



Skills Funding Agency

Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

T 0345 377 5000

www.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk

Dr Wendy Thomson
Chief Executive
Norfolk County Council
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
Norfolk, NR1 2DH

11 May 2015

Dear Wendy

As Chief Executive of the Skills Funding Agency in the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, I am writing to provide an update on the position of Norfolk County Council Adult Education Service in light of the Further Education (FE) Commissioner's review, and the next steps that will be taken to secure improvement.

As you are aware, in light of the inadequate grading following the Ofsted inspection of Norfolk County Council Adult Education Service in January 2015, the Minister for Skills and Equalities, asked the FE Commissioner, Dr David Collins, to carry an assessment. The assessment of Norfolk County Council Adult Education Service was conducted between 31 March and 1 April 2015.

I welcome the swift response Norfolk County Council have taken to identify the necessary improvements, following the 'Inadequate' Ofsted inspection in order to provide a high quality Adult Education Service. However, if Norfolk County Council is to implement the necessary actions detailed in the Post Inspection Action Plan, it is going to require a significant investment in both the IT infrastructure and Management Information systems. Without these changes, it is unlikely that all the necessary improvements can be made and alternative providers may need to be sought. The Council now needs to urgently determine whether it is prepared to support these changes.

On the basis that the Council wishes to support these changes and continue its commitment to delivering an Adult Education Service, several new appointments will be required. A dedicated Head of Service will be needed to inspire staff and deliver the changes within a clear timescale and there is an urgent need for a new senior post to lead on data management in order to improve the performance management of the service and allow intelligent challenge. You may also wish to consider one of the current Assistant Head posts focusing entirely on quality improvement with a particular emphasis on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

The Skills Funding Agency and an FE Adviser will monitor the implementation of your revised Post Inspection Action Plan through Case Conferences, with a follow-up review undertaken in September 2015 to review progress.

A summary of the FE Commissioner's assessment and his recommendations is provided with this letter. Following your response to this letter, the summary and my letter to you will be published in due course on www.gov.uk.

If you have any questions about the FE Commissioner's assessment or this letter please contact Karen Kelly, SFA, Karen.Kelly@sfa.bis.gov.uk in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Lauener', with a checkmark at the end.

Peter Lauener
Chief Executive