

Report of the Executive Member for Education, Culture and Skills to the meeting of Full Council to be held on 8 December 2015.

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Subject:**The Bradford Education Covenant****Summary statement:**

Bradford Council has proposed an Education Covenant as part of its strategy to deliver key and sustained educational improvements. The Covenant is one element in a wide range of improvement activities which are included in the recently written school improvement action plan.

The Bradford Education Covenant lists a set of pledges from the Council as well as a set of 'asks' of different groups such as – young people, parents, schools, businesses, the community and central government. The Covenant makes clear that children and young people are educated through the experiences they encounter in their young lives both inside and outside the school. It begins at birth and continues for life. The Covenant reinforces the view that for children and young people to get the very best from their education and to fully achieve their potential it has to be a united effort from us all.

This report provides feedback on the outcomes of an extensive consultation process and proposes a way forward to consider amendments to the Covenant so that a final version can be published at the earliest opportunity.

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1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Bradford Council has proposed an Education Covenant as part of its strategy to deliver key and sustained educational improvements. The Covenant is one element in a wide range of improvement activities which are included in the recently written school improvement action plan.
- 1.2 The Bradford Education Covenant lists a set of pledges from the Council as well as a set of 'asks' of different groups such as – young people, parents, schools, businesses, the community and central government. The Covenant makes clear that children and young people are educated through the experiences they encounter in their young lives both inside and outside the school. It begins at birth and continues for life. The Covenant reinforces the view that for children and young people to get the very best from their education and to fully achieve their potential it has to be a united effort from us all.
- 1.3 This report provides feedback on the outcomes of an extensive consultation process and proposes a way forward to consider amendments to the Covenant so that a final version can be published at the earliest opportunity.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following the educational review conducted by Professor David Woods in September 2014, Bradford Council with its strategic educational partners has developed and implemented a new educational improvement strategy, a school-led system where the local authority, schools within their partnerships and the teaching school alliances take on a shared responsibility and accountability for the improvements to educational outcomes that Bradford requires. The strategy is aligned closely to the Council's overarching strategy, the New Deal for Bradford. The Ofsted inspection of Bradford's school improvement arrangements in June 2015 highlighted the poor educational outcomes achieved and recognised, and supported, the optimism around the new school-led improvement strategy. The Ofsted report stated "there is a new direction in the local authority and a cause for optimism. Headteachers, governors and partners speak convincingly about a 'step-change' in the authority's approach and a new rigour and challenge to schools and partnerships."
- 2.2 In response to the LA's Ofsted inspection a detailed action plan has been developed to help provide the impetus for continued rapid improvement. The new action plan replaces a number of previous operational plans. It has been evaluated by Ofsted and, with a few minor improvements that have now been actioned, the plan has now been endorsed by Ofsted.
- 2.3 As part of the new strategy the Executive Member for Education, Culture and Skills and the Strategic Director Children's Services proposed the development of a Bradford Education Covenant to illustrate that all educators and stakeholders have a responsibility to our young people and how they can contribute to our children's overall education. The Covenant is about everyone recognising their role in supporting Bradford's action plan for school improvement. The Council has a



challenging overarching target for every school to be good or outstanding by 2018 and has four key drivers in its educational improvement strategy:

