalising on the existing catchment areas of the two colleges, as well as the east-west economic corridor around us, we will maintain local delivery, while implementing a regional educational strategy.

Creating Choice for Learners

Both colleges have large 16-18 provision which is predominantly vocational and apprenticeships. Each college will continue to establish strong links with local secondary and special schools to support progression and opportunity. The combined college will play an active part in the localised developments of the existing and planned UTCs and engage locally with new sixth-form initiatives to create the widest possible choice for learners.

The combined college will bring its local strengths in vocationalism to local developments, ever more specialising in technical, professional training and apprenticeships for young people as a real alternative to more traditional routes.

Our strategy will drive a skills infrastructure to support economic opportunities across the east-west economic corridor.

Our impact will stretch from the Sheffield City Region to the Humber and Lincolnshire, building on the connectivity provided by road, air, sea and rail.

Linking with Employers

Students following routes that require particular skills will be able to pursue specialised qualifications, as the college uses its increased presence to work closely with regional and local employers.

- Establishing a college for businesses across the region
- A combined employer-facing service for apprenticeships
- Wider access to staff, teachers, trainers and assessors
- Capacity to attract staff with specialist and niche skills
- Support for employer levy payers as well as micro-businesses
- Greater capacity to respond to bespoke workforce development needs of employers

“We are committed to meeting the skills needs of regional employers”

Retaining our Campus Identities

The proposed name of the new merged college is the DN Colleges Group. The local names of colleges and campuses will remain unchanged.



