CABINET

HIGHER EDUCATION WITHIN THE FURTHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

NOTE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

I am circulating for the information of my colleagues a draft White Paper entitled "A Plan for Polytechnics and Other Colleges—Higher Education in the Further Education System". It has already been cleared with the Social Services Committee.

The White Paper is due to be published on Tuesday, 24th May, 1966.

C. A. R. C.

Department of Education and Science, W.I.,
13th May, 1966.
A Plan for Polytechnics and other Colleges
A PLAN FOR POLYTECHNICS AND OTHER COLLEGES

Higher Education in the Further Education System

INTRODUCTION

1. Much has changed since the White Paper of 1956 on Technical Education* and the introduction of the four-tier system of Colleges of Advanced Technology, Regional Colleges, Area Colleges and Local Colleges. Following the recommendations of the Committee on Higher Education† in 1963, under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins the Colleges of Advanced Technology have been transferred to the university sector, and the Council for National Academic Awards has been established to provide degrees for students in non-university institutions. In a recent report the National Advisory Council on Education for Industry and Commerce has drawn attention to the need for the further concentration of courses in the interests of the most effective use of resources. And the present Government have committed themselves to an even greater expansion of higher education than was forecast in the Robbins report. They have announced their intention of developing a distinctive sector of higher education within the Further Education system to complement the universities and colleges of education.

2. It is now necessary in the light of these developments to review the existing pattern of provision of higher education in the Further Education system of England and Wales. This the Government have done in consultation with the national bodies representing the local education authorities and the teachers in technical colleges, and with the National Advisory Council on Education for Industry and Commerce and the Council for National Academic Awards. Valuable help has been received from an informal advisory group under the chairmanship of the then Joint Minister of State for Education and Science, Mr. Reg Prentice, M.P., consisting of individuals with experience of further education and of industry. The Government now propose a further evolution of the present pattern on the lines outlined in this White Paper.

3. The Government and the local education authorities have been putting substantial and increasing resources into the technical, commercial and art colleges since the White Paper of 1956 was published. The object of developing a new pattern now is to see that the rapidly mounting demand for higher education within the system of Further Education is met in such a way as to make the best possible use of these resources without prejudicing opportunities for the tens of thousands of less advanced students who wish to take courses at intermediate and lower levels. The Government believe that this can best be done by concentrating full-time courses of higher education as far as practicable in a limited number of strong centres with the staff, buildings and equipment needed both to achieve and maintain high standards and to provide the right setting for an active community of staff and students.

* Cmd. 9703. † Cmd. 2154.
4. Within higher education there are two other sets of students no less important than those who have the time and ability to take full-time or sandwich courses of degree standard. The first are those who are seeking a qualification that requires a course of higher education which is below degree standard; the second are the many thousands of students who, being already in employment, can find time only for part-time day and/or evening courses, whether they lead to a degree or to a qualification below that standard. The Government believe it to be of the utmost importance that the leading colleges concerned with higher education should be comprehensive in the sense that they plan their provision of courses to meet the needs of students in all three categories. The comprehensive range and character of the work of these centres will broadly distinguish them from other kinds of higher education institution. As mixed communities of full-time and part-time teachers and students, they will as a whole have closer and more direct links with industry, business and the professions.

THE PRESENT POSITION

5. Last year there were about 40,000 full-time and sandwich students in advanced courses in technical, commercial and art colleges in England and Wales. Of these students nearly 12,000 were working for degrees and 8,000 for the Higher National Diploma (H.N.D.); almost half were sandwich students. About 7,000 of them were studying art. A further measure of the substantial scale of provision is that more than 100,000 students were studying to obtain recognised qualifications by attending part-time day and evening courses at an advanced level. Of these about 2,500 were working for degrees and more than 50,000 for Higher National Certificates (H.N.C.). These figures represent a remarkable achievement on the part of local education authorities and colleges. By their foresight and vigour in recent years they have expanded provision in anticipation of the growing demand and simultaneously improved standards. This has set a firm foundation on which to build for the future.

6. All but one of the 25 Regional Colleges and more than 30 Area Colleges and Colleges of Commerce are offering full-time degree courses. About 100 other colleges are providing full-time advanced courses and a similar number offer only part-time courses at the same level. This does not include 40 Colleges of Art engaged in advanced work.

7. The volume of advanced work varies greatly from college to college. 25 have more than 500 full-time students; seven have more than 1,000. At one extreme eight colleges have over 500 full-time degree students; at the other are nine colleges with fewer than 50 such students.

