

Report of the Strategic Director Children's Services to the meeting of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 3 February 2021

AV

Subject:

Post 16 Education

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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Portfolio:

Education, Employment and Skills

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Post-16 education and training locally and nationally continues to undergo significant change, in particular the pandemic has necessitated changes to assessment and grading arrangements in 2020 and 2021.
- 1.2 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 2016 Review. This will make a crucial contribution to the targets and ambitions set out in the district Workforce Development Plan, “People, Skills, Prosperity”.
- 1.3 This report provides an update on progress with the implementation of the agreed approach and the latest post-16 participation, performance and progression data, however the Department for Education (DfE) will not be publishing institution or local authority level attainment data from the 2020 GCSE and post-16 examinations.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Post-16 education has undergone considerable reform in recent years. National reforms have changed 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 meant further funding reductions, however the base rate for funding increased from £4,000 to £4,188 for 16 and 17 year olds in academic year 2020/21 (the 2021/22 rate is still pending confirmation) and from £3,300 to £3,455 for 18 year olds.
- 2.3 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 post-16, comprises 15 routes based around occupations with shared training requirements. New level 3 classroom-based technical study programmes – ‘T Levels’ - are being phased in for each pathway. From September 2021, ten T Levels will be available nationally with the remaining courses starting in 2022 or 2023.

- 2.7 T Levels are equivalent to a three A Level programme and have a common framework consisting of:
- a technical qualification;
 - industry placement(s) totalling at least 315 hours (broadly 45 days);
 - maths, English and digital requirements;
 - other occupation specific qualifications; and
 - further employability, enrichment and pastoral provision.
- 2.8 The broader education and skills policy and funding context means that in addition to managing the reform of the 16-18 phase, schools and colleges will also be contending with a range of qualification, accountability, curriculum and funding reforms across other ages and phases of provision that they deliver, i.e. adult provision in Colleges and Key Stages 3 and 4 in schools.
- 2.9 The Covid 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the delivery, assessment and outcomes of young people on post-16 provision in the previous and current academic years.
- 2.10 Due to the pandemic summer 2020 examinations for GCSEs, AS and A Levels were cancelled. Students scheduled to sit these exams were awarded either a centre assessment grade (based on school or college predictions) or their calculated grade using a model developed by Ofqual – whichever was the higher.
- 2.11 This has also led to changes to the usual data that is published by the DfE with only national level summaries available and no institutional level information. Clearly because of the different methodology employed, the national data published cannot be compared with historical data on a like for like basis.
- 2.12 Clearly the current cohort of young people who will finish their post-16 qualifications this year have had to manage significant disruption to their education. Formal examinations have again been cancelled. Ofqual is currently consulting on the range of measures to support teacher assessment in Summer 2021 and this may include externally set papers. The Government has stated that young people should not be disadvantaged compared to previous years as a result of the current circumstances.
- 2.9 Despite these challenges Bradford as a District has sustained improvement over several years 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.

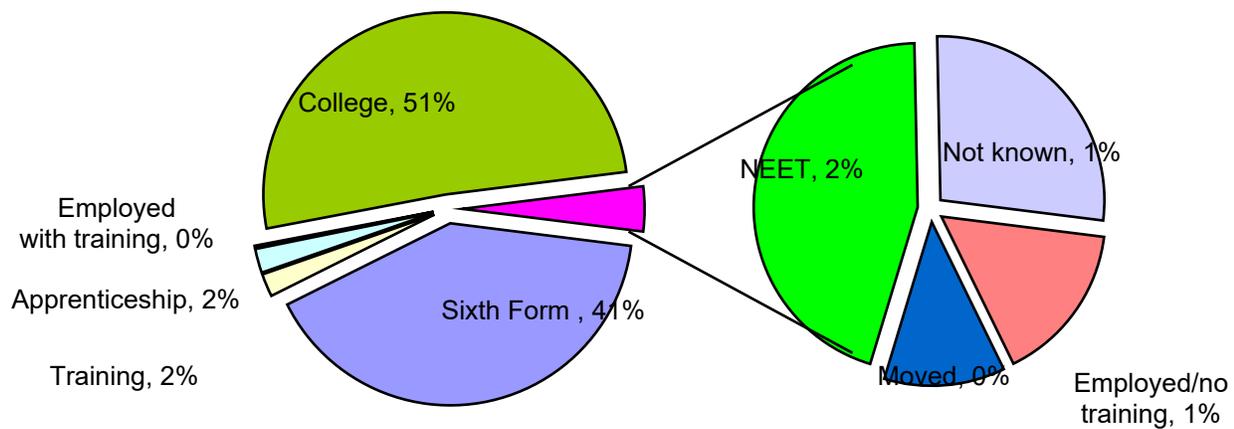
- 3.7 Therefore it was determined that we would work collaboratively to secure a reduction in the number of school sixth forms and the development of a small number of large sixth form colleges or Free Schools.