Doncaster College



North Lindsey College

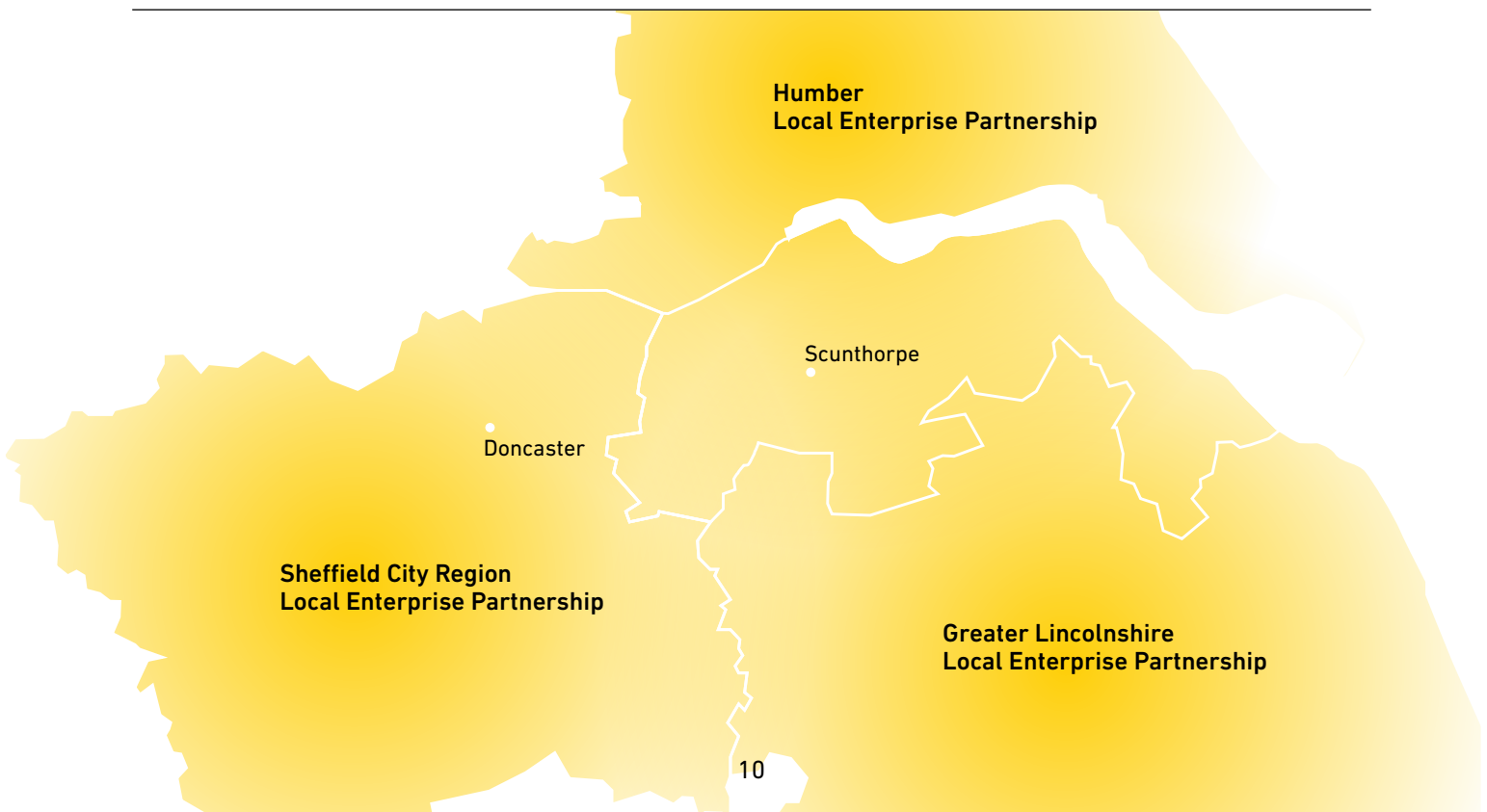


Doncaster College



North Lindsey College

Retaining Local Provision and Serving our Regions



Our Curriculum: Building on Strength

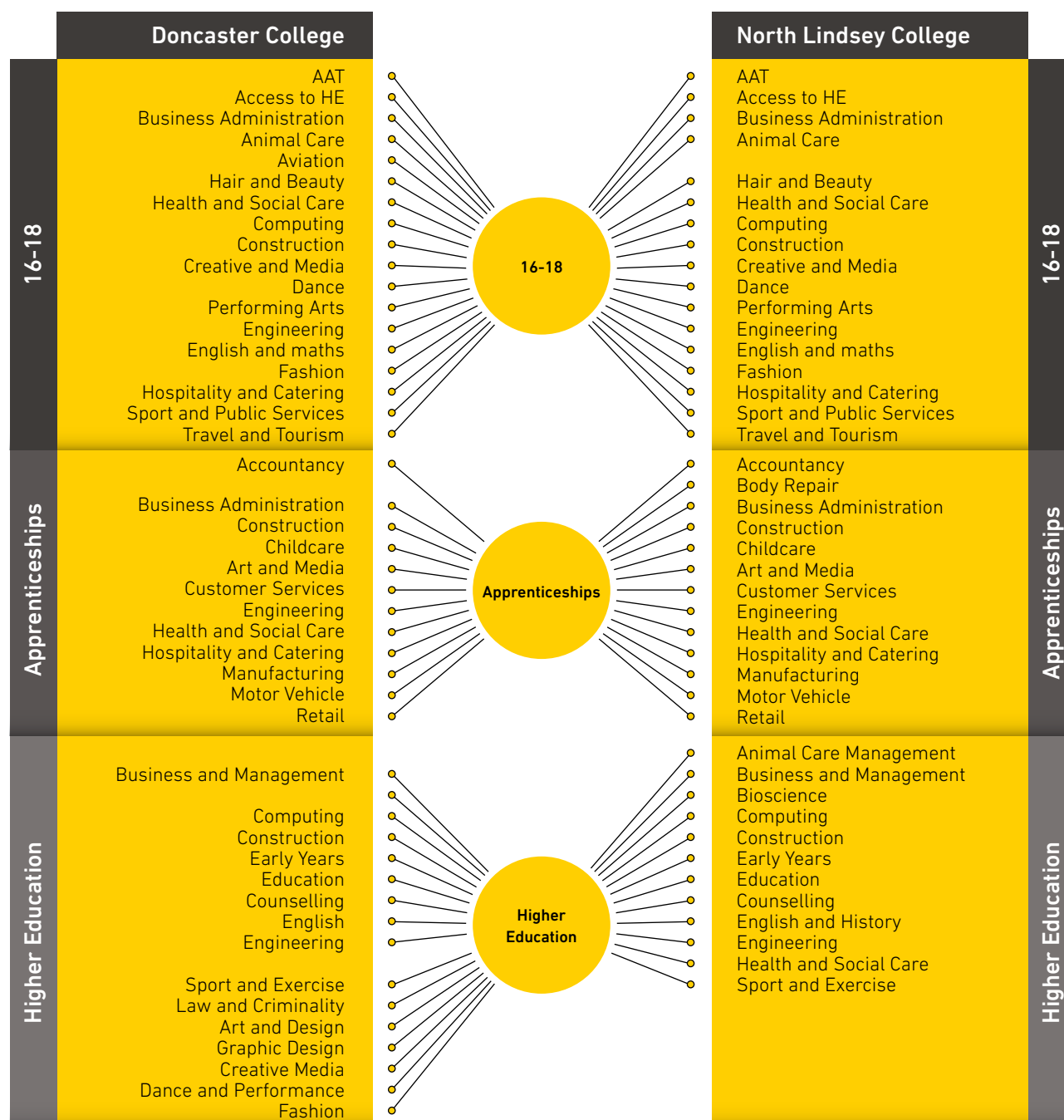
This merger will build on current synergies across both colleges to improve the learning experience for students across both immediate localities and more widely.

