DEAR COLLEAGUE,

I am delighted to inform you that the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is today launching a new £20 million capital fund aimed at encouraging Further Education colleges to implement projects that reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. The new Energy Efficiency Grant is part of the Government’s continued commitment to renew the FE estate and to build sustainable colleges for the future.

The grants are available for projects costing up to £150,000 in total that produce energy savings and reduce carbon emissions over a period of up to five years. The deadline to apply for the first phase of funding is 11 February 2008 and the application document is enclosed with this letter. Further details regarding the process can be found at www.salixfinance.co.uk/. Successful projects will receive funding in March or April 2008.

The LSC is working in partnership with energy efficiency experts Salix Finance to implement the scheme. Projects will be assessed by Salix and will need to show that they deliver energy savings equal to the project’s initial capital costs. Projects will also have to meet key tests for reducing carbon emissions. To support the application process Salix will be providing an email and helpline service and will be running workshops in January for colleges interested in applying for the grant.

The launch of the Energy Efficiency Grants supports the sectors’ commitment to achieving sustainable development within the FE estate. We are committed to investing £600 million annually on capital projects by 2011 and in January this year we launched our strategy for building greener colleges. Colleges and work based learning providers have to now embed principles of sustainability in the design of their buildings and building systems.

Early next year the LSC will launch a sustainable capital development action plan that will encourage colleges to ensure that their new developments are designed to high standards of sustainability and will also encourage these practices in their existing estates.

The challenge is to continue to maintain momentum and ensure the FE estate is world-leading and delivers learning in buildings that are innovative and inspirational, and are designed to fully meet the needs of individuals, employers and our communities.

We can only deliver this by working in partnership with the sector and I would fully encourage you to consider the benefits of the Energy Efficiency Grant and to contact Salix or your local LSC partnership teams for more information.

Yours sincerely

MARK HAYSOM