

Report of the Strategic Director Children's Services to the meeting of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 21st November 2018

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Subject:

Post 16 provision update

Summary statement:

This report provides an update on arrangements for post-16 provision in the District and progress with the implementation of the post-16 review and the agreed vision of an outstanding provision offer and improved outcomes.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Post-16 education and training locally and nationally continues to undergo significant change. The Council with the support, participation and cooperation of a range of key partners led a local review of post-16 provision within the District (concluding in 2016) to ensure that we have a sustainable, high quality offer that delivers the best outcomes for our young no matter where they start. The partnership continues to work to deliver the “joint approach to post-16” focussing on the pattern of delivery of academic provision in the District that was agreed through the Review.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on progress with the implementation of the agreed approach and the latest post-16 participation, performance and progression data.
- 1.3 The response to the review, “A joint approach to post-16 education improvement in Bradford and the need for change” is included in the Appendices

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Post-16 education is changing significantly. National reforms are changing the curriculum, the accountability framework, funding and will significantly expand the apprenticeship programme.
- 2.2 The changes in funding from the introduction of a new 16-19 formula in 2008/09 to equalise rates of funding per learner have seen a significant reduction in levels of funding received by Bradford institutions. Alignment of funding with subsequent policy changes, such as the Wolf Report, and the removal of protections have meant further funding reductions.
- 2.3 Under the current iteration of the 16-19 funding formula introduced in 2013-14, a single basic funding rate per full-time student (currently £4,000 for 16 and 17 year olds) is intended to fund a study programme of around 600 guided learning hours whether they are studying academic or vocational qualifications. It is expected that a study programme that should include:
 - substantial academic or applied and technical qualifications;
 - non-qualification activity, in particular there is an expectation that the young person will have some form of work experience; and
 - the study of English and maths where they do not hold a GCSE 9-4 (new grading) or A*-C (legacy grading) in these subjects.
- 2.4 Concurrent to this there has been significant reform to Apprenticeships, with the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy and processes related to that; the progressive, ongoing phasing out of frameworks which are being replaced by the new Apprenticeship standards; and the associated creation of the Institute for Apprenticeships to oversee quality and advise government on funding.
- 2.5 The changes to Apprenticeships are within the context of major reforms to the technical education system first set out in the Post-16 Skills Plan and refined since. Occupations with shared training requirements will be grouped together into 15

technical education routes and new level 3 classroom-based technical study programmes – T Levels which will be equivalent to 3 A Levels – will be created for each pathway.

- 2.6 Clearly this does not happen outwith the context of the broader education and skills funding and policy landscape. The overwhelming majority of our 16-19 year olds access post-16 provision either in schools or colleges. Each of these institutions, in addition to what is happening post-16, will also be contending with other qualification, accountability, curriculum and funding reform across other provision they deliver. For example, Adult Skills funding has been reformed and allocations to Colleges reduced as a result. At the same time schools are managing the impact of reform on their 11-16 allocations all of which is happening alongside the changes to post-16.
- 2.7 Despite these challenges Bradford as a District has shown significant improvement over a sustained period of time in the numbers of our young people participating in education and training. However despite some progress we are yet to see significant improvement in academic outcomes across the District.
- 2.8 In the context of these drivers and pressures, but above all to ensure we can meet the needs of our young people, and deliver the skills needed by the local economy now and in the future, partners continue to collaborate to reshape the 16-19 academic offer across the District.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Review outlined a clear case for change that was accepted by all partners. Specifically this was based on the need to improve outcomes, the breadth and relevance of the curriculum offer, financial sustainability, and the quality of guidance.
- 3.2 One of the peculiarities of Bradford that the review highlighted was that the pattern of post-16 provision, specifically the high number of small school sixth forms. At that point all the publicly funded secondary schools in the District had, or planned to open, a sixth form.
- 3.3 Typically, across the country, smaller institutions have poorer outcomes for post-16 and changes to funding represented a significant challenge to smaller sixth forms, especially in the context of reform to pre-16 funding. It was difficult to see how those small sixth forms could realistically be sustained financially moving forward. Financial viability for these settings could only be achieved by offering a limited range of courses in areas that traditionally attract high volumes. This approach would clearly serve to limit the opportunities for our young people in terms of the coherency of their post-16 study programme and their subsequent transition to the labour market and/or higher education.
- 3.4 Therefore it was determined that we would work collaboratively to see a reduction in the number of school sixth forms and the development of a small number of large sixth form colleges/Free Schools.

