Future for Further Education

Policy Paper on Further Education in Wales

Spring Conference 2014
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Purpose of Policy Document/ Background

This paper has been approved for publication by the Welsh Liberal Democrat’s Policy Committee as a Policy Paper, for debate at Welsh Liberal Democrat Spring Conference in Newport, April 2014.

Within the policy-making procedure of the Liberal Democrats, the Federal Party determines the policy of the Party in those areas which might reasonably be expected to fall within the remit of the federal institutions in the context of a federal United Kingdom. The Party in England, the Scottish Liberal Democrats, the Welsh Liberal Democrats and the Northern Ireland Local Party determine the policy of the Party on all other issues, except that any or all of them may confer this power upon the Federal Party in any specified area or areas. The Party in England has chosen to pass up policy-making to the Federal level. If approved by Conference, this paper will therefore form the policy of the Federal Party on federal issues and the Party in England on English issues. In appropriate policy areas, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland party policy would take precedence.

Many of the policy papers published by the Welsh Liberal Democrats imply modifications to existing government public expenditure priorities. We recognise that it may not be possible to implement all these proposals immediately. We intend to publish a costings programme, setting out our priorities across all policy areas, closer to the Assembly election.

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Foreword

Education is a cornerstone of Liberal Democrat policy and principle.

As Welsh Liberal Democrats, believe that education is a crucial means by which individuals can realise their full potential. It tackles poverty, it creates wealth, and it ends discrimination.

Further education plays a pivotal role in this. It stretches the education and aspirations of our 16-19 year olds. It brings new skills to our adult workforce. It supports and promotes vocational education and pathways.

Further Education has many outstanding achievements in delivering academic and vocational education in Wales. It has a unique ability to adapt to new demands. We must be sure that our policies are not overprescriptive and allow the further education sector the flexibility and operational freedom to respond to local and regional challenges. We must practice ‘linked up’ thinking, and ensure that further education provision is in step with the job market. We must strive to raise standards, nurture excellence across vocational and academic provision in equal measure, and aim to serve the needs of all stakeholders. We must enable the development of aspirational and inspirational environments for all further education, and promote excellence in teaching and learning.

Welsh Liberal Democrats believe that further education needs to be seen as an equal partner in education provision for the people of Wales. It is vital to achieve parity of esteem between academic and vocational learning. Further education traditionally places an emphasis on vocational education, which is a type of education that the Welsh Liberal Democrats are firmly committed to promoting.

Education in Wales is likely to face a variety of challenges that we will need to confront. The changing nature of work and knowledge in an ‘information society’, the challenge of raising skill levels and standards in the workforce and an increasingly globalised economy, amongst others, will define education in the 21st Century. As evidenced by Wales’ disappointing PISA results and economic performance, we suffer from a dramatic skills shortage. Further education is vital to efforts to rebalance the economy and improve the skills base of our country.

This paper forms part of our overarching education and skills policy. It builds on our schools policy paper ‘Putting Pupils First’; our higher education paper ‘Fairness and Freedom in Higher Education’; our report ‘Learning Lessons from the Pupil Deprivation Grant’; and Eluned Parrott AM’s spokesperson’s papers on apprenticeships.

We hope you enjoy reading this policy paper.

Aled Roberts AM
Spokesperson for Education
Purpose of Further Education

At the outset, it is important to consider the purpose of Further Education itself. The Humphreys Report\(^1\) set out certain broad purposes for further education, each being inter-related with the others. These include:

- "providing high quality learning via diverse modes of delivery to enable learners, ranging from the age of 14 to adult, to achieve their full potential;"
- "supporting economic prosperity by working in partnership with businesses, employers and other users and customers to meet training and skills needs;"
- "raising the aspirations of communities and of learners, overcoming barriers to remaining in or returning to learning;"
- "encouraging the development of active citizens, not only as skilled workers, but by instilling a wider sense of social responsibility;"
- "being major and proactive agents in the collaborative planning and development of the seamless progression routes for learners from the age of 14 onwards;"
- "widening participation through social inclusion and respecting diversity;"
- "supporting regeneration within their communities and region;"
- "working with partners, users, customers and the Welsh Assembly Government to achieve positive economic, environmental, social and cultural outcomes for wider society;"
- "putting the best interests of the learner at the heart of all decision making."

The Welsh Liberal Democrats believe this accurately represents the purpose and importance of further education to society and to individuals.

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\(^2\) Humphreys Review, p.7
Background Information

Further education has a long and unique history in Wales, often related to the need to respond to the employment needs of developing and changing local industries. It has continued to meet the challenge of delivering outstanding teaching and learning in difficult times. Further Education makes a vital contribution to education in Wales, which lies in its commitment to constantly strive for improvement, its diversity, and its ability to adapt to rapidly changing times.

Wales’ further education provision is handled by a mix of further education colleges and 6th Forms. During 2010/11, there were 312,450 enrolments on learning programmes in Wales’ FE sector; FE colleges delivered 77% (240,125). 41.3% of all learning activities in 2010/11 were Preparation for Life and Work Courses. Also popular were ICT; Health, Public Services and Care; and Business, Administration and Law. Only 3% of courses were in the field of Science and Mathematics, and only 1.7% was in the fields of History and the Social Sciences.

Two thirds of 16-19 year old learners study at one of Wales’ further education colleges. The majority of learners at these colleges, however, are above the age of 19 and study part-time. This will be discussed in further depth in the ‘Adult Learners’ section.

The importance of further education to Wales’ society and economy cannot be understated.

Figure 1: Learners by Provision Type, taken from National Assembly for Wales (November 2013)

‘Further education, work-based learning and community learning in Wales, 2012/13 (provisional figures)’

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Colegau Cymru (October 2012) FE Colleges: Key Statistics
Best deal for learners

Advice and information

It is vital that learners interested in entering further education are provided with sufficient information. One of the reasons for low take-up is ignorance of opportunities and incomplete/inaccurate information. Anecdotal evidence suggests that often learners are provided with limited information, often designed to encourage them to stay at their current learning establishment, as opposed to providing the best information for an individual to realise their full potential.

