

Cabinet – 3 February 2010

14-19 University Technical College (UTC)

Portfolio: Councillor Walker, Children's Services

Service: Walsall Children's Services, Serco

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary of report

- 1.1 This report outlines the University Technical College (UTC) concept within the context of implementing the national 14-19 reform agenda in Walsall (attached as **Appendix A**).
- 1.2 Summarises proposals contained in the Expression of Interest (EOI) to develop a regional 14-19 Engineering UTC in Walsall sponsored by Walsall College and the University of Wolverhampton

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet notes arrangements for a regional Engineering UTC based in Walsall as part of the Local Authority's plans to implement the national 14-19 reform agenda as outlined in this report, and;
- 2.2 Cabinet delegates responsibility to the Executive Director for Children, in consultation with the Lead Member for Children and Young People, to sign an expression of interest in the UTC.

3. Background information

- 3.1 **University Technical Colleges:** The proposed regional Engineering UTC based in Walsall would operate as part of a national network of University Technical Colleges. The Government's target is to build UTCs in the 12 biggest cities in England. The idea was originally devised by Lord Baker, who was education secretary from 1986 to 1989 and oversaw the introduction of GCSEs and the national curriculum, and the late Lord Dearing, former civil servant, chief executive of the Post Office and author of influential government reviews of education.
- 3.2 Lord Baker is now working on the plans with Mike Tomlinson, the former head of OfSTED. Two officials from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) are also working on the project. The idea has all party support with the

Conservative Party announcing plans for technical schools in every major English city as part of its "get Britain working" programme.

- 3.3 Universities are being encouraged to sponsor the development of UTCs with FE colleges or leading businesses as a new generation of schools which are intended to help end the academic-vocational divide in the English education system. UTCs are modeled on the successful technical schools which are now more popular in Germany than grammar schools. UTCs will focus on qualifications that require specialised equipment, such as engineering, construction and manufacturing.
- 3.4 Operating under the academy programme each UTC will teach the Key Stage 4 core curriculum (English, maths, science) and offer Key Stage 4 foundation subjects (ICT, PE, Citizenship) alongside a specialist curriculum in vocational/applied subjects including one or more Diplomas, which are designed to offer both academic and vocational education. Students will also have access to work-related learning and enterprise, personal, social, health and religious education as well as careers education and guidance. Depending on curriculum design courses may be offered within any or all of the areas of the arts; design technology, the humanities; modern foreign languages.
- 3.5 The first "university technical college", for 14 to 19 year-olds, is planned to open in Birmingham in 2012, and will be sponsored by Aston University. Other universities involved in talks with the government about sponsoring UTCs include Wolverhampton, Salford, Bradford, Hertfordshire, Leicester and Loughborough.
- 3.6 Young people will be able to transfer to a UTC at the age of 14 or opt for post 16 study at a UTC. Each UTC is expected to cater for between 400-600 pupils and will be expected to have strong links to local employers.
- 3.7 **The regional Engineering UTC in Walsall:** Walsall College is the lead sponsor of the regional UTC in Walsall with the University of Wolverhampton as co-sponsor, in partnership with Walsall Council and with the support of neighbouring the local authorities.
- 3.8 The UTC will be a regional facility focussing on 'clean' engineering and/ or manufacturing which will contribute to the delivery of the 14-19 reform agenda (attached as Appendix 1) and explicitly support local and regional regeneration priorities. The focus on 'clean engineering' will allow the UTC to draw on wide areas of expertise from within the University of Wolverhampton and Walsall College, harnessing key employer links with small and larger employers within the region. It will also develop formal partnerships with specialist schools and further education provision across the region.
- 3.9 The lead sponsors will bring to bear their expertise within this field through Wolverhampton University's Engineering and Construction Curriculum Centre, alongside Walsall College's specialisms in Energy and Power. It is intended that the university Curriculum Centre will act as a centre of excellence in developing curriculum, teaching and learning resources and in-service teacher training.
- 3.10 The Centre will also be able to access expertise from the University's School of Engineering and the Built Environment, including its existing Engineering Focus

Group which consists of engineering practitioners from a variety of educational settings and institutions. Alongside this, Walsall College will draw upon its expertise in Energy and Utilities, represented through its involvement in National Skills Academies for Power and Process Industries, and through the College Principal's role as the Association of Colleges Sector Skills Champion for Energy and Utilities and as Board Member of Cogent, the Sector Skills Council for Process Industries. Key industrial partners, linked to the sponsors, will ensure that the Academy has an employer-led curriculum in place.