- Improving the quality of leadership, including governance, across all schools and settings
 - Improving school readiness and end of Early Years outcomes
 - Improving teaching and learning and raising levels of literacy across all phases
 - Raising the attainment of underperforming groups and narrowing the attainment gap.
- 2.4 The Covenant is in two parts. Page 1 lists 'What the Council will offer' and is broken down into eight pledges. Page 2 includes 'Bradford Council's Education Ask' and seeks to enlist the commitment of key stakeholder groups.
- 2.5 The Council meeting of 20 October 2015 marked the formal launch of the Covenant (version 1), although the covenant itself and the principles within it were already shaped by consultation with partners over preceding months. This early work included the Executive Member for Education, Skills and Culture providing briefings to the T&A and Asian Sunday. This resulted in a T&A news article ("Council in pledge for improving education") which was published on 14th September. An invitation to comment on this early work was included in a www.bradford.gov.uk website article during the week commencing 14 September.
- 2.6 The formal public consultation, that followed the Council meeting on 20 October, was officially concluded on Friday 20 November. The consultation has been extensive and has been championed by the Executive Member for Education, Skills and Culture. As well as the online consultation on the www.bradford.gov.uk website (asking for email responses), there have been a range of high profile events where the Covenant has been publicised and responses, suggestions and comments sought. These have included:
- school visits and meetings with staff and pupils
 - contact with local businesses
 - briefing for the Bradford South Neighbourhood Ward: Parkside Centre
 - briefings for headteachers
 - meetings with parents
 - publicity on Bradford Schools Online – the schools' information website
 - publicity on Bradnet – the Council's internal website
 - as a discussion and feedback topic at Public Forum for Education
 - briefing for Bradford Governors
 - briefing for Keighley Governors
 - information for the 'Bradford Parents On The Go' blog
 - press releases which resulted in good coverage including in the Yorkshire Post, T&A, Urban Echo
 - consultation with children at City Hall on 16 November 2015 which included 26 children from four schools
 - posts on the Council's Twitter and Facebook.



- 2.7 To give a specific example of how the consultation has provoked a positive response and instigated additional activity. The Executive Member for Education, Skills and Culture and the Strategic Director Children's Services attended a recent meeting of the Bradford Matters group. Bradford Matters is a culturally diverse networking and lobbying group made up of influential individuals and organisations who care deeply about Bradford and its development. Following the briefing the group offered their assistance as a tool to assist in the engagement with employers, community groups and other networks and wrote to the Strategic Director making a number of concrete suggestions about how their role could be supportive to the required education improvement. These actions included marshalling support of employers, support through communities and using their networks to support active volunteering in schools. Appendix B is provided as an example of the positive response from the consultation process.
- 2.8 Over 100 formal and informal responses to the consultation have been received up to 20 November. The feedback basically falls into one of two categories. There were some very sensible and helpful comments about the wording of the covenant. Where possible these have been incorporated into version 2 of the document that can be found at Appendix A.
- 2.9 The second category includes more fundamental views, suggestions and ideas that will need to be considered within a second short phase of further consultation and adaptation. A summary of these suggestions are included below:
- a) The role of childminders.
 - b) A broader view on children's readiness for school, including the role of the work of the National Literacy Strategy within Bradford, and the role of 'Surestart' type provision.
 - c) A request for a direct reference to Early Years' settings and Children's Centres in making sure children are ready for school and when referring to the role of schools.
 - d) The inclusion of a strong statement about the Council's and schools' responsibilities for the safeguarding of children and young people.
 - e) Whether there needs to be further guidance on the early teaching of reading to schools, parents and carers.
 - f) To consider, as part of the education 'ask', whether on page 2 'teachers' as an individual group should be highlighted - suggested inclusion for a 'teachers' section: "to inspire and motivate pupils so they commit to learning", "create a good learning environment", "have the skills to raise standards", "have the skills to use new technologies in their teaching", "to encourage children and young people to help each other, to build resilience and confidence as learners so that they are able to achieve well in their future lives" – this final suggestion could equally apply to 'parents and carers' and other adults.
 - g) To consider whether the Council, schools and teachers should commit in the Covenant to the improvement of children's physical health, emotional well-being and personal development, including meeting pupils' mental health needs and special educational needs, and how children can be supported during stressful



times in their lives (e.g. during national examinations). This to include a better understanding of children's learning needs and why some are more successful than others.

