

YOUTH COUNCIL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

ACTION

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2011, IN FORESTVIEW, BELFAST.

1.00 PRESENT

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

2.00 APOLOGIES

2.01 None.

3.00 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING [27.06.2011]

3.01 Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27 June 2011 were approved and signed.

4.00 MATTERS ARISING

4.01 Min 4.02: Youth Works Programme – Update. The Chief Executive reported that one appeal had been submitted requesting a review of the Selection Panel’s decision. Following the appeals process, the Selection Panel decision was upheld. Based on learning and feedback from the selection panel, external assessor and the appeals panel, modifications had been made to the process, guidance and application form for the next call for applications, anticipated for April 2012.

The Partnership appointed to deliver the pilot Youth Works programme in north Belfast comprises Include Youth (lead partner), Artillery Youth Centre, Challenge for Youth and NI Alternatives. A press release announcing the appointment of the Delivery Agent was picked up by the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and a local north Belfast newspaper.

The programme commenced on 19 September, with close to the target number of participants (36) recruited. The pilot will run through to mid-March 2012. It had been confirmed that the ETI would undertake the evaluation of the pilot and subsequent roll out of the next phase of the programme, although the precise nature and scope of their role was still to be clarified. Monitoring of the pilot programme would be ongoing and the learning assimilated into the roll out of the next phase of the programme.

4.02 Min 5.04: NI Assembly Education Committee Stakeholder Event. The Chief Executive had attended this event on 29 June. The event provided an opportunity for members of the new Education Committee to engage in dialogue with a cross-section of stakeholders. The Chairperson (Mervyn Storey) gave a short input on the role of the committee, and some of the key issues facing the education sector. Given that Youth Service was not referred to in the input, the Chief Executive raised this in the open session. In a positive response, the Committee Chairperson acknowledged the important role of youth workers especially with marginalised young people.

Members expressed the view that it would be crucial for Council and the Youth Service sector to actively engage with the Committee when the Priorities for Youth were published by the Department for consultation.

4.03 Min 7.02: NI GAP Franchise Programme. The Chief Executive reported that he had met with S Cheal (Rank Foundation) to finalise the implementation details and confirm the respective roles of YCNI and Rank in relation to the programme in Northern Ireland. It had been agreed with Rank that it would be essential to ensure that opportunities for young people from a wide range of academic abilities to become a Gapper would be encouraged.

The Chief Executive and Grants Manager had met with the Director of Challenge for Youth, which will provide support to the team of Gappers during their 9-month programme.

Invitations would be issued in October, to voluntary organisations currently in receipt of YCNI grants, for hosting organisation applications for the first tranche of Gappers who, it was planned, would take up post in January 2012.

5.00 CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

5.01 Minister for Education – Statement 26 September 2011. It was reported that the Minister, J O'Dowd, was scheduled to make a major statement, in the Assembly, on the next steps for education in NI. The Chairperson and Chief Executive would attend a post-statement briefing session by senior DE officials on 26 September.

5.02 Meeting with the new Minister for Education. It was noted that the meeting planned for 05 July 2011 had been rescheduled to 28 September. Agenda items submitted for the meeting are:

- overview of YCNI's role;
- role of youth work in complementing formal education;
- role of RYOs in supporting frontline youth work;
- youth work workforce;
- north/south collaborative opportunities.

5.03 The Council's next Governance and Accountability Review meeting was scheduled for 12 October 2011.

A report on these meeting would be given at the November 2011 Council meeting.

6.00 GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

6.01 Voluntary Severance Programme 2011/12. Details of the 2011/12 Voluntary Severance programme were circulated, and noted by members. The Chief Executive reported that staff had been briefed, and expressions of interest sought. He confirmed that YCNI would be given a target for savings (as yet unknown), to which savings in the YCNI salary bill would contribute. In determining the headings under which savings could be achieved, Council would seek to ensure that its functions were sustained.

The Chief Executive would liaise with the Chairperson on any expressions of interest received from staff, prior to submission, to ESAIT, of potential savings this would deliver.

ACTION

D Guilfoyle

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6.02 Strategic Plan 2011-15 / Operational Plan 2011/12. The Plan approved by Council in June 2011 had been formally submitted to the Department. Details of DE comments and YCNI's response were presented and noted by Council. To date, no further response had been received from the Department.

D Guilfoyle

6.03 The Chief Executive presented the Income/Expenditure Profile to 31 August 2011 for information/performance monitoring. Members' attention was drawn to the particular items listed below:

- On the advice of the Audit Committee, Consultancies / Projects were now listed separately.
- Salaries remained on track.
- Sector-wide Projects – examples included Youth Work Outcomes, Priorities for Youth (assisting the sector), CRED (sharing good practice), Benefits of International work. Further details of sector-wide projects would be presented at the November Council meeting.
- Programme Funding – it was noted that around £80,000 remained to be allocated under this heading.
- The In-Service Training for Voluntary Youth Workers figure remained to be apportioned.