Regional consortia should play a strong role in providing information on local courses. They should be required to produce a joint prospectus containing impartial advice and guidance on all local courses and training opportunities for learners in their region. Joint prospectuses must be detailed, meaningful and clearly indicate where and how courses are run, and what options are available for online or distance learning. There should be navigable regional “web-based” and printed prospectuses, in order to reach as many people as possible. They should also work to encourage coordinated open days between 6th Forms and Colleges in order. This will help to provide potential post-16 learners with free and impartial advice in the most accessible way and information on the widest variety of opportunities for study.

Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership in association with local further education and sixth form colleges has recently produced joint prospectuses for businesses, listing colleges and course information. The aim is to cut confusion for employers on the many different courses and options available, provide quick and easy access to what is available in specific industry sectors, and show that FE colleges can offer tailored options to meet specific business needs. Employers can use the prospectus to find new apprentices or employees, or up-skill their existing workforce. Regional consortia could produce parallel prospectuses along these lines.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would engage with regional consortia to develop joint prospectuses and coordinated open days for learners and businesses.

In England, the UK Coalition Government has recently announced that it will separate A-levels from vocational qualifications in school league tables. This is at least in part in order to prevent schools and colleges hiding good performance in one while being weak in the other.

The Welsh Government doesn’t use league tables; instead, it uses the crude and simplistic banding system, which we have previously called on to be reformed. There is also the Level 2 criteria, which includes GCSE qualifications and a range of equivalent non-GCSE qualifications, including vocational qualifications. It represents a volume of qualifications at level

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6 Please refer to the later section on Regional Consortia for more details.
7 http://www.llep.org.uk/Collegeprospectus/#1
9 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-25778023
2 equivalent to the volume of five GCSEs at grades A*-C, but can also include GCSEs in English or Welsh first language and mathematics at grades A*-C.

We would include separate sections in school banding and level 2 criteria based on academic and vocational delivery respectively, allowing us to examine the difference between the quality of provision of academic and of vocational education.

It is important that this policy would be undertaken alongside other work designed to achieve parity of esteem between vocational and academic education. This in itself would help develop parity by separating the two and treating them as distinct and viable pathways in their own right. If we are to encourage people to enter vocational pathways, they need to have proper information about vocational provision at their potential FEI. Schools and colleges should not be able to disguise poor vocational provision with academic results. This would reveal possible weaknesses in vocational education, and encourage schools and colleges to improve their vocational provision.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would split vocational and academic scores in school banding and level 2 criteria.

Learner Outcomes Reports are "summaries of the learner success rates achieved by each further education institution in Wales".¹¹ They act as core performance indicators for the Welsh Government.¹²

Since 2011, annual reports have been published by the Learning and Skills Observatory Wales. Learner Outcomes Reports are an excellent way for learners, employers, parents and the general public to find out more about the outcomes of further education in our FE colleges. Learner Outcomes Reports are being developed for adult community learning and work-based learning.¹³¹⁴ Sixth forms, however, do not have Learner Outcomes Reports. Amending this disparity, in a workable manner, would enable better comparison between Wales’ different further education providers.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would investigate extending the remit of Learner Outcomes Reports to Sixth Forms.

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¹⁴ [http://www.learningobservatory.com/learner-outcome-reports-for-wbl-providers](http://www.learningobservatory.com/learner-outcome-reports-for-wbl-providers)
Flexible approaches to learning

A key principle of the Liberal Democrat approach to education is that it should fit around learners’ needs. We believe that new technologies will enable greater cooperation between institutions, and more individual learning, and Liberal Democrats would seek to encourage technological developments. Changes to the way we run our qualifications system, to allow learners to dip in and out of education, will enable them to take courses at their own pace.

Videoconferencing

Digital learning is a key feature of modern education. Many young people are comfortable with a wide range of technology, and Virtual Learning Environments such as Moodle, the national Grid for Learning Cymru and videoconferencing are all in use in Wales.

Schools could be encouraged to share teachers through videoconferencing. One teacher could teach learners at multiple campuses or institutions via videoconferencing, increasing the number of eligible learners, the number of courses each learner has available to them, and decreasing the cost for each college, which may otherwise need to hire a dedicated teacher. Courses could be run and provided where previously it was not cost-effective, widening provision and enabling learners to experience a more diverse range of courses. Higher education institutions could also be involved in supplying lecturers, teaching materials and facilities for local further education institutions, playing a more active role in their communities. This would need to be a voluntary arrangement between institutions, but one that the Welsh Government could support and enable to occur.

Such arrangements could help provide joint courses for rural areas and small schools. According to the ASCL the practical realities of joint timetabling and transport mean that some children cannot access broader choices, particularly in rural areas, and it makes “choice an illusion”15.

Transport is a key challenge for many in the further education sector. Increasingly, it is members of staff who are required to travel rather than pupils, often in their lunch breaks. 16 Pupils may not be confident to travel and study in other institutions17, particularly in terms of under 16 or under 18 learners or those with special educational needs.

Transporting learners to their chosen provision is costly, time-consuming, logistically challenging and can be unpopular with young people in both rural and urban settings. 18

Originally, the Welsh Government ran a scheme to fund videoconferencing suites, which has been said to have suffered from poor take up. While we would encourage and aim to fund institutions which do wish to set up a dedicated videoconferencing suite, the advent of voice-over-IP or video chat services such as Skype and Google Hangouts has made such online learning far simpler and more cost-effective. For this, classrooms merely need a camera and a projector, something modern classrooms often have already or are in any case substantially cheaper than a full videoconferencing suite, which would also of course be limited to catering to

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15 ASCL evidence, ROP [133], 9 November 2011, Children and Young People Committee
16 WLGA evidence, ROP [para 43], 23 November 2011, Children and Young People Committee
17 ASCL evidence, ROP [133]. 9 November 2011, Children and Young People Committee
18 South West and Mid Wales Regional 14-19 Network Coordinator written evidence, Inquiry into the Implementation of the Learning and Skills (Wales) measure 2009, CYP(4) LS03.
one classroom or one subject at a time. For the same price, multiple projectors and webcams could be provided. To enable this, however, best practice should be shared and regional consortia should be encouraged to develop partnerships between institutions.

It must be recognised that those who do not feel comfortable, which may include adult learners, must also be supported. While videoconferencing should not prove challenging if supervised, other forms of digital learning may be difficult – additional training and support would be necessary.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would encourage further online teaching and videoconferencing between schools, by enabling sharing of best practice

Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) Frameworks
The existing Qualifications and Credit Framework should be further adapted in order to develop a more flexible and comprehensive credit accumulation and transfer system.

