

Report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services for the meeting of Overview & Scrutiny to be held on 27th February 2018.

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Subject:

Bradford Opportunity Area

Summary statement:

Bradford is one of the Education Secretary's 12 Opportunity Areas (OAs) - these are social mobility 'coldspots' each receiving a share of £72 million to improve opportunities for young people in this community.

Bradford's share of the investment is £6m and will total £11.5m. This will include £5.5m for the Essential Life Skills funding over two years to enable children and young people aged 5 -18 years old to participate in regular extra-curricular activities. Children and young people will be able to participate in extra-curricular activities such as sports, volunteering and social action projects.

The new, Delivery Plan, launched by the Education Secretary, Damian Hinds on 19th January 2018 includes investing in literacy projects, careers education and advice and additional support for vulnerable young people across the city, as well as boosting career development for school leaders and teachers in Bradford.

This is a plan that will be Bradford led and has been developed in partnership with the Local Authority, local schools, employers, and the voluntary and health sector. Young people have been consulted, and will be engaged in the delivery of this programme.

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Portfolio:

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1 Summary

- 1.1 The Bradford Opportunity Area Delivery Plan will add to the investment already being made across Bradford, including the Better Start Bradford strategy which is investing £50million over 10 years to work with very young children.
- 1.2 The delivery plan builds on strong partnership work already taking place across the district and will enhance and scale up initiatives such as the Education Covenant, Bradford Pathways and the Industrial Centres of Excellence as these Bradford led initiatives demonstrate the ability to drive improved outcomes.
- 1.3 It will be supported by local businesses, as well as the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) as it continues its work bringing schools and employers together across Bradford to help pupils gain experience of and aspire to high quality careers.
- 1.4 The CEC has signed up a number of significant local employers across a range of industries and include Burberry, PwC, Adecco, Lloyds Banking Group, Mantra Media and Barclays.
- 1.5 The Essential Life Skills programme will complement the delivery plan by providing extra-curricular activities like sports, volunteering and social action projects, giving pupils the opportunity to develop leadership skills.
- 1.6 Alongside this, the DfE will continue to work closely with the National Citizen Service and Education Endowment Foundation.

2 Background

- 2.1 Bradford is one of twelve Opportunity Areas that are receiving a share of £72 million to boost opportunities for young people in these communities. The Opportunity Area programme is a key part of the Government's priority of boosting social mobility.
- 2.2 Bradford's share of this investment is £6m.
- 2.3 As an Opportunity Area, Bradford will also receive a share of a further £22 million through a new Essential Life Skills programme. This funding (allocated proportionate to school age population in each area) will be targeted toward helping disadvantaged young people to develop life skills such as resilience, emotional wellbeing and employability.

- 2.4 Bradford's share of this investment is £5.5m.
- 2.5 Each school, college, special school and pupil referral unit will receive proposed grant allocations that they will then be able to apply for via an application process outlining their activity which will close on 9th March 2018.
- 2.6 This funding can be used to provide new, or significantly extended extra curricular activities. Schools can deliver the activity themselves or decide to buy in a third party to deliver on their behalf. All awarded grants will be subject to monitoring and evaluation.
- 2.7 In addition, Bradford will receive support from national partners, for example The Careers and Enterprise Company, and be prioritised for other government initiatives.
- 2.8 Bradford led initiatives such as the Education Covenant have been gaining strength in their own right as it challenges and enables businesses, public services, parents and communities to provide practical support to Bradford's schools and children. The delivery plan aims to build on this work as well as the Industrial Centres of Excellence, Bradford Pathways, governor recruitment and Bradford Community Champions as this work aligns to the priorities in the plan.
- 2.9 Prior to the Opportunity Area programme, Bradford has been innovative in finding approaches to recruiting the best new teachers to the district. Initiatives such as the city wide 'Bradford Talent Bank' placing quality Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) in Bradford's schools and the 'bus tours' enabling the showcasing of the diversity of schools across the city has given the city access to over 600 graduating teachers each year. Building on this success is a key and aligns with the priority for strengthening school leadership in particular teacher recruitment and retention.
- 2.10 In addition there is a wealth of high quality school leaders – Bradford has more than 30 outstanding schools, 8 strong teaching schools and 16 National Leaders in Education, all committed to driving up standards through collaboration. Over the past two years, up to 100 Bradford heads and senior leaders have signed up to or completed development training, creating a pipeline of skilled and passionate senior and executive leaders. Having system leaders across the district means they can be mobilised to support struggling schools through the Opportunity area work.
- 2.11 Furthermore, the Department for Education's local Opportunity Area team has:

