

YOUTH COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

ACTION

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 16 DECEMBER 2010, IN FORESTVIEW, BELFAST.

1.00 PRESENT

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

2.00 APOLOGIES

2.01 An apology was received from Ms A-M McClure.

3.00 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING [01.11.2010]

3.01 Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 01 November 2010 were approved and signed.

4.00 MATTERS ARISING

4.01 Min 4.01: Funding of Additional Organisations Update. The Grants Manager reported that transition/handover meetings, involving representatives from the Department and YCNI, had been held with Millennium Volunteers and the Prince's Trust. A meeting with Bytes was scheduled for 21 December 2010. It was noted that, with effect from December, YCNI would draw down funds from DE and assume responsibility for making quarterly payments to the organisations.

4.02 Min 4.02: Ocean Youth Trust – Update on Financial Position. At its November meeting, Council members had sought reassurance on the legal and financial viability of the OYT to continue to receive funding from the Youth Council. The Grants Manager reported that the insurance cover had paid out in full on the Lord Rank. It was noted that a North/South Steering Group had been established to develop an Action Plan to operate Sail Training on an all-Ireland basis in the future.

A review of the OYT financial situation indicated that it was operating with an overdraft; had put in place tighter controls to monitor expenditure; and was able to meet its day-to-day operating requirements. The organisation remained in the Youth Council's "Red" alert category, and staff were continuing to monitor the situation on a quarterly basis.

In response to a query about the impact of the loss of the Lord Rank on activities/operations funded by YCNI, it was noted that the organisation had continued to provide programmes for 600 young people over the summer.

Following discussion, it was agreed that staff would continue to monitor carefully the situation for the remainder of the 2010/11 financial year, and hold back a retention until the OYT 2010 accounts were presented. A detailed assessment of the organisation's financial position would be instigated in relation to any grant aid payment for the 2011/12 financial year.

K W'spoon

ACTION

4.03 Min 10.02: Child Protection Funding Update. The Chief Executive reported that he had raised this matter at the Priorities for Youth Stakeholders Group. The importance of keeping this issue to the forefront of thinking within DE and the sector was emphasised. A query was raised about how Council could seek to support and prioritise this area from within its core grant.

In response, the Chief Executive indicated that it would be timely for Council to plan a full-day meeting to strategically review/prepare its operational plan and funding priorities for the 2011/12 financial year. Consideration of Child Protection funding would be an integral part of this exercise.

D Guilfoyle

5.00 CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

5.01 CRED Funding Allocations 2010/11. The Chairperson reported that, on behalf of Council, she had confirmed the grant allocations on 09 December 2010, in order that these could be paid to the organisations. [See also 7.1 below.]

6.00 GOVERNANCE and ACCOUNTABILITY

6.01 The Income/Expenditure Profile to 30 November 2010 was presented for information and performance monitoring. In presenting the report, the Chief Executive referred to the Budget Statement issued on 15 December, which indicated an overall decrease of 3.3% across the education sector budget. The impact of this on YCNI's operations would require detailed consideration by Council, as part of the strategic planning day referred to at 4.03 above.

D Guilfoyle

6.02 The Chief Executive briefed members on key points in the Income/Expenditure Profile, indicating that all recurrent expenditure (highlighted green) would be expended by the year end. In response to a query on the salaries heading, it was noted that allocations for back pay, pay increments 2010/11, and holiday pay accrual were included in the balance figure.

It was noted that additional funding allocations (highlighted yellow) had been, or were on track to be, allocated by the end of the financial year.

7.00 RVYO FUNDING 2010/11

7.01 CR/EDI Funding Allocations. J McCormick presented a composite paper detailing the funding awarded under this strand. This was noted and endorsed by Council.

7.02 Governance of RVYOs – YouthNet Training Plan. It was confirmed that YouthNet had submitted a detailed plan to utilise the grant awarded (£20,000) by YCNI. RVYO staff would receive training to implement the new Code of Good Governance which had been endorsed by DSD and the Charity Commission. YouthNet would also work with RVYO Management Committees to help them identify gaps and weaknesses in their governance systems, and provide the necessary support to enable them to address these.

7.03 Building Change Trust Initiative – YouthNet Plans. It was reported that YouthNet had been successful in obtaining a grant, from the BCT, to enable it to develop a new regional and sub-regional structure to facilitate collaborative support structures and ensure more effective use of shared resources, shared learning, and joint service delivery.

ACTION

YCNI staff would engage with YouthNet to ensure that the £20,000 grant agreed by YCNI would be deployed in a manner which would bring added value to the BCT-funded initiative, and also be consistent with YCNI's commitment to its funded RVYOs.

K W'spoon

7.04 Participation Initiatives by RVYOs – Funding Allocations. Applications received had been analysed by staff, and the recommended funding allocations were presented for approval by Council.

Whilst considering the proposed grant allocations, members discussed the "substantial" level of end of year money identified, and how this related to and/or impacted on the Council's funding policy.

Members were agreed on the desirability to "protect" core funding, and sought clarification on whether or not surplus funds identified could be disbursed, in-year, as additional infrastructure (core) grants. The constraints of the funding policy (which indicated that 12.5% + surplus funds directed to Programme Funding) were highlighted by the Chief Executive. This issue would be reviewed for the 2011/12 financial year.

D Guilfoyle
K W'spoon

The funding allocations for Participation Initiatives 2010 were approved by Council.