Introducing more flexibility into the qualifications system would encourage more part-time study, by enabling learners to choose the length of their course and the speed of progression. They could break their studies more easily, and transfer between and within institutions to suit their own needs. CAT frameworks enable learners to accumulate credits from their courses and complete their programme at their own pace. The majority of universities already operate on a credit-based system, and such systems are used more widely and flexibly in the US. HEPI, the Higher Education Policy Institute, have proposed a ‘personal learning cloud’ that would allow the storage and retrieval of details of accumulated credits, certificated and experiences. 19 Learners should be able to accumulate, store and reactive credits, to enable transfer between courses [see below] and re-enter into education after a dormant period.20 Personalised packages of learning would help support disengaged young people, and allow them access to further study.21 This provides the basic level playing-field on which to build parity between academic and vocational, at least in terms of credit, if not of esteem—although esteem may follow.22

The Welsh Liberal Democrats believe that a Credit Accumulation and Transfer Framework should be developed, to allow more flexibility for further education learners.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats believe that a ‘personal learning cloud’ should be developed to store and retrieve details of accumulated credits.

MOOCs
Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are a new method of learning, beyond the traditional classroom. They have expanded dramatically in recent years, from a small selection of specialist courses to millions of users worldwide. MOOCs are online courses aimed at unlimited participation and open access. Courses are typically stand-alone and learners may receive certification and examinations to validate their studies. The Open University is pioneering this field in the UK with their FutureLearn platform. Bite sized courses are being developed as apps for mobile smart phones, enabling people to learn at a pace that suits them and when they can spare time. MOOC resources are being utilised in a number of institutions worldwide to supplement classroom learning.

Universities UK has recommended that higher education institutions consider the issue - including MOOCs’ role in diversifying recruitment pathways, particularly amongst learners from non-traditional, adult and professional backgrounds; how institutions can add value to free and low cost MOOCs; and how to recognise certain MOOCs for entry onto courses and toward a final award.

Learning from MOOCs, whether as a long-term course or a bite-sized lesson, should be properly recognised and accredited, if it fulfils necessary criteria. This means developing ways of fitting the modules together into meaningful qualifications. Organisations such as Quality Matters in the US provide a quality benchmarking and certification process for online courses. Five Coursera MOOCs were recommended by the American accreditation body for credit awards, the American Council on Education, in May 2013.

The existing Qualifications and Credit Framework could be updated to include course credits earned from MOOCs. Given the hours of study involved in completing a MOOC, it is unlikely that including MOOCs would necessitate radically overhauling the existing system, or challenge existing courses.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would investigate the possibility of accrediting MOOCs and integrating them with the existing Qualifications and Credit Framework for Wales.

The Open University has had a huge effect on learners’ ability to access distance learning, providing distance learning opportunities for hundreds of thousands of learners in higher education. Many universities and even some FEIs are providing for wholly digital learning. We would encourage more digital and online courses in Wales and a special body should be founded to support this process.

24 Universities UK (May 2013) Massive Open Online Courses, p.3
27 Ibid, p.78
A virtual Welsh National Cyber College would work with and through existing colleges in supporting online further education provision in Wales. It would be able to commission distance learning courses for FE colleges to utilise, and even accredit courses. It would help us develop more beyond bricks-and-mortar colleges.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would investigate founding a Welsh National Cyber College/Coleg Seiber Cymraeg to commission, develop and provide online further education courses.
Teaching and teachers

Industry Secondments

High quality and effective vocational education is crucial to sustainable economic success and a building fairer society. Further education is still the place where much vocational education takes place.

Two organisations have proposed schemes were vocational education in further education could be supported by local enterprises through

The Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning [CAVTL]\(^{28}\) have proposed ‘Teach Too’– a new scheme to encourage working people to teach their occupation in further education institutions, through volunteering a few hours of their time. The original business suggestion came from small businesses, as a way to collaborate with local FEIs by providing their time, as opposed to money.\(^{29}\)

CentreForum have proposed ‘Train Too’, a scheme which would target medium and larger businesses as corporate partners to enable employees to go on secondment one day a week for a term or a year, to teach their business to learners in vocational education.\(^{30}\) Secondments should be longer-term and a week-in, week-out commitment, not for master-classes or one-off events. This will mean secondees are able to provide learners with in-depth expertise, as opposed to a flavour or introduction to a career. While CentreForum acknowledge that smaller and micro businesses should not be excluded, this re-focusing reflects the fact that such businesses are likely to find it more difficult to be able to release an employee to an FEI than larger businesses, even for a few hours.

This scheme is designed to fill actual current vacancies in FE teaching provision with industry professionals.\(^{31}\) Thus, CentreForum propose a model wherein the professional secondees would be paid by further education colleges, at a further education teacher’s wage. Employers would be encouraged to top-up their employees’ salaries, but this would not be a requirement.

It is important to note that, similar to Teach First, a required list of competencies designed to test potential teacher effectiveness would be essential. It is also likely that applicants would have to take part in a full assessment centre to test subject knowledge and pedagogical competencies, with which the FEI would have to be involved. A one week intensive training course could be developed to provide a useful introduction to teaching for secondees.\(^{32}\)

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would launch a pilot scheme for a Teach/Train Too initiative.\(^{33}\)

\(^{28}\) CAVTL (2013) *It’s about work… Excellent adult vocational teaching and learning*, [http://repository.excellencegateway.org.uk/fedora/objects/eg:5937/datastreams/DOC/content](http://repository.excellencegateway.org.uk/fedora/objects/eg:5937/datastreams/DOC/content)

\(^{29}\) CAVTL (2013), *It’s all about work…*, p.37


\(^{32}\) CentreForum (2013) ‘Train Too’, p.34,

\(^{33}\) CentreForum calculate that a pilot with 44 secondees would cost £11,000 – with average salary at £29,733, colleges would pay around £2,000 per term for a secondee out of their existing funding. Training for the secondee costs around £250 each [Train Too, 2013, p.52].
Teachers Qualifications Framework

Good teachers are essential to good schools and colleges. We need to support teachers more, and give them the change to provide their learners with the best education possible. A Teachers Qualifications Framework (TQF) provides a framework for the professional qualifications and continuous professional development training needs of teachers and tutors.

