

Y Pwyllgor Menter a Busnes
Enterprise and Business Committee

Huw Lewis AM
Minister for Education and Skills
Welsh Government

5 August 2013

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru
National
Assembly for
Wales



Dear Minister

Budget scrutiny 2014-15: higher education and skills

In order to inform our budget scrutiny session on the higher education and skills portfolio on 17 October, I thought it would be useful to set out some areas that we would like you and the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology to include in your budget paper.

Last year's budget report

During last year's scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2013-14 the Committee welcomed the improvements made in the presentation and clarity of the Welsh Government's budget documents and the papers and annexes that Ministers and Deputy Ministers submitted to Assembly committees.

As was the case last year, the Committee would like to be provided with the individual Budget Expenditure Lines for your and the Deputy Minister's portfolios that are relevant to this Committee.

Programme for Government commitments

Regarding the Welsh Government's ability to deliver the Programme for Government commitments that are within your portfolios and relevant to the remit of this Committee, from within the current allocation, the Committee would like information in relation to:

- Details of the costs associated with the Programme for Government commitments and/or any work being undertaken to assess such costs;
- Whether these commitments are deliverable within the available portfolio budget and details of any areas where affordability is a concern; and
- Information relating to how the delivery of the commitments in your and the Deputy Minister's portfolios and their associated outcomes will be monitored and evaluated to demonstrate value for money.

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Key policies

Following on from our scrutiny of the draft budget last year, the Committee would particularly like to receive information on: work-based learning (and specifically apprenticeships); higher education student support; higher education generally and specifically reconfiguration (including details of any savings) and Welsh medium provision; support for young people who are not in education, employment or training; and Careers Wales. Other policy areas of interest to the Committee include: skills strategies; workforce skills development; and Jobs Growth Wales.

For each policy, as appropriate, the Committee would like to see:

- Details of the costs and/or any work being undertaken to assess the cost of delivering these policies;
- Information relating to how the delivery of the policy, and its associated outcomes will be monitored and evaluated to demonstrate value for money.

Preventative Spending

We are interested in considering preventative spending as part of our scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2014-15. The definition of preventative spending that is being adopted for this purpose is: *...spending that focuses on preventing problems and eases future demand on services by intervening early, thereby delivering better outcomes and value for money.*

With this definition in mind we would like information on:

- The proportion of the education and skills budget allocated to preventative spending measures;
- Details of which specific policies or programmes in the education and skills aspects of your portfolios, relevant to the remit of this Committee, are intended to be preventative; and
- How the value for money of such programmes is evaluated, with a particular focus on what the specific inputs and intended outcomes are.

Provision for Legislation

The Committee would also like to see:

- Information on the extent to which any Welsh legislation that has been passed, is currently being passed or is planned in the legislative programme is likely to have any direct or indirect impact on the education and skills aspects of your and the Deputy Minister's portfolios in the 2014-15 financial year, for example, the implementation of the *Learning and Skills Wales (Measure) 2009*, the *Further and Higher Education (Governance and Information) (Wales) Bill* and the planned *Higher Education (Wales) Bill*.

- Information on the impact on the budget of any UK legislation in the portfolio area.

With many thanks

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick', with a horizontal line underneath.

Nick Ramsay AM
Chair, Enterprise and Business Committee