

Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP
The Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road,
London, SW1A 2HQ

Rt Hon Anne Milton MP
Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills
Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street
Westminster, London
SW1P 3BT

10th October 2018

By email to: public.enquiries@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk and ministers@education.gov.uk

Dear Chancellor and Minister,

Re: National College Week and college funding

As we are sure you are aware, Colleges Week is taking place from 15-19th October. It is therefore highly appropriate that we write and set out our strong support for local colleges, the crucial role they play and importance of sufficient funding.

As you know, LEPs are tasked with driving economic growth and productivity. In our view, skills and training plays a fundamental role in achieving this – it is a top priority for our LEP. We have recently launched a five year skills strategy setting out our vision and priorities which include increasing apprenticeships and achieving inclusive growth. This is attached for your information.

We launched our strategy at Folkestone College in Kent (part of EKC Group) in the new construction facility; an excellent example of ensuring industry need is at the heart of training. To commence delivery against the strategy, we held an inclusive growth event at Harlow College, home to a centre of Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (HAMEC) and lead for the new Stansted Airport College. All have been invested in by our LEP and are just a few examples of the strong employer relationship colleges have and which enable them to respond to current and future jobs growth. Across our geography, we have invested over £40million in over 30 further education capital projects. We are developing a proposal to tackle tutor shortages and exploring solutions such as virtual reality and online learning to respond to challenges. We are highly committed to our college network and clear of their importance.

We view with growing concern therefore the national disinvestment in education and skills training for both the 16-18 and adult cohorts. As our strategy sets out, further education participation and apprenticeship take up has declined. It is essential that we have a well-funded and effective skills system in place to train upskill and retrain adults and young people, particularly at a time when there is likely to be need for much greater self-sufficiency in UK skills.



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We would welcome further government work with colleges to address underfunding and to tackle barriers such as tutor shortages. This will enable us to work in partnership to deliver against the industrial strategy and achieve the very best for our communities and employers.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Christian Brodie, **SELEP Chairman**

Adam Bryan, **SELEP Managing Director**

Graham Razey, **Principal and Chief Executive EKC Group, Chair LEP Skills Advisory Group**

CC

All SELEP area college Principals

Association of Colleges South East and East