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28 May 2015

I am writing to inform you of the Government's view of your college's position in light of the Further Education (FE) Commissioner's recent assessment and the steps that need to be taken to secure improvement at Knowsley Community College.

As you are aware, following the notification by the Skills Funding Agency that Knowsley Community College had been assessed as inadequate for financial health, the FE Commissioner was asked to review the position of your college in line with the intervention policy set out in *Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills* (April 2013). The FE Commissioner completed his assessment 1 May 2015.

I have now considered the FE Commissioner's assessment, and have accepted all of his recommendations.

The assessment recognises some positive aspects of your college's performance including a strong board of governors. The FE Commissioner has noted, however, that a number of governors are due to complete their tenures shortly and the college needs to develop and implement a robust succession plan that will ensure that the college retains a range of skills and experience but should also look to include membership with expertise in FE. Having a strong governing body, with the skills and experience necessary to challenge and support the Senior Management Team are going to be critical, as Knowsley Community College faces a very difficult situation.

The college is facing falling numbers, reduced levels of funding, increased competition and staff costs which are exceptionally high compared to sector norms. All these factors present significant risks and challenges that the college needs to address quickly and decisively. Taking account of this, I would urge the college to begin to explore partnership arrangements with neighbouring organisations to ensure that it delivers a high quality learning offer that meets the needs of learners and employers.

I recognise that the significant challenges to be faced and that these will require difficult decisions for the college, but these need to be taken soon if the college is to ensure its financial sustainability.

The Skills Funding Agency and an FE Adviser will monitor the implementation of your response to the recommendations through Case Conferences, and the FE Commissioner will review the position of the college in mid-October to determine in light of the progress made whether further action will be necessary.

A summary of the FE Commissioner's assessment and his recommendations is attached.

I would be grateful if you could respond to this letter within two weeks of the date on which it was sent. At that point both the summary and my letter to you will be published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

If you have any questions about the FE Commissioner's assessment or this letter please contact Claire Blott, SFA, [Claire.blott@sfa.bis.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.blott@sfa.bis.gov.uk) in the first instance.



**NICK BOLES MP**