



## Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee

7 June 2021

<b>Title</b>	<b>Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy</b>
<b>Report of</b>	Chairman of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	Yes
<b>Enclosures</b>	Annex 1 – Equalities Impact Assessment Appendix A – Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy 2021-2024
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### Summary

This report seeks approval for the Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy for Barnet for the period 2021 to 2024. The Strategy sets out the challenges facing young people in Barnet in accessing appropriate education, training and employment and the council's plans for extending the opportunities available to young people, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, and for keeping the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) to a minimum.

## **Officers' Recommendations**

- 1. That the Committee note the report.**
- 2. That the Committee approves the Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy set out in Appendix A.**
- 3. That the Committee authorises officers to work with secondary schools interested in developing dedicated technical and vocational education provision to identify suitable premises and by considering a joint approach to central government to secure the necessary capital and revenue funding.**

### **1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED**

- 1.1 The committee's approval is required for the Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy in order to provide a clear vision and clear strategic objectives and priorities for the education service in Barnet over the next three years.
- 1.2 Sections A to C of the strategy show how it links to and supports the Barnet Education Strategy 2021 to 2024, which was approved by this committee on 30 November 2020. Section C also sets out the three strategic objectives of the Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy, which are:
  - Strategic Objective 1: Extend the opportunities for young people to access vocational and technical programmes by developing vocational pathways and the curriculum through partnerships and collaborative approaches with post-16 providers.
  - Strategic Objective 2: Minimise the number of young people who are NEET, by developing the employability skills and resilience of young people and by ensuring excellent transition support and interventions for all young people, especially those at risk of becoming NEET or who are already NEET.
  - Strategic Objective 3: Increase the opportunities for disadvantaged young people to progress to suitable education, training and employment, including care leavers and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 1.3 Section D of the strategy sets out the national context, including the council's legal duties in respect of post-16 education, and includes a summary of the government's Skills for Jobs White Paper. This section also reports on the impact of the covid19 pandemic on both unemployment levels among young people and the opportunities arising from the rapid advances in the use of digital technology in education and the development of remote/online learning.
- 1.4 Section E describes the local context, including performance in post-16 education – technical and vocational as well as academic. It describes the current position and achievement against performance indicators in respect of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). It also describes how the strategy dovetails with the Work, Skills and Productivity Strategy, which is currently being developed by the council in collaboration with local stakeholders. Finally, this section describes the services

provided by the post-16 Education and Skills team within Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS).

- 1.5 Section F describes activities planned for 2021-2 in delivering the strategy. Under each of the Strategic Objectives set out above, the strategy sets out the proposed approach and the various activities planned, including a number of projects for which specific funding has been provided by the council, or, in one case, by the Greater London Authority (ESF NEETs project).
- 1.6 Section F includes a proposal to explore options for extending technical and vocational opportunities through the creation of dedicated technical and vocational sixth-form provision attached to one or more existing sixth-forms. It is recommended that the council support this approach by working with schools interested in such a development to identify suitable premises and by considering a joint approach to central government to secure the necessary capital and revenue funding.

## **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The committee's approval is required for the Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy in order to provide a clear vision and clear strategic objectives and priorities for the education service in Barnet over the next three years.

## **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

- 3.1 Whilst there is no legal requirement to publish a Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy, by doing so, the Council is clearly setting out its plans to fulfil its education duties in respect of post-16 education and skills in a transparent way. Therefore the alternative option of not preparing and publishing such a strategy is not recommended.

## **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 Barnet Education and Learning Service, acting on behalf of the local authority, will implement the strategy in close liaison with the council's Regeneration department and in partnership with secondary schools, colleges and other training providers.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

- 5.1.1 The quality of the education offer in Barnet is at the heart of Barnet's continuing success as a place where people want to live, work and study. It plays a crucial part in making Barnet a popular and desirable place with many families attracted to the area by the good reputation of Barnet's schools.
- 5.1.2 Excellent educational outcomes and ensuring children and young people are equipped to meet the needs of employers are key to delivering the Council's strategic objectives set out in its Corporate Plan, Barnet 2024, based on the core principles of fairness,

responsibility and opportunity to make sure Barnet is a place:

- of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life;
- where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure;
- where responsibility is shared, fairly;
- where services are delivered efficiently to get value for money for the taxpayer.

