

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 DECEMBER 2018

WATERFRONT UNIVERSITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

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Summary

This report provides a brief update in relation to the Waterfront UTC (previously Medway UTC) which was initially reported to this committee on 31 July 2018. The UTC's Principal will be in attendance at the meeting to provide a short presentation and to answer questions from the Committee in relation to the improvement journey.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The updates in this report directly link to the council plan objective of Supporting Medway's people to realise their potential especially all children achieving their potential in schools.

2. Background

2.1 University Technical Colleges (UTCs) follow a model established by the Baker Dearing Educational Trust (BDT), headed by Lord Baker. UTCs are independent from BDT and the governing body is controlled by a majority of employer and university representatives. UTCs typically have capacity for between 440-800 students who split their time between core academic subjects and specialist technical subjects.

2.2 All UTCs are supported by a university and employers and are established to meet demand for particular skills shortage identified by employers in the local area. Each UTC has one or two specialisms, ranging from engineering and manufacturing to construction and bio-medical sciences. These specialisms are determined locally and there is no prescribed DfE list of what is or is not acceptable – it is for the employers and university to decide and make the case. UTC's are registered charities and companies limited by guarantee.

- 2.3 The UTC in Medway was established in September 2015 and is one of a total of 49 UTC's in England. The UTC provides courses for 14-19 year olds with a specialism in the fields of engineering, construction and design. Its aim is to provide young people with the support required to graduate with a portfolio of traditional A Levels as well as technical qualifications.
- 2.4 The building is fully equipped with state of the art facilities to enable and enhance the 'learning by doing' approach to delivering the engineering and construction focus of the UTC. These facilities have been developed in close collaboration with employer sponsors. This approach is also exemplified by the internals of the facility, which have been designed to create a live learning laboratory to enable students to understand the construction, engineering, and operational features of a state of the art, environmentally friendly building. The building has also been designed to create a business-like environment, in keeping with the ethos and focus of the UTC. The building is fully ICT enabled to permit students to mirror industry practice, as well as enhancing their own learning.
- 2.5 The UTC (then Medway UTC) received an Ofsted inspection in March 2018. In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was of the opinion that the school requires special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school were not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This Committee received a report regarding this at its meeting on 31 July 2018.

3. Update

- 3.1 The responsibility for monitoring and supporting University Technical Colleges (UTC's) sits within the remit of the dedicated UTC unit which is part of the Department for Education (DfE). Since the publication of the Ofsted report, this unit has been working with the UTC and have appointed education advisors to support them in developing an improvement plan. Part of that plan has been to re-broker a long term partner to work with the UTC to ensure they have a robust recovery plan in place, which can be maintained moving forward
- 3.2 The UTC has now been incorporated into The Howard Academy Trust. It has also been rebranded and was renamed The Waterfront UTC from September 2018.
- 3.3 Moving forward and building on the strengths highlighted by HMI, there are two specific issues that the UTC and the DfE have been working closely to resolve. Firstly, the disappointing results and lack of quality teaching to support young people's achievement at GCSE and A level and secondly, to resolve the financial position of the UTC.

- 3.4 The academic issues are being addressed by the Principal, working with The Howard Academy Trust and the educational advisors appointed by the DfE. The financial position is being reviewed with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the DfE and the UTC senior leadership team.
- 3.5 The financial position has occurred in the main due to historic pupil forecasting models. The pupil forecasts were optimistic and have led to financial pressures. This has resulted in a three year funding deficit. Working together (the UTC, DfE and the funding agency) the principal is developing a robust financial budget and forecast (including realistic and achievable pupil forecasts) in order for the UTC to move forward on a sound and sustainable financial basis.
- 3.6 Whilst there is no statutory requirement for Local Authorities to work with UTC's, clearly Medway Council has a role to play in supporting and monitoring the improvement plan.

4. Risk Management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk Rating
The UTC fails to support young people achieve their potential	Young People will not achieve their potential at GCSE and at A level	Develop an improvement plan. DfE to appoint educational advisors to support and monitor the improvement plan. The Governing Body to regularly monitor progress against the improvement plan. Termly meetings between the principal and Cllr Potter. Support to Cllr Wicks as a member of the governing body of the UTC.	Medium
Admission numbers continue to fall	Funding will reduce increasing the pressure on the UTC to improve standards	Develop a financial recovery plan over three years with the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Improve the admission criteria.	Medium
Dissatisfaction of parents and young people in the quality of teaching and learning.	Parents and young people will not choose to study at Medway UTC.	UTC to actively promote and publicise what it has to offer young people specifically to improve the educational and pastoral outcomes for young people with a focus on engineering, construction and design.	High

5. Implications for Looked After Children

- 5.1 It is likely that Medway children who are looked after will be seeking to attend courses run by the UTC. It is therefore important for the College to improve educational standards to ensure our children looked after achieve their potential and aspirations.

6. Financial and legal implications

- 6.1 The responsibility for University Technical Colleges including finances remains with the Department for Education.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 The Committee is asked to note this report.

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Appendices

None

Background Papers

Medway UTC Final Report: <https://reports.beta.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/23/142081>