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HL/AMB 020.LET

12 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

**MERGER OF THE FUNDING COUNCILS**

I refer to the Scottish Executive's consultation paper on the merger of the Funding Councils and would comment as follows.

Motherwell College, as one of the largest Further Education Colleges in Scotland, has a fundamental concern for the effective and efficient delivery of further education to Lanarkshire and beyond. In this context, we would support any proposals, before Parliament, which facilitate the delivery of an equitable and inclusive funding package for post-compulsory education across Scotland.

Motherwell College is a member of the Association of Scottish Colleges (ASC), and supports wholly, the ASC's final response to the consultation.

We will not therefore respond in detail to the document, but would however wish to emphasise and highlight two particular issues in which the College has a strong view.

- 1 The merged Council should be expected to ensure equity of funding on an output driven basis. There is, for example, an obvious anomaly where Bell College in Hamilton is funded on a significantly higher basis than Motherwell College for delivering essentially the same product of HNC/HNDs. We welcome the opportunity, through the merger of the Councils, for this anomaly to be removed.
- 2 Our second concern is the current inequality of access to further and higher education across Scotland. The people of Motherwell, Hamilton and Bellshill access further education, at levels in some areas, as much as 40% of the national average (source: Andy Hawkins report "Towards a Plan for Lanarkshire : The Underlying Issues" October 2003). In terms of equality and inclusiveness, this situation, in our opinion, is unacceptable and the new merged Funding Council should be remitted to take steps to address this inequality.

Overall, the proposal appears broadly sound and we will leave it to others to argue, for example, about the name the "Scottish Tertiary Education Provider". It is frankly difficult to get excited about such issues whilst there are fundamental anomalies around funding in post-compulsory education, as described above.

Yours faithfully

Hugh Logan  
PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

