
Meeting	Narrowing the Gap Scrutiny Review Task Group
Date	12 February 2015
Present	Councillors Brooks, Fitzpatrick (Chair) and Mr A Pennington (Co-opted Statutory Member)
Apologies	Councillor Wiseman

5. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included in the register of interests, any prejudicial interest or disclosable interests which they might have in the respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

6. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last formal meeting of the Narrowing the Gap Scrutiny Review Task Group held on Tuesday 16 December 2014 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

7. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

8. Narrowing the Gap Scrutiny Review - Draft Final Report

The Task Group considered a report which presented them with the information gathered in support of this scrutiny review on Narrowing the Gap in York, and asked them to agree their draft recommendations ahead of the presentation of the report to the full Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee in late February 2015.

The Council's Principal Advisor and Acting Senior Adviser (Primary) and Primary Mathematics Consultant were in attendance at the meeting to

provide information in relation to the review. They advised that the Council hoped to deliver a city-wide closing the gap strategy to tackle the gap in attainment between disadvantaged young people and their peers in York.

Members noted the current lack of consistency in schools in outcomes in relation to narrowing the gap and between different key stages acknowledging that the characteristics of attainment profiles of different cohorts could vary as well. Members agreed it was important to consider the impact of activity already taking place in schools and to encourage the sharing of best practice. It was acknowledged that there were some generic strategies which could be used to tackle the gap more effectively than they were currently. Members agreed to amend recommendation i) so that it referred to feedback on the impact of the strategies used, and to add a review conclusion noting the lack of consistency in outcomes and stating that schools should focus on the impact of strategies implemented to ensure that vulnerable students made measurable progress and that schools achieved a narrowing of the gap.

Members welcomed the extension of the pupil premium to early years settings and agreed that the review conclusions should refer to the opportunity this provided to encourage primary schools to engage with early years providers to ensure a joined up approach was in place by time children started school. It was also agreed that recommendation ii) be amended to refer to school readiness projects in pre school settings.

Members stressed the importance of a multi agency approach in tackling narrowing the gap. They accepted that this was already in place and working in pockets of the city but that there were inconsistencies. It was agreed that a citywide strategy would help address this issue and reinforce the knowledge that this work could not be solely undertaken by schools alone. It was agreed that their review recommendations should conclude with a statement advising that the Committee would like their recommendations to form the basis of a citywide strategy.

Resolved:

- (i) That the amendments to the draft final report be agreed.
- (ii) That the review findings and analysis as detailed in paragraphs 15 - 42 of the report be agreed.

- (iii) That the review conclusions and draft recommendations as detailed in paragraphs 43 - 50 of the report be agreed subject to the agreed amendments.

Reason: To conclude the review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols and enable the draft final report to be presented to the full Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting on 24 February 2015.

Councillor Fitzpatrick, Chair

[The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 3.00 pm].

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