



Department for Education  
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Date: 27 March 202

To:

**Elena Rodriguez-Falcon**

CEO, NMiTE

**Andrew Lovegrove,**

Section 151 Officer, Herefordshire Council

**By email**

**Dear Elena and Andrew,**

I am writing to outline the final arrangements for NMiTE as the project end and funding administered by Herefordshire Council concludes. I have been specifically asked to give a view on the use of consultants during the project this is also covered below.

The Department's role as funding body and the Council's involvement as the Section 31 body ends formally on 31 March 2020, though we expect the final payment now to be made in early April. DfE have received assurance that Herefordshire Council will transfer this final payment to NMiTE immediately after transfer. The Department's relationship with NMiTE will change but it remains important that the public investment is monitored and evaluated so the link with the Department does not cease altogether.

I hope that this letter will be useful in allowing the project to move forward and lead to a strong partnership with Herefordshire Council to be sustained beyond the end of the period of DfE funding and the Council's stewardship of it.

The Department considered the employment of consultants by NMiTE to be essential to the business plan given the high risk associated with this project we recognised it needed skilled professionals to undertake some vital work. There have been delays throughout the project due to a series of unforeseeable events such as the departure of the former CEO, protracted negotiations over the LEP funding, the many options to be considered in the property portfolio and validation concerns. This has resulted in multiple roles taken by many in the management team. A large amount of specialist knowledge was needed in the organisation and the work was required at pace given the agreed DfE milestones. This meant the employment of consultants was crucial to the continuation of the project and meeting the overall goals that are well in train. In addition the project has enjoyed overall good management of finances guided by the NMiTE Financial team and the Council Section 151 officer in these challenging circumstances.

I note the Council's concerns and NMiTE's response regarding a particular work area. I know a permanent member of staff has been recruited and this means the use of consultants in this area is ending. I do not believe, in these exceptional circumstances that any further action on this matter is necessary now that it has been resolved. I can confirm that these matters do not constitute a reason for DfE to withhold any part of the grant monies.

As this part of the DfE project comes to an end. I would like to thank all at NMiTE and Herefordshire Council for their joint work on this unique and challenging project and wish it every success. Please let me know if the Department can be any further help.

Yours Sincerely,

Anne Rimmer  
Head of HE Quality and Regulation Division

Cc  
Dame Fiona Kendrick, NMiTE  
Alistair Neill, CEO, Herefordshire Council