

Title: Vision Learning Trust UTC
Author: Department for Education (DfE)

Approved in October 2011, opened in September 2013

Impact Assessment – Section 9 Academies Act Duty

Introduction

1. This Impact Assessment (IA) has been produced in response to section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 which places a duty on the Secretary of State to take into account the likely impact of establishing a new school on maintained schools and Academies, institutions within the further education sector and alternative provision in the area in which the new school is to be located.

Background

2. The Visions Learning Trust UTC (VLT UTC) is to be sited in the centre of Burnley and will specialise in Engineering and Construction, supporting advanced manufacturing employers within the aerospace supply chain, the nuclear industry and green utilities and technologies. Learners at the VLT UTC will develop their skills and learning in ways that provide them with a marketable education and there will be clear progression routes into employment or higher-level learning. The UTC will help drive a successful regional economy by delivering higher quality entrants into the world of work.
3. The UTC's main sponsor is Training 2000 Ltd, a Blackburn-based Group Training Association, which is an independent, employer-backed/work-based learning provider. The UTC will open in August 2013 with an initial intake of 100 Year 10 and 50 Year 12 learners, reaching its full capacity of 800 learners by 2018/19. The UTC will be sited in the Victoria Mill building, which is in the Weavers' Triangle area of central Burnley.

Catchment Area and its Characteristics

4. There are 117 schools and 15 post-16 institutions in the VLT UTC's catchment area, which covers a 15 mile radius covering parts of the Lancashire, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale and Blackburn with Darwen Local Authorities (LAs), as well as, albeit minimally, Calderdale in West Yorkshire.
5. This IA focuses on a sample of 17 of the 132 schools/institutions, the 17 which are the closest to the UTC. The average distance travelled by secondary school pupils in the affected LAs varies from 1.2 to 2.1 miles, and the farthest distance travelled by 80% of secondary school pupils varies between 2 and 3.5 miles (see Table 1 below). Within the sample, the farthest distance from the UTC of any school is 8 miles, so it is officials' view that adequate evidence for the IA can be found from the sample of 17 rather than all 132 in the catchment area: the impact on those outside the sample is assumed therefore to be minimal.

Table 1: average distances travelled by secondary school pupils in local

authority areas surrounding VLT UTC

	Average distance travelled by secondary school pupils	Farthest distance travelled by 80% of secondary school pupils	Number of secondary school pupils travelling more than 5 miles to school	Proportion of secondary school pupils travelling more than 5 miles to school
Lancashire	2.1 miles	3.5 miles	5521	8.2%
Rochdale	1.2 miles	2 miles	125	1.0%
Bury	1.6 miles	2.5 miles	219	2.0%
Blackburn with Darwen	1.6 miles	2.5 miles	267	3.1%

6. Table 2 below shows there are surplus places in secondary schools within the UTC's catchment area. Overall, there is an expected fall of 0.2% in the numbers of pupils aged 11 – 18 to 2016/17. This suggests that the current level of surplus places will remain stable. The total proportion of surplus places (of pupils aged 11 to 18) within the four LAs is around 11% in secondary schools in 2011/12. So, any impact of the UTC on individual institutions is unlikely to be mitigated by short-term increases in pupil population.

Table 2: Projected 11 - 18 pupil numbers in LAs, 2011/12 to 2016/17:

LA	Places in 2010	Academic Year 2011/12		Academic Year 2016/17		% increase 2011/12 to 2016/17
		Pupils	Surplus as % of capacity	Pupils	Surplus as % of capacity	
Lancashire	76,777	68,074	11.3	69,053	10.1	1.4
Rochdale	13,671	12,258	10.3	11,507	15.8	-6.1
Bury	11,847	10,721	9.5	10,268	13.3	-4.2
Blackburn with Darwen	10,695	9,451	11.6	9,464	11.5	0.1
Total	112,990	100,504	11.1	100,292	11.2	-0.2

Note and source: Excludes Sixth Form Colleges and Further Education Colleges and are based on the 2011 SCAP data and covers 11-18 year olds in maintained secondary schools

