

Council – 4 April 2016 – Agenda Item 15.4

Administration Motion in the name of Councillor Reuben Thompstone – Ensuring Continued Educational Achievement

Amendment in the name of Cllr Kath McGuirk:

In 5th paragraph add after "...school attendance issues.":

Council notes there is cross-party opposition both within local government and parliament to the Government's proposal to force the conversion of all local authority schools to become Academies by 2022.

Council notes in particular the public opposition to the proposal from the Leader of the LGA Conservative Group, the Conservative Cabinet Members for Education at Oxfordshire County Council, Leicestershire County Council, Essex County Council and Kent County Council, and the Chairman of the 1922 Committee - Conservative MP Graham Brady.

Council notes the proposal could cost more than £1.3 billion to implement, and will place a further financial burden on local councils with no offer from central government to fund their costs.

Council believes that the proposal will be hugely costly, reduce accountability, create additional bureaucracy, and remove the role of parents on governing bodies against their wishes – all with no guarantee that standards will be improved.

Council therefore calls on the Cabinet Member for Education to write to the Secretary of State requesting that the proposal is dropped.

In 5th paragraph replace penultimate sentence starting "Council will position itself..." with:

Council will position itself to support schools in their transition to academy status if the forced Academy conversion proposal is forced through.

In 5th paragraph replace final sentence with:

Council will further investigate how demand for places for all pupils irrespective of faith and ability can be met going forward.

Substantive Motion to read in full:

Council notes the Annual Statement of Educational Standards presented to the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee and welcomes the very positive results it contains. The analysis demonstrates that Barnet's diverse family of schools together deliver some of the very best educational outcomes in the whole of the country.

Council notes that:

- As of February 2016, 91% of Barnet pupils in Primary and Secondary schools attended a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' school;
- At Key Stage 1, Barnet's attainment was in the top 18 authorities nationwide for Reading, Writing and Maths;
- At Key Stage 2, progress for Reading and Maths was 3rd and 12th in the country respectively;
- At Key Stage 4, Barnet ranked 5th nationally for pupils achieving 5 A*-C grades including English and Maths and was ranked 1st for pupils attaining the English Baccalaureate;
- Secondary school progress in English and Maths was the 2nd and 3rd best in the country;
- At A-level, Barnet was 5th for pupils achieving AAB grades or better.

Council is proud that pupils and schools are achieving such strong results, but is particularly pleased that, within these overall outcomes, Barnet is performing well for those children with SEN (2nd nationally for SEN pupils without a statement at KS4), those who have English as an additional language, and those who come from less advantaged backgrounds (in the top 10%). Council notes that the attainment gap between pupils from disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged backgrounds is half that of the national average.

Council further welcomes the fact that Barnet ranks among the top 10 authorities nationally for social mobility. Council is committed to ensure the best outcomes possible for all children, irrespective of background or circumstances.

Council wishes to ensure that the progress and attainment detailed in the report continues. For example, Council notes the work being undertaken to tackle primary school attendance issues.

Council notes there is cross-party opposition both within local government and parliament to the Government's proposal to force the conversion of all local authority schools to become Academies by 2022.

Council notes in particular the public opposition to the proposal from the Leader of the LGA Conservative Group, the Conservative Cabinet Members for Education at Oxfordshire County Council, Leicestershire County Council, Essex County Council and Kent County Council, and the Chairman of the 1922 Committee - Conservative MP Graham Brady.

Council notes the proposal could cost more than £1.3 billion to implement, and will place a further financial burden on local councils with no offer from central government to fund their costs.

Council believes that the proposal will be hugely costly, reduce accountability, create additional bureaucracy, and remove the role of parents on governing bodies against their wishes – all with no guarantee that standards will be improved.

Council therefore calls on the Cabinet Member for Education to write to the Secretary of State requesting that the proposal is dropped.

Council will position itself to support schools in their transition to academy status if the forced Academy conversion proposal is forced through.

Council will further investigate how demand for places for all pupils irrespective of faith and ability can be met going forward.

Council notes the announcement by the Secretary of State of a new National Funding Formula for Schools, intended to ensure a funding arrangement fair to all pupils and schools. Council notes the principles behind this policy – to ensure that funding is not determined by geographical luck and that it is properly linked to the needs of children.

However, Council calls on the Leader and Chairman of the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee to respond to the consultation, and make further representations to government, to communicate the importance of the formula reflecting the needs of Barnet's schools. Council believes that the formula must, therefore, account for the higher running and staffing costs of schools in London; give proper weight to the challenges of teaching pupils who have English as an additional language (now comprising 48% of primary pupils in the borough); and respect the current pattern of deprivation in London and not rely upon an outdated 'Inner vs Outer London' dichotomy.

Council also calls on them to monitor the details of planned changes to the role of local authorities, with regards to schools, as they emerge and make appropriate representations on the borough's behalf, with the aim of enabling the continuation of the successes noted above.