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4 September 2012

Dear Secretary of State

Demerger of the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry

I am writing to you following a resolution made by Plymouth City Council to request a review of the above. Despite concerns raised by a large number of stakeholders, the decision of the universities of Plymouth and Exeter to demerge the Peninsula Medical School is being implemented. Attached is correspondence with the Higher Education Funding Council and the General Medical Council which sets out the detail of our concerns.

Whilst respecting the autonomy of higher education institutions in matters such as these, we believe that the universities failed to engage in proper dialogue with strategic partners prior to making this decision which has importance to the whole peninsula. We have therefore requested that in future any decision of this nature must be taken following a period of consultation in line with the government compact.

The Council and stakeholders also remain deeply concerned about the longer term sustainability of the new Plymouth University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry, with reduced student numbers, fewer economies of scale as a result of the demerger.

In the light of the above, the Council would like -

- your views to whether the process as described in the attached correspondence provided a sufficient degree of engagement over such a decision and if not your proposals to address this in the future;
- to formally place on record with you our concerns about the sustainability of the School in Plymouth, which the Council will revisit should they prove true.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course

Yours faithfully

Bob Coomber
Interim Chief Executive
Plymouth City Council

cc Secretary of State for Health

Sir Alan Langlands, Chief Executive, Higher Education Funding Council.

Niall Dickson, Chief Executive, General Medical Council.

Professor Wendy Purcell, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, University of Plymouth.

Professor Sir Steve Smith, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, University of Exeter.