

## Evidence to the Education and Culture Committee on the Scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2015/16

### 1. Introduction

The funds announced in the draft budget for 2015/16 are in line with what was promised in the 2014/15 draft budget. As a consequence, the college sector is facing a fall in funding over the Spending Review period of **£30m** in cash terms and **£67m** in real terms if the college budget is unamended.

Financial Year	Budget Allocation	
	Cash £m	Real £m
2011/12	555.7	555.7
2012/13	526.3	517.2
2013/14	521.7	502.6
2014/15	521.7	492.3
2015/16	525.7	488.7
<b>Change Over Period</b>	<b>-30*</b>	<b>-67*</b>

Source: Scottish Government Draft Budget 2015/16, 2014/15, 2013/14 and Spending Review 2011 and SPICe Briefings

\* the 2015/16 budget is not comparable with previous years because the Scottish Government has consolidated income in 2015/16 e.g. ESOL and HE Childcare. Additionally, until the Budget Bill is passed the figures in yellow are only indicative.

The draft budget for 2015/16 also provides **£140m** to deliver two new campuses at Fife College and Forth Valley College. The Scottish Government has also set aside **£16.6m** for various organisations and sectors to deliver on the recommendations of the Wood Commission, which is an increase of **£4.6m** from 2014/15. It is stated in the draft budget that colleges are expected to contribute to economic growth by offering young people “*work-relevant learning*” that is shaped and supported by employers.

### 2. Colleges Scotland Response

#### **Question 1**

*Given recent trends in local authorities’ spending on schools, what are likely to be the main pressures on education budgets in financial year 2015-16? Will there be any impacts on pupils and families; attainment; teacher numbers; the length and scheduling of the school week; teachers’ terms and conditions; developing and strengthening links between schools, colleges and employers etc?*

#### **Question 2**

*How should schools, local authorities and the Scottish Government be preparing to deal with these spending pressures?*

#### **Colleges Scotland Response**

The current provision of vocational education for young people still at school in Scotland is inconsistent. What is available, and for whom, depends on local and regional arrangements. While there are excellent examples of well-planned, targeted and successful provision in partnership with colleges, not all schools/local authorities engage to the same extent.

Furthermore, those that are in place may be at risk from local authority budget reprioritisation. For example, in 2012/13 there were only 1,286 S3-S6 school pupils enrolled in college courses in the whole of Edinburgh whereas Clydebank College alone had 1,113 S3-S6 school pupils.

Ultimately, vocational education depends upon access to excellent resources, including staff. Many staff in schools will have limited industry experience and may therefore find it hard to enable young people to achieve the vocational standards. One of the key benefits of school-college partnerships is that pupils are able to access not just the resources, but also the expertise and methodologies which engage, promote and support vocational parity. There is a need to build on, and promote, the benefits of school-college partnerships and the importance of schools being able to access specialist resources, and expertise.

There was a sharp decline in the numbers of school pupils on college courses following a change to college funding arrangements for 2010/11. In 2011/12 there were 34% fewer S3-S6 pupils benefiting from college courses compared to the previous year and in 2012/13 there was a further fall of 13% (to 26,334 from 30,084)<sup>1</sup>. The funding policy changes also led to variations in the way that school-college partnership activity is funded. Some colleges deliver all of their school-college partnership activity as part of their Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funded activity, however, an increasing number ask for a contribution from schools/local authorities.