Local Authority view and representations

7. The Department wrote to Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Bury and Calderdale LAs seeking their views on the plans for the UTC. No responses were received nor any other representations made directly to the Department.
8. The UTC Trust ran a public consultation from 19 January to 30 March 2012. The UTC sponsor produced a consultation brochure which identified the site, vision and curriculum offer for the UTC and set out its proposed admissions arrangements. A range of consultation activities were undertaken including:
 - (a) targeted distribution of the consultation brochure and accompanying letters to Heads and Chairs of Governors in 85 schools within the proposed catchment area, aiming to inform, and enable Year 8 and Year 10 students to be informed, of the plans for the UTC;
 - (b) press releases issued to announce the consultation and dates for associated

public forum meetings;

(c) further letters sent to nine schools within the catchment area seeking consultation sessions with Year 8 and Year 10 learners: six schools chose to participate which provided opportunities to hear the views of 24 young learners;

(d) market research conducted in local communities within 10 of the 12 boroughs that are in the 15 mile catchment area, plus informal drop-in public forums at the UTC site, attended by 59 people; and

(e) letters sent to 12 local authorities in and around the catchment area, including those contacted directly by DfE officials.

9. Headline findings from the consultation, based on analysis of more than 400 completed questionnaires and other means of generating views, were that:

(a) the vast majority - over three-quarters - of respondents strongly supported the UTC's proposed purpose, vision and learning offer, its specialisms and the role of employers and higher education in backing and shaping the offer;

(b) the majority of respondents supported the UTC's intention to promote and develop community cohesion and supported its proposed admissions arrangements; and

(c) two-thirds of respondents "very much" supported the Secretary of State entering into a FA with VLT UTC.

10. We believe the consultation undertaken by the Academy Trust is sufficient to comply with section 10 of the Academies Act 2010 and that as a result it is reasonable for the Secretary of State to enter into the Funding Agreement with the Academy Trust.

Assessment of impact

11. The catchment area is characterised by a high number of underperforming schools, three of which could experience a high impact from the new UTC. The UTC's impact on the sample schools/post-16 institutions is summarised in Table 3 below, which shows a minimal impact is expected on more than half of the sample.

Table 3: level of impact on sample schools within the UTC's catchment area

	Level of Impact	Total
Impact on Secondary Schools within 10 miles	Minimal	8 out of 15 schools
	Moderate	4 out of 15 schools
	High	3 out of 15 schools
Impact on Post-16 Providers within 10 miles	Minimal	2 out of 2 colleges
	Moderate	0 out of 2 colleges

	High	0 out of 2 colleges
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12. The schools where a High impact is anticipated are identified below, alongside the implications of this impact:

(a) Marsden Heights Community College – Lancashire (1.55 miles from proposed site)

- (i) this is a Community School with no Sixth Form, having a smaller than average size with capacity for 1050 pupils, around 210 per year group. This school had a surplus of 32% in 2010/2011. It failed to fill around a quarter of its year seven places and was undersubscribed for the year commencing 2010/2011;
- (ii) it has been rated most recently as satisfactory by Ofsted, with a good capacity for sustained improvements;
- (iii) 45% of pupils achieved 5+ A* to C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and Maths in 2011, unchanged from 2010, although up from 40% in 2008. This is below the national average of 58%. Compared to the national average, a lower proportion of pupils in this school made the expected level of progress in English and Maths in 2010; and
- (iv) implications of a high impact: the school has a large number of surplus places and was significantly under subscribed in 2011/12. The UTC might be an attractive alternative at the end of year nine for parents/pupils with an interest in more vocational education and in the UTC's specialisms. These factors increase the risk of the school losing pupils to the UTC and thus increase the risk of the school having its long term viability affected because of the high level of surplus places.

(b) Colne Primet High School – Lancashire (2.66 miles from proposed site)

- (i) this is a Community School with no Sixth Form, of smaller than average size with capacity for 950 pupils, around 190 per year group. This school had a surplus of 41% in 2010/2011. It failed to fill 56% of year seven places for the year commencing 2010/2011;
- (ii) it has been rated as Satisfactory by Ofsted and is making satisfactory progress towards sustained improvements;
- (iii) 43% of pupils achieved 5+ A* to C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and Maths in 2011, up from 33% in 2010 but lower than the 45% in 2008. This is below the national average of 58%. Compared to the national average, a much lower proportion of pupils in this school made the expected level of progress in English and Maths in 2010; and
- (iv) implications of a high impact: the UTC might be an attractive alternative at the end of year nine for parents/pupils with an interest in more vocational education and in the UTC's specialisms. These factors increase the risk of the school losing pupils to the UTC and thus increase the risk of the school

having its long term viability affected because of the high level of surplus places.