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 in September 2019 in the City Centre. Both of these are within Multi-Academy Trusts 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; Bradford Girls Grammar; Buttershaw; Co-op Grange; Carlton Bolling; Dixons Cottingley; Dixons City; Dixons McMillan; Queensbury Academy; 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; 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 has launched an A Level offer this year. The College has sought to develop an offer that is complementary to existing provision and provides pathways bring together academic and practical learning that schools are unable to offer.

Participation in education and training post-16

- 3.11 The closure of the sixth forms to date has not had a 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) reduced from 3.6% in 2019 to 2.9% (2019 also represented an improvement with the figure having been 5% in 2018). The chart below indicates the destinations for the whole cohort:



3.12 In terms of the full 16-18 cohort, November's NEET and Not Known rate was at 7.7% in November 2020 higher than the 5.2% in November 2019. This is predominantly due to an increase in academic age 17 (School Year 13) who are Not Known. The NEET rate is similar at 2.8% in 2020 compared to 2.6% in 2019. The November 2020 figure is however still lower than the November 2018 figure of 8.1%.

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	
1. 16 & 17 Participating through:	7014	95.4%	6193	86.2%	13207	90.9%
A. Full Time Education of which:	6671	90.8%	5538	77.1%	12209	84.0%
School Sixth Form	3083	42.0%	2506	34.9%	5589	38.5%
Further Education	3587	48.8%	3025	42.1%	6612	45.5%
Higher Education***	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
HE Deferred***	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
FE with Special Post-16 Institution	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
B. Employment of which:	180	2.4%	409	5.7%	589	4.1%
Apprenticeship	168	2.3%	379	5.3%	547	3.8%
Employment with study (regulated qualification)	10	0.1%	28	0.4%	38	0.3%
Self-Employment with study (regulated qualification)	1	0.0%	2	0.0%	3	0.0%
Working not for reward with study (regulated qualification)	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
C. Non-Employed Training of which:	163	2.2%	246	3.4%	409	2.8%
ESFA & ESF funded Training	118	1.6%	184	2.6%	302	2.1%
Other training provision	12	0.2%	21	0.3%	33	0.2%

Traineeships	33	0.4%	37	0.5%	70	0.5%
Supported Internship	0	0.0%	4	0.1%	4	0.0%

As may anticipated in the current economic context the number of young people in Apprenticeships has declined from 776 in November 2019 to 547 in November 2020. This is reflective of the national picture as well – for the full academic year 2019/20 Apprenticeship starts reduced by 22% for 16-18 year olds, though clearly half of this period predates the pandemic. For the period March to July the smallest (national) decrease in starts for young people when compared to the equivalent month in the previous year was 38%.

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 Level outcomes by type of institution (other than independent schools).
- 3.14 The Review acknowledged 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 As the DfE has not published official statistics below national level for post-16 outcomes in 2020 the most recent data remains unchanged since presented to the Committee in February 2021.
- 3.16 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 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:

