

Report of the Strategic Director Children's Services to the meeting of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 29th January 2020

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Subject:

Post 16 provision update

Summary statement:

This report provides an update on post-16 provision in the District, progress with the implementation of the post-16 review, and the impact on participation and 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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. This will make a crucial contribution to implanting the district Workforce Development Plan, “People, Skills, Prosperity” which launches on 4th February.
- 1.4 This report provides an update on progress with the implementation of the agreed approach and the latest post-16 participation, performance and progression data.
- 1.5 The Review highlighted critical challenges around sufficiency and outcomes. The response to the review, “A joint approach to post-16 education improvement in Bradford” is included in the Appendices.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Post-16 education is changing significantly. National reforms are changing the curriculum, the accountability framework and funding across the full range of provision available to young people.
- 2.2 The changes in funding from the introduction of the 16-19 formula from 2008/09 to equalise rates of funding per learner led to 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 In August 2019, the Government announced a 4.7% increase to the base rate of funding per learner as part of a £400million investment into 16-18 education. This will increase the base rate from £4,000 to £4,188 for 16 and 17 year olds and from £3,300 to £3,455 for 18 year olds.
- 2.4 Under this arrangement a full-time learner is, theoretically, funded for a study programme of around 600 guided learning hours. This applies whether they are studying academic or vocational qualifications. It is expected that their 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 continued study of English and maths where they do not hold a grade GCSE 9-4 in either, or both, of these subjects.

- 2.5 Concurrent to this there has been significant reform to Apprenticeships, with the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy and processes related to that; the on-going, iterative replacement of frameworks with new Apprenticeship standards; and the initiation of the Institute for Apprenticeships which now oversees quality and advises the government on funding.
- 2.6 The changes to Apprenticeships are within the context of major reforms to the technical education system. The new technical option will comprise 15 routes based around occupations with shared training requirements. New level 3 classroom-based technical study programmes – ‘T Levels’ - are being created for each pathway.
- 2.7 T Levels will be equivalent to a three A Level programme and have a common framework consisting of five components:
- a technical qualification;
 - industry placement(s) totalling at least 45 days;
 - maths, English and digital requirement;
 - other occupation specific qualification; and
 - further employability, enrichment and pastoral provision.
- 2.8 The 16-19 phase needs to be considered in the institutional context of the broader education and skills policy and funding landscape. The overwhelming majority of our 16-19 year olds access provision either in schools or colleges. Each of these institutions will also be contending with other qualification, accountability, curriculum and funding reforms across other provision they deliver, i.e. adult provision in Colleges and across Key Stages 3 and 4 in schools.
- 2.9 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. We have also seen some improvement in academic outcomes across the District and sustained success in more technical qualifications at Level 3.
- 2.10 In the context of these drivers and pressures partners continue to collaborate to reshape the 16-19 offer across the District. Our collective aim, as set out in People, Skills, Prosperity is to ensure we can give our young people the very best opportunities for future success by offering pathways to skills that are in demand in the labour market.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The review of post-16 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 The review found that:

- Outcomes needed to rapidly improve for all young people in all settings - overall the outcomes for young people did not compare well to national and regional figures. Our young people's results were below average and they also achieve fewer qualifications than the national average.
There were also significant differences in performance levels in post-16 education depending on where learners live and their backgrounds;
- The choice for students was limited - the approach was not joined up and as a result duplicated learning opportunities with gaps in the range and types of qualifications and programmes at all levels and the A Level offer does not match local economic need; and
- The offer was not financially sustainable.

Sufficiency of Provision

- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 If as a partnership we are to achieve our wider economic ambitions as set out in the Workforce Development Plan, we need to ensure raise skills levels across the District. To achieve this we need to make sure that all our young people have access to a wide range of high standard A level and technical vocational qualifications. The offer must be sufficiently broad to provide excellent learning pathways so young people can progress into employment and higher education.
- 3.7 Therefore it was determined that we would work collaboratively to secure a reduction in the number of school sixth forms and the development of a small number of large sixth form colleges or Free Schools.