- h) To consider whether an entitlement to a work experience placement should be included in the Covenant.
- i) Reference to the expectation that parents, teachers and pupils should show each other respect, and a suggestion that more needs to be done to bridge the gap between parents and teachers.
- j) The addition of a preface that asks for everyone to support children's education by showing each other mutual respect in their dealings because the focus should always be on our children's future.
- k) Development of students' leadership skills.
- l) Improved governance and consideration of the wider personal commitments of governors.
- m) A recognition that school governors have a responsibility to appoint only the best teachers.
- n) Ensuring that school buildings are fit for purpose and schools are appropriately resourced.
- o) The use of colour, natural light and a consideration of air-quality in school buildings can be high impact and inexpensive to implement.
- p) How Teaching School Alliances can contribute to the improvements.
- q) Do all stakeholders (including Councillors, employers) have high enough expectations of what Bradford's children can achieve?
- r) Should there be a specific reference to the Council's commitment to Looked After Children?
- s) A question was raised as to whether the statement "devolve more powers to local authorities to tackle failing schools and hold academies to account" should be included in the 'ask' of the Government.
- t) A request for school holiday schedules to be revised in Bradford to better support learning and to reduce term time absence.
- u) Reference to public libraries – an under-used asset.
- v) There was a suggestion that the covenant be further developed into a book or a charter for Bradford's business and organisations to display as a reminder of everyone's commitment to the Covenant.
- w) There was a question about how this Covenant would make sure that Bradford's young people and graduates are more employable than those from other areas. What is unique about the Covenant, and our expectations, that will make others look to Bradford?



3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 It is pleasing to note the extremely wide range of views and suggestions that were provided in feedback to the consultation. Many of the areas for further discussion included above came from several respondents, and from a very wide range of interested parties, including significant contributions from Bradford's children and young people. One comment appeared to capture the views of many, "Ensure challenge and support is part of everyone's language and it becomes cool to have a love of learning and to talk with pride about our city and its learners."
- 3.2 In compiling this report as many views as possible have been captured and all given equal status. The next stage must be to consider the comments – some clearly go beyond the scope of the Covenant and whilst they represent admirable suggestions they will not be included in the final version. It is recommended that a group of officers and Councillors now work together to finalise the Bradford Education Covenant so that the final version can be published at the earliest opportunity. It is also recommended that as part of the publication, a publicity campaign and the circulation is carefully considered and planned. Finally some of the respondents suggested that stakeholders in education in Bradford should be asked to openly pledge their support for the Covenant – it should be considered whether this is a process that we want to follow and, if so, how that might be organised.
- 3.3 One further important activity has already been organised in the next short phase of consultation and adaptation of the Bradford Education Covenant. At the next meeting of the Education Improvement Strategic Board (EISB), the strategic group that oversees school performance and holds partners to account for the improvements, on 2 December 2015 a number of national stakeholders will be in attendance, including the Ofsted Regional Director, the Senior HMI overseeing the Bradford LA, and the Regional School Commissioner. The independent chair of the EISB will facilitate a discussion "to collectively understand the challenges and how strategically all organisations play their part in the raising of education standards". The outcomes of this discussion will require the school improvement action plan to be updated and will further inform the finalisation of the Covenant and agree how they can contribute to our agenda for improvement.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications at this stage.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 5.1 There are no significant risks arising out of the implications of the recommendations in this report.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1 There are no legal issues.



7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

A Bradford Education Covenant as described in this report and the recommendations provided will support an equality of expectations for the educational outcomes of all of Bradford's children and young people.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

Not applicable.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Not applicable.

7.6 TRADE UNION

Not applicable.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

Not applicable.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

See the recommendations below.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That the report be received as a summary of the feedback provided during the public consultation of the Bradford Education Covenant.



- 10.2 That the revised Bradford Education Covenant in Appendix A be accepted as version for dissemination
- 10.3 That as part of the publication process, dissemination is carefully considered and planned.
- 10.4 That it should be considered whether stakeholders in education in Bradford be asked to openly pledge their support for the Covenant.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A - The Bradford Education Covenant (following public consultation).

Appendix B - Bradford Matters – Supporting Education Improvement Initial Thoughts.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.



Appendix A

The Bradford Education Covenant (following public consultation)

What the Council Will Offer

Keeping schools and education as a top priority

Improving schools and educational attainment so that all our children are able to achieve their potential will stay at the top of our priorities. We will support all Councillors to be effective champions of children, parents and learning and work with schools and parents to develop a vision for education as we pursue our ambition of making all our schools good by 2018.

Driving school improvement

The Council will work to put schools themselves at the heart of driving improvement. We will challenge schools and governing bodies and hold them to account for their performance taking rapid and robust action where there are issues that may be preventing a school from making progress, whatever type of school it may be.