3.5 Progress to date

Significant progress has been made in respect of re-shaping the delivery pattern since the review:

- Two new post-16 Free Schools have been approved by the DfE for opening in the city centre. Both of these Free Schools are sponsored by Multi-Academy Trusts with a track record of delivering “Outstanding” provision, namely Dixons Academies Trust and New Collaborative Learning Trust (who will open New College Bradford). The two centres will have significant focus on academic courses at Level 3 (A Level or equivalent);
- Three small sixth forms closed at the end of academic year 2017/18 (Queensbury Academy, Appleton Academy, Beckfoot Upper Heaton Academy);
- A further three schools (Carlton Bolling College, Buttershaw Academy, Grange Technology College) have already consulted on sixth form closure; and
- Other sixth forms have already considerably revised their curriculum offer, for example ceasing A Level delivery.

In line with the joint approach the Council will continue to support partners with reviewing their offer to ensure provision across the District is viable, meets the breadth of student and business demand, and above all of high quality.

3.6 Participation in education and training post-16

The above changes have to date had no discernible adverse impact on participation. Participation remains strong and although Queensbury, Appleton and Beckfoot Upper Heaton did not recruit Year 12 in 2017/8, this caused no significant variance to the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) rates in their Wards (in fact 2 out of 3 of the Wards’ NEET rates actually improved comparing September 2017 to September 2016 despite those sixth forms not recruiting).

In June Bradford’s 16-17 NEET rate was lower than the national rate, lower than the average rate of our statistical neighbours and lower than the rate in each of the West Yorkshire Local Authorities, as shown below:

National & Regional Context for NEET and Not Known June 2018

| | Age 16/17 NEET | Age 16/17 Not Known | Age 16/17 NEET + Not Known |
|---|-------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Bradford | 2.9% | 2.5% | 5.5% |
| Statistical Neighbours' average | 3.9% | 2.3% | 6.2% |
| Other West Yorkshire neighbours (Kirklees is within SN average): | | | |
| Calderdale | 3.9% | 1.7% | 5.6% |
| Leeds | 3.2% | 2.6% | 5.9% |
| Wakefield | 3.7% | 2.4% | 6.1% |
| England | 3.0% | 3.1% | 6.0% |

The nature of young people's participation in education and training across Bradford is currently distributed as follows:

| | Academic Age 16 | | Academic Age 17 | | Total | |
|--|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| Cohort Total (Excluding Custody) | 6907 | | 6918 | | 13825 | |
| 16 & 17 Participating through: | 6383 | 92.4% | 6056 | 92.4% | 12439 | 92.4% |
| A. Full Time Education. Of which: | 5803 | 84.0% | 5133 | 84.0% | 10936 | 84.0% |
| School Sixth Form | 3329 | 48.2% | 2712 | 48.2% | 6041 | 48.2% |
| Further Education | 2471 | 35.8% | 2402 | 35.8% | 4873 | 35.8% |
| Higher Education | 0 | 0.0% | 5 | 0.0% | 5 | 0.0% |
| Custody with FE - age 16/17 | 2 | 0.0% | 7 | 0.0% | 9 | 0.0% |
| B. Employment. Of which: | 374 | 5.4% | 769 | 5.4% | 1143 | 5.4% |
| Apprenticeship | 334 | 4.8% | 580 | 4.8% | 914 | 4.8% |
| Employment with study | 37 | 0.5% | 183 | 0.5% | 220 | 0.5% |
| Self Employment with study | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| Working not for reward with study | 3 | 0.0% | 6 | 0.0% | 9 | 0.0% |
| C. Non-Employed Training. Of which: | 206 | 3.0% | 154 | 3.0% | 360 | 3.0% |
| ESFA & ESF funded Training | 147 | 2.1% | 108 | 2.1% | 255 | 2.1% |
| Other training provision | 21 | 0.3% | 16 | 0.3% | 37 | 0.3% |
| Traineeships | 38 | 0.6% | 27 | 0.6% | 65 | 0.6% |