Students will have access to a huge range of training and learning opportunities, with focused support to gain skills and qualifications that will support their individual journeys to employment.

Our curriculum spans further and higher education, professional and technical qualifications, apprenticeships, adult and vocational learning. Joint curriculum design and development will create further opportunities for staff and students.

Current Strengths

Both colleges offer provision across the full range of sector subject areas for core 16-19 provision, with a high percentage of students who require English and maths. Both colleges have substantial higher education provision and apprenticeships.

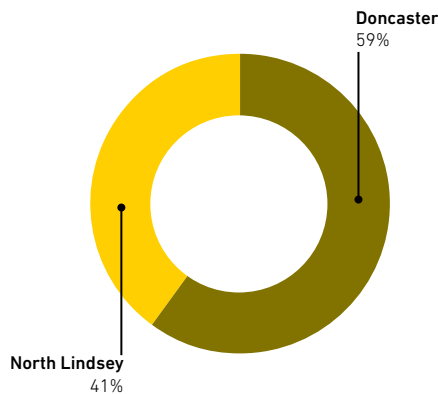


About the Colleges

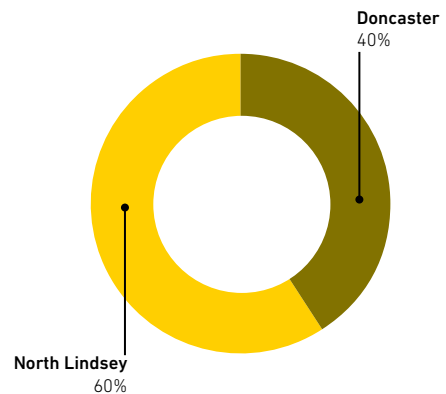
Finance

The financial size and strengths of the two colleges complement each other and provide a firm foundation from which to respond to the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Total Income 2015/16 - £49.3M



Total Net Assets 2015/16 - £28.1M



The combined financial health of the two colleges is already good, with the potential from further growth and synergies to deliver outstanding financial performance.

A Secure Financial Future

This merger will secure the future of the colleges from a financial perspective. It will create a large scale, financially sustainable organisation, able to invest across its curriculum and infrastructure and supporting future growth and ever stronger partnerships with businesses and external organisations.

Quality

	OFSTED	Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)
Doncaster College	Good (April 2016)	Meets UK Expectations (May 2013)
North Lindsey College	Good (May 2014)	Full Confidence (2016/17)

About the Colleges

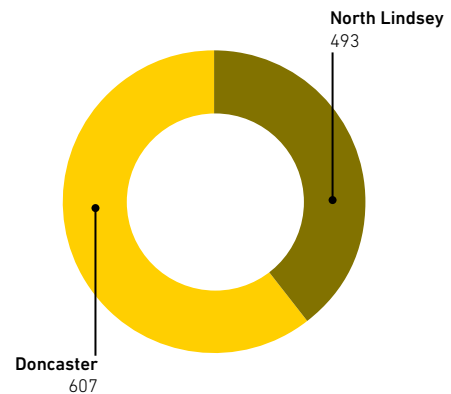
Catchment Area

The new college will serve almost half a million residents living in the immediate catchment areas of Doncaster and North Lincolnshire and contribute to meeting the needs of almost three million residents across the Sheffield City Region and the Humber LEP areas.

There are currently 15,000 business enterprises in the area served directly by the new college and over 85,000 in the Sheffield City Region through to the Humber, with a higher than average dependency on small and micro employers.

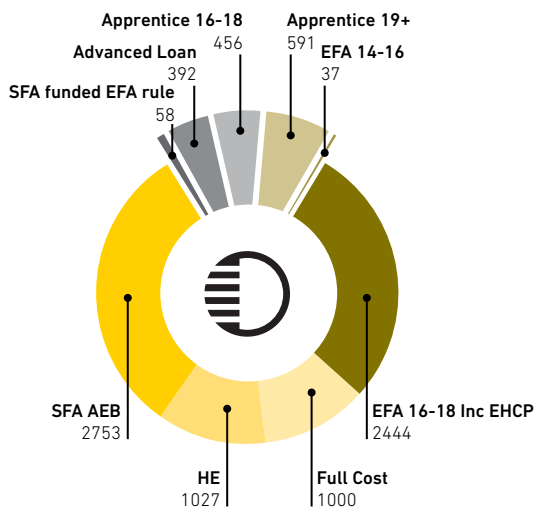
Staff Numbers 2015/16

Directly Employed Staff

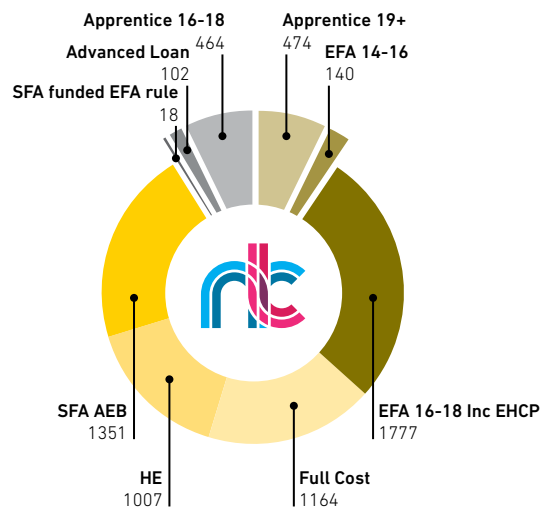


Student Numbers 2015/16

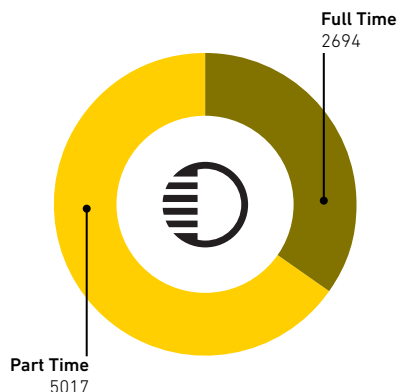
Doncaster College - Student Demographic



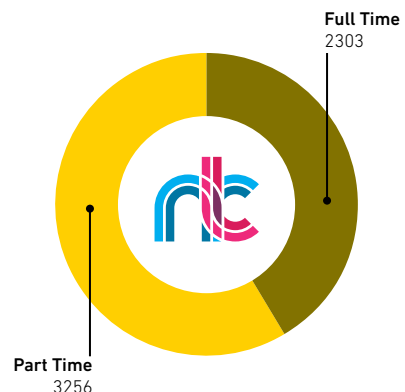
North Lindsey College - Student Demographic



Doncaster College - Full Time/Part Time*



North Lindsey College - Full Time/Part Time*



*Excluding apprentices. EFA = Education Funding Agency SFA = Skills Funding Agency AEB = Adult Education Budget EHCP = Education Health Care Plan

Governance

The governors of both colleges are fully committed to creating an equal partnership and bring a wide range of skills, knowledge and experience to support the process of transitioning to a new organisation. In anticipation of this merger a Transition Group has been formed with representatives from both college governing bodies, working together to consider all aspects of this potential partnership.

