



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

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5 October 2017

Dear John

Draft budget 2018/19

The Committee has agreed that I write to you in advance of the publication of the Scottish Government's Draft Budget 2018/19 later this year.

The Finance and Constitution Committee (FCC) has published advice to subject committees on the scrutiny of the Scottish Government's Draft Budget. The FCC suggests that subject committees' focus on prioritisation, value for money, and preventative spending. The FCC also notes that all committees should consider climate change issues when scrutinising the budget. The FCC has also advised that, once again, there will be very tight deadlines for subject committees to consider the draft budget and report to the FCC.

Because of the expected tight deadlines, the Committee wants to do as much work in advance of the publication of the draft budget as it can to support effective scrutiny. The Committee appreciates that you will not be able to provide detailed figures at this stage. However, while the actual budget lines are important, much of what the suggested focus for subject committees is on policy choice and good policy decision-making.

Prioritisation

The Committee would therefore be grateful if you would outline what your priorities will be in the 2018/19 financial year and for an early indication of how these will be reflected in your budget allocation within your portfolio.

The Committee discussed responses to its report on Additional Support Needs on [27 September 2017](#). One member said: "it would be very good to see the

Government's response to the gaps that I think that many teachers and schools see, certainly in my part of the world, and, I am sure, across Scotland."

The Committee agreed that it would highlight ASN provision as a funding priority and ask how you will prioritise ASN provision in the coming financial year.

Preventative spending

The Committee would also be interested in whether you have identified any areas within your portfolio where there is scope to reprofile resources with a focus on preventative spending.

Value for money, evaluation and outcomes

Please also provide examples of how the Scottish Government and public bodies within your remit are achieving increasing value for money. The Committee would welcome examples of how outcomes are evaluated and how policies and programmes are improving National Performance Framework outcomes and indicators.

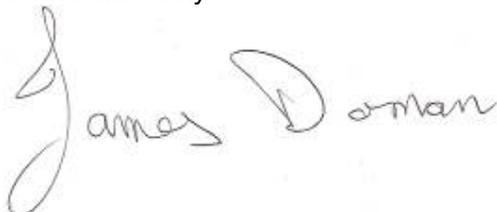
The Committee is particularly interested in what the impact of pupil equity funding has been, how this impact is being evaluated and how this will inform future rounds of funding.

Climate change

Lastly, the Committee would appreciate details and examples of how your policies and public bodies in your portfolio are supporting a transition to a more sustainable society.

The Committee would be grateful for a response to this letter by Friday 3 November. We intend then to invite comments on your response from stakeholders and members of the public. Our intention is that your response and any comments we receive on it will inform an evidence session with you on the budget in December. I will be in touch in due course regarding the date for that session.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Dornan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

**JAMES DORNAN MSP
CONVENER**