These proportions are broadly similar to national destinations data, however progressions to Apprenticeships are marginally higher across the country at 6%.

3.7 Quality of provision

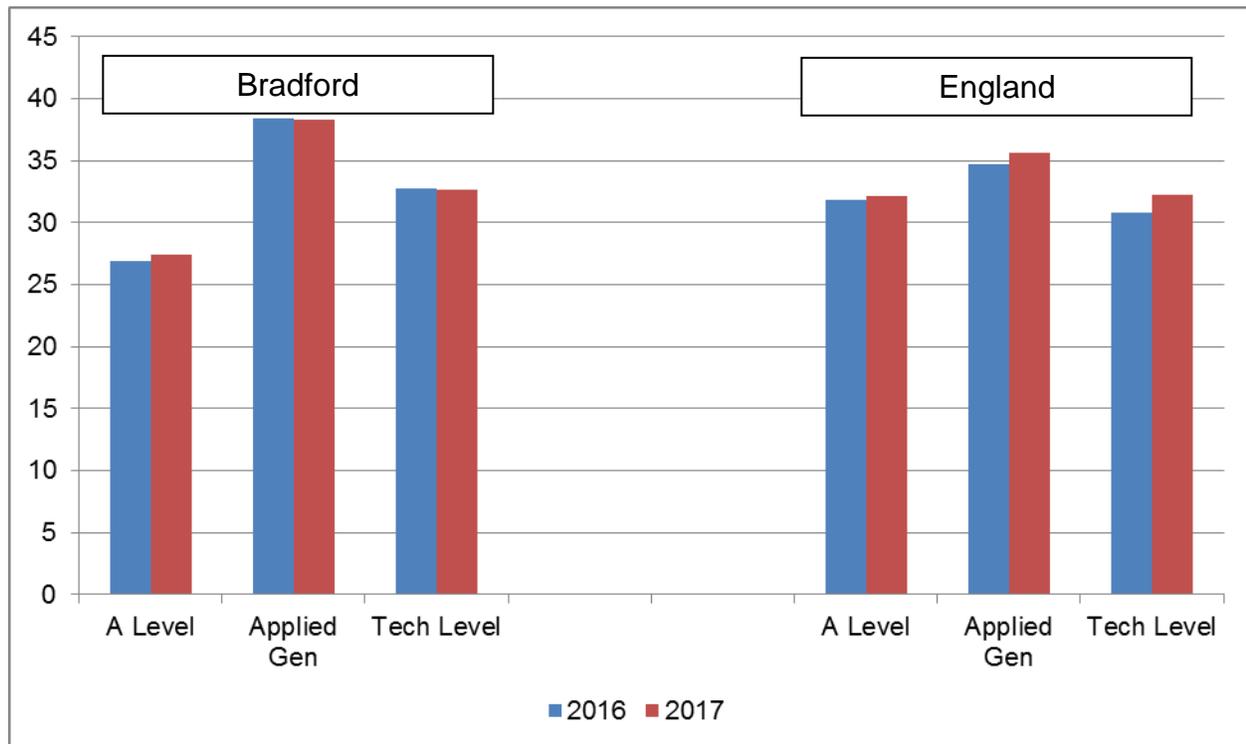
Given the various changes and conversions, the proportion of places in "Good" or "Outstanding" sixth forms is now close to three quarters (74% - as at end of September 2018).