The Welsh Government carried out a review of professional standards and continuous professional development and found that current arrangements are fragmented, not sufficiently robust and in need of greater coherence and improved collaboration between schools and local authorities. At present, Wales’ framework is dramatically out of date, and further education institutions face a choice between an out-of-date Wales-specific teaching qualification or an England-focused more up-to-date teaching qualification.

Teacher training teams in FE colleges, in partnership with universities, deliver in-service post-compulsory teacher training courses to new and prospective teachers. Unlike school teachers in Wales, further education staff in Wales are not required to register with a professional body. Such organisations do exist, such as the Institute for Learning and the Education and Training Foundation. Further education staff should be encouraged to join as an opportunity to develop their skills.

What is required a consistent and overarching Teachers’ Qualifications Framework for the further education sector, in order to provide further education teachers will the support and skills that they want and require. It should include a framework for personal development, which will disseminate high quality information to practitioners and provide opportunities for enrichment. This framework could also include the opportunity for sabbatical leave for teachers to train in new areas, and a fund could be developed to support teachers’ continual professional development. It would help teachers who wish to retrain and upskill in new and different subject areas; too often, substitute teachers are expected to teach outside their area of expertise without having been provided with proper support and training.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would commission an up-to-date Teachers’ Qualifications Framework as a matter of urgency, and work in partnership with professional bodies to register and up-skill further education staff.

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Adult Learners
An ageing workforce, the shift to a knowledge economy, and the implications which flow from that, are unavoidable and indisputable. Failure to recognise and address the challenges that demographic change presents would result in a further education system not fit for purpose or the needs of the economy and individuals.

The falling birth rate, raising of the retirement age and greater life expectancy mean that there will be a higher proportion of the population in our workforce in future. Already, 70% of the workforce who will be active in 2020 have already completed their compulsory education.\(^{37}\) Lifelong learning is an important way to cope with the evolving knowledge economy. Individuals have to constantly learn and update their knowledge and abilities to meet the needs of their careers. If skill levels are to be improved overall, there must be proper provision to “upskill” those who have passed, or will soon pass, compulsory education, and provide enhanced learning opportunities for adults.

Despite the needs of the business community for a higher skilled adult workforce, further education in Wales is not reflecting this. The age group for which further education participation has fallen the least are 16-18 year olds, while adult learner numbers have plummeted. Between 2007 and 2011, Wales has seen a fall of 41.7% in learners aged 65+, 37.2% fall in learners aged 50-64 and a 27.9% fall in learners aged 25-49 despite age groups 50-64 and 65+ seeing an increase in population numbers.

![Figure 2: Age profile of learners at Welsh FEIs; 2006/7 to 2010/11](source: Research Service calculations from StatsWales Number of learners by provider and age group; accessed 6 March 2013)

The Welsh Government has already cut funding for post-19 further education by 25% - with already significant declines in further education participation rates, this reduction of funding could result in an inability for Further Education Institutions to sufficiently provide services to post-19 learners, who form the majority of further education learning in Wales.

Several barriers exist to preventing adults re-entering the world of work. ACACE found that a ‘hard-core’ of non-participants were particular unhappy at school, and believe that education is not important to them. Furthermore, for many adults, ‘school’ is synonymous with ‘failure’ and bad experiences. We must combat a range of factors that may prevent individuals re-entering education or retraining – from the availability of a suitable training opportunity to lack of time. We must help counter an individuals’ own psychological barriers, which may explain not only when individuals are reluctant to take up training, but also why they do not express training needs that may be apparent to others. Schemes should be individually tailored – with people not treated as abstract or ideal characters, but “as concrete persons who differ according to their specific characteristics and needs”.

We believe that a cross-party commission must be set up to develop proposals and secure an historic settlement for adult learners, at a time of great upheaval in the sector. It should have an independent chair and have a remit to review the funding of re-skilling and lifelong learning and report before the end of the next Assembly.

38 ACACE, Adults: Their Educational Experience and Needs.
40 Ibid, p.6
The Welsh Liberal Democrats call for a cross-party commission to examine adult education and skills in Wales.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats encourage the Welsh Government to consider the wider impacts of their policy decisions on post-19 learners and to work towards achieving parity of esteem and of provision between 16-19 year old learners and adult learners.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats call for a more appropriate balance of resources between 16-19 year old learners and adult learners, providing opportunities for all individuals in Wales.

Additionally, there has been a 29% drop in participation in FE from individuals who reside in Communities First areas, which cover the most deprived areas of Wales.41 52 CF Clusters have been established, which between them cover the 10% most deprived geographic areas according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2011. The drop has only been 5% for 18 year olds entering FE, and 19% for 16 year olds, but rises dramatically to between 41% and 49% for those over the age of 50.

In order to tackle this drop, the Welsh Liberal Democrats would earmark a certain amount of the £38.4m Community First funding allocated for 2015/16 to provide for accessing further education courses for those living in Communities First areas. This earmarked funding could cover travel costs to FE colleges, small maintenance grants, or accessibility schemes.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would earmark Community First funding for accessing further education in Community First clusters.

Welsh language

The Welsh Liberal Democrats are committed to a truly bilingual Wales and believe the government must ensure that greater Welsh language usage is supported and encouraged throughout Wales. If we are to develop a truly bilingual Wales, then learners must be enabled to study in their preferred language, including in further education. Providing for Wales’ Welsh speaking community is of the utmost importance. As the 2011 census demonstrated, the numbers of Welsh speakers are falling, with only 19% of the Welsh population aged 3+ claiming they were able to speak the language.\(^{42}\)

In further education, we must work to promote Welsh-speaking courses, teachers and materials. In the higher education sector, the ‘virtual’ college Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol was set up in 2011 to expand higher education teaching through the medium of Welsh. Its main aims are:

- **To advance learning and knowledge in keeping with its constitution, by promoting, maintaining, developing and overseeing Welsh medium provision in higher education in Wales, working with and through higher education institutions in Wales.**

- **As a centrally governed body, which takes an overview of all Welsh medium provision, to provide unity of purpose, cohesion and leadership through a national strategy.**

- **To enrich, deepen and broaden the provision for students, stimulating and responding to demand from students and thereby increasing the numbers of students studying through the medium of Welsh.**\(^{43}\)

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol works to provide effective and accessible Welsh-language teaching materials, develop effective collaborative partnerships, and train a new generation of lecturers for the future.\(^{44}\) It uses new technologies such as e-learning portals and iTunes U, and distance learning projects, to increase accessibility.

