

DECISION OF COUNCIL 12 JULY 2016

11. ACADEMISATION OF SCHOOLS

Resolved -

Making sure our children have a good education leading to a successful working life has to be our prime concern. We commit to having every child in Bradford in our line of sight.

This Council however notes that:

- The Government's aim is for every state school in the country to become an academy. This remains the case despite the fact that in May 2016 it backtracked on its proposal to force every school to become an academy by 2020.
- When a local authority school becomes a sponsored academy, if the school has a financial surplus then the academy keeps that surplus. But if the school has a deficit, the local authority is required to take on that debt.
- Over and above this the Government expects local authorities to pick up the bill for rising PFI costs, utilities and other conversion costs. The public land which schools are built on is transferred (currently, on a 125-year lease) to the Multi Academy Trust without any recompense to the local authority.
- We currently have 43 academies in the district and in view of Government policy the number of schools converting to academy could quickly accelerate.
- The Regional Schools Commissioner has an objective to support schools to become academies but is shackled by not having the finances to make the process happen. In short it is an unfinanced Government policy which is putting an unacceptable financial burden on councils at a time when sustained year on year government cuts show no sign of abating.

This Council resolves to:

- **Ask Scrutiny to work with officers to prioritise a full examination of this issue so that the prospective costs can be quantified.**
- Write to the District's MPs to ask them to lobby the Secretary of State for Education to request a fairer, more equitable system regarding the financial burden placed on the local taxpayer when a maintained school switches to sponsored academy status.

- Work with other local authorities to make the case for Government to grant some funding to accompany their unfinanced academisation agenda.

*ACTION: Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services/City Solicitor
(Overview and Scrutiny Lead)*