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I am writing to inform you of the Government's view of the position of Warrington Collegiate following the recent review by the Further Education (FE) Commissioner's team, and the steps that will need to be taken to secure improvement.

As you know, the Skills Funding Agency issued the college with a Financial Notice of Concern in November 2015, following a judgement of Inadequate Financial Health based on the review of your 2015-17 Financial Plan. The college was also graded 'Requires Improvement' by Ofsted in October 2014. I therefore asked the FE Commissioner, Sir David Collins, to carry out an assessment of the college and this was conducted between 14 and 18 December 2015.

The key finding is that although the college has made a good start on reducing costs, it now needs to significantly strengthen and extend its recovery plan, for which the senior management team will require support. There are also concerns over financial monitoring and forecasting and it is clear the recovery plan needs more demanding targets and clearly defined actions. Also highlighted is the need for improved governance, with Governors demonstrating greater effectiveness in challenging the Executive Team and their planning.

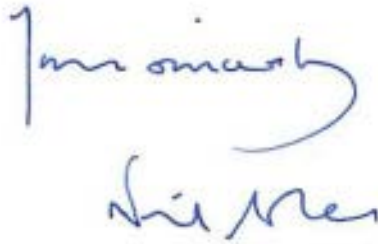
The FE Commissioner recommends a number of steps to achieve enhanced governance, including recommending that this succession planning quickly identifies a new Chair and Vice-Chair to lead the college's contribution to the area review process. As the review of the Cheshire and Warrington area is due to start later this month, selecting a new Chair to be in post during its key stages is clearly a priority, so I am pleased the college has begun the process for identifying a new Chair to take the college forward.

The FE Commissioner also makes a number of detailed recommendations for action that the college should take over the coming months, including strengthening the targets of the financial recovery plan; better use of management and a proper evaluation of the investment in the new logistics centre. It concludes with a recommendation to revisit the college before Easter 2016 to monitor progress.

I have carefully considered the assessment, and accept all the recommendations the FE Commissioner makes. While it is clear the college has made a good start, much still needs to be done. I have asked the FE Commissioner to review the position at his first monitoring visit and, if necessary, make further recommendations.

Warrington Collegiate faces a challenging future. I shall be looking to the Board and the college's Executive Team to provide the appropriate leadership in these difficult times.

A summary of the 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 assessment or this letter please contact; Mike Macloughlin in the Skills Funding Agency; mike.macloughlin@sfa.bis.gov.uk, in the first instance.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nick Boles', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

NICK BOLES MP