D Guilfoyle

All other headings were as expected at this stage of the financial year. Proposals to utilise available funds within some budget headings would be presented at the November 2011 Council meeting.

D Guilfoyle
K W'spoon

In response to a query about a discrepancy in the Gross Expenditure and Balance to Date figures, the Chief Executive would have this checked out, and an amended Income/Expenditure Profile reissued to members.

D Guilfoyle

The Chief Executive briefed members on difficulties which Council staff were experiencing in relation to the DE Drawdown process. He reported that he planned to raise this matter at the Governance/Accountability Review meeting, in October, to ensure that Council received parity of treatment with other ALBs.

D Guilfoyle

6.04 Section 75 Annual Progress Report 2010/11. Approval to formally submit the Annual Report to the Equality Commission was proposed by B Faulkner, seconded by D Capper, and agreed by Council.

D Guilfoyle

7.00 RVYO FUNDING 2011-2012

7.01 The Chief Executive and Grants Manager presented a composite paper incorporating discussion points and recommendations in relation to

- (i) Programme Funding 2011/12; and
- (ii) The Review of Young People Focused Funding Policy.

7.02 Programme Funding 2011/12

(a) Capacity Building Fund. Council had previously agreed (June 2011) to an increase of up to £10,000 for each of the three organisations – Youth Initiatives, GLYNI and Challenge for Youth. The Grants Manager had held meetings with representatives of these organisations, and it was anticipated that specific additional actions would be formally agreed in the near future.

K W'spoon

(b) Millennium Volunteers / Prince's Trust / BYTES. The three organisations had responded positively to the Council's funding offer to support co-operative ventures. The Grants Manger would shortly be in a position to approve a formal proposal from the three organisations.

K W'spoon

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(c) Learning Event for RVYOs. This event would be held on Tuesday 08 November 2011, in the Ramada Hotel. All funded RVYOs had been advised of the details and proposed format of the event. Council members, and representatives from a range of other funders, DE, ETI, and ELBs would also be invited to attend.

ALL

In response to a query from members regarding duplication of services by RVYOs, YCNI staff were asked to consider how such potential duplication might be identified and report back to Council.

D Guilfoyle
K W'spoon

(d) Training. It was noted that the Youth Work Training Board would meet shortly to consider the most appropriate strategy to utilise the funding approved by Council to support workforce development issues.

(e) Data Collection. A recommendation to earmark £50,000 for this purpose during 2011/12 was approved by Council in June 2011. However, under Target 2.2 in the Council's business plan, comments received from the Department would envisage a much wider exercise which would "*complete a cost-benefit analysis of regional delivery of services by YCNI funded RVYOs with a focus on public value*".

Staff considered that there was an opportunity to pilot the SROI approach across a sample of RVYOs. Whilst this would be a more intensive process, it had the potential to produce valuable and timely insight into the cost-benefit and public value of Council's funding. The funds currently earmarked for data collection could be transferred to this revised task.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Chief Executive should initiate dialogue with the Department on Target 2.2, to determine what actions would be viable and appropriate, and prepare a more detailed proposal/recommendation for consideration by Council at its November meeting.

D Guilfoyle

(f) Participation Funding/Big Deal Participation Proposal. The Grants Manager briefed members on the uptake of Participation Funding in 2010/11, and provided examples of the projects undertaken and the outcomes achieved.

A recommendation was presented, that Council approve £50,000 for a further round of Participation funding in 2011/12. The Big Deal project would facilitate a young person's panel to make funding recommendations to YCNI under this strand.

Preliminary discussions had been held with Big Deal staff within YouthNet in relation to establishing a panel of young people. However, it was recognised that the NI Youth Forum staff had been responsible for this aspect of the Big Deal project.

In order to to address the challenge of encouraging a contribution from some of the most excluded groups of young people (identified in para 8.4 of the paper) members recommended that a proportion the available funding in 2011/12 should be targeted at new groups (say 80% new groups /20% existing groups split).

K W'spoon

Members also recognised that there were a range of "good stories" emerging from this funding strand, and suggested that it would be appropriate to collate these in the form of a report and/or DVD/CD, for circulation to a wider audience.

K W'spoon

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K W'spoon

Members agreed to the proposal to allocate £50,000 for a further round of Participation Funding in 2011/12, and that YCNI staff should enter into formal discussion with the Youth Forum in relation to facilitating and supporting a young people's funding panel.

7.03 **Review of Young People Focused Funding Policy.** It was noted that Council staff were initiating meetings with the ELB Heads of Youth Service in the first instance in order to ensure that this review would be complementary to an initial review of all voluntary sector funding schemes (i.e. ELBs and YCNI). However, given the DE views on Target 2.2, and members views expressed at (e) Data Collection above, it was agreed that it would be prudent to confirm the way forward on that exercise before commencing any action to review Council's current funding policy.

7.04 **CRED Funding Proposal 2011/12.** The Chief Executive provided an update for members, confirming that two strategic partnerships were currently in receipt of funding from YCNI [2011/12 financial year]. At the June meeting of Council, an initial proposal to support a third consortium was presented, as it was anticipated that the DE Community Cohesion Branch might secure some additional CRED funds. However, during the summer it was confirmed that such funding would not be available from the Department.