- Engaged regularly over the last 8 months with stakeholders across Bradford to build momentum and a collective Opportunity Area vision.
- Built upon the strong tradition of collaboration in Bradford through the partnership board to co-construct the plan.

3 Why is Bradford an Opportunity Area?

- 3.1 The purpose of Opportunity Areas is improving social mobility; using education as a key driver to achieve this. Therefore the Social Mobility Commission's Social Mobility Index was used as the starting point to identify these areas. The 12 areas selected were all in the group of Local Authority's with the greatest challenges and fewest opportunities.
- 3.2 Although, Bradford was amongst the areas identified as most challenged (ranked 254th out of 324 districts in the social mobility commission's index in 2017) it has also been identified for Opportunity Area investment, as it has been recognised as already having built the necessary momentum and capacity for improvement.

4. The Opportunity Area Partnership Board

- 4.1 The Bradford Opportunity Area partnership board brings together local school and council leaders, businesses and community organisations with an understanding of the area and a commitment to making Bradford a better place to learn and achieve.
- 4.2 Decisions about what investments will need to be made based upon the priorities and activities outlined in the plan and will be determined by the Partnership Board in consultations with key stakeholders. The Board's role is to work with schools, early years and post-16 education providers, employers, young people and parents and carers, to:
- Developing the Opportunity Areas Plans
 - Determine spending priorities, ensuring they are evidence based and represent value for money
 - Ensure plans are delivered in a robust and effective way
- 4.3 The Board's membership is as follows:
- Anne-Marie Canning: Director of Widening Participation and Social Mobility at Kings College, London
 - Michael Jameson: Strategic Director, Bradford Council Children's Services
 - Adeeba Malik: Deputy Chief Executive, QED
 - Christian Bunting: Director, Bradford Birth to 19 Teaching School Alliance
 - Duncan Jacques: CEO and Executive Principal of Exceed Academies Trust
 - Janice Stephenson: Head teacher, Newby Primary School
 - John Wright: Chief Investigator, Born in Bradford

- Sir Nick Weller: CEO and Executive Principal of Dixons Academy Trust – Bradford’s Research School
- Paul Lewis: Director of Government Relations, The Careers and Enterprise Company
- Sue Cooke: Executive Head of Economic Services, Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- Will Richardson: Senior Partner PwC
- Vicky Beer: Regional Schools Commissioner (NW and W Yorkshire)

The meetings are also attended by officials from the Department for Education.

5 The Bradford Delivery Plan

- 5.1 The second six Opportunity Area plans, including the Bradford plan were published on 19th January 2018. Bradford’s plan, sets out a series of ambitions to support literacy projects, careers education and advice and additional support for vulnerable young people across the city, as well as boosting career development for school leaders and teachers.
- 5.2 The Bradford plan identifies four priorities for action over the next two years and subsequent targets for improvement. The plan also provides the detail about what will be done this year and what investments will be made. Further detail about the priorities and commitments for this year are included below:

In setting its priorities, the partnership board has focused on areas where the Opportunity Area’s time and resources can achieve the best combination of short-term impact and sustainability, balancing issues affecting the greatest number of young people, against those creating the most severe challenges for a minority.

The plan sets out four priorities for Bradford to improve social mobility.

Priority 1 - Strengthening school leadership and the quality of teaching

The plan will support improvement in school leadership, enabling at least 50 head teachers, senior and middle leaders to complete leadership courses, and launching an enhanced offer of leadership masterclasses. The plan aims to support improvement in the Ofsted ratings of at least half of the schools in Bradford currently rated ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’.