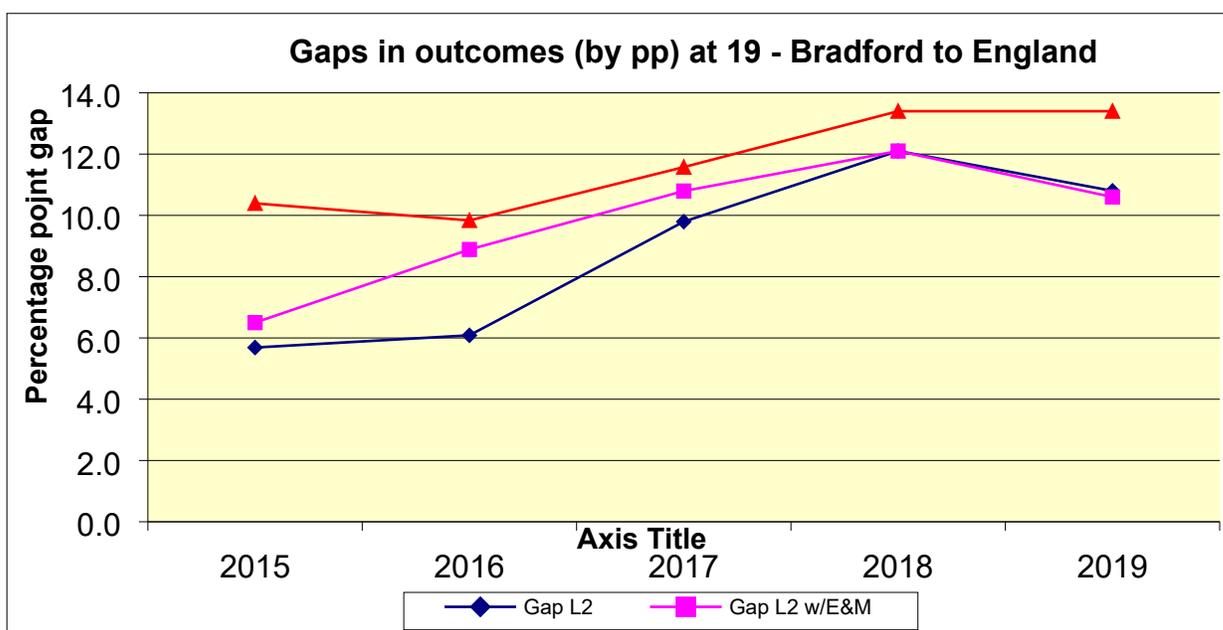
Key Stage 5		2016	2017	2018	2019
A Levels	Bradford	C-	C-	C	C
	National	C+	C+	C+	C+
Tech Levels	Bradford	Dist-	Dist-	Dist-	Merit+
	National	Dist-	Dist-	Merit+	Merit+
Applied General	Bradford	Dist+	Dist+	Merit+	Dist-
	National	Dist	Dist	Merit+	Merit+

- 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 1. Applied General remained the same.

- 3.18 The DfE also reports value added measures for A Levels and Applied General at organisational rather than Local Authority level. In 2019 for A Level, five of our schools were classified as 'Above Average' for Value Added, eight as 'Average', and twelve as 'Below Average'. Of these twelve, five have since either closed or not recruited to Year 12.
- 3.19 In terms of Applied General eight schools and colleges were 'Above Average', fifteen classified as 'Average' and two 'Below Average' (of which one has now closed).
- 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 may have a short-term impact on scores for Applied General and Tech Level nationally and locally whilst teachers and young people adjust to the new qualification demands.

Levels of attainment at age 19

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



(2020 data expected to be published April 2021)

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

2018/19 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 those completing a Level 3.

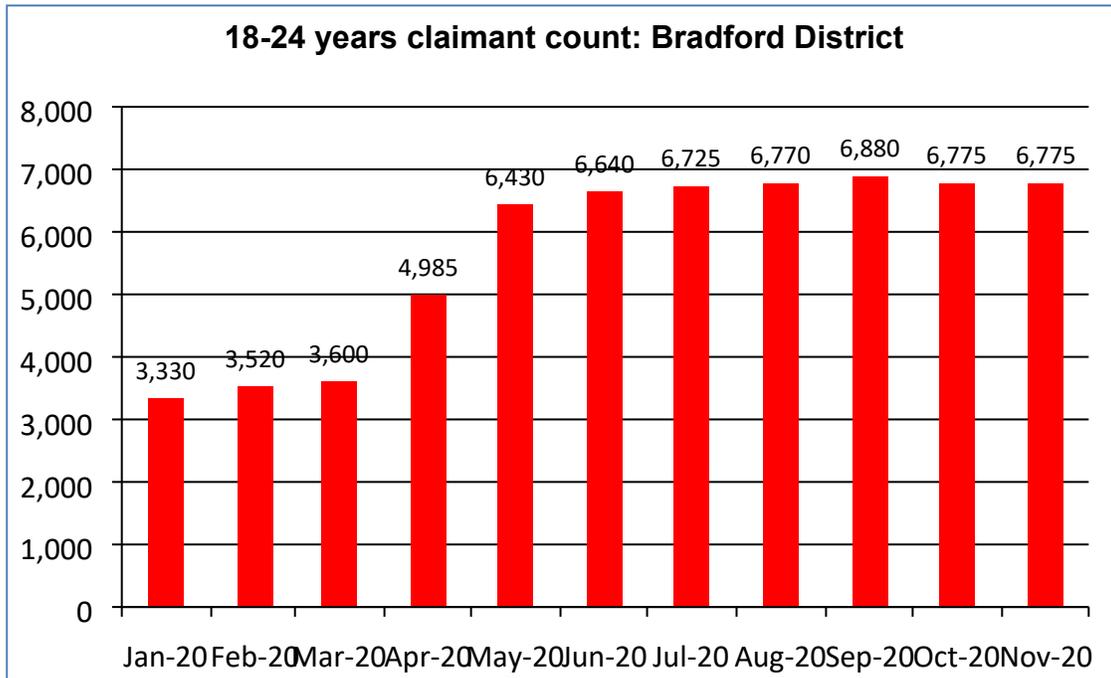
Destinations of 16-18 students by whole cohort and Level 3 cohort (%):



