

# CO-OPERATIVE REVIEW PROJECT PLAN

## NARROWING THE GAP IN SCHOOLS



**PLYMOUTH**  
CITY COUNCIL

Background	
Chair:	Councillor Bowie
Lead Officer:	Jayne Gorton
Democratic Support Officer:	Ross Johnston
Membership:	Councillors Bowie (Chair) Councillor Jarvis Councillor Casey Councillor Stark Councillor Jordan
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Nicky Williams
Date review approved by the Co-operative Scrutiny Board:	7 August 2013
Summary of subject to be reviewed:	There is a national focus on reducing the gap between the attainment of pupils on free school meals (FSM) and their non-free school meals peers. The government's intention is to ensure that those children who began life with some social disadvantage are not disadvantaged further through under-performance in educational terms. The review will expand on this to also specifically focus on the attainment and take up of FSM from Looked After Children (LAC) and children from service families. Additionally the review will address the concerns of the welfare reforms and its impacts on the eligibility of FSM and free school transport. Furthermore, the review will consider the financial burden placed on parents of school aged children from non-school uniform days and Proms.
Reason(s) and rationale for the review:	The main reasons of the review are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is a key Child Poverty area of focus.</li> <li>- It is a national focus and an area of concern for the public.</li> <li>- The impact of welfare reforms on an already potentially disadvantaged group.</li> <li>- The potential impact on the FSM and school transport budgets.</li> </ul>
Objectives of the review:	The review has three main objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. to ensure that the attainment results of pupils who take up FSM, pupils who are classed as Looked After Children and pupils from service families are not negatively affected – this will be reviewed and measured using school attainment results data and recommendations considered to seek to improve this situation if any negative analysis is found;</li> </ol>

	<p>2. To understand the impacts of Welfare Reforms on FSM eligibility and school transport provision and seek to ensure relevant advice and information is provided to parents who will be negatively affected;</p> <p>3. To ensure schools are aware of the financial pressures being placed on parents from extra activities including non-school uniform days, school days out and school proms and establish whether any alternatives can be provided to ease the financial burden on parents.</p>
What will the review look at?	<p>The review will look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil Premium funding and spending;</li> <li>• FSM eligibility criteria, application forms and processes and publicity;</li> <li>• Attainment results of FSM pupils vs Non FSM pupils;</li> <li>• Attainment results of LAC and pupils from Service Families;</li> <li>• Attainment results from all three pupil groups benchmarked against local authorities in the South West and Plymouth City Council's Family Group;</li> <li>• Work of the Plymouth Excellence Cluster;</li> <li>• School Transport Provision and eligibility;</li> <li>• The impacts of the Welfare Reforms on eligibility;</li> <li>• The number of additional financial pressures placed on parents from extra activities put on by the school;</li> <li>• The economic boost that school proms provide to city businesses;</li> </ul>
Which areas will be excluded from the review?	<p>The review plans to stay within its remit, however, there is the potential that the evidence provided may bring to light other areas of concern closely related to this review, therefore there are no areas that will be completely excluded from this review.</p>
What City and Council Priorities does the review relate to:	<p>This review relates to the council's values, as stated in the Corporate Plan 2013 – 2016, to be Responsible and Fair and also promotes all of the four cooperative objectives, in the Corporate Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pioneering Plymouth</li> <li>• Growing Plymouth</li> <li>• Caring Plymouth</li> <li>• Confident Plymouth</li> </ul>
Identify links to other Council policies, projects or strategies:	<p>Other council policies, projects or strategies related to this review include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children and Young People's Plan 2011 – 2014.</li> <li>- Child Poverty Matters: The Child Poverty Strategy for Plymouth 2013 – 2016.</li> <li>- Corporate Plan 2013 – 2016.</li> <li>- Plymouth's Child Poverty Needs Assessment 2012</li> </ul>
Who will benefit from the review:	<p>The main beneficiaries will be children and families across the city, particularly those who are the most socially disadvantaged.</p>