In terms of the colleges with a significant presence in the District, Leeds City College (including Keighley College) and Shipley College are both "Good" and Bradford College "Requires Improvement". The Council's ambition is that all sixth form provision is rated as "Good" or "Outstanding" by 2020.

3.8 Outcomes and attainment

Bradford has started to marginally reduce the gap to national on A Level performance in recent years, although clearly it is anticipated though that the full benefit of this approach on A Level results will not start to be realised until the first Free School cohorts complete in 2021 (on the assumption the new offer will commence from Sept 2019).

Applied General and Technical provisions 16-18 have remained consistently strong compared to national averages. The points per entry validated data from 2017 by provision type was as follows:



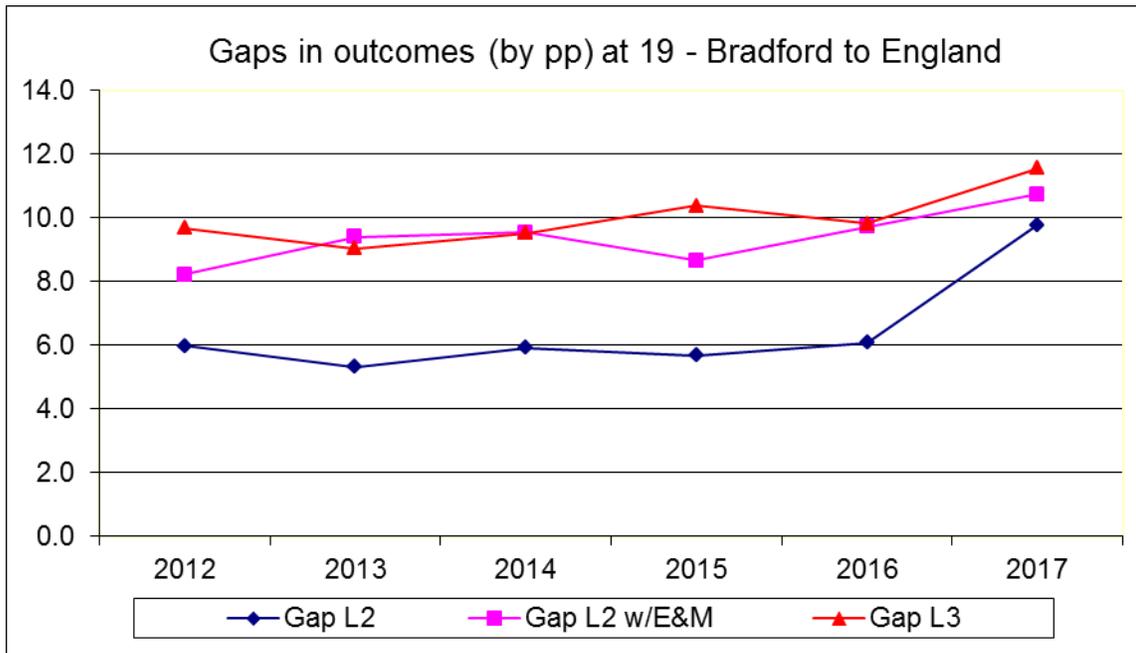
The provisional data for 2018 indicates that the average fine grade per A Level entry for Bradford District schools has improved to C from C- whilst the national grade has remained unchanged at C+. Although Bradford is ranked 121st of 150 LAs based on the provisional data (136th in 2017) it was the 27th most improved LA in 2018. The revised results will be published by the DfE in the Statistical First Release in January 2019.

Post-16 qualifications have undergone significant reform in recent years with the aim of A Levels, Applied General and Tech Level qualifications all becoming more rigorous with greater focus on assessment at the end of qualification rather than coursework. This is likely impact adversely on Applied General and Tech Level performance locally.

Although the outcomes for those completing Level 3 have shown improvement, we still do not have sufficient of our young people attaining Level 3 by age 19. We have not significantly closed the gap performance to national over time as demonstrated in the next table.

