

YOUTH COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14 DECEMBER 2009, IN FORESTVIEW, BELFAST.

ACTION

1.00 PRESENT

Chairperson	Ms M Young	
Members	Mr D Capper Mr B McKee	Mr G Doran Mr D Spence
Staff	Mr D Guilfoyle Ms S Rader	Mr J McCormick Ms K Witherspoon

The Chairperson welcomed members to the final meeting of this Youth Council.

2.00 APOLOGIES

2.01 Apologies were received from Mr B Faulkner, Ms P Haren, Ms A-M McClure and Mr P Murphy.

3.00 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (26.10.09)

3.01 Minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 October 2009 were approved and signed.

4.00 MATTERS ARISING

All Matters Arising were substantive agenda items.

5.00 CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

5.01 The Chairperson reported on the Chairs of RPA-affected organisations recent meeting with the Minister (9th December 2009), at which it had been confirmed that the operational date of 01 January 2010 for the establishment of ESA was no longer achievable. However, interim arrangements would be put in place to continue the work on convergence arrangements, and maintain governance and continuity of services. A copy of the Minister's Statement to the Assembly on 01 December had been circulated to members.

In terms of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland, it was confirmed that the current Council's term of office would end on 31 December 2009, and appropriate interim membership arrangements for the Youth Council would be put in place. The Chairperson had raised the important issues of governance/continuity arrangements with the Permanent Secretary but no definitive guidance was available at this time.

5.02 The Members Performance Appraisal arrangements were noted, and the Chairperson thanked members for their prompt response.

6.00 EDUCATION AND SKILLS AUTHORITY

6.01 As the deferral of ESA establishment would impact on a number of areas of Council's work, it was agreed to consider the implications under each agenda item as appropriate.

ACTION

7.00 OPERATIONAL PLAN 2009/10

7.01 An update on progress against the objectives/targets set for the year was tabled for performance monitoring/information. It was noted that all objectives had been achieved, or were on track for achievement by the year ending 31 March 2010. There were no significant issues of concern.

7.02 As Chairperson of the Youth Work Training Board, D Capper indicated that the report presented belied the work of Council officers in delivering on a complex range of core aims and objectives across all of Council's functions. In particular, he paid tribute to J McCormick, M McAlinden and T McKenna for their roles in relation to those areas of work falling under the remit of the YWTB.

7.03 Discussion ensued on the impact of interim membership arrangements for YCNI, from 1 January 2010. A Council with a reduced membership would still be required to undertake the same governance role and functions, and the implications of a smaller Board might not have been thought through in terms of the work to be delivered by YCNI.

7.04 It was noted that the deferral of ESA establishment would have implications for the International Committee and the Youth Work Training Board. These committees, together with the Council's Audit Committee, would need to be officially re-established under the interim governance arrangements put in place by the Minister. The impact of the convergence activities on these areas of work was difficult to predict at this time, but it was agreed that now was an appropriate time for Council to submit to ESAIT a further briefing on the work of the YWTB, the International Committee, and other key functions of Council. The important role of working in collaboration with colleagues across the sector was also stressed.

A major concern was identified in relation to the potential for key youth service policy issues going into abeyance until the interim arrangements have been clarified.

It was agreed that the (new) Council Chairperson would raise these issues/concerns with Departmental officials in January 2010.

7.05 It was agreed that it would be appropriate for staff to undertake some preliminary work towards the preparation of an Operational Plan for the year 2010/11, pending clarification of the interim arrangements.

Chairperson

D Guilfoyle

8.00 YOUTH SERVICE MONTH – NOVEMBER 2009

8.01 The Chief Executive reported on the range of events, launches and seminars/conferences held during the month. Particularly significant were the series of events branded *Thinking Seriously About ...* Quality Assurance, Youth Work in Schools, and culminating in the Future of the Youth Service conference on 25th November. The report from this conference would be completed by mid-December, and would include a number of action points to be taken forward through the Youth Service Sectoral Partners Group. The potential for a follow-up workshop/conference, with further input from the keynote speakers, was noted.

Overall, feedback on the month had been positive, and the Chief Executive paid tribute to all the staff involved in the planning, organising and running of events, noting in particular the key role performed by S Rader.

ACTION

8.02 Copies of (i) "Shaping the Future of the Youth Service" publication, and (ii) YCNI 20th Anniversary publication were presented to members. It was noted that (i) had been well received by the Department and the sector, and would assist in developing future youth service policy/structures.

The YCNI 20th Anniversary/Legacy document also identified key strategic issues to influence DE/ESA thinking in relation to youth service delivery in the future.

9.00 FINANCE

9.01 The Chief Executive presented the **Income and Expenditure Report to 30 November 2009**, and briefed members on those budget headings showing an underspend, including Salaries; Programme Funding; and Consultancies/Projects.

It was confirmed that, with the delay in the establishment of ESA, responsibility for managing the 2009/10 budget would remain with Council, in line with whatever interim arrangements were put in place [see Minute 5.01 above].

D Guilfoyle

9.02 In relation to salaries, it was noted that provision had been made to cover potential expenditure in relation the Equal Pay issue as reported to Council at its October meeting. This would account for a proportion of the underspend referred to above. In order to expedite this matter, Departmental approval would now be sought to implement the agreed pay offer made by DFP in respect of the affected Council staff.

D Guilfoyle

9.03 As previously agreed by Council (26 October 2009 meeting), a significant proportion of the identified underspend would be allocated as Additional Support Funding, on a percentage basis, to those RVYOs in receipt of Infrastructure Support Funding and Thematic Infrastructure Support Funding [see Minute 10.2].

