



Rt Hon Anne Milton MP
Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills
Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Martin Doel
Chair of Governors
West Kent and Ashford College
Brook Street, Tonbridge
Kent TN9 2PW

20th May 2019

Martin Doel

I am writing following the assessment of West Kent and Ashford College by the Further Education (FE) Commissioner on 7th, 8th and 15th February 2019.

It is clear from the Commissioner's report that the activity of previous leaders and governors at the college have led to a financial crisis that is still being fully understood. The crisis puts the college's long-term future at risk and has the potential to adversely impact the education of learners.

It is the Commissioner's assessment that governance at the college has failed in overseeing the financial management of the college. There has been a lack of good communication and transparency from college leadership and insufficient steps have been taken to avoid conflicts of interest at board and senior management level.

The college faces significant challenges and is in a perilous position. The board should continue to engage actively with the Commissioner, his team and the ESFA with all ongoing intervention activities.

I am pleased that a number of the Commissioner's recommendations have already been acted upon, although you will understand that there is still much

to do. It is important that the new leadership and governance arrangements are used to provide appropriate financial management of the corporation in this time of challenge. Addressing the financial issues of the corporation should be the priority of the board now, but in the short term, disruption for teaching staff and students should be minimised so that college life continues normally.

Given the significant challenges now facing the college, I am placing the college in Supervised College Status with immediate effect.

I have accepted all the recommendations of the Commissioner and am providing a copy of the Commissioner's report with this letter. The report will be published on GOV.UK. in the next two weeks.

Please confirm, in writing, within three weeks, what actions you are taking to address all of the recommendations and your timetable for doing so.

If you have any questions about the FE Commissioner's assessment or this letter, please contact the Commissioner at **FE.Commissioner@education.gov.uk**.

I have written separately to both the following, local MPs who may have learners attending the college from their constituency to inform them of the FE Commissioners findings:

Damian Green – Ashford
Tom Tugendhat – Tonbridge and Malling



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