8. The figures given in the preceding paragraphs refer to students in courses which are classified as “advanced” in the statistics of the Department of Education and Science. There are also growing numbers of students of 18 and over in other courses which are above G.C.E. Advanced level in standard but are not classified as “advanced”. References to “higher education” in this White Paper include courses of this type.
FUTURE NEEDS

9. The National Plan* (paragraph 23, page 198) makes clear the Government's intention that there should be available in 1969/70 in Great Britain places for over 70,000 full-time and sandwich students following advanced courses in institutions of further education. This compares with the estimate of 51,000 by 1973/74 put forward in the Report of the Committee on Higher Education. Over 60,000 of these places will be in England and Wales. This does not include the provision needed for the students referred to in paragraph 8 above. These combined demands for full-time and sandwich courses are likely to increase still further during the nineteen-seventies. Numbers of part-time students are also expected to increase, though not at the same rate.

FUTURE PATTERN

10. It will be possible to meet these rapidly expanding needs and at the same time to provide properly for the no less important needs of students at other levels only if a greater concentration of full-time higher education can be secured. The effect of distributing it as widely as at present is that many departments and colleges are too small to sustain high academic standards and to provide a satisfactory corporate life. This also involves an uneconomical use of resources—not least of teachers qualified to undertake the higher levels of work. A considerable measure of concentration is therefore essential.

POLYTECHNICS

11. The Government believe that the best results will be achieved by developing higher education on polytechnic lines wherever practicable. This will enable staff and students to enjoy the advantage of belonging to institutions offering a wide variety of disciplines and it will concentrate expensive resources in fewer centres. The Secretary of State for Education and Science therefore proposes, in full consultation with the Regional Advisory Councils for Further Education, to designate a limited number of major centres in which a wider range of both full-time and part-time courses can be developed. As comprehensive academic communities they will be expected to cater for students at all levels of higher education.

12. In so designating the Secretary of State will take account of the likely demand for higher education places, the needs of industry, the availability of lodgings and other residential provision, and the desirability of achieving a reasonably balanced provision in different fields of study over the country as a whole. Special attention will be given to the claims of Regional and other colleges which have already established a reputation as centres of higher education and at which highly qualified staff have been appointed and substantial capital resources committed. It is proposed that as a generic term these major centres should be called "Polytechnics". This will not prevent particular institutions from using their present or other titles.

13. In some places the right course will be to develop a single college as a Polytechnic. But where two or more colleges in the same or neighbouring local education authority areas are substantially engaged in higher education

the authorities concerned will be encouraged to link them to form a stronger and better balanced unit. This might occur by the merger of existing colleges or of part of their work: in other cases some form of federal structure may be appropriate. Care will be taken to respect existing relationships and to take into account special needs in particular fields of study.

14. The Secretary of State aims to settle the list of Polytechnics for about ten years and not to add to it within this period. The purpose of this policy is to give the authorities and colleges concerned a firm foundation for the development of the designated colleges and to guide individual authorities, the Regional Advisory Councils and the Department of Education and Science in the allocation of resources. Other authorities and colleges will also know where they stand and will be able to concentrate on their responsibilities for other categories of students.

15. When, after considering the advice of the Regional Advisory Council and any views that may be submitted by the Regional Economic Planning Council the Secretary of State has decided in principle upon the establishment of a Polytechnic, the local education authority or authorities concerned will be invited to submit proposals for its constitution and development. Designation will be given only when the Secretary of State is satisfied that the proposed Polytechnic will be capable of making an effective long-term contribution as a major centre of higher education. He will wish in particular to be satisfied that there are proper plans for the development of the work in appropriate fields of study on the comprehensive lines described above, and that wherever appropriate possibilities of merger or other arrangements for closer association between colleges have been fully explored. He will also need to be satisfied that the government of the Polytechnic will be on acceptable lines (see paragraph 25). But full account will be taken of variations in circumstances, and there may be exceptional cases requiring special treatment. Where appropriate, designation will be provisional in the first instance.

16. In the long term the Polytechnics will be expected to concentrate wholly or largely on students of 18 and over pursuing courses of higher education. Courses at other levels, however, may well continue for some time while the demand from higher education students is growing and pending the provision of satisfactory alternative facilities elsewhere.

17. It is impossible to give any exact indication of the size that a Polytechnic should aim at achieving by a given date. This will depend both on the level of regional and national demand and on the resources that can be provided from time to time. It is unlikely, however, that the full educational and economic advantages of developments on polytechnic lines will be secured in institutions with less than about 2,000 full-time students and, while there may be exceptions, the Polytechnics will normally be expected to have in mind long-term plans for growth to at least 2,000 full-time students plus part-time students from the areas they serve.

18. The number of colleges to be designated as Polytechnics has not been fixed precisely in advance. It is an essential part of the Government's policy that the selection shall be made in full consultation with Regional Advisory Councils and local education authorities, and the number will also be affected
by the extent to which it is possible to form mergers or federations. The Appendix contains a summary of the preliminary proposals which are being sent to Regional Advisory Councils for consideration and gives an indication of the limited number of Polytechnics that the Secretary of State is contemplating.

