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I am writing to let you know about the Government's view of your college's position in light of the Sixth Form College Commissioner's review, and to invite you to confirm the actions your college will now take in response to the financial concerns.

As you are aware, in light of the Financial Notice to Improve I asked Peter Mucklow, Director for Young People at the Education Funding Agency (EFA), as the Sixth Form College Commissioner to review the position of your college in line with the intervention policy set out in Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills (April 2013). He completed his assessment on 7 January 2016.

I have now received his assessment, a summary of which is attached, which includes a set of recommendations. I have accepted all these recommendations. As you will see, the assessment agrees with your governing body's conclusion that the college is no longer financially viable as a stand-alone institution, despite the efficiency savings which have already been realised. The Sixth Form College Commissioner recognises the commitment of the governors and college senior leaders to securing the best outcome for its students and the local community and welcomes the work done thus far to seek a structural or partnership based solution.

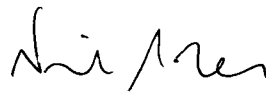
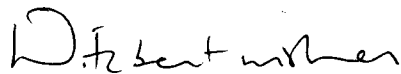
I fully endorse the decision to merge with Furness College, whilst retaining a distinctive academic sixth form branded offer. Both colleges are performing well, as evidenced by recent 'good' Ofsted grades and there is a history of successful collaboration as well as a shared commitment to high quality provision for the local community. It will be essential to maintain and enhance this relationship between the two colleges in the build up to the proposed merger.

I encourage you to continue your hard work and work quickly on the recommendations outlined in the assessment in order to be ready for the next academic year. The funding agencies will be regularly monitoring progress at both colleges, and will be looking for evidence that the recommendations are being delivered, the merger plans are progressing well and the financial viability of Barrow-in-Furness Sixth Form College is improving.

Can you please confirm, in writing (by two weeks from date of issue) what actions you are taking to address the recommendations and your timetable for doing so. Your letter should be copied to Paul Williamson, Deputy Director, Northern Territory, EFA (paul.williamson@education.gsi.gov.uk).

You should also be aware that, in the interests of transparency and after I have received your response, I intend to ask the EFA to publish this letter and the summary of the report including the recommendations. The EFA will provide you with a link to the appropriate section on GOV.UK.

If you have any questions about the Sixth Form College Commissioner's assessment or this letter, my officials will be happy to meet with you to discuss these. Please contact Paul Williamson at the EFA in the first instance.



NICK BOLES MP