Promoting learning from the very best

We already have some outstanding school leaders and teachers. We will work even harder with schools to identify, celebrate, promote and share best practice and support them to assist each other to accelerate improvement.

Attracting, retaining and developing the best school leaders and teachers

We will invest resources in attracting, retaining and developing the best school leaders, teachers and classroom assistants, and reducing the numbers of supply teachers. We've already set aside £660,000 to do this. Part of this commitment will involve promoting Bradford District as an attractive career choice for the best teachers and school leaders. Government policy is to increase the numbers of Academies so we will do everything possible to ensure that all education providers educating our children including academy sponsors are of high quality, understand fully our local needs and circumstances, and will work collaboratively with the Council and its partners.

Providing school places by working together with government

The Council will work with the Government to ensure the District gets the money it needs to provide enough school places and keep schools well equipped. We've invested £700,000 to match the Government's money for extra school places but we need more money and more places.

Helping to make sure children are ready for school

Support will be there for families and children from through the 'early years' helping to make sure children are ready for school and can do their very best at school from day one.

Supporting children and young people to be ready for work and life

Working closely with the business community, the University and colleges, the Council will provide real opportunities for skill development and jobs when young people leave school. We'll continue, in partnership, to deliver the innovative Industrial Centres of Excellence, each covering a different economic sector, linking schools to employers' needs and we'll support business to get the right young person, with the right skills through our Apprenticeships Hub.

Raising aspirations through cultural opportunities

Providing chances for students to benefit from enriched cultural learning by maximising the District's unique local learning opportunities and facilities - for example, with the National Media Museum and City of Film. This will provide inspiration to our young people and stimulate creativity.

The Bradford Education Covenant – Bradford Council’s Education Ask

Parents and Carers

- Access a nursery place – 15 hours a week is free and it can make a big difference to your child’s development.
- Involve yourself in your child’s education, encourage and celebrate their learning.
- Enjoy being with your child, follow their interests and involve them in all that you do – as this is the best way to help prepare them for the next stage of their learning and development
- Make learning fun at home, read, count and play every day with your young child.
- Make sure your child is at school on time, attends regularly and doesn’t take unauthorised absence.
- Support your child to do their best with their homework and to get it in on time.
- Have the highest expectations of what your child can achieve at school and when they leave.
- Support your child to get involved in out of school activities.

Parents need to do this because their involvement in children’s education from an early age has a significant effect on educational achievement, and continues to do so into adolescence and adulthood.

Children and young people

- Make the most of opportunities for learning at school and at home and have high expectations of what you can achieve
- Take responsibility for your own education, behave well, build your skills, ask questions, take notes in class and get your work in on time, discover your talents – it’s your life, your future, your choice.

Children and young people need to do this because motivated and responsible pupils have a better chance of achieving success.

Schools and Governors

- Put yourselves at the heart of driving school improvement, working together in partnership, recognising that all types of school are part of a wider education system and need to share solutions and ideas to raise education attainment.
- Be active in the District’s networks of schools, assist each other each other to challenge and address failure and support the lowest performing schools to learn from the highest performers.
- Share resources and expertise to invest in teaching, learning and facilities.
- Commit to continuous professional development for school leaders, teachers and governors.
- Take timely and robust action to deal with performance, governance, attendance and any other issues in your school to provide the very best education experience and outcomes for your pupils.
- Support students to identify future careers opportunities.
- Ensure that the information that you provide to parents and carers is clear, concise and accessible.
- Work with communities to improve community engagement with schools.

All our schools need to do this to help us achieve our shared ambition of making sure every school is ‘Good’ by 2018.

Business and employers

- Support and become involved with an Industrial Centre of Excellence or Bradford Pathways.
- Encourage your employees to volunteer for the reading in schools project and to offer mentoring for young people at school.
- Provide meaningful work placements to your local schools and be an active partner in educating young people about potential careers.
- Provide apprenticeships for local young people.

Businesses need to do this because good education and good skills mean greater growth. In engineering alone the UK needs 1.82 million workers with relevant skills by 2022.

