NOTE OF KEY POINTS

- Sir Andrew Foster attended and gave a summary of progress to date on his review of FE Capital. He summarised the areas to be looked at by the review, listened to a number of comments from Council members and agreed to meet with Audit Committee Chair, Gareth Cadwallader. Publication of the review was planned for the end of March.

- Council discussed a paper on the funding options relating to the Capital Programme Review. In the light of advice from the Council, Ministers had agreed an approach that would allow the eight Application in Detail projects to proceed with phasing over a 5 to 6 year period. Council agreed the following actions:
  - the eight Applications in Detail deferred from the December meeting approved on condition that grant payments can be phased over five or six years, and that grant payments in the first two years were contained within the available budget (£67m)
  - authority delegated to the Chair and Chief Executive to jointly agree any variations to the grant support proposed for the 8 AiD projects as a result of the need to re-finance
  - the eleven applications also held over from the December meeting and other applications in the pipeline should not be determined on an In Principle basis, but should be considered with all other projects as part of a future prioritisation process
  - a small steering group of Council members to be established, comprising the Chair and up to four other members, to oversee the work needed to design new project criteria and a new process for prioritising future projects.

- Council approved a capital application from Rochdale Sixth Form College and Hopwood Hall College to be funded from the 16-19 Capital fund, and approved the reinstatement of 16-19 delegated authorities to enable small capital decisions to be made (applicable to the DCSF budget).

- Council noted the key recommendations from Council member Claire Ighodaro’s review of EMAs.

- The regular Finance and Performance report showed demand led programmes accelerating, but a predicted balanced position for DCSF budgets. The DIUS position was more complex, although a balanced position was also predicted.

- Machinery of Government changes continued to present challenges. Senior management were currently awaiting finalised details which would then be communicated to staff.

- Council noted an update on Risk Management.

- Council noted an update on Train to Gain, primarily around management of demand and response to the flexibilities.

- Performance on apprenticeships was improving with 19-24 and 25+ participation doing particularly well. Work was underway to implement an action plan on16-18 apprenticeships, with contingency plans in place in case of a less successful than anticipated summer period.

- The NAS was supporting the delivery of the commitment of the public sector to contribute 21,000 new apprenticeship places to the 35,000 target announced earlier in the year.