

# News

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## New Performing Arts College final piece of jigsaw at Merchant Gate



A deal agreed between English Cities Fund (ECf) and LocatED will see a new Performing Arts College developed on the last remaining plot at Wakefield's Merchant Gate scheme.

ECf has sold the 1.1 acre site for development of a new 53,000 sq. ft. Performing Arts College, accommodating circa 500 students aged 16-19.

LocatED was commissioned by the Department for Education to identify and acquire a site in central Wakefield which could accommodate the requirement. LocatED is a government owned property company responsible for buying and developing sites for new free schools in England.

The new college will be located directly opposite the Council's civic office, Wakefield One, with access to the train station nearby.

ECf - a joint venture between Muse Developments, Legal & General and the Homes & Communities Agency - is working in partnership with Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, Network Rail and the East Coast Mainline to deliver the Merchant Gate regeneration project, which is immediately adjacent to Westgate Station and the Civic Quarter.

So far the scheme has delivered 200,000 sq ft of offices, retail and leisure space, 66 apartments and a £9 million investment in infrastructure and public realm.

James Scott, development director for ECf, said: "Merchant Gate is already a thriving commercial quarter and this exciting development will complete the final piece of the jigsaw. A Performing Arts College is an ideal use for the only remaining plot of land, further boosting footfall to the area and offering a fantastic facility to the wider city. I'm sure the scheme's well-connected location and excellent amenities will prove extremely popular with students."

James Brook, Senior Acquisition Manager for LocatED, added: "Following an extensive review of potential opportunities we decided that this was the best site to accommodate the proposed new

college. Its position within Merchant Gate makes it an excellent location within the city centre and it is highly accessible by both car and public transport.”

Cllr Peter Box CBE, Leader of Wakefield Council, commented: “We are delighted to be welcoming a new Performing Arts College into the last remaining plot at Wakefield’s Merchant Gate scheme. We are proud that this fantastic development has attracted a variety of key businesses into the district, providing a huge economic boost to the city.”

A planning application will be submitted in 2018 with a proposed opening date of 2020.