OTHER CENTRES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

19. While the aim of policy is that full-time and sandwich courses should as far as practicable be concentrated in the Polytechnics it is not intended that they should have a monopoly of full-time higher education within the Further Education system. Their work will need to be supplemented by that of many other colleges, particularly in specialist fields, and it is obvious that higher education courses for part-time students will need to be distributed over a still larger number of colleges.

SPECIALIST CENTRES

20. Special consideration will be given to the position of art and other colleges which already have established reputations in specialist fields and to which substantial resources have been committed. In some cases the best arrangement may be to include the college (or the relevant part of its work) in a Polytechnic; and in others the college may be able to establish academic links with a suitable Polytechnic. Full-time courses of higher education in specific professional fields such as art, architecture, agriculture, social work, management studies, nautical studies, institutional management and catering, which are already recognised under nationally settled arrangements, will continue if the need for them can be established in terms of current criteria for the approval of courses. After progress has been made with the designation of Polytechnics the Secretary of State proposes, however, to review the provision in these fields with the bodies concerned with a view to deciding whether any changes should be made in the existing pattern.

FULL-TIME HIGHER EDUCATION AT OTHER COLLEGES

21. Existing courses will continue until they have been completed by students already in them or arrangements can be made to place the students in other courses.

22. Full-time higher education must also continue where there are special needs which cannot be met by the Polytechnics and specialist centres, and where there is adequate student support. These needs may be due to special local circumstances, the impracticability of transfer to a Polytechnic until additional accommodation becomes available, or student demand that cannot be catered for otherwise. The test of need will be whether a proposal to continue or to launch a course satisfies the criteria for the approval of courses in force from time to time. It is not, however, proposed that colleges not already engaged in full-time higher education shall embark on it save in exceptional circumstances. (The criteria currently in force are set out in Circular 11/66 issued by the Department of Education and Science on 12th April, 1966, and the report that accompanied it on Size of Classes and Approval of Further Education Courses of the Committee on Technical College Resources appointed by the National Advisory Council on Education for Industry and Commerce.)
PART-TIME HIGHER EDUCATION

23. In view of the travelling difficulties of many part-time students there must be a wider distribution of part-time courses and while everything possible should be done to enable part-time higher education students to take advantage of the facilities of the major centres, it is intended that colleges at present offering H.N.C. and other part-time higher education courses shall continue them subject to the criteria for approval in force from time to time. Regional Advisory Councils and authorities will, however, be asked to examine the scope for the further concentration of particular fields of study at selected colleges in order to improve educational standards and to secure the most effective use of resources while taking reasonable account of the travelling difficulties of part-time students. Colleges not already engaged in part-time higher education should not undertake it in the absence of exceptional circumstances.

24. Proposals for part-time degree courses will not be entertained from colleges which have no full-time higher education courses unless the course is to be conducted in close association with a Polytechnic or other college that is offering degree courses in the same field.

GOVERNMENT OF COLLEGES

25. Separate consideration is being given to the pattern of government and academic organisation appropriate to colleges engaged in full-time or part-time higher education, and the representative bodies will shortly be consulted about the guidance which should be given on this subject. It will be a condition of the designation of Polytechnics that their arrangements are consistent with those recommended.

RELATIONS BETWEEN POLYTECHNICS AND OTHER COLLEGES

26. There will be great educational benefit in the establishment of close academic and other links between the Polytechnics and other colleges engaged in higher education, whether full-time or part-time, within the surrounding area. Authorities which are invited to prepare schemes for the establishment of Polytechnics will be asked to take this into account, and the Secretary of State hopes that all concerned will co-operate in developing such links to the fullest practicable extent. The Secretary of State is also anxious that mutually advantageous links with universities shall be developed through sharing of staff, joint use of communal and other facilities and in other ways.

27. The Government believe that by contributing to the more economic use of the resources available for further education generally the new arrangements will be of great benefit to all colleges and not only to those which are engaged in full-time or part-time higher education. The courses which are offered at other levels are no less important to the community, and the existing area and local colleges in particular will have a special responsibility for meeting the rapid increases in demand that will result from the Industrial Training Act. Their invaluable contribution to the educational and economic needs of the nation must in no way be prejudiced by the development of higher education. The Government will continue to give them all possible support.
28. (i) The decision to develop and expand higher education within the Further Education system necessitates a review of the existing provision with the object of using the available resources to the maximum advantage in order to build up a strong and distinctive sector of higher education which is complementary to the universities and colleges of education. In particular full-time and sandwich courses of higher education must be concentrated in a substantially smaller number of centres than at present.

