

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

31 January 2013



UTC – PLYMOUTH Briefing Note

This is a brief update on the progress of UTC Plymouth project as at 9 January 2013.

Headlines:

Across all activities the project remains on track to open in September 2013. While the build and refurbish programme is undoubtedly tight, the contractor (BAM) is confident that it is achievable. Visual evidence suggests rapid demolition and early progress on new build elements. A large proportion of the sub-contractors are either local or regional.

Over the last 9 months, the project has seen the appointment of Prof Pauline Kneale as Chair and the University's Member of the Plymouth UTC Ltd company, the appointment of the new Principal/CEO Designate – Mrs Mary Cox from Northumberland Church of England Academy (joined 5 November 2012), new Vice Principal Designate Mr Peter Robinson from Devonport High School for Boys (joins 1 April 2013) and critically, confirmation of the legally binding Funding Agreement (FA) between the UTC and the Department for Education earlier last year.

In addition to the tight programme, the key risks concern student recruitment for the UTC. This is a very new and unique form of educational provision with a lean target audience because of a demographic trough affecting Year 9 (age 13) and Year 11 (age 15) students, from across a large travel-to-learn area of around 45km. The aim is 75 students for Year 10 and 12 for September 2013, and 100 and 90 new students in September 2014. The recruitment of students has started. Take up from across the Plymouth area is strengthening.

Background:

Over this period a number of significant milestones have been achieved, and together with other positive changes, the project has moved from post-application into the implementation phase. These include, in no particular order, the:

- Application and approval of the UTC's building planning permissions (albeit with some caveats).
- PCC contracting BAM for the delivery of this project, together with the Development Agreement and a lease between PCC and the UTC.
- Tender and selection of an ICT provider (RM Education).
- A brand has been developed. Recruiting students has commenced with initial student/parent open evenings from Sept–Dec 2012, and these will be followed by several further planned events in 2013. PCC are co-ordinating applications for Year 10 in-line with their statutory role. Media coverage continues to promote the opportunity across the region.
- Staff recruitment will be sequenced to build over the period leading to opening (25 staff members, 21 teaching and support) for 150 pupils. 3 x Heads of Faculty will be recruited in the next 2 months for appointment in April 2013; the bulk of staff will take up their posts in late August 2013.
- Employer engagement has continued with refinement of the curriculum, selection of appropriate specialist equipment and confirmation of the workshop designs (7 in total). A number of successful employer engagement events took place in 2012, with plans to consolidate this over the next 3-9 months.

- The UTC's Board of Governors volunteer and selection process has commenced;
- The University is the legal 'lead' sponsor of the founding UTC partnership and the UTC remains a trading subsidiary of the University. The UTC project continues to enjoy the essential and positive support (including financial) from the University, as well as pro bono time and advice from both City College Plymouth and Plymouth City Council on a wide range of matters.
- The small Project Team (now 3 staff, but 7 by April 2013) remain hosted in University offices and will remain in situ until early September 2013 when the new premises open.

Author: John Searson
Job Title: Principal Adviser (Schools and Settings)
Department: Education Learning and Family Support
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