

Introduction & Context

Both Coleg Llandrillo Cymru and Coleg Meirion Dwyfor simultaneously released a public consultation document at the end of October 2009 in order to gather views and opinions regarding the proposed merger of the two institutions. The aims of the merger, rationale and approaches taken were clearly communicated within this document.

Recipients were able to respond directly to Clerks at either College, or via a website supporting the merger. The public consultation closed on Monday, November 23rd 2009.

Findings

Over 260 consultation documents were despatched to external parties, as well as to all staff and students at both institutions. All responses received were positive and voiced collective support for the proposed merger, with a proportion offering advice and recommendations to the merged institution.

Responses are briefly summarised below:

Name	Representing	Summary of views	Summary of Recommendations
Paul Frost	Coleg Llandrillo Sports and Recreation Focus Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive, meeting needs of WAG objectives in providing locally accessible high quality and broad based education in Wales Supports bilingual provision Greater security to both Colleges Responds to regional training needs will be enhanced in outdoor education in small businesses 	Provided a reference to the Strategy for the North West Outdoors Partnership which may be useful to the merger institution.
Henry Roberts	North Wales Economic Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive response to transformation agenda whilst benefitting FE within both catchments and North Wales generally Clear economic advantages 	None
David Jones, Principal	Deeside College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully supportive of proposals Keen to work in partnership Collaboration to ensure local needs are met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure development of Land-Based operation is fair across the region without introduction of nugatory competition.
Dafydd Jarrett	NFU Cymru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full support given the ten commitments Keen to develop infrastructure at Glynllifon to boost local economy Opportunity to strengthen courses in support of local industry and economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wider use of resources at Glynllifon, Further Land-Based development as key sector Create a "gate to plate" food trail Dolgellau campus to be further supported
Betty Williams, MP	Conwy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully supportive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on Bilingualism
Darren Millar, AM	Clwyd West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully supportive of enhanced services across the region 	

Grace Lewis-Parry Director Governance and Communications	NHS /CIG Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises the need to enable provision to develop and meet needs of learners reflecting linguistic needs. Benefits of merger are laudable and supported Efficiencies of scale acknowledged Desire to work closely with the new College in support of coherent and effective public services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merger must be Timely and equitable built on current expectations, without destabilisation.
David Scott	Conwy Local Service Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports merger 	
Professor R. Merfyn Jones, Vice Chancellor	Bangor University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome proposed merger affording contribution to regeneration of North West Wales, WAG skills agenda and widening participation. Seeks to work cooperatively within new partnership arrangements including progression routes, Foundation Degrees, shared services, future initiatives 	
Ifor Gruffydd	North Wales Welsh for Adults Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully supportive Confidence in Principals and management of two Colleges Existing good name of Colleges Both College can extend informal and formal Welsh for Adults delivery Greater investment in learning infrastructure especially at CMD Development of Welsh in workplace training in Dwyfor Greater critical mass enabling merged institution to utilise funding from centre more effectively Quality and delivery of WFA will improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further Welsh for Adults Adult Community Learning should include Welsh for Adults
R Geraint James, Head of Service	Education Services Conwy County Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant benefit to staff, students and communities Enrichment afforded by life long learning banner Excellent existing quality of provision at both institutions Learner choice Affords Bilingual development Meets need of authority's corporate plan and children & young peoples plan. Merger strengthens future service delivery arrangements across North Wales counties for schools improvement and delivery of other Council services 	
George Brookes, Head of Service	Education Services Conwy County Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full support of merger process Improved offer to students 	

Margaret Phelan	University and College Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support in broad terms • Significant benefit to learners • Strengthen provision in rural communities • Enhance bilingual opportunity • Financial stability and security for CMD staff • College opportunity to become a "Beacon Employer" • Welcomes commitment to adult continuing education in rural community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No compulsory redundancies • Clearly defined terms and conditions for staff • Harmonisation levelled up not down • Continued negotiations with unions
Ieuan Bryn & Rhianwen Evans	Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to protect bilingualism • High expectations of the merged College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thought needed to define translation services and scope • Need for substantial increase capable and qualified translation provision (estimated at 4 extra full time staff) to provide highest quality service. • Need for simultaneous translator • Structure of translation unit • Consider appointing a translation unit admin. assistant • Need budget for external services
Andy Bilcliff	NPower Renewables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full support to the benefit of students as a whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on bilingualism to be proportionate to need. • Staff selection must be for greater good of College. Performance should be monitored prior to redeployment of staff
Bethan Lloyd Owen	Careers Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive of development and sympathetic of approaches • Improved access to provision • Better outcomes • Desire to work with new institution • Bilingual approach and development • Development of High quality provision in a rural setting • Development of local College councils supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions strategic fit of proposal • Partnership rationale to be developed • Effective employer engagement • New NEET provision • Improved access for students via ICT • More full-time and flexible provision at Pwllheli and Dolgellau • Governance structure must ensure balanced and equal priorities at all sites
Esyllt Penri, Clerk to Governors	Coleg Menai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sees the clear advantages of both Colleges merging • Recognised need of CMD to partner with a larger provider • Both Colleges hold significant areas of expertise. • Despite all provisos, willing to work collaboratively with the merged institution in best interest of learners • Memoranda of understanding to be revised in light of merger to ensure open, amicable and effective relationships continue within any pattern of delivery in future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mention of CMD's alternative rejected approach to Menai in consultation document. • Coleg Menai remain convinced that merger with Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor could be better served by itself. • Glynllifon Campus development should avoid duplication or compete with Coleg Menai's established provision in Arfon, and avoid destabilising existing relationships with schools

