



**'By 2025 Scotland will be regarded as a world-leading learning nation' –  
Scotland's Futures Forum publishes project report**

A major 'futures-thinking' study which positions Scotland as a world-leading learning nation is published today.

Deliberately provocative in nature, the scenario-based report by Scotland's Futures Forum (SFF) aims to stimulate long-term policy debate by envisaging the future shape of skills and learning in Scotland in the year 2025.

The study, which was developed in partnership with the Goodison Group in Scotland, identifies two fundamental drivers which will shape society and learning in 2025 – increased globalisation and greater social inequality – and asks whether learning for all is compatible with Scotland's universities and colleges being globally competitive.

The study has been welcomed by leading academic and Futures Forum Director Sir Andrew Cubie as "one of the most important contributions to public debate" in Scotland.

With evidence and research gathered from 350 stakeholders spanning education, business and politics, the report presents four stand-alone scenarios, each of which offers a very different notion of the future of Scotland's education system.

The scenarios are:

1. **Market Driven Learning Society** - *In this world, the market is the driver, and the universities are the winners. Scotland has embraced globalisation, but it's everyone for themselves.*
2. **Local Learning Society** - *In this world, what matters is equality and social justice. People think local rather than international.*

3. **Global Learning Society** - *In this world, the government is leading the way to a learning society, teaching is a highly regarded profession and education is a key export.*
  
4. **Divided Learning Society** - *In this world, the learning society is divided and people accept that as the way things are and will be. Rising crime and social unrest has led to the creation of 'gated communities' where wealth is concentrated. The areas outside face spiralling deprivation, housing the 'precariat', people with poor or transitory job prospects.*

Sir Andrew Cubie said:

“The scale and breadth of this project make it one of the most important contributions to public debate in Scotland. It is the ambition of Scotland’s Futures Forum and of our 350 strong stakeholder community that by 2025 Scotland will be regarded as a world leading learning nation.

“The very nature of this project emphasises the need to look to the long-term. The four scenarios are not designed to predict the future, nor do they represent policy proclamations, but they are by their nature provocative in order to stimulate a new debate that will take us well beyond the next four year electoral cycle.

“One of the key issues that arises from this work is whether ‘learning opportunities for all’ can be compatible with Scotland being a global leader in the field of university education. There is no easy answer, but it is vital that we start the debate now.”

Louise Macdonald, Chief Executive of Young Scot, who has been heavily involved in the project, said:

“Scenario planning is a powerful tool, and the four creative scenarios in this work use the power of storytelling to engage and open up debate. We believe this project represents a serious piece of collaborative work that can have a positive impact on the future of skills and learning in Scotland.

“I urge everyone involved in Scotland’s learning sector to consider the scenarios and think about what kind of future they want for the learners of tomorrow. We will be encouraging young people to connect with this work and use the scenarios to get involved in the debate.”

Prof Graham Donaldson, Honorary Professor at the University of Glasgow, said:

“There is no doubt that the four scenarios identified in this report are challenging and will provoke reaction. But this substantial piece of work is about influencing how

policymakers, educators and employers approach the long-term positioning of skills and learning in Scotland.

“Scotland’s Futures Forum is not trying to predict the future nor is it advancing one scenario over another. It is posing the difficult questions so that we address the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.”

### **Background on the report**

The SFF inquiry ‘*By 2025 Scotland will be regarded as a world-leading learning nation*’ was launched in September 2011. The findings will be presented to stakeholders and politicians, including the Education Cabinet Secretary, at Holyrood on 4 February.

The four scenarios in the report are supported by a Key Questions and Provocations paper. The questions are intended to generate debate within the Scottish education sector, the business community and in Parliament. The report is also accompanied by a supporting ‘toolkit’ which will enable outside organisations to engage with the scenarios from their own perspective.

### **Background on Scotland's Futures Forum - [www.scotlandfutureforum.org](http://www.scotlandfutureforum.org)**

Scotland’s Future Forum was created by the Scottish Parliament to help its Members, along with policy makers, businesses, academics, and the wider community of Scotland, look beyond immediate horizons, to some of the challenges and opportunities we will face in the future.

Looking beyond the four year electoral cycle and away from party politics, the forum seeks to stimulate public debate in Scotland, bringing fresh perspectives, ideas and creativity on how we might prepare for the future now.

### **SFF Board of Directors**

- The Rt Hon Tricia Marwick MSP, Presiding Officer, Scottish Parliament
- Aileen McLeod MSP
- Alex Johnstone MSP
- Lady Susan Rice, Managing Director, Lloyds Banking Group, Scotland
- Anne Douglas, Prospect National Secretary for Scotland and Chairperson of the Scottish Union Learning Board
- Sir Andrew Cubie CBE, Chair of the Goodison Group in Scotland and Chair, Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership
- Professor Sir Ian Diamond, Principal and Vice Chancellor of Aberdeen University

- Paul Grice, Scotland's Futures Forum Company Secretary and Clerk / Chief Executive of the Scottish Parliament

Scotland's Futures Forum has strategically linked with the Goodison Group in Scotland in the area of learning and skills, to deliver this major project.

**Background on The Goodison Group in Scotland** – [www.ggis.org.uk](http://www.ggis.org.uk)

The Goodison Group in Scotland (GGiS) was formed in 2005 by founder member and Chair Sir Andrew Cubie CBE and Brian Stevens. The establishment of GGiS was inspired by the work of the Goodison Group, set up in England by Sir Nicholas Goodison and Brian Stevens as a programme of FEdS Consultancy Ltd.

The overarching aim of The Goodison Group is to influence debate and practice in business, government and education on the changing nature of learning in the 21st century. It does this by bringing together experienced people from the worlds of business, government and education to focus on particular themes to do with learning, skills and productivity.

GGiS Board of Directors include:

- Sir Andrew Cubie (Chair)
- Mark Batho
- Dugdale Bradley
- Prof Graham Donaldson
- Brian Stevens (Company Secretary)

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