



Gillian Keegan MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary 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

11 March 2020

Nick Deeming
Chair of Governors
Richmond-upon-Thames College
Egerton Road
Twickenham
TW2 7SJ

Dear Nick,

I am writing following the assessment of Richmond-upon-Thames College by the Further Education (FE) Commissioner. The FE Commissioner's Team visited the college on 21 and 22 October 2019 to undertake a formal intervention following the recommendations of a diagnostic assessment conducted in August 2019 and the issuance of a Financial Notice to Improve by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in October 2019.

The FE Commissioner reports that significant failures in the college's financial management and control have resulted in the college operating under serious financial pressure. In the context of the increasing financial commitments required by the ongoing campus redevelopment project, I am greatly concerned that this presents significant risks to the college's working capital and its future sustainability.

The improvements you have made since your appointment as Chair, including in areas of governance, leadership and management, must be consolidated and built upon to provide a robust governance structure that can effectively meet the critical threats currently facing the college. To this end, working proactively with a National Leader for Governance (NLG) and strengthening the board's skills base through the appointment of new governors with financial and project management expertise must be your priority.

As significant shortcomings in financial management and control were a

contributory factor to the college's present situation, I fully support the FE Commissioner's recommendation that the interim financial director continues to complete rapid improvements to confirm the full extent of financial challenges facing the college.

Following a recent visit to the college by the FE Commissioner's team in January 2020, it is clear that despite some improvements, difficulties in securing the long-term sustainability of the college remain. Given the scale of these challenges, and the financial commitment required by the campus redevelopment project, I endorse the FE Commissioner's most recent recommendation that the structure and prospects appraisal (SPA) currently underway assesses options for merger against the prospects for a standalone college.

I have accepted all the recommendations of the FE Commissioner and a copy of the assessment is provided with this letter. This document and my letter will be published on gov.uk.

Please confirm within three weeks to the FE Commissioner, FE.Commissioner@education.gov.uk, what actions you are taking to address all of the recommendations and your timetable for doing so.

I have written separately to all the following local MPs who may have learners attending the college from their constituency to inform them of the FE Commissioner's findings:

Munira Wilson MP

Ruth Cadbury MP

Sarah Olney MP

Rt Hon Sir Edward Davey MP

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP

Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP

Seema Malhotra MP

Twickenham

Brentford and Isleworth

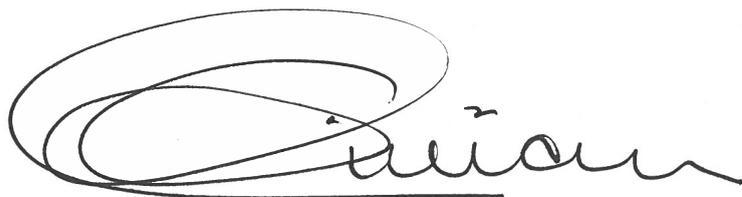
Richmond Park

Kingston and Surbiton

Esher and Walton

Spelthorne

Feltham and Heston



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