- 3.11 The UTC will also offer opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) contexts which will widen opportunities for progression into employment and/or further and higher education. These will be enhanced by opportunities to study Modern Foreign Languages, reflecting the international nature of the science, technology, engineering and manufacturing industries.
- 3.33 Qualifications will include Diplomas (in engineering and or manufacturing) vocational qualifications, such as BTEC and NVQs, and STEM qualifications typically leading to level 2 qualifications at 16 and level 3 at 18. These will be mapped into the wider qualifications framework and apprenticeship opportunities dependant on the sponsors' expertise and provision. Core learning in functional literacy numeracy and IT, Personal Learning and Thinking Skills will be explicitly linked to employability and enterprise skills.
- 3.34 The curriculum framework will also present opportunities for personalised progression routes according to individual learners' stage, not age. In practice this will mean that a tailored extension of Wolverhampton University's HEMiS (Higher Education Modules in Schools) programme will allow for a structured introduction to Higher Education which will raise aspirations and smooth progression routes beyond the Engineering Academy. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the lead sponsors' experience in supporting access and adult courses will enable some localised extended provision for those people who may wish to pursue study in this field of study.
- 3.35 Young people who have an interest in practical learning in the context of engineering in the broadest sense and in developing their skills and competences with a view to a career in engineering will be admitted at 14 or 16. It is intended to develop the concept of the UTC graduate; confident young people with sound key skills, entrepreneurial flair, and the ability to communicate and present their ideas and able to apply the skills they have learnt to the workplace and/or further study.
- 3.36 The proposed UTC will serve pupils between the ages of 14 and 19, with 120 places in each of the four year groups, giving a total of 480 places. The UTC will be part of the wider local picture in the context of 14-19 commissioning, providing a range of opportunities for young people and that this would result in a significant number of applications from within Walsall and from neighbouring authorities. It is generally considered that pupils can reasonably travel to school for 45 minutes and almost all secondary schools and academies in Walsall are within this travel area. In terms of other LAs, this area includes the eastern and central parts of Wolverhampton, the Cannock area of Staffordshire and very small areas of Sandwell; none of Dudley lies within this zone.

- 3.37 Given this general pattern, analysis of trends suggests that there would be a significant level of interest in the UTC from young people resident in Walsall and adjoining areas. It is considered that, following extensive awareness raising and publicity activities, the UTC would be oversubscribed within a few years of opening. Although places cannot be allocated on the basis of residency in specific LAs, it is considered that, on average, admissions to Year 10 would typically be in the region of 80 from Walsall and 20 from Staffordshire and from Wolverhampton, giving a total of 120.
- 3.38 It is expected that the attractiveness of the curriculum offer and the provision of appropriate specialist facilities would attract pupils from across the ability range and that for Walsall schools and academies this would be in the region of 4 or 5 pupils from each establishment.
- 3.39 In Year 12, it is expected that the pupil roll will comprise a mix of pupils who have already completed Years 10 and 11 at the UTC and new admissions. The balance of these groups will develop over time.
- 3.40 The number of pupils to be admitted to Year 7 in Walsall schools and academies over the next few years is forecast to remain at or just below the number admitted in September 2009; however, from 2016/17 admissions to Year 7 are forecast to be significantly higher.
- 3.41 Pupil Place Planning for BSF is focused on 2019/20 and 2020/21 when total pupil numbers in mainstream schools and academies are forecast to be in the region of 1,250 higher than in January 2009. Planning for this includes the enlargement of three schools. The provision of places at the UTC would assist with the pressure on school places but should the UTC not be established it would be necessary to create additional places at other schools.
- 3.42 A range of schools, colleges and other providers located within the 45 minutes travel area offer engineering courses. The UTC will complement the existing specialist provision and add to the diversity and breadth of provision in Walsall and in the Black Country. It is envisaged that there would be a high level of collaboration between settings to ensure that young people had access to a wide range of courses.
- 3.43 Other specialist school provision in Walsall includes: (Appendix A & B)
- Frank F Harrison Engineering College which offers a range of courses which are popular with students;
 - Brownhills Community Technology College which offers the engineering diploma in partnership with Walsall College;
 - Shire Oak Technology College which offers popular engineering courses
 - Willenhall School Sports College which successfully offers a range of engineering courses including apprenticeships.
- 3.44 Other specialist school provision in the travel area includes:
- Staffordshire
 - Chase Terrace Technology College
 - Kingsmead Technology College
 - Sandwell

