

**Report of Director of Children's Services**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

**Subject: University Technical Colleges**

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| Are specific electoral Wards affected?<br>If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for Call-In?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No            |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?<br>If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:<br>Appendix number: | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

**Summary of main issues**

1. UTCs are 14-19 Academies sponsored by universities and employers that offer a full-time technically oriented course of study with clear progression routes into higher education or further learning in work including apprenticeships.
2. An Expression of Interest around exploring the potential for the development of University Technical Colleges (UTCs) in Leeds was submitted by the Council on behalf of partners to the Department for Education on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012, see attached.
3. UTCs could present a major opportunity to help support the economic development of Leeds and create the highly skilled workforce required to thrive and grow in the future. They could also make a significant contribution to helping address the future need for secondary places. Further discussion with key partners is required to firmly establish the case for UTCs in Leeds.

**Recommendations**

Executive Board is recommended to:

- I. Note the content of the report.
- II. Indicate support for the Council brokering discussions at the highest level to explore the potential for the development of UTCs in Leeds and helping partners move forward any proposals at pace.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To inform members of the Expression of Interest (see attached) around exploring the potential for the development of University Technical Colleges (UTCs) in Leeds that was submitted by the Council on behalf of partners to the Department for Education on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and seek support for the Council having a central role in any further developments.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 Leeds' vision is to become the best city to live, work and learn in by 2030. Our vision is underpinned by an ambition to be a 'NEET-free' city by transforming the experience of young people entering the job market. We aim to offer a 'Guarantee to the Young' supported by a range of integrated pathways including education, training, volunteering, work experience and apprenticeships, leading to jobs and higher level qualifications. We also want to engage business much more directly with longer term skills investment and shaping the curriculum that is delivered in our educational institutions. University Technical Colleges could enhance the range of learning opportunities available to young people in Leeds, help cement the relationship between education and business and help deliver our vision.
- 2.2 UTCs are 14-19 Academies that offer a full-time technically oriented course of study with clear progression routes into higher education or further learning in work including apprenticeships, typically with 500-800 pupils. UTCs are sponsored by a university, employers and in some cases an FE college with strengths in the UTC's specialist subject area. UTCs offer a more businesslike approach to learning combining practical and academic studies and involve employers and universities in the design and delivery of the curriculum.
- 2.3 The proposal to submit an Expression of Interest around developing UTCs in Leeds stems from discussions, initially led by a group of schools in the North West of the city and involving a number of universities, employers and the Chamber of Commerce. Subsequently Leeds City Council became involved in the discussions raising the agenda to a higher strategic level with key stakeholders.
- 2.4 Currently up to £10 million of capital funding together with £300k of pump priming funding is available from the DfE to support successful applications to develop a UTC.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 The decision to submit an Expression of Interest at short notice was primarily the result of dialogue with the Baker Dearing Trust (BDT) who are contracted by the DfE to run the UTC roll out nationally. As discussions between partners are only at an early stage the original intention was to consider submitting a full application for the next bidding round in Autumn 2013. However, following a meeting with the BDT on 9 November 2012 they made it clear they were very enthusiastic about Leeds developing a UTC programme and indicated that even though they recognised that partners in Leeds were not in a position to submit a full application they felt it would be worth submitting an Expression of Interest by the deadline of 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

