

YOUTH COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

ACTION

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24 JUNE 2010, IN FORESTVIEW, BELFAST.

1.00 PRESENT

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

2.00 APOLOGIES

2.01 Apologies were received from D Capper and A-M McClure.

3.00 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (13.05.10)

3.01 Minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 May 2010 were approved and signed.

4.00 MATTERS ARISING

4.01 Min 4.02: Voluntary Severance/Interim Arrangements Update.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the business case for voluntary severance had now been submitted to the Department for consideration. In light of the current financial environment, and the convergence delivery plan, this would represent a cost-effective and efficient way forward for the future.

The Chief Executive reported that, at today's Accountability Review meeting, the Permanent Secretary stated that he was currently considering other broader contextual issues, and was not in a position to confirm a date for release, or give any indication of a timescale for such confirmation.

J McCormick expressed his disappointment with the Department's current position in relation to the voluntary severance submission, and referred to the personal impact resulting from the lack of clarity on a timeframe. Council noted Mr McCormick's comments, and it was agreed that the Chief Executive would seek a meeting with G Boyd (Chief Executive Designate, ESA) on the matter. The Chairperson and Chief Executive would also give further consideration to the future implications for Council, as a follow up to the Governance and Accountability Review meeting.

D Guilfoyle
M Young

4.02 Min 7.02: Meeting with ESA Director (Designate) Children and Young People's Services. The Chief Executive reported on an initial exploratory meeting with Dr Mangan, attended by the ELB Heads of Youth Service and himself. At the meeting, it was confirmed that those present were committed to delivering convergence in terms of the Youth Service, but ELB colleagues required the approval of their Chief Executives and Boards to proceed. Dr Mangan had undertaken to contact the ELBs Chief Executives, to seek confirmation on the participation of the Heads of Youth Service.

ACTION

4.03 Min 8.01: Disability Hub Update. Following the demise of FACE Inclusion Matters, it was reported that responsibility delivering the Disability Hub Project had been transferred to Mencap, one of the Consortium members. A revised funding figure, and Service Level Agreement with Mencap had been agreed.

Concerning FACE, the Chief Executive reported that he had been in contact with the FACE Chairperson, who confirmed that a solicitor had now been appointed to file for liquidation with the courts. YCNI and YouthNet are identified as creditors. Council would be kept informed of progress.

D Guilfoyle

4.04 Min 8.04: DE Request to fund additional organisations – Update. Members were reminded of the discussion at the May meeting of Council, in relation to the DE request that YCNI would take on the management of the following programmes, with a view to their eventual incorporation into a YCNI/ELB/ESA funding scheme:

- Millennium Volunteers
- Bytes Project
- Prince’s Trust XL Programme.

Whilst not opposed to the idea, at the May Council meeting members had raised a number of issues/concerns and had requested further clarification and detail on which to base its decision.

It was confirmed that these three programmes were currently funded directly by DE from the youth service budget, but it was the Department’s view that funding via YCNI would be more appropriate. It was noted that the Department had advised the organisations concerned that it was in discussion with YCNI in relation to this revised funding arrangement.

Members expressed a number of concerns including the impact of taking on additional work with a smaller staff team; the need for compatibility with YCNIs current funding policy; the consequences for YCNI if future funding to these organisations was reduced; and the balance between Youth Service funding allocated at ‘regional level’ as distinct from ‘local level’.

It was agreed that the Chief Executive would discuss Council’s concerns with DE and seek clarification and reassurance where appropriate.

D Guilfoyle

Council would return to this issue at its meeting on 23 September 2010.

4.05 Min 8.06: Meeting with Building Change Trust. It was reported that staff had met with the Chair of BCT to discuss the potential for complementarity between the work of BCT and proposed YCNI actions in relation to collaboration and sharing of services. Meetings were also scheduled with representatives from DSD. It was noted that these meetings were timely, given the financial and other pressures which voluntary organisations were likely to face in the future.

5.00 CHAIRPERSON’S BUSINESS

5.01 On behalf of Council, the Chairperson congratulated J McCormick on receiving the MBE in the Birthday Honours List.

5.02 Members were reminded to forward completed Declaration of Interests Forms to S Rader, as soon as possible.

ALL

5.03 Governance and Accountability Training. The Chairperson thanked members who had participated in the DE-organised training sessions. [See also Minute 7.00 below.]

5.04 Governance and Accountability Review Meeting. The Chairperson and Chief Executive met with Departmental officials, earlier today, for the Council's accountability review. The change in emphasis from previous meetings was noted, with the Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer, required to provide the Permanent Secretary with assurances on a range of matters, including: financial management, accountability, risk management, fraud, and convergence delivery plan.