- Manor Foundation Business Enterprise and Sports College
- Wolverhampton
- St Peter's Collegiate School

- 3.45 Walsall College attracts students from Walsall and adjoining areas, offers a wide range of engineering courses at a variety of levels thereby opening access to students across the ability range. These courses are very popular but there is limited opportunity for provision to be expanded to meet the increased demand expected when the current economic situation improves over the next few years. It is considered that demand will be particularly high in the 'clean engineering' fields and that the UTC would provide an excellent opportunity to add to existing capacity to meet this demand.
- 3.46 The relatively high NEET levels both in Walsall and in neighbouring LAs indicate that appropriate provision is not currently available to attract these young people into learning. There is significant potential to recruit to the UTC from these areas, in addition to pupils from schools in the local area and the wider Black Country.
- 3.47 The raising of the participation age has been factored into Walsall's pupil place planning through to 2020/21 and the proposed provision in BSF, together with the UTC, would be sufficient to meet the needs identified.

4. Resource considerations

4.1 Financial:

- 4.1.1 Subject to the Machinery of Government legislation it is proposed under the *Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act, 2009* that the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) will take on responsibility for the funding of Academies on behalf of the Secretary of State.
- 4.1.2 The YPLA will calculate and make payments of grants, supervise and ensure financial control of budgets, and monitor and enforce the Funding Agreement. Through its regional structure it will be well-placed to ensure that Academies get the support and challenge that they require.
- 4.1.3 UTCs also work with sponsors. Walsall College is the lead sponsor of the regional UTC in Walsall with the University of Wolverhampton co-sponsor, in partnership with Walsall Council and with the support of neighbouring the local authorities.

4.2 Legal:

- 4.2.1 Officers will need to take legal advice on the process to be followed and commitments that are signed up to as part of supporting the UTC.

4.3 Staffing

- 4.3.1 There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

5. Citizen impact

- 5.1 Effective 14-19 provision at both the Walsall and sub regional level will support the priorities of Every Child Matters – especially in relation to Enjoy and Achieve and Achieving Economic Wellbeing – and the skills agenda by supporting improvement in attainment at KS4 and KS5, raising aspirations, improving post 16 participation and reducing NEETs.
- 5.2 Successful quality assurance, planning, commissioning and delivery of provision in the UTC as part of the 14-19 partnership provision including schools, Walsall and training providers will ensure high quality, best value provision for approximately 3000 young people.
- 5.3 Links with the development of capital programmes particularly BSF, including shared 'skills centres', will support regeneration.

6. Community safety

- 6.1 These proposals will challenge discrimination and harassment by working with partners to remove barriers to engagement in 14-19 learning pathways.
- 6.2 The UTC and its sponsors will put in place policies and processes to monitor and address complaints and modify their practice to eliminate discrimination and/or harassment.
- 6.3 Community cohesion (good community relations) will be promoted by the development of collaborative provision of a broad range of progression pathways within education, training and young apprenticeships, linking with local employers in the planning and delivery of provision. This will enable the integration of students from different cultural backgrounds from various schools and training providers and promote good Information Advice and Guidance (IAG), transition and progression through education, training, employment and higher education.
- 6.4 Monitoring of the take-up of the full- range of courses, will identify where more effective communication and marketing, the commissioning of additional provision, and more culturally sensitive provision would enable greater participation and success.

