



Department for Education

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Rt. Hon. Robert Halfon MP
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Dear Mr. Carmichael,

I am writing to inform you of the Government's view of the position of Canterbury College following the recent review by the Further Education (FE) Commissioner's team and the steps that will need to be taken to secure the necessary improvement at your college.

As you are aware, following the Skills Funding Agency issuing the college with a Notice of Concern for Financial Health in March 2016, I asked Sir David Collins, the FE Commissioner, to carry out an assessment of the college. This was conducted on the 26 - 30 September 2016.

I have now considered the FE Commissioner's report of the assessment and note that the college has faced significant challenges, including declining financial health and three consecutive Ofsted 'Requires Improvement' grades. It is clear - as I know you recognise, that urgent action needs to be taken to stabilise the college's position, and to improve delivery for learners.

I am therefore strongly encouraged by your recent positive response to these challenges. The action you are taking to reduce the college's expenditure in line with its income, alongside placing a clearer focus on the necessary quality improvement.

In particular, I welcome the decision you have taken to bring in East Kent College to support your leadership and management. Strong leadership and governance is essential to long term success, and the involvement of East Kent has undoubtedly enabled you, your Board and new management team to begin to implement the required actions as outlined in the college's recovery plan.

I understand that the intention is that this partnership will lead to a merged institution by August 2017. While this approach will be considered as part of your upcoming area review, I believe it has scope to deliver substantial improvement to stabilise the position of Canterbury College, and improve the quality of your offer to local learners.

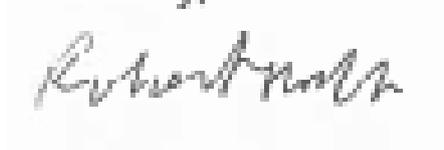
The FE Commissioner also makes a number of recommendations for action that the college should instigate over the coming months.

These include: the need for the Board to establish separate finance and audit committees; the need to undertake a skills audit of Board members, with new governors appointed to fill any gaps; an annual appraisal of the Principal's performance measured against targets and objectives set by the Chairs of the Corporation, Finance and Quality; improved Quality processes and data; and a shadow Board to be established to oversee the merger drawn from both colleges and new members.

I have carefully considered the FE Commissioner's assessment, and accept all the recommendations he makes.

You should note that you have two weeks from the date of this letter being sent to comment on the factual accuracy of the FE Commissioner's summary report, after which time a copy of this letter and the FE Commissioner's summary report will shortly be published on www.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills