



Skills Funding Agency

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Richard Perkins
Chair of the Board
Lowestoft College
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23 April 2015

Dear Mr Perkins

As Chief Executive of the Skills Funding Agency in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, I am writing to inform you of the government's view of the position of Lowestoft College in light of the Further Education (FE) Commissioner's recent review, and the next steps that will be taken to secure improvement.

As you are aware, following the notification by the Skills Funding Agency that Lowestoft College had been assessed as inadequate for financial health, the Minister for Skills asked the FE Commissioner to undertake an assessment, and three FE Advisers, Phil Frier, Lynne Craig and Steve Hutchinson, visited the college between 2 and 6 March 2015.

I have now considered the assessment, which includes a set of recommendations. I have accepted all these recommendations. A summary of the assessment and the recommendations is provided with this letter. The summary and my letter to you will be published on www.gov.uk in May, after the general election.

The assessment recognises that the College is beginning to taking the necessary steps to address the issues which have led to the financial and quality difficulties of the College, and I am encouraged to read about the determined approach that the new Interim Principal has brought to tackling these issues and gaining the support of both staff and stakeholders. However, although the management team, are now putting in place the necessary actions to drive forward the improvements, the next few months will be critical to determine whether or not a financial turnaround can be achieved. The College needs to focus on delivering a more sustainable financial position, while ensuring that the College delivers a high quality learning offer that meets the needs of learners and employers. In order to deliver the necessary improvements, the College should rapidly implement a robust recovery plan and its associated actions that links

curriculum plans with resource and finance plans. Given the urgency of completing the recovery plan, you may want to appoint an experienced interim senior manager who has recovery planning experience and will be able to support the existing management team. The Governing body should also consider recruiting a new governor with a strong financial background.

All of these steps should put the College in a good position to deliver the necessary financial and quality improvement. However the position remains uncertain and it is important that you work with the FE Advisers and Skills Funding Agency to ensure that they can closely monitor progress. I have therefore asked my officials at the Skills Funding Agency to work with you and experienced colleges and providers in the area to ensure that high quality skills programs remain on offer to the learners of Lowestoft College.

If you have any questions about the FE Commissioner's assessment or this letter please contact Karen Kelly, SFA, Karen.Kelly@sfa.bis.gov.uk in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Lauener', with a checkmark at the end.

Peter Lauener
Chief Executive