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Dear John,

I am writing to inform you of the government's view of your College's position in light of the FE Adviser's review, and the next steps that will be taken to secure improvement at Guildford College.

As you are aware, following the notification by the Skills Funding Agency that Guildford College had been assessed as inadequate for financial health, as Minister for Skills, I asked an FE Adviser, David Williams to carry out a short, sharp assessment of the College. The assessment of the College was conducted between 26 August – 1 September 2014.

I have now considered the FE Adviser's 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. In line with the published intervention process (May 2014) summaries of the findings from all FE Commissioner assessments are published to enable the college or institution subject to intervention, and the sector more widely, to see and learn lessons. The Guildford College summary will be published once you have provided me and my officials with your action plan.

The assessment recognises the actions that your College has taken over the last two years to address the weaknesses in the governance and leadership of the College. I am encouraged by the steps you have taken to ensure that the governing body is challenging and scrutinising the leadership more robustly and that, in your corporation meetings, you are focusing your attention on the financial performance of the College. Having a strong governing body, with the skills and experience necessary to hold the Principal to account, is critical to a successful College. I welcome the changes that the Principal has made to ensure the right mix of skills and experience is available on the senior management team. All of these steps put the College in a good position to deliver the necessary financial improvement, however the position remains uncertain and it is important that you work with the FE Adviser and Skills Funding Agency to ensure that they can closely monitor progress.

The College now 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. I recognise this may involve further difficult decisions for the College but these decisions are paramount if Guildford College is to secure financial recovery within an agreed timeframe. To this end, I ask that you submit a revised recovery plan, incorporating a detailed contingency plan and based on the latest information about recruitment, to the Skills Funding Agency by 31 October 2014, sharing any early thinking on the content of the recovery plan with the FE Adviser and my officials at the Skills Funding Agency as appropriate.

I wanted to make you aware that I have taken the decision to publish summaries of the findings from the FE Adviser to enable the college or institution subject to intervention, and the sector more widely, to see and learn lessons. The summaries for all those who have been assessed by the FE Commissioner have been published on www.gov.uk, along with my letters to the relevant Chairs. All summaries from any future cases will be published once the college or institution has sent me their plan for addressing the recommendations from the assessment.

My officials at the Skills Funding Agency will be in touch shortly to arrange a meeting between you, the Principal and the FE Adviser to discuss this letter and agree next steps, and how the College will work with the FE Adviser on it.

If you have any questions about the FE Adviser's assessment or this letter please contact Hannah Caldwell (Hannah.Caldwell@sfa.bis.gov.uk) in the first instance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Boles', written in a cursive style.

NICK BOLES MP