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| Lucy Allan MP  House of Commons  London  SW1A 0AA  3 December 2020 | | |
| Dear Lucy,  Thank you for your letter of 26 November, seeking my endorsement of Telford College’s new Maths and Digital Education and Enterprise Hub.    I am very pleased to see Telford coming forward with a proposal to use Towns Fund funding to strengthen technical education provision in the area. As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and look to take advantage of the opportunities created by leaving the European Union, skills are more important than ever as a driver of both productivity and social mobility.    I welcome in particular the contribution that this proposal seeks to make to levelling up opportunity across the UK, and to strengthening higher technical education and STEM provision. As you know, I recently published reforms that aim to make higher technical education a high-quality, prestigious and popular choice.  I also welcome the focus on responding to employer demand, and the engagement with local employers including the Chamber of Commerce. I will shortly be bringing forward a Further Education White Paper, which will set out how we can create a skills system that is more effective in responding to local labour markets, and that gives businesses a key role in shaping skills provision locally.  Decisions on which proposals to support from the Towns Fund rest with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, so it would not be appropriate for me to endorse Telford’s proposal. My officials do consider every skills proposal, and feed comments to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.  C:\Users\EGillies\OneDrive - Department for Education\Desktop\Box notes 2019_20\Templates\Gavin Williamson electronic signature.PNG  **Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP**  **Secretary of State for Education** | | |
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