## Methodology

The method and approach of the review:	<p>The review will use the following evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site visits and observations – the review will undertake site visits to two separate schools in the city over a lunch time</li> </ul>
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	<p>period – this will be to review the systems of cash-less and cash paying lunch services; also the review will seek to meet with the school council’s at these two schools to discuss this issue;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document analysis – the review will request reports on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupil Premium funding and spending;</li> <li>- FSM eligibility criteria, application forms and processes and publicity;</li> <li>- Attainment results of FSM pupils vs Non FSM pupils;</li> <li>- Attainment results of LAC and pupils from Service Families;</li> <li>- Attainment results from all three pupil groups benchmarked against local authorities in the South West and Plymouth City Council’s Family Group;</li> <li>- Work of the Plymouth Excellence Cluster;</li> <li>- School Transport Provision and eligibility;</li> <li>- The impacts of the Welfare Reforms on eligibility;</li> <li>- The economic boost that school proms provide to local businesses;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Interviewing experts – the review will seek to interview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A representative from the Department for Work and Pensions</li> <li>- A representative from the Parent Partnership</li> <li>- A representative from the Excellence Cluster</li> <li>- Judith Harwood, Assistant Director for Education, Learning and Families</li> <li>- Heather Ogburn, Senior Leadership Adviser</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Interviewing witnesses and service users – the review will seek to interview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cabinet Member for Children and Young People</li> <li>- Cabinet Member for Customers and Communities</li> <li>- School Council at Marine Academy Plymouth</li> <li>- School Council at Ridgeway School</li> <li>- A representative from the Citizens Advice Bureau</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Comparisons with other authorities and benchmarking exercises – the review would like to compare all attainment results and FSM take-up figures against: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authorities in the South West</li> <li>• Local Authorities in Plymouth City Council’s Family Group</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Witnesses and experts:	<p>Witnesses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A representative from the Department for Work and Pensions</li> <li>• A representative from the Parent Partnership</li> <li>• A representative from the Excellence Cluster</li> <li>• Judith Harwood, Assistant Director for Education, Learning and Families</li> <li>• Heather Ogburn, Senior Leadership Adviser</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Member for Children and Young People</li> <li>• Cabinet Member for Customers and Communities</li> <li>• School Council at Marine Academy Plymouth</li> <li>• School Council at Ridgeway School</li> <li>• A representative from the Citizens Advice Bureau</li> </ul>
Co-opted representatives:	The Panel will invite the Youth Cabinet to nominate two members to sit as co-opted representatives on the panel for the duration of the review.
Documents and/or reports for analysis e.g. internal/external reports or legislation):	<p>The documents that will assist the review include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government guidance or legislation – Pupil Premium guidance and legislation;</li> <li>• Local policies and strategies – Child Poverty Matters: The Child Poverty Strategy for Plymouth 2013 – 2016.</li> <li>• Performance plans and performance indicators – Benchmarking data against other authorities and performance data from schools within Plymouth;</li> </ul>
Site visits:	<p>The review will undertake two site visits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Marine Academy Plymouth (MAP) (Tuesday 22 October 2013 at 12 noon – 1:30pm – as part of the formal meeting 2) – to review the cash-less lunch system in operation and speak with the MAP school council.</li> <li>2. Ridgeway school (at a date to be confirmed) – to review a cash paying lunch system in operation and speak with the school council.</li> </ol>
Consultations/Research:	N/A
Publicity:	<p>The review will be publicised using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A press release</li> <li>• Promotion on the council’s social networking sites;</li> <li>• A radio interview with the Chair.</li> </ul>
Evaluation method	The recommendations of the review will be provided to the Cooperative Scrutiny Board for review in December 2013 and then the Ambitious Plymouth panel will review the final report and recommendations in February 2014. The Ambitious Plymouth Panel will then undertake a progress review on all recommendations in December 2014.
Resource Requirements:	<p>When considering resource requirements you should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs of venue hire – a potential cost to hire a room at the Marine Academy Plymouth.</li> <li>• Refreshments – Lunches to be provide at meetings 1, 2 and 3 for up to 10 (members and officers involved in the review);</li> <li>• Travel costs - potential travel costs, or all members to make their own way to minimise costs;</li> <li>• Approximate officer hours – 150 hours</li> </ul>

Barriers and Risks:	There are no obvious barriers or risks associated with this review.
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<b>Timetable</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timescale / Date(s)</b>	<b>Intended Outcome(s)</b>
Meeting 1 Venue: Council House, Warspite room Time: 1:30pm	17 September 2013	To look at the issue of FSM with all associated evidence and witnesses to be reviewed at this meeting.
Site Visit 1 – Ridgeway School	TBC	To review a cash paying lunch system in operation and speak with the school council.
Meeting 2 Venue: Marine Academy Plymouth Time: 10am	22 October 2013	A review of the findings from meeting 1.  To look at the issue of welfare reforms with all associated evidence and witnesses to be reviewed at this meeting.
Site Visit 2 – Marine Academy Plymouth	22 October 2013 12 noon – 1:30pm	To review the cash-less lunch system in operation and speak with the MAP school council.
Meeting 3 Venue: Council House, Frobisher room Time: 10am	5 November 2013	A review of the findings from meeting 2.  To look at other financial burdens placed on parents' e.g. non-school uniform days and school proms with all associated evidence and witnesses to be reviewed at this meeting.
Draft report	End November 2013	DSO and Lead Officer to finalise the draft report and present conclusions and recommendations to be shared with the Review panel. This will then be formally agreed at Meeting 4.
Meeting 4 Venue: Council House, Frobisher Time: 10am	3 December 2013	Review findings from all meetings.  To approve the final report and recommendations to be submitted to Cabinet (other organisations) via the Cooperative Scrutiny Board.
Submit report to the Co-operative Scrutiny Board Meeting:	18 December 2013	Approve recommendations from the Cooperative Review.
Submit to Cabinet Meeting:	14 January 2014	Respond to the recommendations from the Cooperative Review.
Submit to other bodies/organisations:	Recommendations dependent – dates of other organisation meetings will be looked into following the approval of the	Respond to the recommendations from the Cooperative Review (if there are any).

	report at Meeting 4.	
Scrutiny Panel to evaluate and track the outcomes of the Co-operative Review:	3 February 2014 Schedule for a review in December 2014.	Review Cabinet's (and other bodies/organisations) responses (February) and review the progress on recommendations (December).