

YOUTH COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 25 JUNE 2009,
IN FORESTVIEW, BELFAST.

1.00 PRESENT

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

2.00 APOLOGIES

2.01 An apology was received from A-M McClure.

3.00 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (27.04.09)

4.01 Minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 April 2009 were approved and signed.

4.00 MATTERS ARISING

4.01 Min 4.01: "Right Here" Project Update. The Chief Executive reminded Council of the scope of this project and provided an update report on the progress of the bid submitted by the consortium of NI agencies comprising YCNI, YouthAction, HPA and Action Mental Health. It was noted that the bid had now moved into the second stage of the assessment process. This would take place in Enniskillen, and would involve representatives of the NI consortium in a full-day of dialogue, interviews and assessment exercises conducted by representatives of the Hamlyn Foundation. Successful projects would be confirmed by 30 June 2009. Council would be advised of the outcome in due course.

D Guilfoyle

4.02 Min 5.03: Meeting with YouthNet. The Chairperson reported on the (28.04.09) meeting with representatives of YouthNet to discuss issues related to the Council's funding policy. It was noted that the questions and concerns raised by YouthNet were addressed within the funding policy documentation and the letters of offer.

4.03 Min 10.01: Youth Work Awards 2009 Report. K Witherspoon reported on a most successful event, held on 6 May 2009 in the Ramada Hotel, Belfast. The excellent response in terms of entries for the 2009 Award Categories was noted. Over 400 young people, youth workers, and sectoral representatives attended the awards ceremony. An Awards Newsletter, providing details of the projects and award winners, would be available for distribution in due course.

K W'spoon

5.00 CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

5.01 The Chairperson thanked D Capper for attending the Minister's meeting with Chairpersons of RPA-affected organisations, held on 20 May 2009.

5.02 Congratulations were expressed to A-M McClure (in absentia) on receiving an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

ACTION

5.03 The Chairperson briefed members on correspondence received from the Belfast Circus School, and her response.

6.00 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

6.01 Revised DE Director Structure. Information on the revised Director structure within the Department was presented for information and updating purposes. It was reported that Department’s focus on “Improving Educational Outcomes” would be in the areas of resourcing, policy development, and ensuring the public accountability of the performance of the education and youth sectors. It would specifically ensure the strategic direction and accountability of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) which in turn would be responsible for operational planning, service delivery and standards.

The following Directorates would have a direct interest in various aspects of the youth service:

- Families and Communities
- Inclusion, Access and Well-being; and
- Curriculum, Qualifications and Standards.

It was noted that L Warde Hunter was leaving the post of Director, Families and Communities to take up a post outside the Civil Service. Details of her successor were not currently available.

G Doran declared an interest in the following item and did not participate in the discussion or decision taken.

6.02 Policy Paper 19: Education Advisory Forum – YCNI Response to Consultation Document. The Chief Executive reported that, due to time constraints, Council staff had analysed the proposals contained in Policy Paper 19, and submitted a staff response to the consultation. Thanks were expressed to C Harvey for producing a very comprehensive document.

Members approved the the content of the paper, and were happy to ratify this as the formal Youth Council response. There were no amendments.

7.00 EDUCATION AND SKILLS AUTHORITY

7.01 Recruitment, Redeployment and Voluntary Severance (RRVS) Strategy – implementation arrangements. The Chief Executive briefed members on this matter. The ESA Implementation Team had issued letters to senior managers across the RPA-affected education sector organisations, including both the YCNI Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive, requesting expressions of interest in voluntary severance. Decisions on offers, and timing, of voluntary severance would be taken by ESA and the Department.

It was noted that this was the first phase of the voluntary severance process. The second phase was expected to commence in early Autumn, following the development of proposals for the ESA Assistant Director structure. Further phases would then be implemented until the reorganisation was completed.

The need to ensure continuity in the delivery of YCNIs functions and services was reiterated by members. The Chairperson and Chief Executive would keep this under review, and refer back to Council as required.

M Young
D Guilfoyle

7.02 YCNi Scheme for Redundancy in accordance with the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations (NI) 2007, as amended. A revised Youth Council scheme, incorporating amendments in line with changes to the Local Government regulations, was presented for adoption. Members were briefed on the main changes to the YCNi scheme previously approved.

The revised scheme would ensure consistency with the PSC Guiding Principle, recommending that RPA-affected education sector organisations should consider any proposals to enhance occupational voluntary severance schemes to the extent that this would ensure consistency of treatment across the sector. The costs of any agreed severance packages would be met by ESA.

D Spence proposed, P Haren seconded and Council approved the adoption of the YCNi Scheme for Redundancy/Early Termination of Employment as presented.

7.03 YCNi Pension Policy. The Chief Executive reminded members that all Youth Council staff were members of the NILGOSC pension scheme, and outlined the purpose and content of the Pension Policy presented for approval.

Adoption of this policy would ensure that Council was compliant with recent changes in the Local Government Pension Scheme (NI) regulations, that its policy would be consistent with the other major education sector bodies moving into ESA, and there would be no potential detriment to Council staff moving into ESA.

P Murphy proposed, D Capper seconded, and Council approved the adoption of the YCNi Pension Policy as presented.

7.04 Recruitment of ESA Chairperson and Directors. The position of ESA Chairperson had been advertised. Interviews were planned to take place during June, and it was anticipated that the appointment would be confirmed by September 2009.

On 15 June, a restricted trawl notice was issued by ESAIT to the RPA-affected education sector organisations, advertising seven Director posts. Documentation in relation the Director Children and Young People's Services, and Director of Education Quality and Standards was circulated to members, as the responsibilities of these Directors would have a direct impact on the youth service. Copies of the ESA Directorate/Senior Management Structure, and a description of the range of services in Local Team were also presented.

The Chief Executive reported that Consultants, engaged by ESAIT, were currently developing proposals on service delivery models, and it was understood that these would be out for consultation over the summer.

It was agreed that it would be appropriate for Council to seek to develop its views on key elements of the organisation and shape of youth service within ESA, in order to be in a position to comment on the emerging proposals. The Chief Executive would liaise with the Chairperson, and Council members available over the summer, in order to determine a YCNi collective view.

A key issue for consideration would be the mechanisms envisaged to co-ordinate the local youth work teams, and how the ESA hub would link to these.

D Guilfoyle
M Young
Members

It was noted that the design of the next level of the structure (Assistant Director) would be critical to the position of youth service within ESA. Council would be one of the groups well-placed to put forward crucial arguments in relation to this.

8.00 RVYO FUNDING

8.01 Programme Support Funding 2009/10 Proposals

At its March 2009 meeting Council had agreed in principle to the introduction of three sub-strands (Strategic, Short-Term and Developmental) under Programme Support Funding. Following discussion at the April meeting, staff were tasked to undertake some further research, give further consideration to the themes and identify other emerging issues. The Chief Executive presented a revised paper setting out an analysis of the current context within which the youth service was operating, identifying a number of strategic issues, and a proposed YCNI funding response under a number of complementary funding strands. Key strategic issues identified were:

- Promoting Inclusion
- Promoting Innovation (universal services)
- Promoting Physical and Emotional Well-being
- Promoting wider life changes for young people

The funding strands proposed were:

A. Strategic Funding Strands

- (i) Promoting Inclusion (Disability) (Ethnic Minorities)
- (ii) Promoting wider life chances of young adults

B. Supporting Youth Work Practice

C. Community Relations and Cultural Diversity (including Irish medium)

A description of the funding strands, methodology, resources available and how these would be utilised, was contained in the paper presented.

The Grants Manager briefed members on the application process, and relevant dates:

Public Advertisement	Tuesday 30 June 2009
Closing Date for receipt of applications	Wednesday 29 July 2009.

Council approved the implementation of the funding proposals, and the following members were appointed to Chair the Grants Panels:

<u>Strategic Funding:</u>	M Young
<u>Supporting Youth Work Practice:</u>	D Capper
<u>Community Relations & Cultural Diversity (existing CRYSSS Panel)</u>	
<u>Appeals Panel:</u>	B Faulkner

M Young
D Capper
B Faulkner
D Guilfoyle
K W'spoon

In order to ensure that the funding could be allocated by September 2009, Council delegated authority to the Panels to assess the applications received and approve the payment of grants, subject to the agreement of the Council Chairperson. Details of grants allocated would be presented to Council at its September meeting.

M Young
K W'spoon

P Murphy declared an interest in the following item and did not participate in the discussion or decision taken.

8.02 Funding for YouthNet and NI Youth Forum. The Grants Manager briefed members on the background to this item, and referred to the section in the new funding policy relating to representative bodies. It was noted that both organisations are subject to a Service Level Agreement, covering specific details of the costs YCNI funding can be used to support, targets in terms of level and nature of work with member organisations or direct work with young people; and targets relating to other planned activity.

Council approved a recommendation to award YouthNet and NI Youth Forum a one-year 5% increase for their 2009/10 Infrastructure Support Funding, to be reviewed in March 2010. Copies of the Service Level Agreements for each organisation would be sent to Council members for background information.