## **5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

5.2.1 The work to drive the delivery of the Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy is delivered from within existing resources of Barnet Education and Learning Service Ltd.

## **5.3 Legal and Constitutional References**

5.3.1 Article 7 - Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships of the council's constitution states that the committee has responsibility for all matters relating to children, schools, education and safeguarding.

5.3.2 Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 place a duty on local authorities to secure efficient primary, secondary and further education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area. Section 13A requires local authorities to ensure that their functions are exercised with a view of promoting high standards, ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training and promoting fulfilment of learning potential for children and young people in its area. Section 14 requires local authorities to secure sufficient schools and sufficient is defined by reference to number, character and equipment to provide appropriate education based on age, ability and aptitude, as well as ensuring diversity of provision. These duties are overarching duties and apply regardless of whether schools are maintained by the local authority or independent of local authority support. The Education Strategy, the School and Settings Improvement Strategy and the report on school place planning set out how the Council intends to meet these duties.

5.3.3 State funded schools are split into maintained schools, which are funded via the local authority and academy schools which are funded directly by the Department for Education. The Council has powers of intervention for maintained schools and whilst it does not have these powers for academy schools, it still has a role to work with its community of schools and raise any issues about performance with the Regional Schools Commissioner. The Schools and Settings Improvement Strategy sets out how the Council will comply with its responsibilities around school improvement.

5.3.4 The Council has duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 in relation to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It also has duties under that Act to consult parents, young people and other stakeholders on strategies and policies setting out how it will fulfil its duties.

5.3.5 The local authority has a duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people aged 16-18 (aged up to 25 for young people with an

Education, Health and Care Plan). The duty is met by close partnership working between the BELS post-16 team, secondary schools, colleges and other training providers. The local authority also has a duty to encourage, enable and support young people to participate in post-16 education or training.

#### 5.4 **Insight**

5.4.1 None

#### 5.5 **Social Value**

5.5.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders

#### 5.6 **Risk Management**

5.6.1 None

#### 5.7 **Equalities and Diversity**

5.6.1 The Council has a duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act to have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day to day business and to keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services. School improvement monitoring, supporting and challenging arrangements ensure that the quality of education in Barnet is maintained and improved. Outcomes for all groups of children and young people are monitored including children with special educational needs and disabilities and disadvantaged children (those in receipt of free school meals and children looked after).

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed in relation to the Post-16

Education and Skills Strategy and is attached as Annex 1.

## **5.7 Corporate Parenting**

5.7.1 In the Autumn Term 2020 Barnet had 139 Looked After young people aged 16 years or over. In 2019-20 the percentage of Barnet looked after 16- and 17-year-olds who were NEET was 10.8%, compared to 1% for Barnet as a whole. The percentage of care-leavers (young people who have left care) aged between 18 and 25 who were NEET in April 2021 was 33% (141 out of a total of 352). The Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy aims to ensure as few Looked After Children and Care-leavers as possible are not in employment, education or training (NEET). One of the three strategic objectives is to 'Increase the opportunities for disadvantaged young people to progress to suitable education, training and employment, including care leavers and young people with special educational needs and disabilities'.

## **5.8 Consultation and Engagement**

5.8.1 A draft version of the Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy was presented to and discussed at the meeting of the School Standards and Settings Partnership Board in April. The Board is made up of headteachers and representatives of colleges, the council and BELS. The draft strategy was sent to headteachers, college Principals, and heads of sixth-forms in early May for comment. The Parent-Carer Forum has also been consulted along with a focus group of young people. The focus group of young people comprised young people aged 16 to 22, currently undertaking training and support on a range of post-16 projects.

## **6 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Barnet Education Strategy 2021-2024: [Agenda for Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee on Monday 30th November, 2020, 6.00 pm \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)