



Gillian Keegan MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills
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John Hogg
Chair of Governors
Gateshead College
Baltic Campus
Quarryfield Road
Gateshead
NE8 3BE

Dear John,

I am writing following the intervention assessment of Gateshead College by the Further Education (FE) Commissioner in January 2020.

The FE Commissioner's team conducted the assessment following the recommendations of a Diagnostic Assessment (DA) in December 2019 and the issuance of a Financial Notice to Improve by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on 20 December 2019. You have already seen the draft report and recommendations. As you will be aware, routine FE Commissioner work was paused due to the coronavirus crisis, so the final version of this report has been delayed in reaching you.

From the FE Commissioner's report, it is clear that significant failures in leadership and governance have allowed for the serious deterioration of the college's financial position. Governors have neglected their responsibilities to the college by failing to provide an adequate level of challenge to financial and remuneration matters. Similarly, the Senior Leadership Team have failed in their corporate responsibility as senior postholders to provide leadership and take responsibility for the college's performance.

Given the college's vulnerable position, it is vital that the appropriate measures are put in place to restore financial stability as quickly as possible. To this end, I urge you to rapidly

implement the FE Commissioner's recommendations to address the college's precarious financial situation and ensure that the college can produce an achievable surplus budget in line with FEC benchmarks. I also urge you to engage fully with the planned structure and prospects appraisal to support assessment of potential solutions for the college's long-term recovery.

There have been some signs of progress following the FEC team's visit, particularly in the strengthening of the college's leadership and governance through the appointment of an interim principal, the identification of new board members and a review of the SLT. I advise you to continue implementing those recommendations focused on enhancing the quality of leadership and governance to ensure the college is in a strong position to address the significant challenges it faces.

I have accepted all the recommendations of the FE Commissioner and a copy of the assessment is provided with this letter. A copy of this letter and the summary report will also be sent to the following local MPs, whose constituencies are served by the college, to inform them of the FE Commissioner's findings:

- Ian Mearns MP Gateshead
- Liz Twist MP Blaydon
- Sharon Hodgson MP Washington and Sunderland West
- Chi Onwurah MP Newcastle upon Tyne Central
- Rt Hon Nicholas Brown MP Newcastle upon Tyne East
- Kate Osborne MP Jarrow

Yours sincerely,



Gillian Keegan MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills