

YOUTH COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 15 APRIL 2010, IN FORESTVIEW, BELFAST.

1.00 PRESENT

Chairperson	Ms M Young	
Members	Mr B Faulkner Mr G Doran	Mr D Capper Ms A-M McClure
Staff	Mr D Guilfoyle	Ms S Rader

2.00 APOLOGIES

2.01 None received.

3.00 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (15.03.10)

3.01 Minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 March 2010 were approved and signed.

4.00 MATTERS ARISING

4.01 Min 6.04: YCNI Operational Plan 2010/11. The draft operational plan would be presented at the Council meeting scheduled for 13 May 2010.

4.02 Min 7.00: Budget 2010/11. Written communication was received from the Department (on 30 March 2010) explaining that, as the Executive had yet to finalise the 2010/11 budget for government departments, it was not in a position to confirm budget allocations for the financial year. To allow the Council to continue to function and deliver its statutory responsibility, an interim allocation equivalent to $\frac{3}{12}$ of the 2009/10 budget would be made available. This allocation was based on the core budget only, and did not include any earmarked funding.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the RVYOs had been notified accordingly.

5.00 CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

5.01 The Chairperson reported that she had been appointed as a Board Member of Volunteer Now (the organisation created from the merger of the Volunteer Development Agency and 9 Volunteer Centres across NI, including VSB). It was suggested that it would be useful for Council to engage with the new organisation on a range of issues in relation to volunteering. In addition the learning experience of merging these organisations could be helpful, given that the current financial climate may necessitate some YCNI-funded organisations having to consider the benefits of merging in the future.

6.00 EARMARKED GRANT AID FOR YOUTHNET

6.01 A paper was presented, outlining the current position of YouthNet in relation to TSN and Child Protection workers, arising from the budget situation referred to at 4.02 above.

ACTION

D Guilfoyle

D Guilfoyle

ACTION

6.02 Members were reminded that, at its March 2010 meeting, Council had agreed to release only the first quarter of the 2010/11 budget allocation to the RYVOs, including YouthNet as the Representative Body. On the same basis, Council approval was sought to release the first quarter payment relating solely to staff costs contained within the TSN and Child Protection funding in order to enable these staff to be retained and continue to deliver the related work in these important areas. The Chief Executive confirmed that sufficient funds to cover this payment, for the period April – June 2010, could be identified from within the YCNI budget.

6.03 Council approved the release of the first quarterly payment to YouthNet in respect of the TSN and Child Protection workers salaries only. It was noted that this would be a one-off payment, and the situation regarding continued funding for these posts would be reviewed by Council when its final budget allocation for 2010/11 was confirmed.

D Guilfoyle/
K W'spoon

6.04 Following on from the discussion at the previous Council meeting (held on 15 March 2010 – Minute 7.04), members agreed that it would be essential for DE to be made aware of the rationale and outputs of these important work areas, in order to ensure continued funding. YouthNet would be asked to prepare relevant facts/figures/documentation for submission to DE.

D Guilfoyle

The scope for the sector to work together, for example through the YSSPG, would be beneficial in ensuring the protection and continued support from DE, for these and other specific projects/posts.

D Guilfoyle

7.00 VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE

G Doran declared an interest in this matter and did not participate in the discussion or decision-making.

7.01 In an opening statement, the Chairperson reminded members of YCNIs statutory functions/responsibilities and indicated that deliberation and decision on the matter of voluntary severance should be considered in light of these.

7.02 The Chief Executive provided background information and detail on the process in respect of the Council's Director Youth Work Services (Deputy Chief Executive). Following direct contact with G Boyd [ESA Chief Executive (Designate)], he had been advised that it was now appropriate for Council, as employer, to consider the issue of severance for the DYWS and convey its decision, and supporting business case, to ESAIT.