7. Environmental impact

- 7.1 Shared collaborative provision will give value for money and reduce the need to travel to study out of the Borough as a wider range of courses will be available within the borough, and through joint planning within the sub-region.

8. Performance and risk management issues

- 8.1 Risk:

The following risks are associated with the UTC

- Failure to secure clarity around capital funding

- Failure to attract sufficient students
- Failure to recruit the appropriate number of staff at the right level and with relevant skills
- Failure to gain LA and DCSF support
- Alignment of curriculum with Walsall's 14-19 strategy

8.2 The sponsors have Risk Assessment processes in place and will ensure that risk assessment has been carried out and controls put in place.

9. Performance management:

9.1 As an Academy the UTC will retain clear responsibility for its own performance and be held to account against the OfSTED framework.

9.2 Subject to legislation put in place by the Machinery of Government, the *Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act, 2009* proposes that the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) will take on responsibility for the performance management of Academies on behalf of the Secretary of State.

9.3 Through its regional structure it will be well-placed to ensure that Academies get the support and challenge that they require. No other body is better placed to bring that support and challenge linked to the overall funding and commissioning process.

9.4 Locating these functions within the YPLA will enable better joining up of the delivery of 14-19 reform and the wider education agenda for academies.

10. Equality implications

10.1 The National 14-19 reform agenda is intended to ensure that an appropriate range of courses and qualifications is available so that every young person can learn a way that engages and motivates them. Walsall's 14-19 Strategy reflects this aim and its effective delivery will directly and positively impact on the reduction of gaps in attainment as well as promoting the achievement of socially excluded groups.

10.2 The specialist curriculum offer at the UTC will enhance the opportunities available to 14-19 year olds in Walsall and surrounding boroughs. Local commissioning will be based on analysis of local demand, and funding will follow the learner, promoting equality of opportunity for young people across the 14-19 age and ability range.

10.3 Decisions as to whether an Academy should have a sixth form, and relating to the number of places, will be made, as now, by the Secretary of State. As now, that decision will be informed by discussion with the local authority in whose area the Academy is located.

10.4 Academies will be commissioned by to provide 16-19 education and training as part of the overall commissioning process, which will be set out in the National Commissioning Framework.

- 10.5 Where an academy and the LA are not able to reach a resolution locally about a particular commissioning decision, the YPLA, performing its role as the Secretary of State's agent would make the final decision about academy places in line with the Secretary of State's guidance on his academies policy and 16-19 provision, taking into account local and regional intelligence, as well as the views

Consultation

Consultation on these proposals has taken place through:

- The UTC Steering Group, which includes representatives from the DCSF, Walsall College, The University of Wolverhampton, Walsall Children's Services/Serco
- The UTC Curriculum Group and Admissions group, which includes representatives from Walsall College, The University of Wolverhampton, Walsall Children's Services/Serco and other LAs.
- Black Country DCSs
- DCS Staffordshire

Background papers

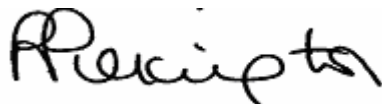
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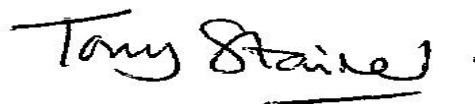
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Signed:
Executive Director: Pauline
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Date: 25 January 2010



Signed:
Managing Director, Walsall Childrens
Services, Serco
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Signed:
Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Walker :
Date: 25 January 2010