Progress to date - sufficiency

- 3.8 Significant progress has been made in respect of re-shaping the delivery pattern since the review:
- Two post-16 Free Schools opened this September in the City Centre. Both of these are being sponsored by MATs with a track record of delivering

“Outstanding” provision – Dixons and New Collaborative Learning Trust (New College). The two centres have a significant focus on academic courses at Level 3 directly addressing the area requiring most improvement in post-16 outcomes.

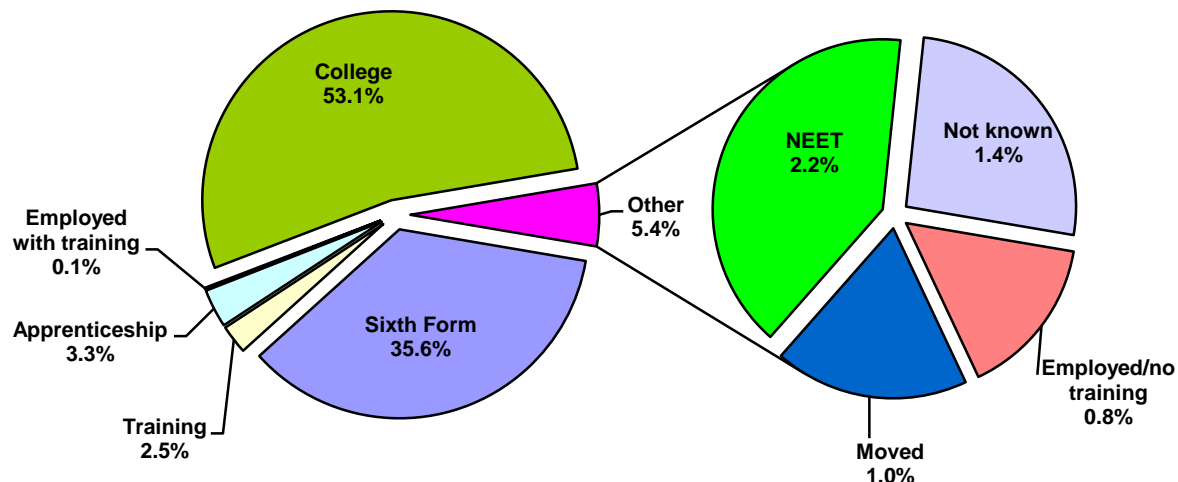
- A number of mainly smaller sixth forms have now either fully closed or not recruited to Year 12 (i.e. they have retained last year’s Year 12 as Year 13 and will close at end of the academic year). These are Appleton Academy; Beckfoot Upper Heaton; Queensbury Academy; Dixons Cottingley; Dixons City; Dixons McMillan; Buttershaw; Co-op Grange; Carlton Bolling; and University Academy Keighley.
- Both Dixons Trinity and Kings, as well as the One In a Million Free School have also formally changed designation to 11-16 but these schools hadn’t previously recruited to post-16;
- In addition Bradford Girls Grammar are consulting on their sixth from July 2021, with further consultations anticipated; and
- Other sixth forms have also considerably revised their curriculum offer, for example ceasing A Level delivery.

3.9 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.

3.10 Keighley College is now also developing an A Level offer. The College has been meeting with schools within their catchment to develop an offer that is where possible complementary to existing provision and provides pathways that schools are unable to.

Participation in education and training post-16

3.11 The closure of the sixth forms to date has had no discernible negative impact on participation leaving Year 11. The Local Authority is required by DfE to undertake an annual ‘Activity Survey’ in early November, tracking destinations of young people leaving Year 11. For this academic year the proportion of those who were NEET and Not Known (the combined figure is how DfE reports this) actually reduced from 5.0% to 3.6%. The chart below indicates the destinations for the whole cohort:



- 3.12 November's NEET and Not Known rate and 'In-Learning' figures both also showed an improvement on November 2018 with the NEET and Known Rate reducing from 8.1% in November 2018 to 5.2% in November 2019. This puts Bradford in the second quintile nationally.