The latest data pertains to the cohort who sat GCSEs in 2014. As would be expected the drop in performance in Bradford that year following reforms to Key Stage 4 has tracked through to age 19. Consequently the gap in each of the published measures on attainment rates at 19 (Level 2, Level 2 with English and Maths, and Level 3) increased in 2017.

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3.9 Progression

Progression rates for those do complete a Level 3 are on the whole positive and 77% enter a sustained education destination. As is indicated below, we have a greater rate of progression into any HE destination than is the case nationally for those completing a Level 3. This is not mirrored, however, by the progression rate into either Russell Group institutions or into Oxford and Cambridge destinations.

Percentage of Level 3 completers into Higher Education destinations:

| | Higher Education Institutions | Oxford and Cambridge | Russell Group (incl. Oxford / Cambridge) | All other Higher Education Institutions |
|----------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| England | 60% | 1% | 17% | 34 |
| Bradford | 67% | - | 13% | 52 |

To note: the Bradford figure for Oxford and Cambridge was greater than 0, but less than 0.5% so was not published

However it must be emphasised that this data is only based on Level 3 completers and so in this instance the Bradford figure is based on only 2,430 young people out of a total possible cohort of almost 6,000.

This data also indicates that fewer young people progress into employment at the end of a Level 3 (11% in Bradford as opposed to 19% nationally) and more young people from Bradford fail to sustain their destination (8% compared to 6% nationally).

The challenge with progression into sustained employment is also reflected in the youth unemployment figures for 18-24 year olds. The national youth claimant rate is 3% compared to Bradford which has a 4.1% claimant rate for 18-24 year olds compared 2.8% for the working age population in Bradford. This is also the fourth highest youth claimant rate in Leeds City Region (data ranked by rate):

| Local authority/district | Number of claimants aged 18-24 | Rate of claimants aged 18-24 (%) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| York | 330 | 1.1 |
| Leeds | 2,185 | 2.1 |
| Craven | 75 | 2.2 |
| Selby | 125 | 2.2 |
| Harrogate | 245 | 2.9 |
| Wakefield | 840 | 3.3 |
| Bradford | 1,925 | 4.1 |
| Kirklees | 1,665 | 4.2 |
| Calderdale | 800 | 5.1 |
| Barnsley | 1,035 | 5.3 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | | 3.4 |
| Great Britain | | 3.0 |

However the trend data is more positive; this is 120 fewer claimants than the previous month and 90 fewer claimants since at this time in 2017.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

There are no financial and resource implications arising out of this report.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

There are no significant risks to the Council arising out of the recommendations in this report.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

There are no legal issues arising out of this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The approach is predicated on all of our young people having the opportunity to access high quality post-16 education and training regardless of background or protected characteristics.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Improved outcomes and skills levels will improve the range and quality of opportunities available to our young people in the labour market, and their ability to contribute to society and their communities.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

The contents of this report do not directly impact Council's own and the wider District's carbon footprint and emissions from other greenhouse gasses.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct Community Safety implications arising out of this report.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

There are no Human Rights Act implications arising out of this report.

7.6 TRADE UNION

There are no Trades Union implications for the Council arising out of this report.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

Clearly as the pattern of post-16 changes there will be Wards that do not have schools with sixth forms as they did previously, however as is set out in the report all young people will have access to appropriate post-16 provision.

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

No direct implications for corporate parenting arising from the report

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

No data protection or information security matters arising from the report.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

None.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee notes the contents of the report and progress made to date in implementing new arrangements for the delivery of post-16 provision in the District.**
- (2) That the Committee welcomes the engagement of a broad range of partners from education and business to further develop the post-16 agenda and partnerships in Bradford.**

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – [Post-16 education and training in Bradford and the need for change](#)

Appendix 2 – [A joint approach to post-16 education improvement in Bradford and the need for change](#)

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[Post-16 skills plan](#)