This organisation is an interesting new development in the higher education sector, and we would seek to explore extending similar arrangements into the further education sector. Coleg Cenedlaethol Cymru costs £7m for the next financial year\(^{45}\) including £0.33 million for a scholarship scheme. There is already a memorandum of understanding from 2013 between Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and Collegau Cymru, to work together to:

- **Improve Welsh-medium and bilingual progression routes for further education, work-based learning, adult learning and higher education by developing, promoting and supporting integrated educational pathways that respond to the evidenced needs of learners and employers**

- **Share teaching and learning resources (especially digital learning resources) and innovative practice in pedagogy/andragogy in Welsh-medium education**

\(^{42}\) [http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-20677528]

\(^{43}\) [http://www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk/en/thecoleg/]

\(^{44}\) [http://www.colegcymraeg.ac.uk/en/ourwork/]

Support the continuing professional development needs to teaching and support staff in both sectors, and contribute to professional networks and relevant events.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would develop the role of Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol within the further education sector, including exploring expanding its core remit to include further education.
Additional Learning Needs [ALN] learners

Individuals with special educational needs (SEN) are those who have learning difficulties which call for special education provision to be made for them. This term is likely to be replaced with the more flexible ‘additional learning needs’ (ALN) within this Assembly, which can also cover ‘gifted’ learners.

Learners with ALN are issued with a statement. If the local authority feels that a child needs extra provision to meet their special educational needs, a proposed statement is provided. The statement describes these needs, relevant local ALN education provision, and non-educational needs and provision. There are currently 13,564 learners with a statement in Wales, as of January 2013, which represents an estimated 2.9% of pupils on roll.

Learners with ALN face a wide range of problems which other learners do not. Young people with ALN do less well than their peers in school and education. They are also more likely to not be in education, training or employment at age 18. It must be remembered that each learners with ALN has different needs and requires different support from others – we cannot allow our education system to focus on the ALN label rather than meeting the child’s needs.

The Minister for Education and Skills, Huw Lewis, has stated that the Welsh Government will bring forward a standalone Special Education Needs Reform Bill in the future.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats call for this bill to include provision for ALN learners in further education.

The transition between different stages of life – between school and college, between college and the world of work – can be particularly challenging for learners with ALN. The process can be unnerving and stressful for learners. Support networks at one level may not carry over and may be lost, there may be a lack of continuity of provision for many services, and transition planning can be weak and confusing for learners and families. At present, all learners with a statement should be involved in drafting a transition plan during Year 9, to help the young person prepare for a successful life outside of school. The Welsh Government has consulted on phasing out these plans and replacing them with Individual Development Plans for each learner.

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48 http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/additionaleducationalneeds/?lang=en
49 Contact a Family (February 2012) Special Educational Needs – Wales: information for families, pp.10-11
50 Welsh Government (June 2013) Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs: January 2013, p.1
52 http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/our-news/199874/
54 http://www.snapcymru.org/transition_for_parents_and_carers
Further support may be possible for learners with ALN, dependent on their specific needs. In order to ease the transition into further education, the Welsh Liberal Democrats would encourage: the use of ‘bridging materials’; the effective sharing of information by schools and colleges; visits to schools by prospective learners, along with supportive teachers, families and other workers; taster days and joint social events ahead of starting at a new school to build new social networks; the identification of ‘mentors’ in college and more. In transitioning to the world of work, trial work experience and voluntary placements and job coaching are important. Employability should be a common theme in ALN learners education, and further education institutions should work to raise expectations. A work-related curriculum for young people with ALN should be developed as a stepping stone to employment. A key worker should be designated to help clarify and ease the transition process.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats call for improved support for young people undergoing the transition into college, or from college into the world of work.

We will also encourage improved teaching for learners with ALN. Engaged and informed teachers are vital to help individuals with ALN realise their full potential. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in England has announced a new grant of up to £9,000 for individuals who wish to specialise in this area. The department has also developed a fund of £1 million, available as grants for high-level specialist training for those already working with learners with ALN, through continuous professional development (CPD).

Further Education Institutions often require outside support from independent specialist providers and specialist schools in order to offer the best provision for learners with ALN. Such support enables the sharing of knowledge, builds capacity and facilitates shared delivery arrangements. The Coalition Government has sought to set up clusters of FEIs, independent specialist providers and specialist schools to achieve these aims.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats call for similar schemes to be developed in Wales, in order to improve the teaching standard for ALN in Wales.

Learners with a first language other than English or Welsh

Another group which may need extra support in schools are those learners who have a first language other than English or Welsh. According to StatsWales, 185 schools in Wales have learners aged 5 and over with first languages other than English or Welsh. Only 36 schools in Wales are entirely made up of learners with English or Welsh as their first language, while 2

56 http://www.trinityfieldsschoolandresourcecentre.co.uk/resourcecentre/sentransitiontoemployment.htm
58 Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (August 2013) Money to improve numeracy and literacy teaching to young people was announced by Vince Cable today, http://news.bis.gov.uk/Press-Releases/Bursaries-of-up-to-20-000-offered-to-teach-maths-English-or-Special-Educational-Needs-SEN-690cc.aspx
59 http://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/page/who_we_are/news/article/index.cfm?articleId=309
schools (both in Cardiff) have 30 or more first languages, other than English or Welsh, spoken by pupils aged 5 and over.

To address this, support should be given to those teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) who have attained qualifications specialising in this field. Schools with high numbers of learners with a first language other than English or Welsh should be supported in hiring teachers with specific qualifications. However, there are clearly at least 185 with some learners who may need additional help in English-medium education, but not many. To help support learners at such schools, we propose further CPD in teaching learners without English or Welsh as a first language, to be provided on a similar basis as with grants for learners wishing to specialise in ALN. Teachers could also be employed on a regional basis, and cover several local schools which may have learners who need extra support.
Qualifications

Recognition of Welsh Qualifications

Wales and the rest of the UK’s nations have different education systems and qualifications, which are becoming increasingly divergent. Due to this, there is a fear that Welsh qualifications will not be recognised or properly understood outside Wales itself. Universities in England, Scotland or Northern Ireland may not recognise Welsh qualifications as equivalent to their own, and employers may not be confident employing individuals who hold new and unfamiliar qualifications. Internationally, there is an even wider range of qualifications available, and education institutions and employers abroad are less likely to understand Wales-specific qualifications.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would focus on continually improving Welsh qualifications, to ensure that the standard of Welsh education does not fall behind our peers in the rest of the UK or internationally.