Priority 2 - Improve literacy in Bradford’s primary schools particularly for disadvantaged pupils

The work will build on the investment already being made in early reading skills by funding training programmes in Bradford, beginning this year with the 10 primary schools furthest below the national average for reading and writing. Over the life of the programme, secondary and post-16 literacy will also be supported in consultation with local employers and universities to make sure young people are better prepared for the world of work.

Priority 3 – Improving access to rewarding careers

Efforts will be targeted at 11-18 year olds to ensure each benefits from at least four high quality encounters with the world of work. The National Citizen Service (NCS) will triple the resources it makes available to young people in Bradford, to support 2,400 15-17 year olds by 2020.

Priority 4 - Removing barriers to learning by developing evidence for what really works

Bradford is at the forefront of world-leading research on health and education. By the end of 2018, local partners including Bradford's EEF Research School, the 'Born in Bradford' cohort study and Bradford Council will be supporting teachers in at least 50 schools to identify and provide the right help to students at risk of social, emotional or mental health issues. Priorities will include early identification of autism and related disorders, as well as improving reading and writing.

The Department for Education will work with a range of partners across education, government, business and civil society to deliver change on the ground. Improving opportunity is one of the great challenges of our time and everyone must play their part.

In centring our plan on schools, we are making a difficult choice not to focus on areas like early years, or post-16. We are however, committed to working with partners leading improvement in these sectors – like the Better Start programme, already working at scale to raise the quality of early years education in the city – so where our interests and programmes align we will seek to join up, share learning and resources.

As well detail about what will be delivered in support of these priorities the plan it also identifies the support available to Bradford from national organisations, including The Careers Enterprise Company, National Citizen Service and the Education Endowment Foundation. The value of this investment is estimated to be c.£1m. A copy of the plan is included at Appendix A to this report.

6 How will the Opportunity Area Programme complement work already underway?

- 6.1 The Opportunity Area plan recognises that “the challenge goes beyond low attainment. Head teachers, employers and other key stakeholders have described what they see as a culture of low expectations across the city. They have made clear the urgent need to attract more great teachers, schools leaders and professionals who can drive up standards and broaden young people’s horizons.” (OA Plan p.15)
- 6.2 The first place we will look to for answers is Bradford. We will scale up investments in existing good practice wherever possible. We will recognise,

celebrate and invest in the most effective individuals, organisations and partnerships in Bradford, so that they can, in turn, help others to improve.

7 How will Bradford receive this investment?

- 7.1 The Department for Education (DfE) have confirmed, via a Grant Determination Letter received by the Council on 10 October 2017, they will devolve funding as a “Grant under a Section 31 non-ring fenced transfer (Local Government Finance Act 2003).” Furthermore they confirmed that their “expectation is that Bradford Council will use the funds to support the aims of the Opportunity Areas programme.”
- 7.2 This financial year, we expect at least two non-ring-fenced grants to be paid. The first we have already received in October (£100k) and a second in January 2018.
- 7.3 A copy of the Grant Determination Letter is attached at Appendix B to this report.
- 7.4 Officers have also held initial discussions with DfE officials about Essential Life Skills funding and have confirmed with them that this funding will be provided in the same way. We anticipate that we will account for the funding internally as part of the Opportunity Area budget, but expect to report spending to the DfE separately to support their monitoring arrangements.

8 Investments and Procurement

- 8.1 As outlined by the DfE in their grant determination letter. Funding is provided to the LA to:
- implement the recommendations of the Opportunity Areas delivery plans to improve the social mobility outcomes of children and young people across all life stages;
 - offer targeted support and fund activities that address social mobility barriers locally across all life stages;
 - coordinate through the OA partnership board regional activities with the intention of improving system capacity in school leadership, teacher quality, curriculum programmes and school clubs;
 - support activities that seek to improve personal development, raise aspirations, provide opportunities for career experience and skills development and participation in volunteering and social action projects;
 - establish pilot interventions and programmes focussing on areas which might include (but would not be limited to) the home learning environment, teacher workload, international teacher recruitment, children and young people’s mental health, training for SEND practitioners, pathways to employment for young people, and speech, language and communication needs in early years.

