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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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13 November 2008

*Dea Angela,*

**Proposed Learning and Skills Measure (Wales) 2008**

Thank you for inviting me to attend Finance Committee on 6 November to respond to the Committee's questions to the proposed Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure.

I enclose a paper to submit to the Committee in response to their request for additional information on the key assumptions which underlie the cost estimates for the Measure.

*Best wishes,*

*John*

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# **Finance Committee: Proposed Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2008**

13 November 2008

## **Paper from the Deputy Minister for Skills**

### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This note responds to the request from the Finance Committee for information. What follows provides additional information relating to the cost estimates provided to the committee in FIN(3) 12-08 (p4).

### **2.0 Background**

2.1 Officials have met with representatives of the 22 local authority areas and have agreed banding arrangements for the phased introduction of the minimum entitlement. All local authority areas have now agreed their particular banding. Agreement was reached on the basis that funding of £20.9m revenue expenditure and £11.6m capital expenditure would continue in its present form until 2012-13.

### **3.0 Basis for the estimated cost**

3.1 An analysis of post-16 participation data for the last 5 years shows an average annual increase of 0.2 percentage points per annum for a single year group. This increase has been projected forward in the costings. It is noted that 14-19 Learning Pathways policy, that the proposed measure supports, has been under implementation since 2004. It would therefore already be expected to have had some impact upon participation. However, a further increase in post-16 participation due to the implementation of the Measure for post-16 cohorts has also been included in the costings.

### **4.0 Cost of provision**

4.1 The Welsh Assembly Government has developed the National Planning and Funding System (NPFS). The planning element of the new system strengthens the link between learning needs and learning delivery whilst the funding element ensures that schools, colleges and training providers are funded on an equitable basis. The system is intended to result in:

- a learner focused approach to funding;
- parity of esteem between academic and vocational learning;
- provision being funded in the same way across the whole of Wales; and

- the ability to prioritise expenditure towards particular delivery
- 4.2 NPFS forms the basis of the costings for provision. It is recognised in the analysis that vocational courses may have higher costs associated with them. For this reason a weighting of 1.25 has been attached to cost estimates relating to vocational courses. It should be noted that at present work based training providers receive a weighting of 1.2 for provision funded by the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 4.3 It is also important to note that the minimum choice of 30 courses does not represent the provision of 30 “new” courses. The intent is for schools and colleges to extend existing choice to reach 30 choices. In Wales at present the average choice offered by a school at Key Stage 4 in 2008 is 24.

## **5.0 Learner Travel**

- 5.1 The Learner Travel Measure provides an entitlement, for eligible learners of compulsory school age, to free travel at the start and end of the school day. No such entitlement exists for learners above compulsory school age. The Learner Travel Measure does not provide for travel that may be required during the day for any age group. It is therefore necessary to provide travel costs estimates for circumstances where delivery of entitlement can only be effectively provided with some transportation of learners.
- 5.2 The policy intention is to minimise learner movement. Learner movement should only take place where it is the most efficient and effective solution to the challenge being faced. In this context policy seeks to:
- encourage as far as possible the movement of curriculum deliverers and associated support staff rather than the movement of learners. (e.g. a teacher from setting A travels to teach at setting B and C);
  - the promotion of “blended learning” combining elements of e-learning and traditional delivery to maximise effectiveness of delivery and minimise costs.

## **6.0 Learning Coach**

- 6.1 Experience from the Learning Coach pilot training programme administered has established the basis for the calculations on the Learning Coach function. This includes training costs and staff cover costs.