

From: Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education and Young People's Services

To: Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee -17 March 2016

Subject: Proposed change of age range and the expansion of Leigh UTC

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway: None
of Paper

Future Pathway: Cabinet Member Decision
of Paper

Electoral Division: Dartford North (Cllr Tom Maddison)

Summary:

This report informs the Cabinet Committee of the proposal by Leigh Academies Trust to expand the age range of the Leigh University Technical College (UTC) to admit students from year 7. Currently the UTC admits students from year 10. This report also requests members to recommend that the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform agrees to release sufficient funding to put the necessary infrastructure in place

Recommendation:

The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform on the decision to:

- a. Agree, subject to Ministerial approval, to allocate 50% of the total cost of the capital build project (estimated to be £10m), from the Education and Young People's Services Capital Budget, to fund any necessary additional works or variations to accommodation.
- b. Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council with the Education Funding Agency
- c. Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts

This decision is subject to ministerial approval and subsequent planning permission being granted.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Dartford district section of the Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2016-20 identifies significant local pressure on year 7 places in

Dartford. The Commissioning Plan identified a need to provide an additional 16FE of Secondary provision in the district by 2023.

- 1.2. Every school in the planning area is being considered as a possible proposal for expansion according to several criteria, including location, cost, proximity to demand, site size, willingness of the school, highways issues, Sport England and Ofsted rating.

2. Background to the Proposal

- 2.1. The Leigh UTC is an educational institution which opened in September 2014; established at plot 19, The Bridge Development, Brunel Way, Dartford. It forms part of Leigh Academies Trust (LAT), a multi academy trust in Dartford, Kent.
- 2.2. Leigh UTC aims to provide specialist education in Engineering and ICT and has the core priority of providing students with good future career prospects and to help them to develop the specific skills industry requires.
- 2.3. However, like some other UTCs, achieving Year 10 and Year 12 student recruitment targets in the first years of operation has proved challenging and planned numbers have not been achieved. Year 10 has proved to be especially difficult. At the end of the last academic year the roll was 133, compared with the pre-opening target of 165. The roll for the October 2015 Census was 224. The pre-opening target for the second year was 375.
- 2.4. The proposal to change the age range to admit students from year 7 will achieve two key objectives; to assist in providing sufficient year 7 places in Dartford and to provide the UTC with the opportunity to guarantee its long term viability.
- 2.5. In summary, the proposal to achieve the change in age range is to develop an 'Inspiration Centre' on a plot of land adjacent to the current UTC building accepting 120 students in each of Years 7 – 9. The current UTC building would be used almost exclusively for students between Years 10 and 13 to follow specialist programmes in Engineering and Computer Science. All 120 students from the 'Inspiration Centre' would transfer to the senior section of the UTC in Year 10 and a further 30 places would be made available for students to transfer from other schools in the area at this point. This would mean the number of students at the UTC increasing to 960

3. Progress to date

- 3.1. Following the Leigh Academies Trust's submission of a business case to the Education Funding Agency in Summer 2015, various discussions have taken place within the department and with ministers to ascertain whether or not this expansion would be acceptable and how the capital costs of the expansion could be met.
- 3.2. In recognition of the need to ensure long term viability of the UTC, Ministers have asked officials and the local authority to find a way to proceed with the proposal. In a recent meeting between Leigh Academies Trust, Kent County Council and the Department, an "in principle" agreement has been reached. If KCC would agree to

a 50% contribution of the capital build costs, DfE officials would recommend that Ministers agree to fully fund the acquisition of the adjacent site and meet the remaining 50% of the capital build costs.

- 3.3. Therefore, should Members agree to allocate the 50% contribution towards the capital scheme, it would still be subject to ministerial approval and the outcomes of any associated public consultations

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. The estimated capital build costs for the proposed scheme are £10m. The financial implications for KCC would be as follows:
- a. Capital – Kent County Council's contribution will be 50% of the total capital build cost. KCC acknowledge that the final contribution may be higher or lower than 50% of £10m, as the cost of the project is an estimate. If the required level of contribution is greater than 10% the Cabinet Member will be required to take a further decision to allocate the additional funding.
 - b. Revenue – For a period of three academic years, the school will receive protection for an additional 120 Year 7 students. For each additional classroom, resulting from the expansion of the school, the sum of £6,000 will be allocated towards the classroom setup costs.
 - c. Human – The Leigh UTC will appoint additional teachers, as the school size increases and the need arises.
- 4.2. Members should note that a cost of £5m to KCC represents a saving of approximately £7m against the average cost for providing 4FE of Secondary provision.