Communities

- Everyone in every community and neighbourhood to play their part in making a positive contribution to the growth, development and wellbeing of young people.
- Get involved for example as a volunteer reader.

We need our communities to do this because everyone shares in the social and economic benefits of improving education and everyone can play a part in helping to achieve it.

Government

- Provide the funding for the District to have enough places for all our children.
- Provide funding and support to help increase education achievement in the District, for example invest in a local programme to drive rapid and sustainable improvements.
- Support us to attract outstanding teachers, leaders and, in line with Government policy, Academy chains to the District.
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We need the government to do this because we have one of the fastest growing populations of young people in the country and will need extra places equivalent to two new secondary schools by 2018.

Appendix B

Bradford Matters – Supporting Education Improvement **Initial Thoughts**

There are three main areas where BM can make a real contribution to the improvement of education in Bradford schools.

1. Marshalling Support with Employers

Bradford Council has taken a thoughtful step of launching Bradford Pathways. This is a careers education model that seeks to engage young people for primary through secondary and into post 16 education with the world of work. The initiative is designed to enthuse young people about particular careers and to ready them for the world of work. If it is to be successful it needs buy in from employers in large numbers. BM Members should seek to encourage a significant sign up to this initiative working closely with Council Officers. Employers will also be key to delivering under 3 below.

Target KPI: Number of employer links created

2. Marshalling Support within the Community

BM has strong membership links with many Community organisations. As such it can marshal the voices that command significant impact on local communities. BM should exploit those links to have an impact on the education system through parents. Parents are such significant figures in the development of children and they can help with the preparation of their children for schools and also provide support during the child's time at school. What is proposed is a consistent and organised message for parents to come via various community organisations. It may seem patronising but when you speak to Heads they will tell you the efforts they need to put in to ensure pupils attend, don't take holidays etc.

There is a capacity issue in Bradford that exists because educational performance has been low for such a long time, actually over a generation. That means that some parents will require support with numeracy, literacy and confidence/motivation towards education. While it is likely that some impact could be made through volunteering and accessing existing programmes of support, an intervention on the scale required is likely to need significant revenue funding. BM could work with the local authority and the LEP to craft a scheme or schemes capable of support and that utilise 'in kind' contributions from community organisations/volunteers etc. Given this requires money such an objective will be difficult to achieve but is worth considering as its impact would be beneficial to current educational issues. It also begins to rectifying the long term impact on the current parent population of Bradford who have not benefited from as good an education as they should have.

Target KPI: Communication strategy with supporting materials launched with measureable outcomes.

Target KPI: Funded programme of personal development launched targeting parents who require support to help prepare and keep their children in school.

3. Using networks to support active volunteering with Schools

Active volunteering in schools has a hugely positive effect on young people and school performance. A good example was raised at BM when Simon Atkin reported that West Yorkshire Police had provided a significant number of officers at various levels in the Force to volunteer as school governors. Other BM Members could use their networks to allow for an increase in the number of volunteering opportunities for their businesses, networks and community organisations. As well as Governors other key areas of volunteering could be those who read with young people or help with maths. A further example would be the provision of coaches and mentors for school children – these could be targeted at those experiencing problems with the school system but could be equally valuable to more gifted pupils or any others in between. Schools Heads often benefit from the role of Governors as 'Critical Friend'. This is an important role as it allows for support and challenge to be offered in a way that is positive but provides meaningful insight into new approaches to difficult problems. Perhaps some employer representatives could perform this role with Heads or other senior staff, or perhaps teachers or Business managers in schools?

Target KPI: Number of Governor Volunteers identified

Target KPI: Number of other (to be specified but could include Literacy and Numeracy support; coaches and mentors) active volunteers identified.

A good example of where all three activities come together is the Police Camp initiative run by the Police and Bradford College – see here: <https://policecamps.bradfordcollege.ac.uk> for details.

A final thought on **Teacher Recruitment**. As organisations change their workforce plans thought should be given to retraining opportunities to encourage high calibre staff who no longer wish to work in their current field into teaching. This idea requires further thought but is included for completeness in the draft.

Where next?

Education sub group to consider the above, amend as desired and report back to BM. AW to liaise with BDMC to ensure this approach is welcome.