

**Y Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc
Children and Young People Committee**

Leighton Andrews AM
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Welsh Government
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Dear Leighton

We wish to thank you and the Deputy Minister for Skills for attending the Children and Young People Committee meeting on 19 October as part of our scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget Proposals 2012-13.

The Committee would like to make a number of comments for your consideration. We are also writing to the Minister for Health and Social Services and the contents of both these letters are being copied to the Finance Committee to inform its overarching strategic scrutiny of the Draft Budget and will appear on the Committee's website.

Capital

Members felt there was a lack of strategic vision and questioned how the Welsh Government would identify where capital was to be used. Concern was raised over the delivery of the 21st Century Schools programme, with the draft budget indicating a large reduction in capital expenditure, but no indication of how the reduced budget was to be allocated. Members also questioned why you were unable to advise on the capital allocation to local authorities to enable forward planning, especially as the Minister for Local Government and Communities had announced his provisional Local Government Settlement for 2012-13 on 18 October.

14-19 Learning

Members were concerned that delivering the 14-19 Learning Pathways may be challenging, with some local authorities having to restrict transportation for students in an attempt to reduce costs. Members were also concerned that this Budget Expenditure Line (BEL) was reliant on savings from elsewhere. They noted your suggestions to overcome these potential difficulties but remained concerned that you were relying on partners for a considerable amount of the programme's delivery.

You advised the Committee that regional working would achieve savings in a number of areas which you planned to transfer to front-line services. Members noted that these savings were dependent on the co-operation of external partners and were concerned how the savings would be delivered if these partnerships were not forthcoming.

Nursery Education

Members were unclear from the draft budget what funding was allocated to nursery education and what part nursery education played in the strategy to improve standards and achievement. As agreed, Members look forward to receiving additional information from you on the implications of the draft budget for nursery education.

Thank you for assisting the Committee in its work, and we look forward to receiving your response to the points raised in this letter as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely



Christine Chapman AM
Committee Chair