

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

10 November 2011



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

University Technical College

University Technical Colleges (UTC) are a new government initiative which aims to offer 14-19 year olds the opportunity to take a highly regarded, technically-orientated course of study at a college that is equipped to industrial standards. They are usually sponsored by a University or FE College and they offer clear progression routes into either higher education or higher level apprenticeships in a place of employment. Young people may transfer to the UTC at the end of Year 11 from other educational providers in order to pursue advanced technical courses.

In the Spring of 2011 the Secretary of State for Education announced that a number of UTCs would be developed working with the Baker Dearing Foundation, these were promoted by Lord Baker. Following this announcement an application process was developed for universities and colleges to submit bids for UTC funding, the closing date was mid June 2011.

For Plymouth, the Council and its partners have declared a new set of priorities via the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The need to create a skilled workforce within the context of a higher wage economy is at the heart of the priority to create economic regeneration and wealth for the city. Similarly the LSP is committed to the priority to raise aspiration and achievement so that young people have the necessary skills to take advantage of future job opportunities.

Whilst Plymouth has been relatively successful in driving down the number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in recent years a significant number of young people (65%) are currently within this category. This would suggest that for a significant number of young people the “learning offer” that the city currently provides does not match their needs.

The concentration of NEET young people reside in the west of the city in the NW, SW and SE localities. These localities are also the coastal locations of marine economic activity. It would assist the city in developing a more inclusive and at the same time high quality offer to the young people of the city if a UTC was set up in the west location preferably in the SW locality aligned to the major businesses such as Babcock and Princess Yachts.

The current city policy out in [Plymouth City Council Children's Services Strategy for Change Investment for Children](#) shows how secondary pupil numbers are steadily decreasing but will start to rise again in 2015. The policy the Council has been following with secondary places has been one called “breathe in breathe out”. This is where secondary places have been pruned back to allow for new growth as the demographic demand lifts.

There will be a raise of the participation age. This will mean that young people are required to stay in education and training to 17 years of age by 2013 and to 18 years of age by 2015. There will therefore be a rising demand over these years for additional post sixteen places, which has been factored into the councils forecast of places.

A bid for a Plymouth based UTC was made by a consortium of proposers including the University of Plymouth, The College of Further Education and Plymouth City Council, sponsored by the

major businesses of Babcock and Princess Yachts, as well as the Chamber of Commerce the Royal Navy and federation of small businesses and up to 20 other businesses in Plymouth. The bid was for a 450 place UTC based at a Devonport location with the specialisms of Advanced Manufacturing and Marine Engineering.

In total 37 Bids were made to the Government for UTC proposals across the country. On the 10th October 2011 the Government announced that 13 UTC's would be taken forward and Plymouth was among these. The announcement made clear that the Secretary of State hoped that Plymouth UTC would be opened in 2014, but there were possibilities of an earlier start in 2013.

The Consortium of Partners and Sponsors have formed a steering group and are developing the governing arrangements of what will become a UTC Trust. It will be this body that seeks to take the proposals through the government stages of forming a UTC that is capable of signing a funding agreement with Government similar to Academies.

The strong relationship the council has with its partners and particularly the University means that the Council's involvement with the development of the UTC is very strong. This has a very valuable benefit as it allows the Authority to work with the UTC in developing an admission policy that is complementary with other schools in the city. Given this development it is possible to analyse and model the impact of the UTC. This work is ongoing and involves a consultation with Academy and Community School Headteachers. The initial analysis has been based on considering the exam results of 16-18 year olds and modelling the numbers of young people to which a UTC with a manufacturing and engineering specialism would be attractive. The picture that is emerging shows that students from all schools within the city could be attracted by the opportunities. Included in the analysis is the attraction there will be to the UTC from outside the city boundaries and in particular Torpoint given the proposed location. Whilst incomplete at this stage, the analysis is indicating that a maximum of 15 Y11 students from any one school might choose a UTC over a traditional school place.

The timing of the UTC and how it expands to full capacity is also being taken into consideration. Close working with the UTC will allow the Authority to understand very clearly the plans of how the UTC will grow. It is early days but already we have an understanding that the planned growth of the UTC is unlikely to be at capacity until 2016 and by this stage the very substantial growth in the secondary age pupil numbers will begin to feed into Y7. This means that the challenge will be for Secondary Academies to change their focus to the younger age range rather than reducing in capacity.

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