Stephen Williams Students Union President	Coleg Llandrillo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student voice positive regarding merger • Will help broaden choice of studies for all students • Rural provision to be protected and grown • Welcomes opportunity to further embed work of SU across all campuses 	
David Rosser Director	CBI Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merger sits well with WAG aims for delivery in FE in Wales • Merger will benefit learners in the area • Greater scale of merged institution will strengthen FE presence and heighten the ability to invest in high quality delivery • Employer engagement will be strengthened in a large geographical area 	
Lord Dafydd Elis- Thomas, Llwydd	Assembly Government of Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An innovative proposal at the heart of the WAG transformation agenda and educational strategy • Allows an emphasis on responding to skills needs of employers , 14-19 learning pathways • Merged college will be able to respond to new opportunities in the delivery of Foundation Degrees • Welsh medium education will be strengthened • “Merger proposal is a dream come true. We will now have the leadership locally and nationally to bring the dream to fruition”. 	
Hywyn Williams, Corporate Director Life Long Learning	Denbighshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many benefits to proposed merger to North West Wales • Greater partnership opportunities with local authorities in Gwynedd, Conwy and Denbighshire to maximise opportunity and progression • Welcomes a strategic approach to working in partnership with other colleges and agencies in key sectors especially land based and Health & Social Care. • Welcomes College enhancement as lead provider for bilingual and vocational education and establishment of a national learning network and e-network developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No diversion of current resources away from Denbighshire
Professor Aled Gruffydd Jones, Pro Vice Chancellor	Aberystwyth University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of benefit to learners and the region in general • Could serve as model for partnership and co-working for other institutions in rural Wales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy to discuss matters of interest to both the merged College and Aberystwyth University further
Glynlifon Student Focus Group	Students at Glynlifon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive development to ensure the future of the college – it makes sense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College needs to retain identity or name (and logo?) • Landbased provision should be kept at Glynlifon (not moved to another site)
Pwllheli Student Focus Group	Students at Pwllheli	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the new college will be more financially stable, more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College needs to retain identity or name

		<p>resources will be available to students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater public profile • Welcome more community provision • Welcome more opportunities for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care needs to be taken not to lose staff expertise from Pwllheli • Need to ensure that all students in the new college get equal opportunities, wherever they are
Dolgellau Student Focus Group	Students at Dolgellau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members of the group were aware of the proposed merger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Students' Union should continue to exist and operate on the Dolgellau Site.
Iwan Trefor Jones, Corporate Director	Cyngor Gwynedd Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor can safeguard and widen educational and training opportunities locally, offering high quality experiences to learners at all levels ▪ Opportunity to make Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor's systems and structures more robust, especially its financial structures. ▪ Council recognises the good practice in place at Coleg Llandrillo ▪ An opportunity to develop an extensive and exciting curriculum for learners to widen the choice for local learners, and enhance experiences. ▪ Improved links with employers in Meirionnydd and Dwyfor building on CLC's strengths ▪ Council are pleased with commitment to safeguard the Welsh-medium and bilingual provision, and development of the Welsh-medium and bilingual services throughout the catchment. ▪ Merger facilitates development of learning pathways and ensure progression locally. ▪ Looking forward to supporting the establishment of the new College, and to working with you to ensure that the young people of Meirion-Dwyfor, in particular, have the best quality education and training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meirion-Dwyfor needs fair representation and a strong voice on the Board of the new College ▪ Support for education and training in rural areas, especially through the use of information technology ▪ Opportunity to share resources with other public partners and Council within specific communities; ▪ Recognised need to respond to local employers' needs ▪ The College to become full partners in the County's rejuvenation strategy, by taking a leading and proactive role in its implementation ▪ To foster and develop close ties with Coleg Menai, seeking opportunities to collaborate and share resources ▪ Need to forge close links with local secondary schools, creating a climate of co-operation and joint-planning
Mr T Elwyn Griffiths, Clerk	Llanystumdwy Community Council		<p>Raised questions for clarification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Coleg Llandrillo as opposed to Coleg Menai? • Will merger affect language of provision? • Will students be required to travel further to study?

Conclusions:

The wide public consultation exercise attracted positive responses from all participants who broadly voiced strong support to the merger, recognising the strengths of bringing together two willing institutions with complementary portfolios. Certain recipients were understandably protective of their own positions, however the newly merged College would clearly seek towards a collaborative approach to address the views expressed by its key stakeholders. All recipients noted the advantages brought by a single larger, stronger organisation in delivering a wider and fuller service to the regions' students and potential students. It is heartening to note the positive voice from respective student bodies at both Colleges and particularly the underpinning support indicated by three local authorities. A strong emphasis on bilingualism and the ongoing support of Welsh-medium provision in rural areas was also apparent in most responses. It can be assumed that those who chose not to respond were neutral regarding the proposals.

Overall, the ten commitments offered by both Colleges at outset sought to provide comfort on most of the points raised by recipients in the consultation exercise. It is clear that both Colleges have a genuine desire to collaborate for the collective greater good of diverse and localised bilingual education and training in North Wales. It is evident that much detailed work has already been undertaken to satisfy the criteria for a successful and seamless merger to be facilitated.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Prosser', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Toby G Prosser, JP
Clerk to the Corporation

Llandrillo College Further Education Corporation Board