(c) Hameldon Community College – Lancashire (3.51 miles from proposed site)

- (i) this is a Community School with no Sixth Form, with capacity for 750 pupils, around 150 per year group. There was a 43% surplus capacity in this school in 2010/2011. It failed to fill 59% of year seven places for the year commencing 2010/2011;
- (ii) the school is currently in special measures but is making satisfactory progress towards sustained improvements: 41% of pupils achieved 5+ A* to C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths in 2011, up from 36% in 2010. This is below the national average of 58%. Compared to the national average, a much lower proportion of pupils in this school made the expected level of progress in English and Maths in 2010;
- (iii) implications of a high impact: this school has a large number of surplus places and was significantly under subscribed in 2011/12. It achieved below average results in 2011 and is currently in special measures. So the UTC might be an attractive alternative at the end of year nine for parents/pupils with an interest in more vocational education and in the UTC's specialisms. These factors increase the risk of the school losing pupils to the UTC and thus increase the risk of the school having its long term viability affected because of the high level of surplus places.

13. There is a potential moderate risk to four schools¹ but this should not affect their long-term viability. There is potential for the loss of pupils to the new UTC to have an effect on their overall attainment and ability to improve. Most of these schools have low attainment and low Ofsted grades. Two also have high levels of surplus places. However, it is not expected that any will see a threat to their long-term viability because two of these schools managed to fill most of their places and two were a considerable distance (seven miles) from the proposed site.

Impact on Sixth Form colleges and FE colleges

14. There are seven colleges² within the catchment area of the UTC, including the two covered by the assessed sample plus five of the remaining 15 in the catchment area. These seven colleges are those offering learning which overlaps with that proposed by UTC. In principle, the bigger the overlap, the greater the impact we would expect the UTC to have on the college but the overall overlap in provision is small, at seven percent. Although Calderdale College has the highest proportion of overlap with the UTC (17 per cent), other factors mitigate the impact: the College is rated outstanding and has many adults aged 19 + on its courses. So the impact rating is minimal, as is the case for all the post-16

¹ The four schools are Blessed Trinity RC College, Pendle Vale College, West Craven Technology College and Todmorden College.

² The seven colleges are Accrington & Rossendale College, Blackburn College, Burnley College, Calderdale College, Craven College, Nelson and Colne College and St Mary's College Blackburn.

providers in the catchment area.

15. The diverse, wide range of courses and part/full time options on offer for post-16 students will limit the overall impact of the UTC on most individual providers. The impact of the UTC on post-16 provision is quite difficult to assess. Although there is some overlap in the provision of courses between the UTC and colleges in the area, the post 16 colleges have been rated outstanding and they also have large 19+ populations. This high performance and business diversity means that the impact of the UTC is expected to be minimal for these colleges.

Conclusion

16. VLT UTC's wide catchment area suggests that its impact on most secondary schools and colleges will be limited. The UTC has a wide catchment area potentially spanning all, or parts of, four large local authorities (LAs). This area and the number of schools and colleges within it leads us to expect the UTC to have a diffuse impact, whereby a large number of secondary schools and post-16 providers each lose only a few pupils, and that this will happen incrementally over the five years it will take the UTC to reach its full capacity. The UTC Trust has purposefully chosen a wide catchment area and incremental growth to help ensure a diffuse impact.
17. There is some risk to performance and long-term viability for three secondary schools if they lose larger numbers of pupils. The area, within the first 15 miles of the UTC, is characterised by a high number of underperforming schools. Three of these secondary schools could experience a high impact from the new UTC, suffering a potentially significant loss of pupils. These schools tend to have high existing numbers of surplus places and low attainment; additionally one of the schools is in special measures, putting them at a higher *general* risk of losing pupils to a new provider. However, the specialist nature and 14-19 age range of the UTC make it difficult to predict which pupils it will attract and therefore which specific schools will be most affected.
18. The overall conclusion from this assessment is that the UTC's likely impact on local schools and post-16 providers will be limited and that this should not prevent the Secretary of State from entering into a Funding Agreement with the VLT UTC.