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	Total %
Cohort Total (Excluding Custody)	7192		7099		14291	
1. 16 & 17 Participating through:	6896	95.9%	6356	89.5%	13252	92.7%
A. Full Time Education, of which:	6413	89.2%	5553	78.2%	11966	83.7%
School Sixth Form	2743	38.1%	2758	38.9%	5501	38.5%
Further Education	3667	51.0%	2782	39.2%	6449	45.1%
Higher Education	0	0.0%	4	0.1%	4	0.0%
HE Deferred	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other Post 16 Education	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
FE with Special Post-16 Institution	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
Custody with Further Education	3	0.0%	8	0.1%	11	0.1%
B. Employment, of which:	281	3.9%	557	7.8%	838	5.9%
Apprenticeship	273	3.8%	503	7.1%	776	5.4%
Employment with study	7	0.1%	50	0.7%	57	0.4%
Self Employment with study	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
Working not for reward with study	1	0.0%	3	0.0%	4	0.0%
C. Non-Employed Training, of which:	201	2.8%	246	3.5%	447	3.1%
ESFA & ESF funded Training	135	1.9%	190	2.7%	325	2.3%
Other training provision	20	0.3%	18	0.3%	38	0.3%
Traineeships	46	0.6%	38	0.5%	84	0.6%
Supported Internship	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

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

Outcomes and attainment

- 3.13 The issues highlighted by size in the Review also linked to the challenge around the quality of outcomes. Typically, across the country, smaller institutions have poorer outcomes for post-16, whilst 16-19 Free Schools have the best A Levels outcomes by type of institution (other than independent schools).
- 3.14 The review acknowledge that attainment, progression and value added across the range of types and levels of provision in all post-16 settings needed to improve at pace.

Progress to date – outcomes and attainment

- 3.15 In terms of outcomes by grades young people completing a Level 3 qualification post-16 in the district achieve comparable outcomes to their national peers as shown below. In particular in 2019 we consolidated 2018's improvement in the A Level fine grade from C- to C. This is encouraging as the full anticipated benefit of the joint approach will not start to be realised for A Levels until the first Free School cohorts complete in 2021.
- 3.16 Applied General and Tech Level provision 16-18 have remained consistently strong compared to national averages. It should be noted that all 2019 results are provisional at the time of writing.

Key Stage 5		2016	2017	2018	2019
A Levels	Bradford	C-	C-	C	C
	National	C+	C+	C+	C+
Tech Levels	Bradford	Dist-	Dist-	Dist-	Merit+
	National	Dist-	Dist-	Merit+	Merit+
Applied General	Bradford	Dist+	Dist+	Merit+	Merit+
	National	Dist	Dist	Merit+	Merit+

- 3.17 It was, however, the case that in term of points per entry that for A Levels and Tech Levels declined slightly in 2019 as can be seen in the charts at Appendix 3. Applied General showed a marginal increase (0.1 points per entry).
- 3.18 The DfE also reports value added measures for A Levels and Applied General at organisational rather than Local Authority level. In 2018 for A Level, two of our schools were classified as 'Above Average' for Value Added, five as 'Average', and nine as 'Below Average'. Of these nine, four have since either closed or consulted on closing their sixth form.
- 3.19 In terms of Applied General eight schools and colleges were 'Above Average', twelve classified as 'Average' and two 'Below Average'.
- 3.20 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 to impact adversely on Applied General and Tech Level performance locally.

