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I am writing to inform you of the Government's view of the position of Birmingham Metropolitan College following the Further Education (FE) Commissioner's recent review, and the next steps that will be taken to secure improvement.

As you know, in light of the 'inadequate' assessment of the College's financial health the Skills Funding Agency issued the College with a Notice of Concern on July 2015. As Minister for Skills I asked the FE Commissioner, Dr David Collins, to carry out an assessment of the College and this was conducted between 24 and 28 August 2015.

In his assessment the FE Commissioner recognises that the College is beginning to take the necessary steps to address the significant issues which have led to its financial and quality difficulties, and I am encouraged to read the positive and determined approach that the current leadership and management team have brought to tackling these issues.

However, although the College now has in place the expected policies and process in order to achieve quality and financial recovery, the next few months will be critical to determine whether or not financial recovery can be achieved. The College needs to focus on delivering a more sustainable financial position, while ensuring that it delivers a high quality learning offer that meets the needs of learners and employers.

In order to deliver the necessary improvements the College should implement the actions set out in the recovery plan that links to the Post Inspection Action Plan, Financial Plans and Quality Improvement Plans. In addition the FE Commissioner has recommended a number of actions to improve the scrutiny, challenge and monitoring of the College's performance which include the re-instatement of a finance sub-committee until the College's financial performance is good and a review of the data dashboard be undertaken to ensure trend data is captured. The College should also review its management of apprenticeships to ensure there is a clear focus on performance and a curriculum planning tool should be developed that enables off line modelling.

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 Commissioner and Skills Funding Agency to ensure that they can closely monitor progress. I have also asked for your College to be part of the Birmingham and Solihull Area Review, to ensure that high quality skills programs remain on offer to the learners in your area.

I have carefully considered the FE Commissioner's assessment, and accept all the recommendations he makes. A summary of the Commissioner's assessment report and recommendations are provided with this letter. This summary and my letter to you will be published on www.gov.uk two weeks following the date on which this letter was sent.

If you have any questions about the FE Commissioner's assessment or this letter please contact Mary Rogers in the Skills Funding Agency Mary.rogers@sfa.bis.gov.uk in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,



NICK BOLES MP