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East Lothian Council

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Dear Colleague

CONSULTATION PAPER ON THE MERGER OF THE SFEFC AND THE SHEFC

Thank you for sending a copy of the above paper to me for comment. I welcome this opportunity and wish to comment as follows:-

- The intention of moving towards achieving greater parity of value between further and higher education is welcomed.
- In relation to the "Role of the New Body" it will be crucial that it has regard not only to the future skill needs of Scotland, but also the need to develop knowledge. This is also closely linked to the continuing need for adequate funding for research.
- There is also mention of "use public funding in support of the delivery of Ministerial priorities". It would be helpful if these priorities could be clearly identified and communicated to key stakeholders.
- It would be very encouraging if there could be a clear statement of the Executive's continued commitment to research and to funding levels.
- In relation to the proposed merger of the two Funding Councils – this is to be welcomed.
- The name of the new body should be as suggested in the draft Bill – i.e. The Scottish Tertiary Education Funding Council.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

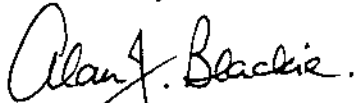
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- Clearly any lessons learned from previous PFMRS should be carefully considered in shaping direction for the new body.
- Future mergers of STEP organisations could be considered by the new body; however, this would have to be carefully handled in relation to existing legislation.
- There is no mention of contact with/collaboration with Community Planning Partnerships – this is especially important for F.E. Colleges.
- Issues of social inclusion, future needs assessment and provision for young people with additional support needs have not been taken into account in the paper.

I hope that these comments are of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



Alan J Blackie
Director of Education and Children's Services