Appendix 1: Context 14-19 Strategy

- 1.1 **The national 14-19 education reform agenda:** is driven by technological change and the demands of a global economy for knowledge workers with a broader range of work place competencies and soft skills that complement academic or technical skills. As a result 14-19 education and training in the UK is undergoing a rapid and radical period of change designed to secure a broad 14–19 entitlement that ensures every young person has access to a high-quality, interesting and useful curriculum that will help them achieve their potential and progress to further and higher education and skilled employment.
- 1.2 The key elements of the national reform programmed are:
- raising the minimum age at which young people leave education or training to 17 by 2013 and to 18 by 2015
 - introducing a new suite of qualifications, Diplomas in 17 subject areas at three levels by 2013
 - reforming A levels with a reduction in assessment while ensuring that every candidate is stretched and challenged
 - introducing a new extended project qualification for Advanced Diploma and A level students
 - creating new functional skills standards and qualifications in English, mathematics and ICT
 - reviewing and updating GCSEs
 - expanding Apprenticeship opportunities
 - supporting learners below level 2 and level 1 through the foundation learning tier
 - placing responsibility for education and training of all young people to 18 with local authorities so LAs can take a more holistic view of services for under 19s
 - increased emphasis on science, technology, engineering and mathematics
- 1.3 From 2013 learning for young people aged 14-19 and 25 for those with special needs, will lead to qualifications from one of four routes:
- **Apprenticeships** – for 16-19 year olds, young apprenticeships for 14-16 year olds, with an entitlement to a place by 2013 for all 16 year olds suitably qualified
 - **Foundation Learning** – with some delivery on a 14-19 basis in all local areas from 2010 and increasing provision from 2010 to align with the 2013 Diploma entitlement and RPA target
 - **General Qualifications**, e.g. GCSEs and A levels
 - **Diplomas** – with an entitlement by 2013 for all 14–16 year olds to the first 14 Diplomas and for 16–18 years to all 17 Diplomas
- 1.4 These routes will be broad programmes of learning which give young people the opportunity to combine qualifications and tailor their learning to meet their specific needs and interests. At the same time, there will be flexibility and progression within and between routes to respond to individual needs.

- 1.5 All young people in KS4 will study as part of the secondary curriculum:
- core curriculum: English, mathematics, science
 - foundation subjects: ICT, PE, Citizenship
 - work-related learning and enterprise
 - religious education
 - sex, drug, alcohol and tobacco education and careers education
 - a course within any or all of the areas of the arts; design and technology; the humanities; modern foreign languages.
- 1.6 All young people will develop functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT as well as the personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) to succeed in adulthood and at work. These generic skills will be embedded throughout the secondary curriculum and in all qualifications routes.
- 1.7 From 2013 LAs will have a statutory duty to deliver *full* participation for *all* 17 year olds 'in learning' as part of proposals to Raise the Participation Age (ROAP) which also involves securing provision for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD) up to the age of 25, and for young people in juvenile custody up to the age of 18; by 2015 *all* 18 year olds will be expected to remain in learning. Those who go straight into work at 16 will need to take part in accredited training for the equivalent of a day a week. A minority of young people will participate in informal non-accredited learning, to get them back on the path to success through one of the routes outlined above.
- 1.8 Local Authorities will also need to secure mechanisms for delivering appropriate support for young people, including:
- excellent impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and support to make the right choices at 14 and 16;
 - an on line 14–19 Prospectus setting out the courses and support available;
 - a Common Application Process linked to the 14–19 Prospectus that makes it easier to apply for education and training;
 - the September Guarantee to ensure all 16 and 17 year olds have an offer of a suitable place in learning and targeted support to those who need it most.
- 1.9 These reforms will collectively encourage more young people to continue in learning in ways that they find engaging and that will help them to achieve more by 19. By 2020 the goal is for 90% of young people to achieve Level 2 (5 A* to C GCSEs or equivalent) by the age of 19, and 70% to achieve Level 3 qualifications by that age.
- 1.10 It will not be possible for one school or college to deliver the 14-19 entitlement on its own. To deliver the entitlement it will be essential to establish the right delivery arrangements at a local, regional and national level. Stronger local partnerships and consortia arrangements combined with integrating services for young people, will help them see the options that are on offer to them, make an informed choices that will enable them to fulfill their potential and develop the knowledge and skills that are required by universities and employers.