3.25 This dataset also indicates that across the whole cohort fewer young people progress into employment at the end of 16-18 study (17% in Bradford as opposed to 24% nationally).

3.26 The challenge with progression into sustained employment is also reflected in the youth unemployment figures for 18-24 year olds.

During the pandemic we have seen a significant and sustained rise in the District’s youth claimant rate. The number of 18-24-year-old claimants for November is 6,775 an increase of 3,175 since March, or in percentage terms a rise of 88.2%. This has served to worsen youth unemployment everywhere in the District, but especially in existing hotspots. A ward breakdown of youth unemployment is at Appendix 2.



3.27 To tackle youth unemployment a number of key interventions are being developed:

3.28 SkillsHouse

We have a track record of strong and productive multi-agency partnership working to improve employment and skills outcomes in the District. The offer however is too complex and can be difficult for young people to navigate. The Council's significant investment into the SkillsHouse partnership - £3.75million over the next three and a half years – will expand and fully implement a localities based multi-agency approach, developing an integrated system making it easier for young people to access services that support them to access work.

The investment into the Partnership will also lead to the creation of a unified brand, bringing together support services to individuals and employers. A significant step in achieving has been the recent launch of the SkillsHouse Youth website - www.skillshouseyouth.co.uk. This has replaced the old Connexions web presence and sits alongside the existing SkillsHouse brand and website. The site is the District's portal to Information, Advice and Guidance for young people up to the age of 18, with a web chat facility for personalised support and guidance.

3.29 Careers and Technical Education

All young people need a range of knowledge, skills and habits to become successful and thrive. The Careers and Technical Education approach identifies essential skills most desirable for this success such as communication, critical thinking, problem solving, entrepreneurship and leadership and delivers these through a range of activities that enhance students' classroom experiences.

The approach also incorporates sector specific approach, notably through the ICE programme: 86 board members spanning 7 boards offer strategic insight between schools and industry, designing relevant industry pathway and skills development opportunities for young people. This year at board level members have reviewed the framework, comprising of 15 industry sectors and endorsing 78 pathways to take forward into September 2020. Additions to the framework include the inclusion of Energy, Environment and Utilities Technology sector, supporting the Economic Recovery Board's actions on the Green Economy.

Opportunities for young people to interact with businesses to inspire, reinforce learning and understand the modern work environment are critical to their chances of success and central to the CTE Partnership's approach. Bradford Manufacturing Weeks and Tech Week have been significant successes this year despite the restrictions in place, Manufacturing Week engaged 4,551 students and Tech Week reached 10,439 pupils.

3.30 *Kickstart*

This Government scheme supports businesses to offer paid six-month work placements to young people up to the age of 25 who are currently unemployed. This offers a significant opportunity to young people giving them valuable paid work experience. In addition to paying for 25 hours at National Minimum Wage there is £1,500 for training for each young person.

The Council is acting a Gateway (consortium) for the programme and 135 local businesses have registered with us offering over 750 placements for young people. This covers a broad range of opportunities and roles across 15 sectors of the economy through a range of organisational types and sizes. The application has been made to DWP for these placements and is undergoing assessment.

