

SSP 11

Ymchwiliad i'r Pwyllgor Llywodraeth Leol a Thai ar flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd

Inquiry into the Local Government and Housing Committee on priorities for the Sixth Senedd

Ymateb gan: Colegau Cymru

Response from: Colleges Wales

John Griffiths MS  
Chair, Senedd Local Government and Housing Committee  
Senedd / Welsh Parliament  
Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

15 September 2021

Dear John,

### **Priorities for Senedd Local Government and Housing Committee**

ColegauCymru is pleased to respond to the Local Government and Housing Committee's consultation on priorities for the Sixth Senedd. ColegauCymru is a post-compulsory education charity; we promote the public benefit of post-compulsory education and learning. We also convene the further education (FE) Principals' Forum, which represents Further Education colleges and FE institutions (FEIs) in Wales. ColegauCymru also undertakes research, policy development and provides practical support to FE colleges in Wales, including on work-based learning (WBL) which is a key part of FE college activity.

We have followed with a mixture of interest and concern the developments around the UK Government's replacement for EU structural funds: the Shared Prosperity Fund, and its pilot Community Renewal Fund, and also the Levelling Up Fund. As you are aware, a considerable amount of EU funding has been used to fund training and skills, including apprenticeships. This is at risk under the new arrangements, especially where competitive bidding is part of the process.

As the replacement funds are channelled through local authorities, ColegauCymru asks the Committee to consider investigating the efficiency and effectiveness of this approach during the pilot scheme, especially with regard to any skills or training elements, including adult community learning.

Over the longer-term, once more is known about how the replacement funds will operate in the future, the early years of this next stage should also be investigated by the Committee. An inquiry could assess how well such funding is operating in Wales, any practical improvements or



support that could be put in place to maximise value of the funding available (especially elements concerning training and skills) and how local authorities can develop successful bids that complement the employment and skills needs of Wales in a coherent manner.

It might be useful to consider joint sessions with the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee as part of any such inquiries although a major focus will remain the role of local authorities in managing replacement European funds.

Later in the course of the current Senedd, ColegauCymru would also encourage the Committee to consider how the new Corporate Joint Committees are operating in practice, especially in respect of their economic wellbeing activity. This should take account of the link between education, skills and economic wellbeing, including the role of adult community learning.

We look forward to working with you over the course of the next Senedd.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Rachel Bowen  
**Director of Policy and Public Affairs, ColegauCymru**