K W'spoon

9.00 AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

9.01 The Audit Committee Chairperson, B Faulkner, presented the Statement of Accounts 2008/09 and explained that the Audit Committee had examined these in detail, with inputs from the Council's accountants (Moore Stephens) and PwC on behalf of the NIAO. There were no significant issues arising.

9.02 The NIAO Report to those charged with Governance was presented for information and performance monitoring. The report set out:

- the audit conclusion;
- results of the review of the statement of accounts;
- recommendations, and management's response, in relation to key risks set out in the Audit Strategy (new grant disbursements; reporting requirements – accounts issues; review of public administration).

It was noted that the Comptroller and Auditor General would provide an unqualified (clean) audit opinion, and that no report on the account was required. On behalf of Committee, the Chairperson welcomed the reassurance provided by the NIAO report. He thanked the NIAO/PwC staff, and the Council staff involved, for the preparation and work undertaken to ensure that the 2008/09 statement of accounts was prepared in accordance with the relevant guidelines, and within the agreed timeframe.

9.03 Approval of the Statement of Accounts 2007/08 was proposed by B Faulkner, seconded by D Capper, and agreed by Council.

9.04 Internal Audit Report 2008/09. This report had been examined in detail at the Audit Committee held on 22 June 2009. Based on the work carried out by the Southern Internal Services staff, the Head of Internal Audit had given his opinion that the effective systems of internal control which had been established by management of the Council provided assurance regarding the achievement of financial objectives, grant payments and risk management. The level of assurance provided was substantial. The Audit Committee, and the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer, were content with the Internal Audit assurances given. This was noted by Council.

ACTION

10.00 FINANCE

10.01 The Income/Expenditure Report to 31 May 2009 was presented for information.

10.02 It was reported that all legacy organisations bank accounts would transfer to ESA with effect from 01 January 2010. In preparation YCNI, along with the other affected organisations, would be required to undertake the following additional audit tasks, by the dates shown:

- Preparation of "shadow" IFRS 2008/09 Accounts to be completed by 30 September 2009 (Moore Stephens)
- Completion of audit of "shadow" IFRS Accounts 2008/09 by 31 December (PwC on behalf of NIAO)
- Completion of Internal Audit Report (9 Month) by 30 November 2009 (Southern Internal Audit Services).

10.03 Members stressed the importance of rigorous financial management being maintained in the interim, and requested that significant surplus/deficit balances across the budget headings would drawn to Council's attention at the earliest opportunity.

11.00 YCNI LEGACY PROJECTS

11.01 A paper was tabled, outlining preliminary plans for events to mark the the legacy of the Youth Council's work. Whilst it would be important to celebrate the achievements of the Youth Council itself over the past 20 years, the proposals presented were focused on seeking to secure proper recognition of the significant contribution which youth work makes within the education sector.

Staging of the event(s) during Youth Work Week in November 2009 was proposed, along with a target audience of MLAs, key education sector stakeholders (including the ESA Directors), government departments, and other relevant sectors. Suitable venues would be identified (one Belfast-based; one outside Belfast).

11.02 Discussion ensued on the proposals presented, and the following points were noted:

- Difficulty in securing MLAs attendance at events – may be more appropriate to target Councillors, the new Transition Committees, youth advisers of the political parties.
- Timing of the event(s) is crucial to maximise attendance.
- Strong view that the focus of the events need to be on the wider impact and contribution that youth work makes to society; focus also on the beneficiaries.
- A key emphasis should be on influencing for the future, for the benefit of youth work, youth service and young people; also identifying and promoting good practice; to ensure that policy makers, ESA etc know what youth work delivers for society.
- Objectives need to be clarified and clearly set out.
- The Project Team would continue to develop the plans for the event(s), with reference to the Council Chairperson, and others, as required.

D Guilfoyle

D Guilfoyle

D Guilfoyle

D Guilfoyle

11.03 A revised paper, taking account of members comments, would be prepared and issued for feedback.

ACTION
D Guilfoyle
M Young D Guilfoyle
ALL

12.00 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.01 It was proposed by G Doran, seconded by B Faulkner, and agreed that authority be delegated to the Chairperson and Chief Executive to deal with issues arising over the summer period. Any actions taken under this Authority would be reported to Council at its September meeting.

13.00 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13.01 The next meeting of Council would be held on Thursday 10 September 2009, 5.30 pm in Forestview.

13.02 Dates of future meetings:

- Monday 26 October 2009
- Monday 14 December 2009.

Signed

Date