7.03 Discussion ensued, under the following headings, based on those to be used in presenting the business case to ESAIT:

- Satisfies business needs re convergence activity;
- Necessary skills and expertise retained in the organisation/sector;
- Interim management arrangements put in place;
- Alternative accountability arrangements put in place;
- Assured continuity of service.

ACTION

Whilst content that arrangements for knowledge transfer, development of skills/ expertise across the relevant staff, and continuity of service were well advanced, members voiced some concerns about the proposed deputising function for the Chairperson, and the associated risk management issues, as part of the interim arrangements. It was felt this had the potential to compromise the integrity/ position of the role of Chairperson, and presented an element of risk for Council. Members expressed a preference that further consideration would be given to the role of the corporate team in the interim/risk management arrangements. The Chief Executive was asked to prepare a further proposal in relation to this, for consideration by Council.

D Guilfoyle

7.04 Proposed by B Faulkner, and seconded by D Capper, Council approved the release of the Director Youth Work Services (Deputy Chief Executive) under voluntary severance arrangements. The Chief Executive would submit the Council’s business case to ESAIT; Council would be kept informed of progress.

D Guilfoyle

8.00 ESA CONVERGENCE DELIVERY PLAN

8.01 The Chairperson welcomed Mr Paul Sweeney, Permanent Secretary Department of Education; Mr John McGrath, Deputy Secretary Department of Education; and Mr Gavin Boyd, Chief Executive (Designate) Education and Skills Authority.

8.02 In his opening remarks, Mr Sweeney thanked members for the opportunity to meet with Council as part of a range of meetings being held with the nine “legacy” bodies in the education sector. He paid tribute to the work of the Youth Council, and also indicated that he would welcome an opportunity of a further meeting to hear about the work in more detail.

M Young/
D Guilfoyle

Mr Sweeney then provided an overview of the current state of play in relation to

- Education Reform;
- Review of Public Administration;
- the Legislation; and
- the Convergence Delivery Plan (CDP).

He noted that, due to the current lack of political consensus, the legislation was stalled in the Assembly and so a definite establishment date for ESA could not be identified.

The savings which had been envisaged due to the formation of ESA were very significant. During 2010/11, £13 million was the target in terms of reducing bureaucracy.

The Convergence Delivery Plan was a “sub-optimal” arrangement whereby the existing bodies, including the Youth Council, would continue to discharge their statutory functions but also co-operate in a rationalisation of services on a regional basis.

8.03 There followed a discussion/questions session, during which members sought further clarification on the progress of the legislation, the implementation of the CDP (including the review of management structures), and its implications for YCNI and the Youth Service.

ACTION

Some of the main points arising from this session included:

- Clarification that the Executive did not appear to have made progress in addressing the impediments to ESA legislation being passed.
- The ESA Directors (Designate) would be convening meetings of relevant staff in relation to the CDP.
- The initial focus of the CDP was the ELBs (Phase I), with no definite time-frame for Phase II (involving YCNI) being initiated.
- No definite clarification was provided on references to YCNI and Youth Service within the CDP.
- Efficiency savings in administrative costs of education bodies, including YCNI, would be an important issue for 2010/11.

8.04 In his closing remarks, P Sweeney again thanked Council for the opportunity to brief them. He referred to the commendable job done by the ELBs, over many years, keeping our community together.

However, we are now operating in a new scenario and, whilst money was not everything, the focus was on raising standards and a new vision of what we can achieve.

He concluded by referring to the fact that, although the current Assembly had one more year to run before the next Assembly election, there was still an opportunity for tangible achievements within the education sector.

9.00 AUDIT COMMITTEE

9.01 It was confirmed that a meeting of the Council’s Audit Committee would be held on Tuesday 27 April 2010, 5.30 pm in Forestview.

B Faulkner/
D Guilfoyle

10.00 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.01 There were no items of AOB.

11.00 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- 11.01 Meetings have been scheduled for:
- Thursday 13 May 2010 and
 - Thursday 24 June 2010.

ALL

Signed Date