(ii) After full consultation with the Regional Advisory Councils and local education authorities concerned, the Secretary of State will designate a limited number of Polytechnics as the main centres for the future development of full-time higher education within the Further Education system. Though there will be no question of creating a rigid or ossified pattern irrespective of traditions and individual circumstances, the object will be to develop them as large and comprehensive institutions offering full-time, sandwich and part-time courses of higher education at all levels. The Secretary of State’s preliminary proposals for the establishment of Polytechnics are set out in the Appendix.

(iii) Designation may be final or provisional in the first instance but it is not intended to add to the list of Polytechnics for at any rate about 10 years. Before a Polytechnic is designated account will be taken of the possibility of associating one or more colleges by merger or otherwise in order to form a more effective unit. It will be a condition of designation that the government and academic organisation are on acceptable lines.

(iv) The object will be to reduce substantially the number of colleges engaged in full-time higher education but colleges not designated as Polytechnics will continue to offer full-time courses of higher education where they satisfy the criteria for approval of courses in force from time to time. Existing provision for courses in specific professional fields under nationally settled arrangements will be reviewed in due course.

(v) Colleges already engaged in part-time higher education will continue with such work subject to the criteria for approval of courses in force from time to time.

(vi) In the absence of exceptional circumstances colleges not already engaged in higher education will not be expected to embark on it.

APPENDIX

The following preliminary proposals for the establishment of Polytechnics within their Regions are being sent to Regional Advisory Councils for advice. Where in the light of their views it is decided to proceed with a proposal to establish a Polytechnic, the local education authority or authorities concerned will be invited to prepare for consideration by the Secretary of State a scheme on the lines set out in this White Paper. (The colleges named are those which are substantially engaged in full-time and other higher education in the area and in the Secretary of State’s view should prima facie be considered for inclusion in the list of Polytechnics. Existing Regional Colleges are asterisked.)
NORTHERN
(1) Newcastle upon Tyne—Rutherford College of Technology,* Municipal College of Commerce, College of Art and Industrial Design.
(2) Sunderland—Sunderland Technical College,* College of Art.
(3) Middlesbrough—Constantine College of Technology (see also YORKSHIRE).

NORTH-WESTERN
(1) Liverpool—College of Technology,* College of Building,* College of Commerce, College of Art.
(2) Manchester—John Dalton College, College of Commerce, College of Art and Design.

YORKSHIRE
(1) Huddersfield—College of Technology.*
(2) Leeds—College of Technology,* College of Commerce, College of Art.
(3) Sheffield—College of Technology, College of Art.
(4) Middlesbrough—Constantine College of Technology (see also NORTHERN).

EAST MIDLANDS
(1) Leicester—Regional College of Technology,* College of Art.
(2) Nottingham—Regional College of Technology,* College of Art and Design.

WEST MIDLANDS
(1) Coventry and Warwickshire—It is proposed that the authorities should be invited to consider the possibility of a scheme for a Polytechnic in which the Lanchester College of Technology* at Coventry and the Rugby College of Engineering Technology* would be associated. Consideration would be given to the inclusion of the Coventry College of Art.
(2) Wolverhampton—College of Technology, College of Art.
(3) Birmingham—It is proposed that the Birmingham education authority should be invited to prepare a scheme for the establishment of a Polytechnic taking account of the existing provision for advanced technical education in the City and the work of the College of Commerce and the College of Art and Design.

EAST ANGLIAN
Hertfordshire—Hatfield College of Technology* (see also LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES).

CONFIDENTIAL
LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES

(1) *Inner London*—It is envisaged that there should be, say, five Polytechnics in the Inner London area based on existing Regional and other colleges substantially engaged in full-time and other higher education.

(2) *Brighton*—College of Technology,* College of Art.

(3) *Hertfordshire*—Hatfield College of Technology* (see also EAST ANGLIAN).

(4) *Kingston upon Thames*—College of Technology,* College of Art.

(5) *North London*—Enfield College of Technology, Hendon College of Technology, Hornsey College of Art.

(6) *South-East Essex*—West Ham College of Technology,* Barking Regional College of Technology,* South-West Essex Technical College and School of Art. Discussions between the authorities concerned with a view to the establishment of a new higher education institution in this area have been proceeding for some time.

SOUTHERN

(1) *Oxford*—College of Technology.

(2) *Portsmouth*—College of Technology,* College of Art and Design.

SOUTH-WESTERN

(1) *Plymouth*—College of Technology,*

(2) *Bristol*—It is proposed to invite the authority to prepare a scheme for a Polytechnic taking account of the work of the Bristol College of Commerce and the West of England College of Art, and the possibilities for the further development of full-time and part-time higher education at the Bristol Technical College as the site at present occupied by the University of Bath designate becomes available.

WALES

*Glamorgan*—Treforest College of Technology,* Discussions will take place with the Welsh Joint Education Committee and individual authorities concerned with a view to ascertaining what would be the best arrangements for higher education in the North Wales area.