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THE PRIME MINISTER

17 November 2020

Dear Sir Patrick and Dame Nancy,

Thank you for your letter of 23 September, about the 2019 Review of Post-18 Education and funding, as well as your insightful views on the recommendations. The Government wants the higher education sector to focus relentlessly on outcomes for the individual, on skills for the nation and on rigorous academic standards. We would agree that excellent outcomes are key to filling our productivity gap, fuelling our economy and creating opportunities.

The Government further believes that a fair and open post-16 education system is vital to offering genuine opportunity and levelling up, with equity of vocational and academic routes. Beyond that, post-16 education has an essential role to play in driving economic recovery and future prosperity.

The Government has been considering the Augar Report and its recommendations carefully. We plan to respond to the report alongside the Spending Review, providing the sector and students with certainty about the future of post-16 education and funding. The upcoming Further Education White Paper will also form part of our response at the Spending Review.

The Department for Education welcomes the Council for Science and Technology's perspective and your positive comments so far. The Department would be happy to discuss arrangements for a specific session to further explore the Council's views.

Sir Patrick Vallance and Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell DBE DL