



## Press release

Date: Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2018

### **It's official – Stockton Riverside College and Redcar and Cleveland College merge today**

A merger of Stockton Riverside College and Redcar and Cleveland College becomes official today in a transformational move that is already bringing opportunities to the area.

The two colleges will now work together as one organisation, while maintaining a strong presence in their respective communities and each retaining their own identities and campuses.

Phil Cook, Principal and Chief Executive of the merged College, said: "We are delighted to have reached this point and to be able to officially announce our merger.

"I am pleased to say that we are going ahead with confidence. Our aim is to ensure local colleges for local people, to deliver high quality, and ensure a commitment to all of our learners, to both colleges' surrounding communities and to the businesses that we work with."

Already creating a positive impact with the creation of new job opportunities at a senior and management level, a new campus principal has been appointed at Redcar and Cleveland College and the organisation is currently recruiting for a campus principal at Stockton Riverside College, a director of human resources, three heads of department and four programme area leaders, to further strengthen its management team.

Chair of Stockton Riverside College's Board of Governors, Mark White OBE DL, said: "These are exciting times for the now merged College and as a Board of Governors we are proud to have played our part.

"Even in initial talks it quickly became clear that both Stockton Riverside College and Redcar and Cleveland College share a passion for our surrounding communities and the wider Tees Valley. That is why we were, and continue to be, confident a merger would be beneficial, not just to the colleges but also to the region."

With campuses in Stockton, Thornaby and Billingham, Stockton Riverside College incorporates SRC Bede Sixth Form, NETA Training Group and The Skills Academy.



## Press release

Date: Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2018

Mr White said: "A priority of this merger was always to ensure that both colleges retained their existing identities, never losing sight of those things that are important to each college.

"Our focus now will remain firmly on all of our students, on teaching and learning and on developing outstanding employer partnerships."

Sue Jeffrey, Leader of Redcar and Cleveland Council and Chair of Redcar and Cleveland College Board, said: "This is a hugely important development both for Redcar and Cleveland College and for the borough as a whole. Twelve months ago we were facing the possibility of our college closing, now we are preparing for a great new future.

"Bringing the two colleges together will enable us to expand our quality and services meaning more and better opportunities for our people to secure the skills they need to get great jobs locally, both existing and new.

"I believe that everyone should have access to quality education and training, this merger makes that possible here in Redcar and Cleveland and is no more than our people deserve."

Changes are already taking shape at Redcar and Cleveland College where during their most recent Ofsted monitoring visit the education inspectorate reported on a "transformed" ethos of the college.

Councillor Craig Hannaway, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Children, said: "This is a very important step for the future of post-16 education in the borough. I know the whole council wants to see our vocational college thrive and provide excellent education for our young people, whatever their background. I'd like to pay tribute to everyone who has worked so hard to make this merger happen.

"Both colleges will benefit from shared resources and expertise, whilst also maintaining their own identities and I trust that Redcar and Cleveland College will prepare and inspire its students and meet the needs of our business community long into the future."

The Sir William Turner Foundation has supported education in Redcar for over 300 years and it continues to deliver that support through Redcar and Cleveland College, last year donating almost £20,000 to buy special equipment for several departments and assisting students to make overseas study trips.



## Press release

Date: Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2018

Peter Sotheran MBE, Chair of The Sir William Turner Foundation, said: “The Trustees of the Sir William Turner Foundation see this merger as an exciting new opportunity and look forward to continuing their support for students at Redcar and Cleveland College.”

Ben Houchen, Tees Valley Mayor, said: “I’m delighted that the government has signed off this merger. This is a huge step to keep a local skills offering alive in Redcar and give young people every chance to succeed.

“With the unprecedented opportunity the South Tees Development Corporation gives for jobs and growth, it’s essential we prepare the future workforce with the right skills to fill the high-quality jobs that are being created. This will help local students fulfil their potential and supply businesses with a steady stream of qualified workers.”

Professor Mark Simpson, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) at Teesside University, said: “Earlier this year we officially launched the new Teesside University College Partnership which will provide even wider access to higher education courses in the Tees Valley.

“We very much welcome the merger between Stockton Riverside College and Redcar and Cleveland College. It is as a positive step for the regional college network and we look forward to continuing to work together to provide progressive routes into higher education and establishing courses that meet the needs of the economy and the aspirations of local communities and individuals.”

Councillor Bob Cook, Leader of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, said: “Stockton Riverside College provides many of our young people and adult learners with first class opportunities which help them towards achieving their ambitions for the future. We are very fortunate to have such a good college in the borough and wish it well with the merger.”

**Ends**

**For more media information, please contact:**

**Marie Turbill** - Marketing Officer (PR and Communications)

Tel: 01642 865 438 Email: [marie.turbill@stockton.ac.uk](mailto:marie.turbill@stockton.ac.uk)