Director-General Learning & Justice
Paul Johnston

T: 0131 244 2814 2814
E: dglj@gov.scot

The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

LEGACY 2014
XX COMMONWEALTH GAMES
SCOTLAND

By email to: Gary.Cocker@scottish.parliament.uk

Paul Martin, MSP
Convenor
Room T3.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

14 January 2016

Dear Mr Martin

PUBLIC AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT – 3RD REPORT 2015 – REPORT ON SCOTLAND'S COLLEGES 2015

Thank you for your letter of 18 December 2015 requesting additional information following your committee's consideration of my previous response. I hope the following is helpful.

Student support

You asked for a breakdown of the budget and clarification on whether this includes support in the form of loans. The further education (FE) student support budget runs to a little over £105 million this academic year (2015-16), comprising bursaries, childcare and discretionary funds. I can confirm that student loans are not part of the package of support for students studying at FE level; they are available only to those studying higher education (HE) whether in college or university.

This academic year, students studying full-time at FE level, aged 18 or over, can receive a non-repayable bursary of up to £94.52 a week, depending on age, family circumstances and income.

The breakdown of the student support budget for this academic year is as follows:

Bursary	£83,968,996	79.8%
Childcare	£14,258,400	13.5%
Discretionary	£7,002,635	6.7%
	£105,230,031	

Merger savings

You asked how, with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), we monitor and track the efficiency savings resulting from merger.

In Aileen McKechnie's letter to the Committee of 19 August 2015, she explained that £50m recurrent efficiency savings have largely been achieved through lower unit costs and increased activity. I am aware that the SFC, in its response of 26 November 2015, has provided more detail on how this figure has been derived. The relevant performance data in this respect are the college resource budget and the volume of provision both of which are monitored by the SFC and its board, which SG attends as observers, and through regular joint liaison meetings.

Additionally, as you know, the SFC will, through its current post-merger evaluation programme, gather information at college-level of <u>other</u> savings resulting from merger that allow them to operate more efficiently.

I hope you find this response helpful. I would of course be pleased to provide further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Johnston
Interim Director General of Learning and Justice