
Meeting	Narrowing the Gap Scrutiny Review Task Group
Date	16 December 2014
Present	Councillors Brooks, Fitzpatrick and Wiseman Mr A Pennington (Statutory Co-opted Member)

1. Election of Chair

Members were given the opportunity to nominate a Chair.

Resolved: That Cllr Fitzpatrick be elected as Chair of the Narrowing the Gap Scrutiny Review Task Group.

2. 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.

3. Public Participation

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

4. Narrowing the Gap Scrutiny Review Report

The Task Group considered a report that provided initial information in support of the new scrutiny review on Narrowing the Gap in York and asked Members to agree a way forward for progressing the work on the review.

Officers confirmed that the York 300 Cohort data showed that progress in Narrowing the Gap had been made in some key stages but was not consistent across all. Gaps had narrowed in Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2 but had widened in Key stage 1 and Key Stage 4.

Discussions took place regarding the Narrowing the Gap conference that some Task Group Members and officers had attended on 9 December 2014. This conference brought together representatives from a number of York schools and partners to share information and examples of best practice and focused on what schools should be doing to further improve their efforts and use of the pupil premium. Led by Sir John Dunsford case studies from Millthorpe Secondary, Westfield Primary and Roundhay schools were used.

Officers confirmed they were actively following up on actions suggested at the conference and had already produced a webpage around pupil premium and Narrowing the Gap. They would also be revising the Local Authority's Strategy for Narrowing the Gap and had invited Sir John Dunsford back in 6 months time to review the progress made.

The Task Group discussed which schools would be advantageous to visit. They agreed to contact a selection of primary and secondary Schools, some that had attended the conference, others that had not, some that were consistently narrowing the gap and others that were struggling. This would allow them to gather information on the strategies that were working, how the schools were using their pupil premium and to understand what specific barriers some schools were facing. In answer to Members questions officers agreed to prepare a checklist for them to use on their visits.

The Task Group was informed that the Chair of the Learning and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee had agreed to hold an additional full committee meeting late February to allow more time for Members of the Task Group to visit the schools and produce their draft final report.

Resolved: After lengthy discussions, the Task Group agreed:

- (i) To hold an informal meeting on 7th January 2015 to consider:
 - (a) the Roundhay Schools presentation.
 - (b) information on the pupil premium 2014 award winners and
 - (c) a list of suggested questions for the school visits and proposed dates for those visits.
- (ii) That, subject to their findings, to possibly visit the Progress Centre at Stantonbury Campus School in Milton Keynes.

Reason: To carry out the review inline with scrutiny procedures and protocols and conclude the review before the start of the forthcoming purdah period.

Councillor Fitzpatrick, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.10 pm].

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