



Department
for Education

John Landeryou
Chair of the Corporation
LeSoCo
Lewisham Way
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12 March 2014

I am writing to let you know about our view of your college's position in light of the FE Commissioner's review, and to invite you to confirm the actions your college will now take in response to the significant concerns raised.

As you are aware, in light of the inadequate Ofsted inspection, I asked the FE Commissioner 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 on 7 February 2013.

I have now received the FE Commissioner's assessment – a summary of which is attached – which includes a set of recommendations. I have accepted all these recommendations.

As you will see, the assessment identified significant weaknesses in the governance and leadership of the College. It has also identified significant concerns about the financial sustainability of the College. I have spoken recently about the role of governors in Colleges; Governors are responsible for the strategic oversight of the college, and in holding the Principal and executive to account for delivery. They are also guardians of public money, ensuring its effective and efficient use. It is therefore essential that the governing body has the skills and experience necessary to fulfil these responsibilities.

It is essential that the governance and leadership of LeSoCo College recognise the weaknesses identified in the FE Commissioner's review and understands the need for swift and decisive action to protect the needs of learners and ensure efficient use of public funding. I welcome the work the College has already begun to respond to the FE Commissioner's assessment. I encourage you to continue this hard work and ensure that these actions lead to sustained quality improvement and financial recovery. The FE Commissioner and the funding agencies will be regularly monitoring progress at the College, and will be looking for evidence that the College has responded to the FE Commissioner's assessment, and that the College is delivering the changes necessary.



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If you have any questions about the FE Commissioner's assessment or this letter my officials will be happy to meet with you to discuss. Please contact Jill Lowery (Jill.Lowery@sfa.bis.gov.uk) in the first instance.

Yours
Matt

MATTHEW HANCOCK MP

OUTCOMES OF THE FE COMMISSIONER'S ASSESSMENT OF LeSoCo COLLEGE

- 1. The Board of the College is recently formed. Broadly speaking they are well skilled and willing to challenge. However, the board should continue to refresh, ensuring representation from local business/employers. The Board should also have representatives at leader or executive director level from both Lewisham and Southwark Borough Councils. The Board should also develop and implement a succession plan for the post of Chair.**
- 2. The Board should review the capacity of the current senior management team. As a minimum and as a matter of urgency, the Board should strengthen capacity in the areas of quality improvement and resource management. The Board should also develop and implement a succession plan for the post of Principal.**
- 3. The existing Post Inspection Action Plan should be revisited and enhanced by the inclusion of specific timelines and milestones. More emphasis should be given to the need to improve functional skills and a functional skills audit of vocational staff should be carried out, followed up by supportive CPD where necessary.**
- 4. A revised curriculum plan is needed to demonstrate how the needs of students at all levels will be met as each stage of the estate's strategy is implemented. More attention should also be given to the total learner experience of those currently enrolled at the college.**
- 5. A detailed analysis of staff numbers and utilisation on both the teaching and support side of the college's operations should be conducted as a matter of urgency to bring the college's expenditure in this area to within sector norms. The harmonisation of pay and conditions should be a priority, together with agreements on common policies and procedures.**
- 6. The College's somewhat precarious financial position should be addressed by developing a more accurate and realistic financial forecast, together with detailed and costed plans to bring the college into break even within two years. This should be completed within the next three months.**

- 7. A communications strategy should be developed and implemented that allows for meaningful consultation on key issues with both internal and external stakeholders.**
- 8. The FE Commissioner should regularly review the actions the College takes to respond to the recommendations set out above, and their impact of quality improvement and financial recovery.**