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I am writing to inform you of the Government's view of the position of Richmond upon Thames College 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. In light of this, I asked the FE Commissioner, Sir David Collins, to carry out an assessment of the college and this was conducted from 7 - 11 December 2015.

The assessment found that while you as Chair of the Corporation, have both the experience and expertise to lead the development of college's future plans, there is a substantial shortage of commercial and capital development skills on the Board. The FE Commissioner recommends that the Board develops a suitable training programme for members and should be refreshed to urgently appoint new members with financial, capital development expertise.

Given the need for the college to improve its short term financial position, and the current high staff costs, the FE Commissioner recommends that you should re-visit the decision not to take forward further staff restructuring during 2015/16. He also recommends that the college considers the position of its capital re-development plans in light of the forthcoming area review. Any college decisions relating to the use of its estate and related resources should be managed in line with the outcomes of the area review. I expect the college to fully participate in the review covering provision in South and West London, due to begin in May.

The FE Commissioner also plans to monitor and review progress on a regular basis and carry out a stocktake assessment of the college in April 2016. It will be open to him to make other recommendations in the light of the position at that stage.

I have carefully considered the FE Commissioner's assessment, and accept all the recommendations he makes. It is clear the college recognise and are keen to address the significant challenges facing it. I shall be looking to you, the other members of the Board and the college's executive team to provide the appropriate leadership in these difficult times.

A summary of the Commissioner's 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 FE Commissioner's assessment, or this letter, please contact Stephen Bagley in the Skills Funding Agency; stephen.bagley@sfa.bis.gov.uk in the first instance.



NICK BOLES MP