- 8.2 We will also utilise this funding to cover its reasonable expenses incurred by the Council in helping to administer the OA programme, this may include support for procurement, project management and communications.
- 8.3 We anticipate that the OA Programme in utilising its budget over the next two year (cash c£11.5m) will make a number of significant investments. Many of these investments will be substantial in excess of £250k and will affect more than 1 ward in Bradford. As such these will be key decisions. We will work with colleagues in Corporate Resources to schedule, plan and administer these procurement process.
- 8.4 In order to ensure efficiency in our decision making and to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the Partnership Board and the Council are co-ordinated, we propose that the authority to agree all spending decisions related to the Opportunity Areas programme, including for key decisions, is delegated to the Director of Children's Services, after consultation with the Portfolio Member for Education.
- 8.5 To ensure transparency and accountability in these decisions we propose that an annual report be provided to Executive which should include but not be limited to: information about; total income and investments; the impact of these investments against targets and future plans and likely spending priorities. In addition we propose that formal update reports be provided quarterly to the Portfolio Member for Education, Employment and Skills.

9 Other Considerations

- 9.1 None.

10 Financial & Resource Appraisal

- 10.1 The Opportunity Area funding and other associated funding streams are expected to total around £11.5m over the next two financial years and is a grant from the Department for Education. This includes in excess of £6m for the main Opportunity Area grant, in excess of £5.5m for Essential Life skills funding with the remainder made up of support from national partners and prioritised funding for other government initiatives. This investment will be across the entire Education sector in Bradford and not all of the funding will pass through the Council.
- 10.2 The exact costs of the proposals to support the four priority areas are currently being developed. It is currently expected that all Opportunity Area related expenditure will be met from the grant available and there will be no call on Council's funding.
- 10.3 Specific initiatives will be reported in line with Council procedures as they are developed.

11 Risk Management and Governance Issues

- 11.1 If there are no significant risks arising out of the implementation of the proposed recommendations should be stated but only on advice of the Finance Director and the City Solicitor.

12 Legal Appraisal

- 12.1 Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 provides that a Minister of the Crown may pay a grant to a local authority in England towards expenditure incurred or to be incurred by it. The amount of a grant under this section and the manner of its payment are determined by the Minister but may include conditions such as provision as to the use of the grant and provision as to circumstances in which the whole or part of the grant must be repaid. In the case of a grant to a local authority in England, the powers under this section are exercisable with the consent of the Treasury.
- 12.2 Section 31 is a wide-ranging power to enable any minister to make a grant for any purpose, capital or revenue, to any local authority. The power is designed to allow authorities more flexibility in the use of such resources.

13 Other Implications

13.1 Equality and Diversity

- 13.1.1 None.

13.2 Sustainability Implications

- 13.2.1 As the report sets out, the Opportunity Area Programme is seeking to make a significant impact in education and social mobility over the next three years and beyond. The Programme, its investments and key interventions will strive to support all the District Priority Outcomes, and directly on personal and community well-being, resilience and prosperity. The work is being designed to reinforce existing good practice across the District and use the time-limited resources to make evidence based impact and long-term value.
- 13.2.2 Investing in our children and arrangements for future generations is central to contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the long-term success of the District. OAP is a significant investment where innovation and involvement will be centre stage, especially in making real changes that support inclusive growth and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable.

13.3 Green House Gas Emissions Impacts

- 13.3.1 None.

13.4 Community Safety Implications

13.4.1 None.

13.5 Human Rights Act

13.5.1 None.

13.6 Trade Union

13.6.1 None.

13.7 Ward Implications

13.7.1 All wards affected.

13.8 Area Committee Action Plan Implications

13.8.1 None.

13.9 Not For Publication Documents

13.9.1 None.

14 Options

14.1 There are no options as the programme of delivery is underway and being overseen by the Opportunity Area Partnership Board.

14.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Delivery Plan be noted for information.

15 Appendices

- Bradford Opportunity Area Delivery Plan.
- Grant Determination Letter 10.10.17.

16 Background Documents

- Time For Change: An Assessment of Government Policies on Social Mobility 1997-2017.
- Opportunity Area Selection Methodology.
- Social Mobility Action Plan.