Accountability Review meetings would now be held quarterly.

6.00 AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

6.01 The Audit Committee Chairperson, B Faulkner, presented:

- (i) Statement of Accounts 2009/10;
- (ii) NIAO Report to those charged with Governance; and
- (iii) Internal Audit Annual Report for 2009/10.

He reported that, at its meeting on 16 June, the Audit Committee had examined these in detail, with inputs from the Council's accountants (Moore Stephens) and the NIAO [(i) and (ii)], and the HSC Business Services Organisation [(iii)].

6.02 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.

6.03 The Committee Chairperson highlighted an issue in relation to DE's interpretation of an "overspend" in the accounts. The Council's Finance Officer, K Traynor, briefed members on this matter, and the actions which would be taken, in conjunction with DE, NIAO and Moore Stephens, to address this for the future.

6.04 Adoption of the Statement of Accounts 2009/10 was proposed by B Faulkner, seconded by P Murphy, and agreed by Council.

6.05 The NIAO Report to those charged with Governance was noted for information and performance monitoring.

6.06 Internal Audit Report 2009/10. The Head of Internal Audit's opinion for the year ended 31 March 2010 was that YCNI had in place a **satisfactory** system of internal control designed to meet YCNI objectives. The Audit Committee, and the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer, were content with the Internal Audit assurances given. This was noted by Council.

6.07 The Committee Chairperson expressed his thanks to the Accountants, PwC and YCNI staff for their work in preparing and conducting the audit. A letter would be issued to Ms C Burns, NIAO to thank her for her advice and support.

6.08 Audit Committee Meeting 16 June 2010. Members of the Committee expressed concern regarding the role/status of the DE official at the meeting, and requested that the Chief Executive seek clarification on this matter.

D Guilfoyle

D Guilfoyle

ACTION

7.00 GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY TRAINING

7.01 Council discussed the content of the DE training seminars attended by members, and the implications for YCNI in the future. With an emphasis on convergence and re-engineering to make efficiency savings, Council would have to consider how to rationalise its operation to achieve savings without cutting grant aid.

7.02 It was noted that whilst the first phase of convergence would focus more directly on the ELBs, members identified a number of measures which it would be prudent for Council to take in the interim:

- (i) In September 2010 - A review of YCNI governance arrangements within the changing environment, benchmarking against the Good Governance Standards. This would include a review the Agenda items and conduct of business at Council meetings.
M Young
D Guilfoyle
- (ii) Given the enhanced governance and accountability requirements reported at Minute 5.04 above, the Audit Committee would review in more detail the Council's Risk Management systems/procedures and Risk Register, and report back to Council. The Audit Committee would commence this review at its September meeting.
B Faulkner
D Guilfoyle
- (iii) The Chief Executive would clarify with ESAIT if a forthcoming Chairs meeting would involve all Education Sector bodies, or ELBs only. The Chief Executive would follow up with G Boyd on issues identified at the Accountability Review meeting, including voluntary severance.
D Guilfoyle

8.00 NI YOUTH FORUM – PROPOSAL FOR 2010/11 FUNDING

8.01 The Chief Executive presented a paper outlining two proposals for Council approval.

8.02 At its meeting in May 2010, Council had approved the extension of the Participation Co-ordinator post to 31 August 2010. However, the Big Deal project had now identified additional funding to support the employment of the Co-ordinator to 31 December 2010, as follows:

- 60% of the salary (September and October);
- 100% of the salary (November and December).

During this period, the postholder would be involved in ensuring that the legacy of the Big Deal project was maximised across the Youth Service.

A further extension of the postholder's contract to 31 March 2011 would enable the Co-ordinator to provide practical guidance and assistance to support RYOs under the proposed Programme Funding – Participation strand (see Minute 10.00 below). The work would be reflected within the NI Youth Forum SLA, and monitored by the YCNI Grants Manager.
K W'spoon

8.03 It was reported that the contract of the NIYF Transitional Director was scheduled to end on 31 August 2010, although funding allocated to NIFY for 2010/11 reflected the job costs associated with this post until 31 March 2011. The Forum had sought YCNI's views on this matter in order to make the necessary arrangements regarding the Director's contract.

