

19 July 2004

Merger of the Funding Councils Team  
Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Europa Building  
450 Argyle Street  
Glasgow  
G2 8LG

Dear Sir/Madam

### **A Changing Landscape for Tertiary Education and Research in Scotland**

On behalf of Learning Link Scotland, I am responding to the Consultation Paper on the merger of the Scottish Further Education Funding Council and the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council. Learning Link Scotland is the national intermediary for the voluntary adult learning sector. We have over 100 members across Scotland providing a wide range of community based learning opportunities to over 150,000 learners each year.

We welcome the new approach contained in the proposals that is inclusive of a broader definition of lifelong learning. We would support the creation of a new overarching category of providers eligible for funding through the new body, and the recognition of the role of providers, other than those in FE and HE, and the value this will add to lifelong learning provision. We believe that the enhanced role of the new body will support the development of lifelong learning in Scotland.

### **Responses to the Consultation Paper**

#### **The Changing Landscape**

55. We support the concept of tertiary education as a broader more inclusive and accessible perspective of lifelong learning.

61. We welcome the ability for ministers to specify other providers as STEPs. This will enable eligibility for funding based on the provision of

high quality education in line with criteria. This enables a more learner centred approach, which we would support.

### **Role of the New Body**

74. We welcome the roles of the new body as described in the document, and consider that such a remit will provide the whole sector with strategic leadership for lifelong learning in Scotland.

### **Responsiveness and relevance of learning provision**

81. We welcome this proposal to strengthen links between tertiary education and Community Planning activities, helping to ensure that lifelong learning provision takes into account the needs of learners at local and national level.

82. We agree that learners should be at the heart of the tertiary education system, and steps should be taken in the formation of the new body to ensure that this principle is at the centre of all decision making.

84. Any system of self-evaluation must demonstrate the involvement of all stakeholders and partners in the process.

87. Collaboration and dialogue between key partners is a gap that needs addressing. A more inclusive approach to partnership working, and greater recognition of the values of each partner will enable a more productive dialogue to take place.

### **Funding**

105. We would support measures for greater accountability, coherence and transparency within the funding structures for tertiary education, and in particular 'greater comparability in the way that different types of institutions and levels of courses are funded in tertiary education.'

112. We particularly welcome funding allocations to individual STEPs, and would support the need for the new body to consult on how this should be allocated

### **Research and Knowledge Transfer**

119. Collaboration and partnership within research and knowledge transfer should include the wider lifelong learning sector, ensuring that all stakeholders are included in, and benefit from, the process.

Thank you for the opportunity to consult on this proposal

Yours sincerely,

Jayne Stuart  
Director, Learning Link Scotland