5. Kent Policy Framework

- 5.1. These proposals will help to secure our ambition “to ensure every child will go to a good school where they make good progress and can have fair access to school places” as set out in the Education Commissioning Plan.
- 5.2. The ‘Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision, 2016-20’ identified a pressure on Secondary school places in Dartford. Changes to demographics and increased migration are leading to increased pressure on Secondary school places across the district.

6. Proposal

- 6.1. The proposed expansion of Leigh UTC will improve parental choice for Secondary school places in the Dartford area.
- 6.2. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this proposal.

7. Views

7.1 The local Member

Cllr Tom Maddison supports the proposal

7.2 Headteacher and Chair of Governors

Plans to expand The Leigh UTC are tremendously exciting. They represent a serious vote of confidence by KCC and DfE in the early success of The UTC. They will also ensure that even more students have access to our successful model of education which is allowing students to gain places at selective universities and advanced apprenticeships in areas that our nation's economy so badly needs. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our committed business and university sponsors for their ongoing strong support and encouragement

7.3 Area Education Officer

The analysis of the needs in the area indicate that due to immediate pressure and future demand, based on changing demographics in Dartford district, an additional 16FE of secondary capacity is required by 2023. These 120 year 7 places will help achieve that additional capacity requirement.

The Director of Planning and Access and I have considered every school in the district with a view to whether that school could be enlarged. I am of the firm opinion that one of the most appropriate, sustainable and cost effective solutions to the demand in the Dartford district is to change the age range of the UTC and enlarge the school to enable 120 year 7 places to be offered each year.

8. Delegation to Officers

- 8.1. The Officer Scheme of Delegation; under Appendix 2 part 4 of the Council's Constitution, provides a clear and appropriate link between this decision and the actions needed to implement it. For information it is envisaged, if the proposal goes ahead, that the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support will sign contracts on behalf of the County Council.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. Forecasts for the Dartford district indicate an increasing demand for Secondary school places, due to medium and large scale housing development and inward migration.
- 9.2. This enlargement will add an additional 120 Year 7 places to the capacity per year, in line with priorities in the Kent Policy Framework, 'Vision and Priorities for Education and Young People's Services' and the 'Commissioning Plan for Education' (2016 – 2020).

10. Recommendations

- 9.1 The Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform on the decision to:
 - a. Agree, subject to Ministerial approval, to allocate 50% of the total cost of the capital build project (estimated to be £10m), from the Education and Young

People's Services Capital Budget, to fund any necessary additional works or variations to accommodation.

- b. Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council with the Education Funding Agency
- c. Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts

11. Background Documents

11.1. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/bold-steps-for-kent>

11.2. Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2016 – 2020

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=61244>

10.3 Consultation document and Equalities Impact Assessment

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-consultations>

12. Contact details

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DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,

Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

DECISION NO:

16/00033

For publication

Subject: Proposed change of age range and the expansion of Leigh UTC

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform I:

- a. Agree, subject to Ministerial approval, to allocate 50% of the total cost of the capital build project (estimated to be £10m), from the Education and Young People's Services Capital Budget, to fund any necessary additional works or variations to accommodation.
- a. Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance to enter into any necessary contracts/ agreements on behalf of the County Council with the Education Funding Agency
- b. Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts

Reason(s) for decision:

In reaching this decision I have taken into account:

1. The views received from the consultation with parents/carers, staff and governors.
2. The views of the Governing Body
3. The views of the Local Member
4. the views of the Area Education Officer
5. the views of the Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee.

Financial Implications:

The estimated capital build costs for the proposed scheme are £10m. The financial implications for KCC would be as follows:

- a. Capital – Kent County Council's contribution will be 50% of the total capital build cost. KCC acknowledge that the final contribution may be higher or lower than 50% of £10m, as the cost of the project is an estimate. If the required level of contribution is greater than 10% the Cabinet Member will be required to take a further decision to allocate the additional funding.
- b. Revenue – For a period of three academic years, the school will receive protection for an additional 120 Year 7 students. For each additional classroom, resulting from the expansion of the school, the sum of £6,000 will allocated towards the classroom setup costs.
- c. Human – The Leigh UTC will appoint additional teachers, as the school size increases and the need arises.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

17 March 2016 report to Education and Young Person's Cabinet Committee

To be added after meeting

15 December 2015 report to Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee

The Committee endorsed the Kent Commissioning Plan, which identified a need for additional secondary places in the Sevenoaks District.

Any alternatives considered:

Forecasts for the Dartford district indicate an increasing demand for Secondary school places, due to medium and large scale housing development and inward migration.

This enlargement will add an additional 120 Year 7 places to the capacity per year, in line with priorities in the Kent Policy Framework, 'Vision and Priorities for Education and Young People's Services' and the 'Commissioning Plan for Education' (2016 – 2020).

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

N/A

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Signed

Date