



April 6 2009

## DAVIES WRITES TO HUTT OVER FE FUNDING CUTS

SHADOW Education Minister Paul Davies AM today wrote to Jane Hutt about the cut to further education budgets in Wales.

In his letter to the Education Minister Mr Davies, the Welsh Conservative AM for Preseli Pembrokeshire, said:

“Dear Jane,

The funding cut in this year’s further education budget is a matter of great public concern, as you will be aware from last week’s protest outside the Senedd.

Welsh Conservatives, including myself, have spoken to and been contacted by concerned students, lecturers and college principals about the impact of this cut this year and for future years.

It is our belief that to impose this cut at a time of rising unemployment and as the recession deepens is reckless and risks long-term damage to the Welsh economy, skills base and promotion of life-long learning.

This could also put at risk the jobs of college lecturers and limit the learning opportunities of both existing students and unemployed workers seeking new skills. We also have concerns about the impact of this cut on sixth form education.

Colleges need urgent answers to the following questions:

- How many FE colleges do you expect to fall into deficit as a result of the cut in funding for further education this year?
- What is the funding shortfall for each college affected by the cut in funding for further education this year?
- How many FE college courses do you expect to be withdrawn as a result of the cut in funding for further education this year?
- How many FE college places do you expect to be withdrawn as a result of the cut in funding for further education this year?

- How many FE college lecturers' jobs do you expect to be lost as a result of the cut in funding for further education this year?
- What assessment have you made of the implications of the budget cut on sixth forms in Wales?
- How many schools with sixth forms do you expect to fall into deficit as a result of the cut?
- How many courses provided by school sixth forms do you expect to be withdrawn as a result of this cut?
- How many school sixth form places do you expect to be withdrawn as a result of this cut?
- How many teaching posts in school sixth forms do you expect to be withdrawn as a result of this cut?
- What discussions have you had with further education college principals in relation to the cut in FE funding this year?
- What discussions have you had with unions representing further education college lecturers in relation to the cut in FE funding this year?
- What discussions have you had with employers' organisations in relation to the cut in FE funding?
- What impact do you expect the decision to cut further education funding will have on the development of the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification?
- What impact do you expect the decision to cut further education funding will have on the standard of A-level qualifications?
- What additional demand on FE college resources do you anticipate from the continued rise in unemployment in Wales?
- Should demand for FE courses rise as a result of rising unemployment what financial contingencies exist to meet that demand?
- What impact do you anticipate the cut in further education funding will have on FE colleges' capital budgets?
- What impact do you anticipate the funding cut will have on schools' capital budgets?
- What impact do you expect the decision to cut further education funding this year will have on the Assembly Government's aim of increasing participation in higher education?
- What plans do you have to alleviate funding difficulties caused by the decision to cut from FE budgets this year?

In view of the public importance of this issue I am making this letter available to the media.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Davies AM

Shadow Minister for Education