Ensuring that Welsh qualifications are recognised and understood outside Wales is vital. While the Welsh Government has released a communication strategy, this has a solely national focus, and must also consider the international dimension of recognition of Welsh qualifications.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would develop and launch a strategy for communicating the nature and advantages of Welsh qualifications across the UK and abroad.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would work towards continual improvement of Welsh qualifications, to ensure standards do not fall behind equivalent qualifications elsewhere in the UK and abroad.

Vocational and Academic

The Welsh Liberal Democrats strongly believe in parity between vocational and academic education. Both must be provided as both as vital to the strength of the economy and supporting individuals in realising their full potential.

To this end, we believe in a qualifications model which allows for learners to receive qualifications of the same prestige regardless of whether they choose an academic or vocational route, or a balance between the two.

The Liberal Democrats, in the policy paper Learning for Life, have adopted a policy of flexible 14-18 qualifications framework. This framework would provide choice for different academic and vocational pathways but also allow movement between them. It has been referred to as a ‘Climbing Frame for Learning’, on which individuals can move ‘sideways and across’ between more vocational and more academic courses, as well as climbing upwards.

This policy is designed to remove the division between vocational and academic, and encourage learners to keep their studies broad. Courses should be designed to enable transfer between modules at a similar educational standard, from academic to vocational and vice

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versa. We should encourage pupils to elect vocational courses alongside academic subjects, ensuring a well-balanced education.62

The Welsh Liberal Democrats propose a climbing frame for learning, enabling learners to mix and match vocational and academic learning.

The Review into Qualifications proposed that the Welsh Government should adopt the European convention of categorising vocational qualifications as either Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVETs) or Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVETs).

Guidance from the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training defines two categories for vocational qualifications.

IVETs – general or vocational education and training carried out in the initial education system, usually before entering working life. This would be

CVETs – education and training after initial education and training, or after entry into working life, for instance to upskill, and leading to occupational competence.

IVETs are traditionally for individuals who have not yet entered the world of work. For learners at ages 16-19, either IVETs or CVETs may be appropriate. Adult learners may be more likely to take on CVETs.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would investigate the use of IVETs and CVETs as the system for qualifications in Wales.

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Learner Skills Measure
The Learner Skills Measure is a Welsh Government initiative, introduced in 2008, which aimed to address “the principle of delivering a wider choice of courses through collaborative working”.

Each local curriculum must contain a minimum of 30 courses, scoring at least 780. This must include a minimum of five courses, or at least 260 points, that are vocational courses of study.

While there is much to recommend the aims of this policy, in reality many pupils are not in fact able to benefit in practice from the wider choice of courses. The figure of 30 appears to be arbitrary and “reducing it to just as arbitrary a figure of 25 would not have much of an impact on the variety of courses available to pupils.”

Despite 30 courses being offered, it may not always be true that “all of those 30 courses are taken up or whether they have been able to run” due to lack of resources or interest. When a wider range of choices is offered, inevitably “there will be fewer students on courses, and some courses may find that there are insufficient learners opting for them to make them viable”.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats call for an urgent review into whether the 30 courses mandated by the Learner Skills Measure are actually delivered, and barriers into this delivery.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would urge that the 30 courses are maintained but that regional consortia are able to ask Ministers to disapply nominated aspects of the minimum standard if it is reasonably proven that local collaboration and clustering cannot provide the service.

At present, five of the thirty courses in the measure must be vocational in nature. As we move towards further integrating vocational and academic courses into one integrated method of learning, we will need to lift this criterion. It can also be argued that enforcing a certain number of vocational courses in and of itself creates an artificial divide between academic and vocational courses. It may also prejudice FEIs and learners against vocational courses: FEIs may feel that only have to provide five vocational courses, and learners may see them as less valuable

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64 Rebecca Williams, UCAC, evidence in ROP [para 69], 17 November 2011, Children and Young People Committee
65 Rex Phillips, NASUWT, ROP [para 73], 17 November 2011, Children and Young People Committee.
66 Joyce M’Caw, Careers Wales, ROP [196], 1 December 2011, Children and Young People Committee.
Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification

The Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) was introduced to centres across Wales in September 2007 – by September 2012, 75,000 learners were registered for the course. It consists of several core programmes: Key Skills; Wales, Europe and the World; Personal and Social Education; work experience; community participation; a foreign language; and an individual investigation project. It is offered at the Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced levels and is supposed to represent 120 UCAS (university entry) points, the same as an A grade in an A level subject.

The Welsh Baccalaureate is now a familiar part of the Welsh educational landscape. But it is not, at present, fit for purpose. The quality and value of the ‘core’ component of the WBQ has been questioned, by academics and the media.\(^{67}\)

The WBQ has been roundly criticised as actually being detrimental to Welsh pupils’ performance at university\(^ {68}\), and its 120-point tariff having an ‘inflationary’ effect on learners’ actual attainment.\(^ {69}\) Indeed, a consultation by the Welsh Liberal Democrat’s youth wing – IRCymru – found that an overwhelming majority of respondents felt that the WBQ did not help them gain a place at university, and in fact had a negative impact on their A Level studies. According to respondents, the WBQ took up too much of their time and negatively impacted on their other qualifications. Even the much-touted Wales, Europe and the World module did not provide sufficient understanding of contemporary politics and was deeply superficial.\(^ {70}\)

It has also been criticised by Colin Jenkins and John David, who developed the original Welsh Baccalaureate proposal for the Institute of Welsh Affairs, as it did not follow their model which was based on the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme itself, commonly known as the International Baccalaureate, is a two-year programme of education with final examinations, which is being used as an alternative to A-Levels in many schools. It is an increasingly popular qualification in Britain and worldwide. It was designed “to address the intellectual, social, emotional and physical well-being of students.”\(^ {71}\) Learners choose one subject from each of six subject groups – your first language, a second language, experimental sciences, mathematics and community science, the arts, and individuals and society. Three of these are studied to a standard level, and three to a higher level, with three additional core elements – theory of knowledge; creativity, action and service, and an extended essay.\(^ {72}\)