Consequently, there is evidence of a growing disparity in funding, which leaves the college sector with a lower proportion of the national resource and a lower per capita investment than is provided for the less specialised senior school provision. Such a disparity makes it difficult for the college sector to provide funding for school-college partnerships in place of local authorities. To address the risk of funding withdrawal and partnerships ending, Colleges Scotland recommends **establishing a national funding framework for school-college partnership provision** and services that can be adapted locally to suit particular circumstances in order to provide an entitlement for all school pupils. Such a policy would deliver on recommendation 6 of the Wood Commission report:

*“A commitment to supporting the development of Scotland’s young workforce through the enhancement of vocational education pathways should feature prominently in the National Performance Framework, Community Plans and College Regional Outcome Agreements”.*

Additionally, the failure of the careers service to adequately inform and support learner choice has undermined the efforts of schools and colleges. Unless young people know about available pathways then vocational education will always be considered a lesser option. Careers services need to engage with colleges so they in turn can support school leaders and teachers who inform pupils about vocational qualifications.

### **Question 3**

*Will the allocation to be provided via the 2015-16 Draft Budget be sufficient to enable local authorities to provide a quality education; meet all their statutory obligations in relation to schools; and deliver the Scottish Government’s national educational priorities?*

### **Colleges Scotland Response**

The recent findings of the Wood Commission concluded that the key to developing Scotland’s young workforce is having schools, colleges, business, careers service and other partners all working collaboratively. The government has allocated £16.6m to deliver on the recommendations of the Wood Commission, following £12m in the previous year and we believe the Education and Culture Committee should review how this money can best be allocated to deliver the recommendations of the report and complement the Scottish Government’s national education priorities. Specifically, Colleges Scotland believes funding should be allocated to the following priorities to deliver on the Wood Commission’s ambitions:

<sup>1</sup> SFC Infact Database

- £12.5m to double the level of investment in school college partnerships. This would ensure that 25% rather than 12% of S4-S6 pupils could benefit.
- Building on the success of the Energy Skills Partnership, investing £1m in developing sector skills networks. This would allow colleges to play an anchor role within a region to strengthen collaboration between colleges and employers.
- To ensure college education is focused on employment and progression in learning we believe an additional £10m should be allocated towards to delivering a further 2,000 articulation places. This would ensure that more college students who wish to pursue a degree programme are able to do so.
- An expansion of the numbers of modern apprenticeships (MAs) across a wider range of sectors where apprenticeship are not prevalent. As well as offering excellent learning opportunities they provide significant access to the world of work and can be a driver of economic growth. However, this can only be realised if there is clear alignment with key growth industries and colleges are given responsibility for its delivery.

#### **Question 4**

*The Scottish Government's national performance framework (NPF) "provides a strategic direction for policy making in the public sector, and provides a clear direction to move to outcomes-based policy making". How has the NPF helped the Scottish Government and education authorities move towards 'outcomes-based policy making' in relation to schools?*

#### **Colleges Scotland Response**

N/A

#### **Question 5**

*How do the Scottish Government and local authorities ensure that funding for schools is spent in a way that best delivers value for money?*

#### **Colleges Scotland Response**

N/A

#### **Question 6**

How are pupils, parents, teachers, and communities able to contribute to discussions on:

- the allocations that should be set out in the draft budget;
- how these allocations should be spent on schools?

#### **Colleges Scotland Response**

N/A

#### **Question 7**

How will the draft budget advance the preventative spending agenda in relation to school spending?

#### **Colleges Scotland Response**

Colleges in Scotland have responded positively to the Scottish Government's policy of focusing on college places for 16-24 year olds, with over 70% of college provision now aimed at young people. This has complemented school spending by supporting secondary pupils to enroll in college courses and where possible, delivering school, college partnership and in turn the preventative spending agenda. Although the funding levels announced by the Scottish Government in this year's budget will allow the sector to maintain current activities, however regrettably it does not provide the scope for colleges to deliver the transformational change to support all of Scotland's secondary pupils.

As detailed above Colleges Scotland believes that the following two issues need to be prioritised in order to deliver meaningful preventative pending outcomes with regards to school spending:

- reform careers services; and
- national funding for school-college partnerships.

By focusing on the entire learner journey, from primary through to tertiary, colleges in Scotland can deliver preventative outcomes and follow up on any good work done in the early years from primary and secondary schools.

Colleges Scotland  
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