Given the desirability of appointing a third consortium, and the availability of funds within the Council's Programme Funding budget, the Chairperson agreed to a proposal from the Chief Executive that the process to identify a third consortium could commence in August 2011. Council endorsed this action. It was noted that three consortia applications had been received, and the assessment/selection process would take place on 29 September 2011.

D Guilfoyle
N Rea

It was also reported that the Council's Chief Executive and Development Officer (Equality Principles) met with representatives of the six uniformed organisations which comprise one of the current strategic partnerships. Council's continued funding in 2011/12 had enabled the group to recruit a further tranche of voluntary leaders and members.

In light of the progress made by this partnership, consortia members were in the process of developing a specific proposal which would provide an opportunity for those who had participated in the initial programme (2010/11) to further develop their skills.

A recommendation was presented, that Council approve a further grant of up to £10,000 for the uniformed consortium, subject to YCNI staff being content with the detailed proposal from the partnership.

D Guilfoyle
N Rea

Discussing this recommendation, members were keen to ensure this was not simply a repeat of the first phase of the programme, but that there would be a clear development/progression of skills (e.g. moving from personal development into working with and developing others [peer education]), resulting in a greater impact within the organisations. Members agreed that this should be made a requirement of the second phase proposal from the partnership, and on that basis approved the recommendation.

7.05 **NI Youth Forum – Withdrawal of Circular 1979/10.** Copies of DE correspondence to the YCNI Chief Executive and to the NI Youth Forum Transitional Director had been circulated to Council members in advance of the meeting.

The Chief Executive provided some background information to members, commencing with a reference to a meeting held on 20 April 2011, chaired by DE and attended by NIYF representatives and the YCNI Chief Executive. At this meeting DE had stated that it was minded to withdraw the Circular 1979/10, but would give further consideration to the issue. DE had also invited the NIYF to submit comments in writing for the Department's consideration.

The Chief Executive reported that he had contacted the Department on 02 June 2011, seeking an update but none was available. On 30 August 2011 the Chief Executive had contacted DE again, recognising that YCNI members were due to consider YCNI's continued funding for the Transitional Director's post at the September meeting.

The Chief Executive received the DE correspondence on this matter on 31 August 2011. The Department had indicated that there was no link between the Chief Executive's e-mail to DE and the subsequent issue of the letters from the Department.

The Chief Executive then reported on a meeting which he and the YCNI Grants Manager had with NIYF Executive Committee and Transitional Director. At this meeting on 14 September 2011, the NIYF representatives had expressed their serious concerns regarding the process adopted by DE. They considered the withdrawal of the circular as premature since they viewed the circular as a departmental policy statement and they considered that there was no new policy to replace it.

Concern was also expressed by NIYF regarding the requirement from DE for the Forum to use the title "Transitional Director" for its senior officer.

The Chief Executive advised Council that the circular had been discussed by the Assembly Education Committee, a number of Assembly Questions had been raised, the Youth Forum had spoken to the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People, and had taken legal advice. NIYF had also issued a Freedom of Information request to YCNI primarily in relation to correspondence between YCNI and DE in which the Forum was named.

The YCNI Chief Executive had advised DE of NIYF's concerns and had also sought clarification regarding the status of the Forum's representation on a range of bodies (e.g. YWTB, CDU, YSLF etc). DE had confirmed that NIYF representation on such bodies would not be affected by the withdrawal of the circular during this transitional period.

Members were reminded that DE was requesting YCNI to now consider, and submit to DE for approval, proposals for transitional funding and other support arrangements which might be required to assist the NIYF for an interim period of 12-18 months, but not exceeding two years.

In concluding, the Chief Executive presented a proposal regarding YCNI financial support to the Forum whereby NIYF funding would continue at the current level to 31 March 2012 (with a year-end review built in) and in principle continue to fund the Forum to 31 March 2013, which would coincide with the end of the Council's current funding cycle.

In relation to support arrangements, this would first necessitate more discussion between YCNI and NIYF.

Following a full discussion of the matters raised by the Chief Executive, members agreed that YCNI should provide the transitional funding, as described by the Chief Executive, and appropriate support to the NIYF in order to assist the organisation in considering its future role and making suitable preparations.

ACTION

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K W'spoon

It was noted that Council's current funding policy had envisaged a representative body for young people, appointed following an open selection process. However, given the original timeframes for the establishment of ESA and therefore a "Network for Youth", YCNI had deliberately deferred activating this selection Process. The NIYF would be eligible to participate in such a process when set in place by YCNI.

D Guilfoyle

Members also considered that YCNI should work actively with key stakeholders To help in shaping the future of youth participation.

8.00 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.01 There were no items of AOB.

ALL

9.00 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

9.01 Meeting dates for 2011 were agreed as follows:

- Monday 07 November 2011
- Thursday 15 December 2011

Signed Date