9.04 Confirmation was also provided in relation to the availability of non-DE carryover.

9.05 The Deputy Chief Executive presented a verbal proposal to Council in relation to the **In-Service Training Support Scheme for Youth Workers** [now called the CPD Scheme]. The application process for this scheme is administered by YCNI and recommendations for financial support are submitted to the Department for payment, subject to available funding.

This year 13 new applicants had been recommended to the Department for support. There was also one applicant seeking funding for the second year of a course. However, because of the overall pressures on NI Departmental budgets, DE was required to surrender the monies held against this scheme.

It was proposed that, in light of the current availability of funding within the YCNI budget, it would be appropriate for Council to assist the 14 students by covering the cost of course fees, travel and book allowance. In total this was estimated in the region of £18,000 and payment would be made to the students' employing organisations (not to individuals). It was noted that this would be a one-year only arrangement, as the Department had confirmed that it would continue to support CPD in the next financial year.

Council approved the proposal in principle, subject to an appropriate exchange of correspondence on the matter with the Department for the record.

JMcCormick

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10.00 RVOs FUNDING

10.01 **Capacity Building Grants.** The Grants Manager reported on the outcome of the assessment process. Six applications had been received in total, of which five were shortlisted and interviewed. From this process, Offer Letters for Capacity Building Grants would now be issued to Challenge for Youth, GLYNI, and Youth Initiatives. Service level agreements would be prepared with each of these organisations.

10.02 **Additional Support Funding.** A paper was presented outlining the process and formula for the allocation of additional support funding to those RVOs in receipt of Infrastructure Support Funding and Thematic Infrastructure Support Funding. With the review of YCNIs projected expenditure to 31 March 2010, it was proposed that there would be scope to allocate 12.5% of the grant allocation, under the Young People Focused funding arrangements, to each of the organisations listed. The additional allocations were agreed by Council. Service Level Agreements would be updated to demonstrate where the additional grant would be used to support the agreed core costs.

10.03 **Young People Focused Funding Policy – Review of Implementation of the Policy.** The Grants Manager presented a draft report on the review process, during which she had met with Chief Executives and/or Finance Officers of funded organisations. Meetings had also been held with representatives of the various Grants Panels. Whilst it was acknowledged that organisations would find a new policy complex during the first funding cycle, overall there was no strong criticism of the process apart from those groups which were disappointed in the outcome. All organisations, without exception, found the SLA element of the process very positive and, in addition, many organisations had now undertaken a review of their own data collection methods.

The main concern raised by Grants Panel Members focused on the definition of Youth Work. It was recognised that this not only related to YCNIs funding policy, but was a sectoral issue. A sectorally agreed definition of youth work, along with a registration scheme, would considerably assist grants panels in their task. Such a definition would also link to the DE Priorities for Youth.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Grants Manager would amend the draft report to reflect the need for a clearer definition of Youth Work. In addition, the Chief Executive would instigate a wider sectoral discussion on this issue through the Department/Youth Service Liaison Forum.

11.00 AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

11.01 On behalf of the Audit Committee, Mr D Capper reported on the following matters:

11.02 **IFRS Shadow Accounts 2008/09 and External Audit Report.** These were presented by the NIAO and the Council's Accountants (Moore Stephens) and considered in detail by the Committee. It was reported that the Audit Committee was satisfied with the content and the actions taken.

11.03 **Internal Audit Report on Risk Management and Financial Systems 2009/10.** This report covered the period April – October 2009. It was reported that, due to uncertainties over the establishment of ESA, the level of assurance had been reduced from "substantial" to "Satisfactory", compared to the 2008/09 report.

The Council’s Internal Auditors had outlined the reasons for this, and the Audit Committee had accepted the explanation. There were no other significant issues identified in the Internal Audit Report.

11.04 Audit Committee Report April 2008 – October 2009. The Audit Committee was content with the Report on its work for this period.

11.05 Council indicated that it was satisfied with the reports presented. There were no questions arising.

11.06 Three additional issues were brought to Council’s attention:

- (a) Given that YCNI would continue to operate as a separate entity in 2010, approval was sought to reappoint Moore Stephens as the Council’s Accountants to cover the preparation of final accounts for the 2009/10 financial year. This was approved by Council.
- (b) It was noted that NIAO would arrange for the external audit of the 2009/10 financial year.
- (c) As Internal Audit had already reviewed the relevant systems during 2009/10, Council agreed that no further report would be required in this financial year.

D Guilfoyle

12.00 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.01 To mark this final meeting of the Youth Council, the Chairperson made a closing statement in which she expressed her gratitude to all Members for their significant contribution to the lives of young people, and the work of Council, over many years. She paid tribute to the Committee Chairpersons:

- A-M McClure/D Capper and J Currie for their commitment to ensuring the effective development of the Council’s role in relation to Youth Work Training and European/International work; and
- P Haren/B Faulkner for their commitment to ensuring that effective governance and financial management arrangements were developed and maintained through the work of the Audit/HR Committees.

The Chairperson also paid tribute to the professionalism and the significant work of the Council’s staff team.

12.02 In their capacity as Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive, and on behalf of the staff team, D Guilfoyle and J McCormick thanked the Council Chairperson, Committee Chairpersons and Members for their support, guidance and commitment during the term(s) of their appointment.

12.03 On behalf of Members, D Capper thanked the Chairperson for her leadership, commitment and support, and wished her well for the future.

Signed Date