Levels of attainment at age 19

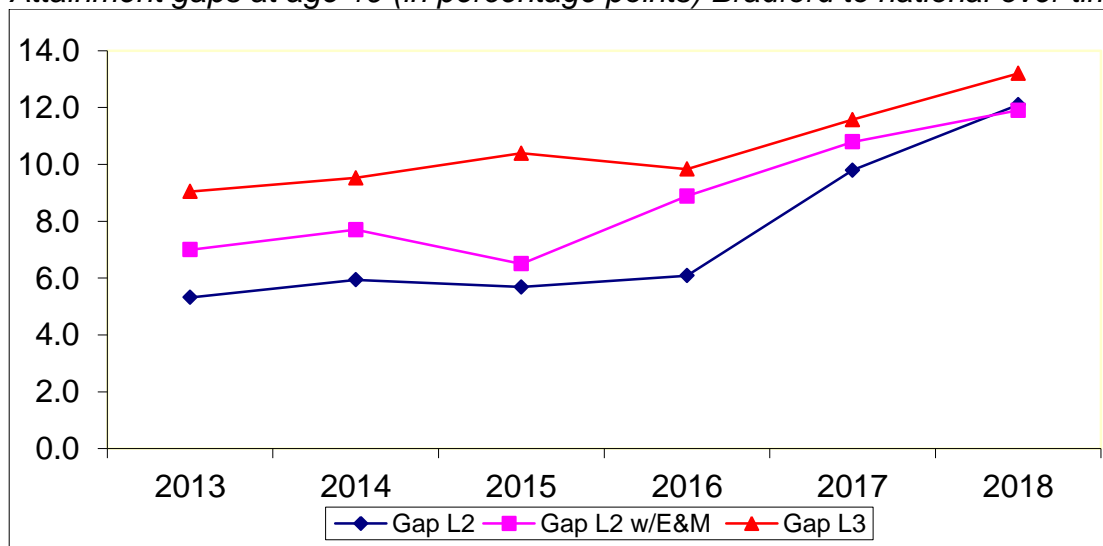
- 3.21 Although the outcomes for those completing Level 3 are broadly in line with national data, we still do not have sufficient of our young people attaining Level 3 by age 19. We have not significantly closed the gap performance to national over time as demonstrated in the next table.

3.22 Closing this gap is our key challenge if we are to deliver against our collective ambition and the key targets expressed in *People Skills Prosperity*.

The latest data pertains to the cohort who sat GCSEs in 2015. As would be expected the on-going impact of implementing reforms to GCSE in 2014 continues to impact outcomes at age 19. The cohort that was 19 in 2017 was the most impacted by these reforms and there was significant variance in national and local performance at that point. Despite minimal increases in GCSE performance nationally and locally the following year, the attainment at age 16 of this cohort of Bradford young people was considerably below national benchmarks.

3.23 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.