The Welsh Government has responded and made some limited reforms to the Advanced Level Core – the individual investigation project of the WBQ’s core component will now be graded distinction-merit-pass, and Essential Skills Wales/ Wider Key Skills will also be graded. This will lead to an A*-C grading system for the WBQ. However, the Wales, Europe and the World,  

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\(^{68}\) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-18045621

\(^{69}\) http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/welsh-bacc-inflates-pupil-achievements-2513441


\(^{71}\) http://www.ibo.org/diploma/

\(^{72}\) http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/international_baccalaureate/
Personal and Social Education and Work-related education are still ungraded. We would examine grading for these other key modules. [http://ircymru.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/WelshBaccResponse.pdf](http://ircymru.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/WelshBaccResponse.pdf)

The Welsh Liberal Democrats believe the WBQ should be redesigned to better prepare young people for life and employment.

Our recommendations:

- The WBQ should be offered to all full-time learners in the school and further education sectors but spread out over an earlier, but longer, period of study: from Year 10 onwards. At 14-16, the Welsh Baccalaureate should support a broad and balanced general education. At 16-19, it should support coherent programmes of learning.
- Pupils who study the WBQ at LV3 should not be required to study the WBQ if they wish to continue on to Higher Education, in order to ensure that pupils are able to pursue alternative qualifications which are more necessary to progress onto HE. The WBQ should not squeeze out other Lv3 qualifications.
- The Wales, Europe and the World module should be re-evaluated to include a sufficient level of citizenship and political systems education. This aspect of the qualification needs to be centred upon non-partisan political education, and citizenship, including Wales’ place within Europe.
- The PASS/FAIL marking system should be more fully replaced with a grading scheme that adequately reflects the pupils’ understanding of skills and the principles of the WQB.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would review the value of the WBQ and investigating developing this scheme or alternatives, including adoption of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme as the standard qualification in Wales.
Governance

Part of the way forward for FE is to collaboratively address further coordination at a Wales level and greater cooperation with regional consortia. (Thomas Review, p.13)

Regional Consortia

The Thomas Review and Humphreys Review discussed regional planning for schools, FEIs and HEIs. The Thomas Review found the development of regional consortia to be a positive step, with local authorities working in partnership to tackle issues relating to resources, capacity and outcomes.

Cooperation would ensure both economy of scale and the delivery of high-quality services. There are several issues which regional consortia could improve, presenting greater opportunities for leaners. Regional consortia would enable the sharing of materials, teaching staff and campus facilities, particularly between smaller colleges and 6th Forms and for vocational provision which carries higher capital costs than academic teaching; information and assessments of the labour market to provide guidance on what courses to offer; careers advice; continuous professional development services; and underpinning systems for back office administrative support. Projects such as a network of inter-library loans could simply remove a huge burden on smaller FEIs. It would help to develop a mutually supportive inter-organisational culture and start to break down competition between schools and further education institutions. Regional arrangements would create a model of interdependence and consequently a lead to a richer curriculum and driving up standards for learners. Regional consortia are ideally placed to promote effective collaboration.

Table 2: Range of functions undertaken by regional consortia, taken from the Future Delivery of Education Services in Wales: Review undertaken by Robert Hill Consulting 2013 (Hill Review), p.94.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>North Wales</th>
<th>South West and Mid Wales</th>
<th>Central South Wales</th>
<th>South East Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategic management</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back office and admin</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School effectiveness*</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy and numeracy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other specialist subjects</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT for learning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for 14-19</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for early years</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governance support</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR support for schools</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACRE</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring NQT training</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* School effectiveness includes: case services for monitoring and challenging schools, whole-school intervention, system leader roles, leadership and self-evaluation support, headteacher performance management, and support for closing the achievement gap.

72 Ibid, p.80
The Humphreys Review recommends that for each region a single collaborative group be formed in supporting partnership arrangements with other providers. The Thomas Review proposed four regional consortia to cover the 22 local authorities, which should have a clear leadership role in: driving up educational attainment and performance consistently across their entire region; ensuring close and effective collaboration between all providers in their region; and securing effective and efficient service delivery.

![Regional consortia diagram](image)

**Figure 3: Regional consortia - adapted from The Future Delivery of Education Services in Wales (2013)**

These should be underpinned by a local government political mandate, according to the Thomas Review. Not in order to form a new tier of government, but that individual LA education departments should acknowledge that it is essential to cooperate with regional consortia. Welsh Ministers should still provide strategic direction for curricula and provide regulation for consortia. These consortia should provide a strategic model that is both democratically accountable and of sufficient size to enable sharing of expertise and benefit from economies of scale.  

The Hill Review recommended that regional consortia should be required to obtain Ministerial consent for their organisational structures, annual business plans and outcome targets. In response, the Welsh Government has proposed a National Model for regional consortia to adhere to which the Minister for Education and Skills expects it to be implemented by April 2014. While we understand the reasons for this and agree that standardisation will enable consortia to establish a more consistent approach, we must also ensure that local authorities are fully engaged with regional consortia and that the capacity of regional consortia and teachers are enhanced in order to meet the challenges facing education in Wales.

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75 ATL, *The Response of the Association of Teachers and Lectures to Proposals for a learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2008*.
Sixth Forms

Regional consortia working and the outcomes of it will address in part the spare capacity issue in secondary schools and remove the present inability of some small sixth forms to provide a necessary comprehensive menu for their post-14 and post-16 learners. Consortia should look carefully at the opportunities of collaboration to deliver financial savings. These economies of scale and cost savings will be particularly useful for smaller sixth forms, especially in rural areas. Rurality is a serious issue for Wales. The Thomas Review (p.77) found that there are in Wales: 4 secondary schools with sixth forms of fewer than 50 pupils; 28 secondary schools with between 50-99 pupils; and 49 secondary schools with between 100-149 pupils. This is compared with 16 FE colleges which together cater for almost 200,000 learners. Colleges have developed literally hundreds of satellite and outreach centres to provide for their extensive local geographic areas, which may cross local authorities. Regional consortia could help in providing increased choice of learning for learners at smaller sixth forms, which cannot always provide for a suitable wide range of courses, especially vocational courses.

