



**Thursday, 6 February 2020: For Immediate Release**

**Comment on the Draft Scottish Budget 2020-21**

Commenting on the Draft Scottish Budget announced today (Thursday), Shona Struthers, Chief Executive of Colleges Scotland, said:

“Colleges Scotland welcomes the Draft Budget announced in the Scottish Parliament as it is the largest revenue increase in over ten years for the college sector. This represents a 5.52% cash terms increase on last year’s revenue resource allocation, and it is extremely pleasing that the Scottish Government clearly recognises the critically important role colleges have in delivering the skills and qualifications for almost 265,000 learners to develop their careers and the positive impact these institutions have across Scotland’s communities and how they help increase inclusive economic growth.

“The college sector’s revenue resource budget has increased by £33.5 million to £640 million – a real terms rise of around 3.6% – and continues to include investment for lecturing and support staff through National Bargaining as well as the £10 million investment for the Flexible Workforce Development Fund. The Draft Budget also provides the college sector’s specific additional investment requirements, including £11.2 million sector inflationary costs, an additional £11 million Scottish Teachers’ Pension Scheme costs arising from HM Treasury increasing employer contributions, £5.5 million for a sector Change Fund, and £1.7 million for free sanitary products in the sector.

“We know from Audit Scotland’s report, [Scotland’s Colleges 2019](#), that the college sector faces considerable medium and long-term financial challenges, but this increase in revenue allocation is a step in the right direction and will help colleges continue to provide high-quality learning and teaching which gives people the professional, technical and vocational skills employers need now and in the future.

“The Draft Budget 2020-21 also allocates £35.7 million capital investment to the college sector, compared to last year’s figure of £47.6 million. However, it is important to note that last year’s figure included £22m for the Forth Valley College campus build in Falkirk, while in 2020-21, there is up to £3m for the Fife College build. This leaves £32.7m for capital, which compares to an equivalent figure of £25.6m for 2019/20, therefore representing an increase of £7.1m available for backlog maintenance and lifecycle costs.

“The college sector’s requirement for capital is well in excess of the amount allocated, so we recognise there are challenges for the college estate in the years ahead, but we will work closely with Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council to source additional capital funding for the sector in years to come and ensure all of the college sector’s learners are taught in the high-quality facilities they deserve.”

**ENDS**

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