3.31 *Next Steps*

The planned next steps in tackling youth unemployment are as follows:

Completion of the Review of Vulnerable Learners - ensuring that our most vulnerable learners have access to high quality technical pathways that increase their chances of succeeding in the labour market. The Review is being Chaired by the Principal of Keighley College and the final report will inform practice and the offer across the District;

Connexions service re-design and NEET provision – to ensure both the strategic alignment of the provision with wider careers offers, and that the demand for intensive support for NEET young people is met. Across the partnership we will work to understand the sufficiency of the offer to NEET young people and address and facilitate the sharing of intelligence and good practice;

Development of a digital platform – this is a key enabler for the careers and technical education approach and ensuring all young people in the District have equality of access to high quality careers education;

A Call to Action leading to the establishment of a Youth Employability Partnership – to publicly emphasise the critical nature of the issue, galvanise and bring together partners and provision to enhance existing strengths, and develop an integrated youth offer; and

Secure and shape use of funding – continuing to work with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority around devolved and emerging budgets to ensure that creating youth opportunity is an absolute priority for deployment of funding. We will work with partners to identify need and potential sources of funding, as well as tackling historic barriers to effective collaboration and use of resource such as data sharing across key transition phases.

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. In preparing young people to access economic opportunities through acquiring relevant and in-demand qualifications, our approach will enable young people to compete for the anticipated increase in “Green Jobs.”

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 partners need to consider the participation and performance of Looked After Children/Care Leavers 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 – Points per entry attainment by qualification type over time

Appendix 2 - Ward breakdowns of youth unemployment

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- [Bradford District Workforce Development Plan](#)
- [Pioneering, Confident and Connected](#)
- [Post-16 education and training in Bradford and the need for change](#)