7.05 Equipment Grants for RVYOs. In light of the severe financial pressures facing RVYOs, and the availability of additional funds for distribution, Council approved a proposal to seek bids for equipment grants from those RVYOs in receipt of Infrastructure Support Funding or Thematic Infrastructure Support Funding, in order to ensure that their support for quality youth work was not hindered by lack of suitable equipment. Staff would issue a funding call to the target group, and grants would be released on submission of receipts for purchase.

K W'spoon

7.06 Social Return on Investment. The Chief Executive briefed members on this strategic sector-wide initiative, to stage a bespoke training course in NI which would train approximately 16 staff, from a cross-section of youth service agencies delivering SROI projects, to become accredited SROI practitioners.

It was proposed that YCNI and YouthNet would collaborate on both the staging of the course, and some ongoing support to those personnel who, following training, would begin to trial it in their organisations. The ELBs would also be invited to become involved in this initiative. Council approved £10,000 for the training and support costs to implement this SROI initiative for the sector.

D Guilfoyle

7.07 "Right Here" Mental Health Project (YouthAction). Members were reminded that it had been Council's intention to provide £15,000 per annum towards the overall cost of this project. However, due to the planned establishment of ESA, the Council did not have the authority to commit this funding. Given the delay in the establishment of ESA, Council approved a further contribution of £15,000 for the 2010/11 financial year.

8.00 NORTHERN IRELAND YOUTH FORUM

8.01 Proposal to extend YCNI funding for the Transitional Director's post. Members were reminded that, at its June 2010 meeting, Council had approved funding to extend the Transitional Director contract to 31 March 2011, with a review in December 2010.

ACTION

8.02 The Chief Executive briefed members on the current situation. DE had advised that a business case be submitted for the continuation of the post beyond 31 March 2011.

8.03 In addition, on 11th November, a letter had been sent to the Department seeking clarification on Network for Youth developments, and highlighting concerns about the potential implications of the NfY for the Youth Forum. Other issues, such as future youth service structures, anticipated budgetary cuts, and external developments such as the NI Youth Assembly, were also referred to in the letter. A response from DE had not yet been received.

8.04 With three months of the Transitional Director's extended contract remaining, Council recognised that it had an obligation to brief the NI Youth Forum on the current position, as the Youth Forum would be required to place the Director on protective notice.

D Guilfoyle
K W'spoon

8.05 During discussion, the following points were identified and agreed:

- There was no direction from DE to help build a business case.
- There was no precedent from DE to request the submission of a business case.
- Since YCNI's role is to advise the Department, Council should write to the write to Ms L Wilson as Head of Division:
 - to remind her of the role of youth service/youth work/participation;
 - to point out that NI Youth Forum was the only current mechanism managed by a Management Committee of young people;
 - highlight the problems that the lack of movement by DE in regard to NfY/Participation structures was causing;
 - cite the current difficulty about the continuation of the NIYF Transitional Director post;
 - recommend a continuation of the post until 31 August 2011;
 - request that the Department either provide guidance for a business case, or identify a new transitional role for the Forum.

D Guilfoyle

From a governance perspective, Council members would require a written response from DE.

8.06 It was noted that, if the Department agreed to a transitional period / role, the Youth Forum would require a clearly set out direction, with appropriate targets and outcomes identified as part of the organisation's SLA with Council.

K W'spoon

9.00 SECTOR-WIDE INITIATIVES

The Chief Executive provided an update on the following initiatives.

9.01 Youth Works Programme. This International Fund for Ireland (IFI) funded Programme, developed by the Department of Education, was aimed at enabling marginalised young people to find their way back to fulfilling their potential, through personal and social development and basic skills training. £2 million had been secured from IFI to support this three-year Programme. YCNI, at the request of DE, was acting as Managing Agent for the programme.

Interviews for the Programme Manager post had been held, and an offer of appointment letter issued. Subject to acceptance, it was envisaged that the appointee would take up post in February 2011.

ACTION

9.02 North/South Youth Work Collaboration. At its November meeting, Council had approved in principle the general themes/outcomes, and the continued input of the Chief Executive in developing the proposal. Following discussions with the partner agencies involved (YCNI, YouthNet, ELBs), a reworked proposal would be forwarded to Council members for comment, prior to submission to YESIP.

D Guilfoyle

10.00 REVIEW OF YCNI MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES - UPDATE

10.01 Honoraria Payments. As a result of the DE directive to YCNI, this arrangement ceased on 30 November 2010. It was noted that no other ALB had been directed to cease honoraria payments. Following an exchange of correspondence, between YCNI and DE, in relation to cost effectiveness and maintaining continuity of service delivery, Council would submit a business case setting out a range of options, including continuation of Honoraria up to 31 March 2011.

10.02 Revised Management Structure/Voluntary Severance. Options presented at the November meeting of Council, were considered in detail by the HR Committee, and a preferred structure was developed. The Chief Executive met with the ESAIT HR Team, and reported that they had provided constructive feedback on a number of presentational issues which would assist in the development of Council's business case for restructuring / voluntary severance.

10.03 It was reported that the business cases for (i) Honoraria Payments and (ii) Voluntary Severance / Revised Management Structure would be prepared and submitted to the Department during January 2011. Council supported these actions.

D Guilfoyle

11.00 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.01 There were no items of AOB.

12.00 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

12.01 Meeting dates for 2011 were agreed as follows:

ALL

• Thursday 27 January 2011	• Monday 14 March 2011
• Thursday 28 April 2011	• Monday 27 June 2011
• Thursday 22 September 2011	• Monday 07 November 2011
• Thursday 15 December 2011	

Signed Date