If there is support for the merger, both Boards will commit to creating a shared Board with a balance of existing and new members reflecting the necessary skills balance and localities. We will create a strong governance structure that will play a greater part in the systems leadership of our region. We will seek to create a 'new governance entity' with redefined ambition and, to ensure local accountability, we propose to have local advisory boards at both Doncaster College and North Lindsey College.

Our aim is to create a new college, with a new Board, while retaining the individual identities and campuses of Doncaster College and North Lindsey College. The proposed name for the combined legal entity is the DN Colleges Group.

Both colleges have undertaken legal and financial due diligence, including a detailed analysis of the financial costs of the merger. This process has determined the most effective way of minimising the costs of the merger so that future funds can be better invested in our students and the curriculum. A key decision has been to determine which college will dissolve and which college will be the receiving college from a legal and financial perspective, and the associated costs of different options have been assessed. This decision has been made on an entirely financial basis, and does not signify any qualitative assessment of either college.

On this basis, it is proposed that Doncaster College will dissolve on 1st November 2017 and its properties, rights and liabilities transferred to North Lindsey College, who will be the receiving college.

Students who are still completing their courses of study by the date of the merger and proposed dissolution of Doncaster College, will complete their studies in their current locations under the auspices of the DN Colleges Group. For new and existing students in 2017/18 at both Doncaster College and North Lindsey College, there will be no changes to current courses.

References and Further Information

Independent Education and Skills Commission's 'One Doncaster' report

<http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools/one-doncaster-report>

North Lincolnshire Strategy, North Lincolnshire Council, April 2016

http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/_resources/assets/attachment/full/0/29155.pdf

North Lincolnshire Market Position Statement 2016-2017

<http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/community-advice-and-support/community-rights-funding-and-grants/market-position-statement/>

Lifting the Lid: The Humber Skills Challenge, 2013: The Capability of the Humber Region, University of Hull, 2013

<http://www.humberlep.org/strategy/research-and-reports/>

The Humber Strategic Economic Plan

<http://www.humberlep.org/strategies-and-deals/the-humber-strategic-economic-plan/>

The Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Economic Plan 2014 to 2030 (2016 Refresh)

<https://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/priorities-and-plans/strategies-and-plans/>

Doncaster's Economic Growth Plan 2013-18

<http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/business-investment/doncaster-s-economic-strategy>

Doncaster Council Corporate Plan 2017-18

<http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/the-council-democracy/corporate-plan>

Sheffield City Region Strategic Economic Plan

<http://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/SCR-Growth-Plan-March-2014.pdf>

Sheffield City Region Strategic Economic Plan and Growth Deal

<http://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Deal-and-Plan-Executive-Summary.pdf>

Have Your Say

We welcome your views on this proposal

Since the first discussion of our proposal, we have received widespread and enthusiastic support from many stakeholders across the regions.

The formal consultation into this proposed merger takes place between 22nd June 2017 and 31st July 2017. You can submit your response by 31st July 2017 using our online survey.*

All comments received as part of this consultation will be taken into account by the leadership of both colleges to determine whether or not the merger should proceed.

Click here to go to our online survey or go to www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/QNWLK9Y



Alternatively, you can write to us at either:

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If would like an accessible version of this document, please contact us.

*The information that you supply via this form will be used as a feedback tool throughout the consultation between North Lindsey College and Doncaster College. The information will be retained by both parties and will only be used for the purpose of (a) summary information for statistical and audit purpose, and (b) published in an executive summary via the colleges website and printed content. All data will be anonymised, and individuals will not be identifiable. By supplying such information you consent to the colleges using and storing the information for the stated purposes; the information is held by the colleges in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.