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Related work on developing appropriate arrangements for the establishment of a Network for Youth, and plans for a NI Youth Assembly, remained ongoing, and in these circumstances it was deemed prudent for YCNI to agree to an extension of the Transitional Director's contract to 31 March 2011. As part of this proposal, authority should be given to YCNI staff to review and amend the job description (if necessary) to reflect more fully the current environment. Council would also review the situation in December 2010, three months in advance of the proposed deadline for the termination of the revised contract (i.e. 31 March 2011).

D Guilfoyle
K W'spoon

8.04 Approval of the proposals in relation to (i) Participation Co-ordinator post and (ii) NIYF Transitional Director post was proposed by P Murphy, seconded by G Doran, and agreed by Council.

D Guilfoyle
K W'spoon

9.00 RVYOs FACING FINANCIAL INSTABILITY

9.01 Following discussions at the 13 May 2010 meeting, staff reviewed the financial accounts of all RVYOs in receipt of Infrastructure Support Funding and Thematic Infrastructure Support Funding. A report was presented, setting out a Green/Amber/Red "traffic light" system developed to categorise the risk and provide an appropriate level of monitoring arrangements.

9.02 Council endorsed the actions described, for implementation by staff.

D Guilfoyle

10.00 PROGRAMME FUNDING 2010/11

10.01 Building on discussions at the May meeting of Council, details of the proposed Programme Funding themes for 2010/11 were presented:

(a) CR/EDI. It was reported that staff had met with the civil servants responsible for this area of work, and highlighted Council's concerns regarding the significant reduction in funding planned by DE. However, it was confirmed that the Department's contribution towards the salary of the Council's Development Officer (Equality Principles) would continue during 2010/11, and it was envisaged that DE would allocate a small amount of funding to YCNI for CR activities by the autumn.

Given the importance of maintaining momentum for work in this field, YCNI would have the capacity to identify sufficient funding, from within its own resources, for a summer round of applications. Council would have the opportunity to review the situation at its September meeting in light of the level of demand, the availability of any DE funding, and the overall external environment.

D Guilfoyle

(b) Collaboration/Sharing of Services. In light of the YCNI/BCT discussions (see Minute 4.05 above), and a YouthNet bid to BCT for funding to assist in exploring the scope for appropriate changes with its member organisations, a matching contribution from YCNI would enable YouthNet to maximise the opportunity of exploring this theme with its members.

(c) Governance of RVYOs. Given the increasing demands being placed on those who serve on the management committees of RVYOs, and the positive impact of previous funding support to YouthNet under this theme, it was proposed that funding be made available to YouthNet to provide governance training / support to its member organisations. The actual figure would be subject to detailed discussion with YouthNet, and the establishment of an agreed action plan with YCNI.

K W'spoon

ACTION

(d) Participation. Whilst YCNI currently did not require RVYOs in receipt of Infrastructure Support Funding / Thematic Infrastructure Support Funding to involve young people in governance and/or decision-making processes of an RVYO, Council remained committed to the concept which was reflected in the Operational Plan. A number of RVYOs had been very active in this area, but there was a wide variation in the extent to which effective mechanisms to engage young people had been implemented. With the establishment of the Network for Youth, it would be important for RVYOs to have sufficient capacity and competence to support their youth representatives active involvement in the future Nfy.

It was proposed that funding be made available to RVYOs currently in receipt of either Infrastructure Support or Thematic Infrastructure Support Funding. The actual amount potentially available to each RVYO would be proportionate to their funding strand allocation, and each RVYO would be required to present an appropriate costed action plan in order to access the funds notionally earmarked for that organisation.

K W'spoon

10.02 In response to a query, it was confirmed that an appropriate application and assessment process would be in place for all strands under Programme Funding.

K W'spoon

10.03 It was noted that by September 2010, Council would be aware of the extent of any further cuts to its 2010/11 budget, and also the level of RVYOs response to themes (a) – (d). Council would then be in a position to determine how the balance of Programme Funding should be allocated. Staff would present some additional potential themes for consideration.

D Guilfoyle

10.04 Council approved the proposals, as set out at (a) – (d) above.

11.00 FINANCE

11.01 The Income/Expenditure Profile to 31 May 2010 was noted for information and performance monitoring.

12.00 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.01 Council agreed to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Chief Executive to expedite urgent business arising over the summer period. Any actions taken under this delegation of authority would be reported to Council at its September meeting.

M Young
D Guilfoyle

13.00 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

13.01 The next meeting of Council is scheduled for **Thursday 23 September 2010**, 5.30 pm in Forestview, Belfast.

ALL

13.02 Dates of future meetings were agreed:

- Monday 01 November 2010
- Thursday 16 December 2010.

Signed Date