

Budget Boost for Public Services

Gordon Brown's tenth budget delivered on 22 March contains a number of measures designed to stimulate new investment in public services and infrastructure.

The Chancellor re-stated his long-term goal to deliver world class public services through investment and reform, while ensuring efficiency and value for money. The Budget announcements include further measures directing resources towards the Government's priorities, including:

- Capital investment in schools will rise from £6.4 billion in 2007-08 to £8.0 billion by 2010-11, matching today's level of per pupil capital investment in private schools. This funding will be paid directly to schools in England through a reformed School Standards Grant, increasing direct payments for an average primary school from £31,000 in 2005-06 to a total of £39,500 in 2006-07 and £44,000 in 2007-08, and for an average secondary school from £98,000 in 2005-06 to a total of £150,000 in 2006-07 and £190,000 in 2007-08.
- £585m of additional resources over 2006-07 and 2007-08 to provide further support for personalised learning in schools in England. Specific measures include:
 - funding for a nationwide pilot of 250 after school science clubs for small groups of Key Stage 3 pupils with interest and potential in science, supplementing the school's science curriculum; and
 - additional revenue funding of £10 million over the next two years to ensure that pupils benefiting from home access to Information and Communication Technology, through the scheme announced in Budget 2005, have access to the internet

Comprehensive Spending Review 2007

A decade on from the first Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), the Government will be conducting a second CSR reporting in 2007. In preparation, the Budget announces:

- plans for a national debate about how public services should respond to the long-term challenges facing the UK;
- further details of the next phase of the Government's value for money programme, including progress on asset disposals and a review of opportunities for transforming service delivery across government, looking at how the channels through which services are delivered can be made more efficient and responsive to the needs of users; and
- a review of the third sector's future role in social and economic regeneration, involving the largest consultation with the third sector ever conducted by the Government

More Funding for Sports Projects

In the run-up to the Olympics in 2012, the Chancellor has announced a series of measures designed to increase participation in sports and recreation:

- an additional £7 million for the National Sports Foundation from April 2006 to fund an Olympic themed programme for children: 2012 Kids;
- additional funding of £2 million will be made available to allow the Sporting Champions scheme to expand, from 2006-07; and
- £6 million for a series of national school sports festivals from 2006 until 2012.

Role of Public-Private Partnerships

As part of the Budget package the Treasury today also published a new report "*PFI: strengthening long-term partnerships*", which sets out the Government's approach to its PFI investment programme and to strengthening partnerships with the private sector for the long-term

The report confirms that the Government sees PFI continuing to play a small but important role in the delivery of modernised public services where it represents value for money. It sets out the results of the extensive research carried out by the Treasury showing that PFI projects are meeting public service requirements in operation. The document highlights the steps Government is taking to further strengthen PFI by introducing measures to: improve further the operational performance and flexibility of PFI projects; reinforce the assessment of value for money in PFI projects; and bolster public sector PFI procurement professionalism.

The full report can be viewed at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/1E1/33/bud06_pfi_618.pdf

For more information on the Budget link to the HM Treasury website here.

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/budget/budget_06/bud_bud06_index.cfm