There is no firm optimal mix for further education colleges against sixth form colleges. Each local area with its own specific demographics and character has different requirements. We do, however, promote the support of both further education colleges and sixth form colleges, as both are important to enable learners to reach their full potential. Sixth forms provide familiar environments for learners through their academic progression, and can help guarantee Welsh medium 16-19 provision in tandem with Welsh medium secondary schools.

With more regional support, we can promote more local provision, as costs will be cut for smaller FEIs. With regional consortia able to take on more administrative and back end tasks such as labour market studies, CPD and more, smaller sixth forms will have less of a financial and administrative burden, enabling them to exist and work effectively in rural areas.

To help support smaller sixth forms, we propose investigating the Cambridgeshire model of further education and sixth forms. Cambridgeshire once pioneered the development of village colleges, catering for 11-16 provision during the day and providing educational and leisure facilities to adults out of school hours. The aim of these schools was to serve the whole community, stem migration from rural areas to towns and cities, and provide high-quality education services, a time of decline in the rural economy. Henry Morris, who as Chief Education Officer for Cambridgeshire 1922-1954 said:

\[\text{The village college as thus outlined would not create something superfluous; it would not be a spectacular experiment and a costly luxury. It would take all the various vital but isolated activities in village life - the School, the Village Hall and Reading Room, the Evening Classes, the Agricultural Education Courses, the Women's Institute, the British Legion, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, the recreation ground, the branch of the County Rural Library, the Athletic and Recreation Clubs - and, bringing them together into relation, create a new institution for the English countryside. It would create out of discrete elements an organic whole; the vitality of the constituent elements would be preserved, and not destroyed, but the unity they would form would be a new thing. For, as in the case of all organic unities, the whole is greater than the mere sum of the parts. It would be a true social synthesis - it would take existing and live elements and bring them into a new and unique relationship.}\]
The village college would change the whole face of the problem of rural education. As the community centre of the neighbourhood it would provide for the whole man, and abolish the duality of education and ordinary life. It would not only be the training ground for the art of living, but the place in which life is lived, the environment of a genuine corporate life. The dismal dispute of vocational and non-vocational education would not arise in it. It would be a visible demonstration in stone of the continuity and never ceasingness of education. There would be no 'leaving school'! - the child would enter at three and leave the college only in extreme old age. It would have the virtue of being local so that it would enhance the quality of actual life as it is lived from day to day - the supreme object of education... It would not be divorced from the normal environment of those who would frequent it from day to day, or from that great educational institution, the family... The village college could lie athwart the daily lives of the community it served; and in it the conditions would be realised under which education would not be an escape from reality, but an enrichment and transformation of it. For education is committed to the view that the ideal order and the actual order can ultimately be made one.\(^\text{78}\)

It could be possible for existing rural sixth forms to work in models similar to village colleges with proactive partnership working and collaboration. This could help make them more sustainable and help them engage with a wider section of the local community. Regional consortia and the Welsh Government could support them in developing such links.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats would pilot a scheme of village colleges in Wales, to help expand provision in rural areas and support sustainable rural sixth forms.

\(^{78}\) Extract from Henry Morris (1925) The Village College. Being a Memorandum on the Provision of Educations and Social Facilities for the Countryside, with Special Reference to Cambridgeshire (Section XIV).
Models of Governance

Traditionally, FE colleges employ a ‘stakeholder’ model of governance, in which a third of members of any governance board are drawn from business, and in which staff, learners, local authority, and community are all guaranteed representation.

In 2011, a report was published entitled “An independent review of the governance arrangements of further education institutions in Wales”, and commonly known as the Humphreys Report. It was commissioned by Education Minister at the time Leighton Andrews, and was chaired by Rob Humphreys. This report recommended an essentially ‘social enterprise’ model of governance, with a leaner Board, comprising Non-Executive and Executive directors, comprising Executive and Non-Executive Directors appointed on the basis of skills and expertise, rather than category. This Board would be the governing body of an FEI and inherit all its existing responsibilities.

This would be complemented by a Membership Body ensuring that the FEI has full engagement with its community. The Membership Body should reflect the diversity of the different communities which they serve, and include leaners, staff, local business and other strategic partners. These members should be suitably supported with a training programme, provided by the Welsh Government. This body is designed to provide enhanced accountability to stakeholders and enhance the role of governors in providing strong scrutiny.

Given the Further and Higher Education Act, FEIs cannot be required to adopt any specific form of governance model. Despite this, NIACE Dysgu Cymru believes that he support for the recommendations is sufficiently high within the sector for the Humphreys Report model to be largely adopted by FEIs.79

It is the responsibility of the sector to ensure its governance structures are accountable and effective.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats encourages further education colleges to review their existing systems of governance and ensure it meets their needs, and will promote the recommendations of the Humphreys Report as a model of best practice.

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**Costings**

This paper may imply modifications to existing government public expenditure priorities. We recognise that it may not be possible to implement all these proposals immediately. We intend to publish a costings programme, setting out our priorities across all policy areas, closer to the Assembly election. All costings in this section are approximate and based on best information at the time of writing.

**Train Too scheme**

CentreForum have calculated that a pilot with 44 secondees would cost £11,000, in order to train secondees in teaching techniques. Colleges would pay around £2,000 per term per secondee out of their existing funding. This raises the total cost of the scheme to £99,000, with a total cost of £2,250 per secondee.

A pilot in Wales of five secondees would cost a more modest £11,250. Ten secondees would be around double, reaching £22,500. The Welsh Liberal Democrats would seek for the Welsh Government to fund the initial pilot in its entirety, with costs passed on to colleges if the policy was rolled out more generally.

**Welsh National Cyber College**

The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol has a current annual budget of £7 million. This, however, also includes substantial salary costs. We believe that the groundbreaking Welsh National Cyber College could achieve similar aims within a smaller budget.

**ALN and ESOL teacher placements**

BIS has developed a grant of £9,000 for individuals who wish to specialise in this area and a fund of £1,000,000 for CPD specialist training.

The UK Government estimates it will provide the £9,000 grant to around 120 graduate teachers to specialise in ALN. It is estimated that the £1 million for ALN CPD grants will provide CPD grants for 400-500 placements, equating to a cost of £2,000-£2,500 per placement.