

INVESTIGATING THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT GAP

To: Children and Young People's Committee

Meeting Date: 5 December 2017

From: Executive Director, People and Communities

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: Not applicable **Key decision:** No

Purpose: To receive a report from the Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange (CUSPE) on the educational achievement gap in Cambridgeshire.

Recommendation: Members are asked to note and comment on the report.

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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In October 2016, Cambridgeshire County Council initiated a collaboration with the Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange (CUSPE), which brought on teams of researchers to explore challenges faced by the County Council.
- 1.2 The attainment of almost all groups of pupils has improved in Cambridgeshire in the last five years. However, some groups are vulnerable to underachievement and the gap between their outcomes and those of their class mates is, and has stayed, too wide. This 'gap' is also larger than that found in most similar Local Authorities.
- 1.3 The reasons for this 'gap' are complex and it was agreed that it would be one of the challenges to be researched. This was carried out by Andrew Day, Victoria Plutshack and Mary Zhang.
- 1.4 Specifically, the team focused on understanding why students in receipt of Free School Meals in more affluent schools underperformed in 2016 compared to their peers in less affluent schools.

2.0 MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 Their report, Appendix 1, provides a summary of the main findings and makes recommendations for further work.
- 2.2 Evidence was found that schools in more affluent wards spend pupil premium funds on different activities than schools in less affluent wards without any obvious association with increased achievement by FSM students and the report recommends that this be considered for further research.
- 2.3 The research also found that staff training, parental involvement and generalised teaching assistants are associated with schools achieving above the average, and so this could be an area for further research or investment.
- 2.4 Other recommendations include giving consideration to better Pupil Premium data collection and disseminating best practice wherever it is found, including best practice in an otherwise poorly performing school.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

- 3.1.1 The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:
 - Improved educational outcomes will provide a more highly skilled workforce; and
 - A key factor in major companies' decisions to move to Cambridgeshire is access to good and outstanding schools for their workforce.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

- 3.2.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- there is a positive correlation between educational outcomes, standards of health and independent living.

3.3 **Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

3.3.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- poor educational progress of vulnerable groups is one of the main reasons why Ofsted judges that schools require improvement; and
- poor attainment significantly reduces employment opportunities and life chances.

4. **SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

n/a

4.1 **Resource Implications**

n/a

4.2 **Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications**

n/a

4.3 **Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications**

n/a

4.4 **Equality and Diversity Implications**

n/a

4.5 **Engagement and Communications Implications**

n/a

4.6 **Localism and Local Member Involvement**

n/a

4.7 **Public Health Implications**

n/a

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	n/a
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS	n/a

Head of Procurement?	
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	n/a
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	n/a
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	n/a
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	n/a
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	n/a

Source Documents	Location
None	