

## PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

**Subject:** Narrowing the Gap  
**Committee:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 25 March 2014  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Williams  
**CMT Member:** Carole Burgoyne (Strategic Director for People)  
**Author:** Jayne Gorton (School Organisation, Access and Services to Schools Manager)  
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**Ref:** JH.JEG (CAB) 05 (7/3/14)  
**Key Decision:** No  
**Part:** One

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### **Purpose of the report:**

The attached report gives the findings from the Ambitious Plymouth Scrutiny Panel's Cooperative Review on the topic of Narrowing the Gap in Schools.

The Cooperative Review took place on four separate dates throughout September, October, November and December 2013.

Members appointed to the Cooperative Review were as follows:

- Councillor Sally Bowie (Chair of the group)
- Councillor Paul Jarvis (Vice-Chair of the group)
- Councillor Glenn Jordan
- Councillor John Smith

With the following Officers supporting the Cooperative Review:

- Jayne Gorton, Senior Education Officer (Lead Officer)
- Ross Johnston, Democratic Support Officer

This report provides comments on the recommendations of the scrutiny panel and makes recommendations on the panels proposals.

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**The Brilliant Co-operative Council Corporate Plan 2013/14 -2016/17:** The proposals help to meet the City Vision, co-operative values, co-operative objectives, and co-operative outcomes in the following ways:

**City Vision – Britain's Ocean City** – providing improved and additional capacity for the increasing number of school age children in the City ensures there are services for every child and helps to improve their education opportunities which will improve their quality of life

**Co-operative Value – We are democratic** – provide, staff and governors at the schools, with the opportunity to participate in the decision making on the proposals.

**Co-operative Value – We are fair** – undertaking consultations on the proposals demonstrates that we are fair and open in our decision making.

**Co-operative Value – We are partners** – the proposals seek to ensure resources are targeted to achieve the maximum value for communities, becoming more efficient and joining up with partners to deliver services in new and better ways.

**Objective – Pioneering Plymouth** – provides extended and improved services for children and their families making effective use of resources available.

**Objective – Growing Plymouth** – seeks to provide support for the growing number of vulnerable children and young people in Plymouth improving their education opportunities.

**Objective – Caring Plymouth** – provides vulnerable children and young people with improved support that will promote independence and reduce social inequality.

**Outcome – Pioneering Plymouth** – helps to address the growing need for additional services for children and young people, using resources wisely.

**Outcome – Growing Plymouth** – provides services for vulnerable children and young people to help them achieve better qualifications and find high quality jobs.

**Outcome – Caring Plymouth** – provides improved services that help children and young people to feel safe and confident in their communities, narrowing the gap in equality of access, helping them take control of their lives and communities.

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**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:  
Including finance, human, IT and land:**

Any costs incurred would be met from existing revenue budgets within the Local Authority and Schools.

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**Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:**

There are no community safety issues related to this proposal. The risk management for facilities is incorporated within the schools' own risk management procedures.

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**Equality and Diversity:**

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No

Schools are community facilities which are open to all and services provided are targeted to those vulnerable children, young people and their families; therefore issues surrounding discrimination on the basis of age, faith, gender, race or sexual orientation are not applicable.

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**Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:**

Cabinet approves the recommendations from the scrutiny panel as follows-

**Free School Meals. Pupil Premium Fund and Schools**

1. The Director for People in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People should develop a plan to be distributed to all schools encouraging them to –

- Ensure all school lunchtime periods are timetabled to be sufficiently long enough to allow a minimum amount of time to eat a hot meal, suggested lunch period of 1 hour;
- Provide a facility that enables pupils with packed lunches and pupils eating a school meal to be located in the same dining area to eat their lunches together;
- Promote the school meal facility to all parents and embrace and proactively promote the new universal FSM opportunities for Key Stage 1 pupils and promote school transport opportunities available to children and families;

- Ensure that the school's catering service staffs are trained to promote communication during lunch-time periods and to be included in school staff team meetings.

2. The Director for People in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People be requested to write to all schools within the city to encourage them to offer a breakfast facility or work with a private organisation to run a breakfast club, and also liaise with the School Catering Manager to improve the food options and availability of Free School Meals (FSM) to incorporate a meal deal that would enable children eligible for FSM to be provided with both a breakfast and lunch option.

3. The Director for People in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Cooperatives and Communities and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People communicate with all schools across the city to encourage and create a plan that would see more schools being used by local communities as a local resource or community hub, to promote opportunities for adult education and learning and social and recreational requirements.

4. The Director for People in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People is requested to discuss with the Plymouth Teaching School Alliance further opportunities to share good practice regarding school to school support, strategies for narrowing the gap and pupil premium funding with a view to publishing the findings in a good practice guide.

5. The Director for People in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People should as far as possible ensure that all schools who use the Plymouth City Council catering service are working towards the Gold Food for Life Catering Mark.

6. The Director for People in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People should request all schools within Plymouth to provide data on how they have spent the pupil premium funding and a report on the impacts this spend has had on improving education and opportunities for its pupils. On receipt of this information a report should be submitted to a Ambitious Plymouth scrutiny panel for scrutiny in 2014.

## **Welfare Reforms**

7. Tracey Lee, Chief Executive of Plymouth City Council, Councillor Tudor Evans, Leader of Plymouth City Council and Ian Bowyer, Leader of the Opposition in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Cooperatives and Communities consider writing a letter to the Government highlighting Plymouth City Council's concerns for the Universal Credit system and indicating the review panel's opinion that anyone who is in receipt of Universal Credit should automatically be entitled to FSMs where appropriate.

8. The Director for Corporate Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People should promote and advertise the FSM service and school transport opportunities in all correspondence about Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claims.

The reasons for the above recommendations were that members of the Cooperative Review felt that they would support Schools and the Council in helping children and young people to achieve their aspirations through educational attainment, thereby narrowing the gap between those children who begin life with some social disadvantage from those with more affluent backgrounds.

**Alternative options considered and rejected:**

Full discussions regarding options available are contained within the full report.

**Published work / information:**

**Background papers:**

**None**

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2.												
3.												
4.												

**Sign off:**

Fin	CDR/ PeopleF EC1314 007/14.0 3.2014	Leg	TH01 52	Mon Off	1984 8/DV S	HR		Assets	N/A	IT	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
Originating SMT Member: Judith Harwood, Assistant Director, Education Learning and Family Support													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the content of the report? Yes													