Appendix 1 – Points per entry attainment by qualification type over time

Chart 1 - A Levels

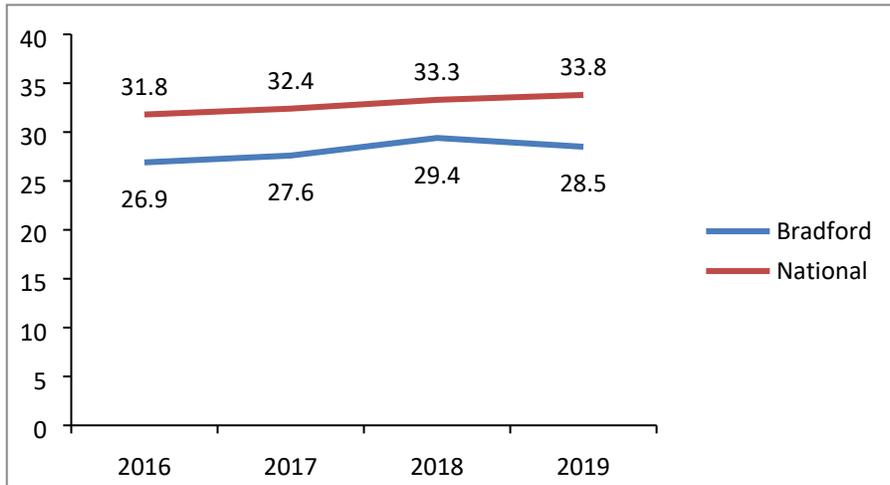


Chart 2 - Applied General

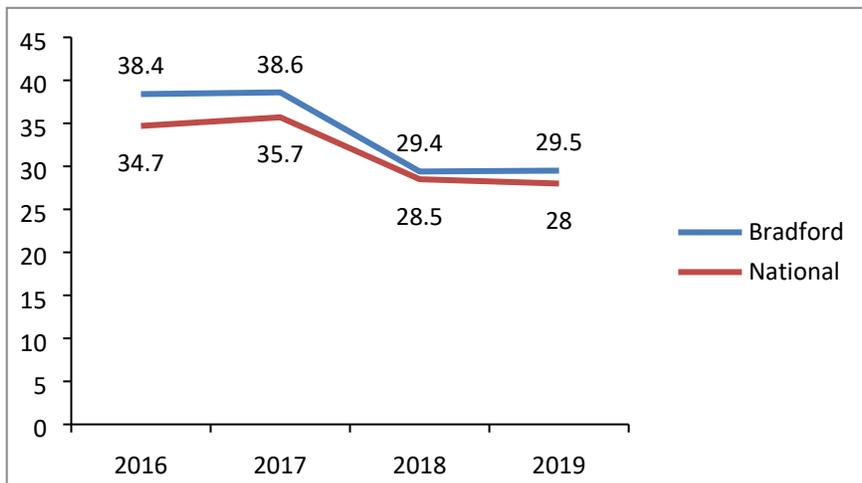
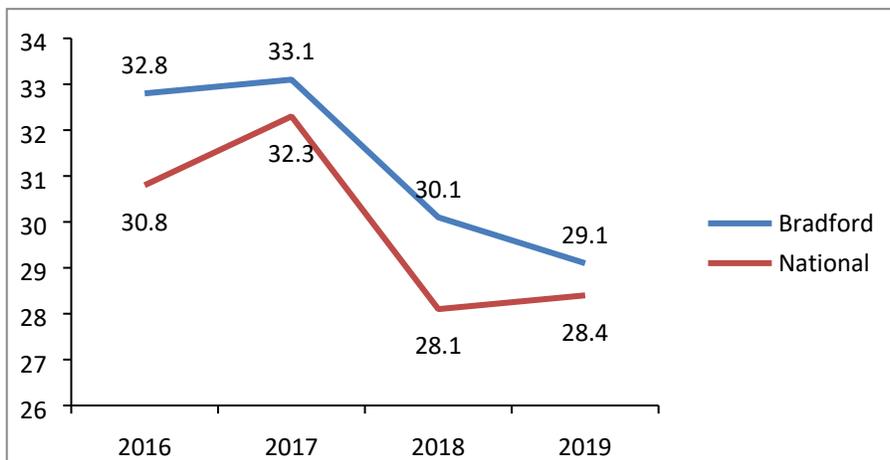


Chart 3 - Tech Level



Appendix 2 - Ward breakdowns of youth unemployment

Chart 1 - Claimant Count by Ward as at November 2020

	nos.
City	480
Manningham	480
Little Horton	465
Bowling and Barkerend	430
Bradford Moor	415
Toller	360
Tong	330
Great Horton	325
Eccleshill	305
Heaton	290
Keighley Central	265
Bolton and Undercliffe	225
Clayton and Fairweather Green	220
Royds	220
Thornton and Allerton	210
Windhill and Wrose	190
Keighley West	185
Wibsey	180
Keighley East	170
Wyke	160
Bingley Rural	125
Queensbury	125
Shipley	125
Idle and Thackley	120
Bingley	95
Baildon	75
Worth Valley	65
Craven	55
Ilkley	55
Wharfedale	40

Chart 2 – Claimant count increase March to November 2020

	% pt inc.
Bradford Moor	9.7%
Manningham	9.0%
Bowling and Barkerend	8.5%
Little Horton	8.1%
Eccleshill	8.0%
Idle and Thackley	7.9%
Wibsey	7.9%
Great Horton	7.8%
Clayton and Fairweather Green	7.7%
Keighley Central	7.7%
Thornton and Allerton	7.6%
Toller	7.5%
Tong	7.5%
Heaton	7.5%
Wyke	7.1%
Windhill and Wrose	7.1%
Royds	6.9%
Keighley East	6.8%
Shipley	6.8%
Bingley Rural	6.7%
Bolton and Undercliffe	6.2%
Baildon	6.1%
Ilkley	6.0%
Bingley	5.9%
Keighley West	5.8%
Queensbury	5.6%
Wharfedale	5.5%
Worth Valley	5.1%
City	3.5%
Craven	3.4%

Chart 3 - Claimant count rate as at November 2020

	%
Manningham	20.5%
Eccleshill	20.4%
Little Horton	19.9%
Tong	19.0%
Great Horton	18.7%
Bowling and Barkerend	18.2%
Bradford Moor	17.8%
Royds	16.9%
Thornton and Allerton	16.8%
Heaton	16.0%
Windhill and Wrose	15.8%
Wibsey	15.8%
Keighley Central	15.7%
Bolton and Undercliffe	15.5%
Toller	15.4%
Wyke	15.2%
Clayton and Fairweather Green	14.8%
Keighley West	14.4%
Keighley East	13.7%
Shipley	12.1%
Idle and Thackley	11.2%
Queensbury	10.7%
Bingley Rural	10.5%
City	9.4%
Bingley	9.3%
Baildon	9.2%
Worth Valley	7.4%
Wharfedale	7.4%
Ilkley	7.3%
Craven	6.2%