



## Minutes - Youth Service Advisory Committee Meeting - 10 February 2005

Present	
Chair	SL Rowlands
Councillors	SA Brown , Mrs CM Meaden , ED Prout
Deputy	Mrs F E F Anderson ( for Cllr O W Adam ) A Bridson ( for Cllr T Harney ) AC Hodson ( for Cllr C Blakeley )
Council Officers	Lindsay Davidson (Deputy Head of Policy Development - Youth & Community Services) , Peter Jenkinson (Deputy Head of Community Services) , Jim Lester Head of Branch - Cultural Services , Maureen McDaid (Head of Youth & Community Service)
Apologies	Maureen Bonney (Wirral Play Council) , George Thomas

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### Minute 5 - INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting, and he indicated that nominations from the Wirral Youth Forum had not yet been made. He commented that the Advisory Committee was the only Council forum where the views of young people could be expressed, and he hoped that the youth exchange representatives would be able to attend the next meeting.

### Minute 6 - MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 8 December 2004, were submitted for information.

Minute Decision :

Resolved - That the minutes be noted.

### Minute 7 - REVIEW OF THE WIRRAL YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Director of Education and Cultural Services reported upon, and submitted 'A Review of Wirral Youth and Community Service' that had been undertaken by Wear Consultancy to assess to what extent the Service was operationally and managerially robust and fit for purpose, in order to respond effectively to new initiatives, particularly the emerging agenda around the Government's Green Paper 'Every Child Matters', the follow up report on Next Steps, and the publication of the Youth Green Paper, expected in the Spring.

The Review looked at all aspects of the Service and identified areas for development, which would have to be addressed if the Service was to meet the challenges presented by the expanding policy agenda. It recognised the strengths of the Service, which were mirrored in the Ofsted Report, particularly in relation to partnership working. It set out a number of recommendations to address questions of structure and delivery, and pointed to areas for improvement which, if addressed, would equip the Service to respond positively to the challenges that lay ahead -

"1. Consideration needs to be given to re-apportioning senior managerial responsibilities on an individual section basis through a re-structuring of the Service, which will enable the strategic management and operational delivery. Within this the title 'Play' should be introduced to the Service nomenclature.

2. Further investment is required in order to better promote the Service and what it does. This investment should initially be targeted towards staff media training and the development of an annual report, promoting best practice from within the Service, for wide scale dissemination to elected members, colleagues across the Council, key partners and stakeholders.

3. A full consideration of the current Joint Management Agreement for Joint Management Committees should be undertaken, with a view to modernising it and aligning it with key Council and Service priorities. In the process the nature of the relationship between Service staff and the Committees should be fully explored and agreement reached on its function and form, emphasising clearly boundaries with regard to expectations of the role, staff responsibilities, and highlighting areas for further training and support.
4. Consideration should be given to further investment in the whole Service participation agenda, especially as this would then enable the Service to play a much more effective role, for example, in the engagement and involvement of young people across the Borough as the Council develops its Children's Trust response.
5. The Service should produce three key strategic documents, as detailed in Section 7 (Policy Development), which should elaborate a minimum of a three-year view on each element of the Service. They should sit alongside an integrated Service Development Plan, which should link the defined vision of the Service with key emergent national and local agendas.
6. The Service should explore options of how best to address issues of concern put forward by staff prior to and during the review process. Particular areas for consideration, besides terms and conditions of service, will be alternate recruitment options such as apprenticeship routes and procedures for managing staffing issues.
7. The Senior Administrative Officer should be empowered and supported to undertake a thorough but time-limited review of all of the Service's administrative support systems and the management of service resources; prepare a comprehensive report setting out the current issues and solutions; and a proposed action plan for implementing those solutions, for consideration and eventual approval by the Senior Management Team, with some emphasis within the proposals with regard to providing a higher level of internal and external customer care.
8. The Service should review its current requirements for performance management at all levels, whilst at the same time devising a harmonised system of monitoring arrangements. These monitoring requirements should reflect the various operational levels across the Service so those with differing contractual commitments make an appropriate response, based around regular and sustained monitoring visits in order to view practice in all delivery units.
9. A review and re-organisation of the Service managerial structure should be undertaken that addresses current structural anomalies, alongside appropriate dialogue as suggested in Section 10 (Operational and Managerial Capacity) with regard to the Community Section. Within the reorganisation, focus should be given to managing the strands of the Service separately, with the creation of a specific senior managerial post for the leadership of the Play Section".

In response to comments from members, the Head of the Youth and Community Service outlined the steps that were being taken to ensure the Service was fully staffed, in order to meet the needs of its users. She reported also that consultation with staff was ongoing, and that in order to prioritise activities, an action plan was being prepared for submission to the next meeting, which would include a progress report on activities to date. Actions related to restructures/reviews would be referred to the appropriate committees, and activities concerning the contribution to the Services for Children and Young People would be referred to the Change Team. In addition, Joint Management Committees would be involved in any review of procedures and the development of new agreements.

Minute Decision :  
Resolved -

- (1) That the officers be commended for the work undertaken in ensuring that the Youth and Community Service is able to respond effectively to the challenges it will face.
- (2) That the recommendations set out in the Review be noted.