Attainment gaps at age 19 (in percentage points) Bradford to national over time

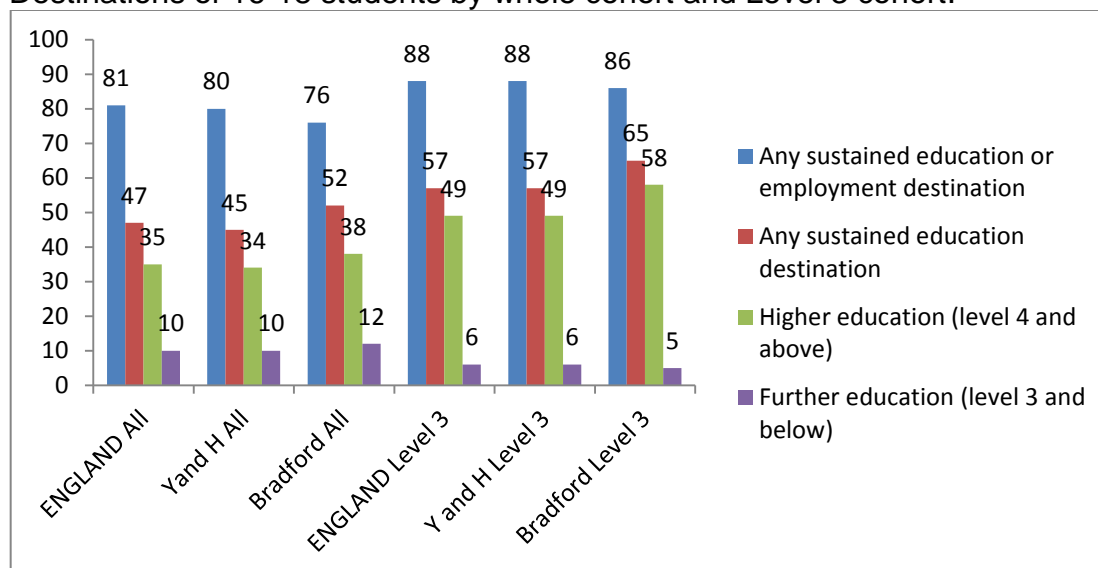


(2019 data expected to be published April 2020)

Progression into positive destinations

3.24 Progression rates for those Bradford young people who do complete a Level 3 are on the whole positive. Of those students who reached the end of a Level 3 in 2016/17 in Bradford (in a mainstream school or college), 65% entered 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 the whole school and college cohort and for those completing a Level 3.

Destinations of 16-18 students by whole cohort and Level 3 cohort:



3.25 This dataset also indicates that across the whole cohort fewer young people progress into employment at the end of 16-18 study (16% in Bradford as opposed to 25% nationally) and more young people from Bradford fail to sustain their destination (16% compared to 13% nationally).

3.26 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 3.9% compared to Bradford which has a 6.8% claimant rate for 18-24 year olds. Our overall claimant rate is compared 4.6% for the working age population in Bradford. Bradford has highest youth claimant rate in Leeds City Region:

Local Authority/district	Number of claimants aged 18-24	Rate of claimants aged 18-24 (%)
Barnsley	1,120	5.8
Bradford	3,170	6.8
Calderdale	895	5.7
Craven	70	2.1
Harrogate	210	2.5
Kirklees	1,950	4.9
Leeds	3,045	2.9
Selby	170	3.0
Wakefield	1,225	4.8
York	330	1.1
Yorkshire and the Humber		4.2
Great Britain		3.9

- 3.27 The District Workforce Development Plan sets out how we will improve our employment and skill levels through:
- building the skills employers seek;
 - improving job quality in the district; and
 - connecting our communities to good jobs and careers.
- 3.28 Under the new governance and delivery arrangements for the Plan, it is proposed that two key groups will drive activity under the *building the skills employers seek* theme: the District ICE Board; and the Post-16 Partnership. Their success will be critical to further improving post-16 education outcomes and securing greater progression into work for 19-24 year olds upon leaving education.
- 3.29 The District ICE Board:
ICE broadens aspirations and supports young people to develop a range of sector specific employability skills, engaging 15,000 young people on career related activity in academic year 2018/19. It builds on the Gatsby Benchmarks to prepare young people from all communities for good jobs and careers.
- The Board will continue to expand sector-based careers pathways to serve young people through growing the Industrial Centres of Excellence.
- 3.30 The Post-16 Partnership:
To increase the skills of Bradford's workforce, particularly at higher levels, we need an education and skills system that delivers the highest levels of quality and ensures high attainment.
- 3.31 The Partnership will champion and drive high quality post-16 education in Bradford supporting Bradford's schools and colleges, promoting and disseminating best practice across the education system to improve outcomes and progression. This will both enable more young people to achieve a Level 3 qualification by age 19 and to improve attainment of the highest grades across academic, technical and vocational provision post-16.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

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

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 5.1 There are no significant risks to the Council arising from the recommendations in this report.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1 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 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 Trade Union implications for the Council arising out of this report.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

- As the pattern of post-16 changes there will be Wards that previously had schools with sixth forms but do not moving forward, 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

- Officers and the Post-16 Partnership need to consider the participation and performance of Looked After Children post-16.

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

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

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

- None.

9. OPTIONS

- None.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- the Committee considers the contents of the report and progress made to date in implementing new arrangements for the delivery of post-16 provision in the District.

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](#)

Appendix 3 – Points per entry attainment by qualification type over time

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Bradford District Workforce Development Plan
- [Pioneering, Confident and Connected](#)