- 1.11 Walsall 14-19 strategy:** A robust 14-19 partnership approach already exists. The 14-19 Partnership includes secondary and special schools, private and third sector training providers, Walsall College, and Wolverhampton University, together with Aim Higher, Connexions, the local Learning and Skills Council, the Education Business Partnership and employers. The strategic management of the 14-19 Partnership through the 14-19 Partnership Board includes stakeholders from the maintained, independent, private and voluntary sectors.
- 1.12 Sub-regional and regional planning with neighbouring Local Authorities is well established through the Black Country Challenge. This sub-regional grouping will form the framework for consultation and decisions about commissioning as the Machinery of Government legislation comes into effect bringing greater coherence to planning and accountability through the Black Country Sub Regional Group.
- 1.13 The 14-19 Partnership is working to secure a curriculum offer that will transform the learning experiences of young people growing up in Walsall. Our intention is to meet the needs, broaden the interests and raise aspirations of learners while at the same time reflecting the intellectual, social, and economic demands of a rapidly changing society. There will be agreed minimum entitlement post 14 and post 16, linked to Walsall's Children and Young People's Plan and regeneration priorities, which will lead to qualifications from one of four routes outlined in paragraph 1.4.
- 1.14 The Walsall 14-19 curriculum offer will be based on an integrated approach to the education, training, and employment and skills agendas. As outlined in the Secondary Strategy and BSF Strategy for Change Part 1, schools, training providers, Walsall College and HEIs will be encouraged to build on their expertise, specialist or Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status, to act as hubs for 14-19 learning from entry level to level 4. Enhanced provision will increase access to work based engagement programmes, apprenticeships, vocational and applied options including diplomas, to complement the more familiar GCSE, AS and A level courses; demand for the International Baccalaureate will be explored. By sharing expertise and experience the distinct strengths of each provider will contribute to the overall range and depth of provision in Walsall, building capacity without overloading individual institutions.
- 1.15 A wide range of courses is advertised through the on-line 14-19 Area Prospectus www.choosewalsall.com. While remaining on the roll of their home provider some students already participate in specific options at other schools, colleges, or with work based trainers.
- 1.16 ICT will enable remote access to specialist courses using video-conferencing and VLE, will bring relevance and enable e-mentoring and programme input from employers, teachers and lecturers.
- 1.17 Realising our vision involves taking a joined up approach to capital planning, linking new facilities, including Skill Centres such as Health Tec and the proposed regional Engineering UTC, to BSF and the Primary Capital Programme. Where joint investment is possible, this will be explored so that cost-effective specialist facilities can be accessible locally or borough- wide.

- 1.18 Learners will be supported by a holistic approach to service delivery. Protocols and shared approaches to curriculum planning and development, teaching, learning and quality assurance, resource deployment, transition planning and continuous professional development are being developed.
- 1.19 In addition to specialist expertise, all providers will contribute to promoting the 14-19 agenda through excellent information, advice and guidance and pastoral support to encourage the personal development of young people, particularly those learners vulnerable to underachievement. This includes young people from areas of particular social and economic disadvantage, those in the looked after system, young people with special needs, learning difficulties or disabilities and those who are potentially NEET, including teenage parents.
- 1.20 Delivery will be designed to promote new and innovative ways of working to secure improvement in achievement for all. For example, the 14-19 strategy references new arrangements for Transition Planning for learners with LLDD and the new Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS). There is a focus on opportunities for learners currently at risk of underachievement, including young people in the looked after system or leaving care, white boys and minority ethnic groups.
- 1.21 The emphasis on access, inclusion, family, community and lifelong learning beyond traditional educational venues is intended to break down barriers to learning, increase participation, and improve attainment. In this way skills, knowledge, and aptitudes will be developed to enable individuals to adapt to emerging challenges throughout their personal and working lives, thus combating the effects of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion that still undermine the educational and employment opportunities of many people in Walsall, in the Black Country and regionally in the West Midlands.