- 3.2 After careful consideration the general consensus amongst partners was that it was neither appropriate nor feasible to submit a full application at this stage, but despite the very limited time available it would be worth heeding the advice of the BDT and submitting an Expression of Interest. It was felt that this would signal the intention of partners to continue exploring the possibility of developing a cohesive set of plans for UTCs in the future.
- 3.3 We were not certain what the reaction of the DfE would be to the document submitted, but the hope was that they might consider earmarking capital funding for Leeds to support any future full application. On 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012 we received a letter from Lord Hill, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education thanking us for the letter expressing interest in developing UTCs in Leeds, see attached. He confirmed that due to its non-compliant nature they could not consider it as part of this funding round, but stated that he hoped partners in Leeds would continue to work together to create a vision and plan for UTCs and submit a full application in a future round.
- 3.4 The document that was submitted to the DfE included letters of support from The University of Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan University, Trinity and All Saints University College, The Leeds Federation of FE colleges and over a dozen employers. It should be noted that after the document was submitted further letters of support from employers continued to be received, indicating the extensive support for this type of development from the business community.
- 3.5 At this stage the Expression of Interest does not commit potential partners including the Council to anything more than continuing to engage in discussions to explore the potential for the development of UTCs in Leeds.
- 3.6 It is recognised that to move forward detailed discussion and consultation would be required with all key stakeholders including; young people, parents, the universities, FE colleges, schools and employers. Also an early decision would need to be made to establish the UTC specialisms based on learner demand and employer need, as this would directly impact on how appropriate it would be for potential sponsors and partner to be involved.
- 3.7 If further discussions eventually lead to a decision to move towards a full application one of the first things that would need to be done would be to form a company limited by Guarantee commonly known as an "Academy Trust". This would need to be supported by sponsors including a university and employers who would act as directors of the company and be responsible for approving and submitting the application. Councils are not allowed to submit the formal application or be part of the Trust, although they can be on the governing body of a UTC.
- 3.8 A full application would also involve submitting a document detailing the company and sponsors/members of the Trust; details of the cohort sizes and catchment area; the educational vision, educational plan (including admission criteria and curriculum model); evidence of demand and marketing (including demand from parents and children and support from the LA, schools and FE colleges); organisational capacity and capability and premises information. It would also

require detailed appendices covering; letters of support from sponsors; catchment area and travel plans; CV's of key people; site plans and a financial plan.

- 3.9 The Council have indicated to partners that they wish to be fully involved in any discussions around UTCs and would be willing to commit resource to help partners move forward at pace the decision as to whether to proceed with a full application.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 A certain level of discussion has taken place between a number of potential partners and organisations that could be affected by the development of UTCs in Leeds. The Council have offered to help facilitate further discussion with key stakeholders at the highest level. However, if a decision is made to submit a full formal application to develop a UTC a company limited by guarantee commonly known as an "Academy Trust" would need to be set up and they would have responsibility for leading on further discussion and consultation. Detailed consultation would be required with a range of key stakeholders including; young people, parents, the universities, FE colleges, schools and employers, along with council elected members and officers.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 Until specific UTC proposals are developed it is difficult to quantify the potential impact. However, as admission to any UTC would be open to all learners in the city it is unlikely there would be any major considerations.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 We would be looking to ensure the UTC specialisms support a number of our priority areas for growth as a city; these are:

- Health and medical
- Financial and business services
- Low carbon manufacturing.
- Creative culture and digital
- Retail
- Housing and construction
- Social enterprise and the third sector

- 4.3.2 All these areas need major injections of young talent if they are to thrive and grow. We believe UTCs could play a key role in helping to create the workforce of the future for these sectors and strengthen our competitive edge as a city.

- 4.3.3 It is envisaged that any UTCs could eventually grow to somewhere near the upper limit of the 500-800 places that UTCs normally provide, helping significantly with the expansion in secondary places.

#### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 Currently up to £10 million of capital funding together with £300k of pump priming funding is available from the DfE to support successful applications to develop a UTC.
- 4.4.2 Depending on the outcome of the options around potential sites the Council might wish to consider making available land to accommodate the UTC.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 There are no identified legal implications at this stage.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

- 4.6.1 It is clear that many potential partners have some reservations or questions that need addressing before they can fully commit to supporting the development of UTCs in Leeds. Concerns include the potential impact on enrolments to their organisation and the impact on their reputation should the UTC not be successful.
- 4.6.2 As the Council are not allowed to lead on UTC applications the decision as to whether Leeds does move forward with UTCs will largely depend on the backing of key stakeholder particularly universities and employers.
- 4.6.3 The Council would look to play a key role in helping shape any plans around UTC and seek to secure the twenty percent of places on the governing body of any UTC allowed under current legislation.

### **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 UTCs could present a major opportunity to help support the economic development of Leeds and create the highly skilled workforce required to thrive and grow in the future. They could also make a significant contribution to helping address the future need for secondary places.
- 5.2 Significant further discussion is required between key stakeholders to firmly establish the case for UTCs in Leeds. Leeds City Council need to be central to any future discussions and help shape any UTC developments to ensure coherence with the wider city strategy for learning and skills.

### **6 Recommendations**

Executive Board is recommended to:

- 6.1 Note the content of the report.
- 6.2 Indicate support for the Council brokering discussions at the highest level to explore the potential for the development of UTCs in Leeds and helping partners move forward proposals at pace.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.