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LR/IB
07 June 2012
Liz Barron (PA)
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Dear Jo,

Merger Between Deeside College and Yale College

Thank you for the consultation document on the proposed merger between Deeside College and Yale College.

The Council values the partnership that it enjoys with local further education providers. There is particularly positive local engagement between Deeside College and the Council on:

- curriculum design and delivery for 14-19 year olds;
- inclusion and wellbeing of learners;
- a coordinated approach to the national transformation programme;
- adult and community education;
- economic development; and
- local strategic planning.

Working in partnership, we trust that merger between the two colleges will provide opportunities to deliver enhanced opportunities for learners, including:

- enhanced curriculum choice within a reasonable travel distance;
- improved links with employers building on the strength of existing relationships;
- a more strategic, stable and resilient Further Education sector;
- a more cost effective and viable financial base and delivery model;
- a sustainable college capable of attracting further investment in the learning infrastructure; and
- an enhanced response to Welsh Government “imperatives” on “Transformation” and the Welsh Language.

There are some key areas in which the Council will expect and need clarification and involvement as both a key partner to the college and as a 'champion' on behalf of local learners. Key risks include:

Profile of the Merged College

Corporation and local site governance arrangements must be effective and inclusive of local partners and communities including Flintshire County Council. Early engagement with partners on this is important.

Meeting Local Priorities

Early involvement is needed to ensure that a combined college is fully focused on delivering local educational and economic priorities, including those set out in Council and Local Service Board Strategies. Flintshire County Council has a key involvement and interest in:

- governance and priority setting;
- joint planning on capital allocations to sites;
- investments in vocational and apprenticeship schemes in support of community regeneration.

Curriculum and Quality of Service

The Colleges have a key role in delivering expansion in vocational and work related learning, working collaboratively with local employers and the local authority as an 'engine for growth' in employment and expansion of apprenticeships. Engagement with partners in development of a renewed programme to address current economic development needs is key to training, employment and community prosperity.

Linking with Partners

The commitment to working in partnership with local 14-19 networks and Councils is welcome. More detailed joint working on local priorities including 14-19 transformational change, sixth form provision, and economic development would be welcome. Early discussion on localised curriculum delivery for post 16 learners and transport entitlement would be welcomed. Further discussion on strategies for the growth of adult and community learning programmes would also be welcomed.

Resources and Facilities

Additional joint planning needs to be undertaken on resource planning for local 14-19 educational transformation, including the specific commitments made in relation to tertiary/sixth form provision. This needs to include joint revenue and capital funding. The consultation document contains little information on efficiencies or capital investment proposals.

Whilst supportive of the principles underpinning the merger proposal, we also look forward to working with you in resolving risk issues and to securing enhanced opportunities for local learners.

Yours sincerely,



Leader



Chief Executive

Chris Bithell

Cabinet Member for Education



Director of Lifelong Learning

Peter MacFarlane

**Cabinet Member for Economic
Development & Leisure**