

## **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Communities Committee - 23 October 2006

**REPORT ON:** Response to The Scottish Executive Consultation on A National Youth Work Strategy - Youth Work Opportunities For All

**REPORT BY:** Director of Leisure and Communities

**REPORT NO:** 602 -2006

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for the submission of the City Council's response to the Scottish Executive's consultation on the National Youth Work Strategy.
- 1.2 The collated response is contained in Appendix 1.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is invited to comment on and approve the response contained in Appendix 1 and authorise its submission to the Scottish Executive.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 None.

### **4.0 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Committee should note that currently approximately 55% of Youth Work costs are met from short-term external funding sources.

### **5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The response to the Scottish Executive emphasises the importance of Youth Work opportunities being available to all young people.
- 5.2 Youth Work is a major factor in addressing Equal Opportunities with young people.

### **6.0 MAIN TEXT**

- 6.1 In August 2006 the Scottish Executive launched its consultation about a National Youth Work Strategy thus fulfilling an earlier manifesto commitment.
- 6.2 The deadline for responding to the consultation is 1 November 2006.
- 6.3 The Leisure and Communities Department is conducting its own strategic review of Youth Work in Dundee and is doing so alongside the development of a National Youth

Work Strategy. This response summarises the likely direction of Dundee's Youth Work Strategy.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and the Directors of Education, Social Work, Housing and staff groupings from Education and Leisure and Communities have all been consulted about this report.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 The following background papers were relied upon in the preparation of this Report:

- "Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work", YouthLink Scotland 2005.
- "Youth Work in Scotland: An Agenda for Action - An issue paper to inform the National Youth Work Strategy Consultation 2006", YouthLink Scotland 2006.
- "Youth Work: Opportunities for All - A Consultation Paper to Inform a National Youth Work Strategy", Scottish Executive 2006.

**STEWART MURDOCH**  
**DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND COMMUNITIES**  
**5 OCTOBER 2006**

### YOUTH WORK - OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

#### Introduction - the role of youth work

**Q1. Should it always be for a young person to decide whether they want to take part in a youth work activity?**

Dundee City Council are of the view that it is fundamental to the concept of youth work that young people choose to participate. This is clearly stated in the "Statement On The Nature And Purpose Of Youth Work" produced by YouthLink 2005 which we wish to endorse. This identifies the essential and definitive features of youth work as:

- Young people choose to participate
- Youth Work builds from where young people are
- Youth Work recognises the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process.

It is recognised that non-youth work organisations often employ youth work approaches to achieve their aims. The term Youth Work should only be used to describe activity underpinned by the above core values and which aims to achieve some or all of the following outcomes:

- Increased self-confidence and self-esteem
- Increased ability to manage personal and social relationships
- Enhanced learning and increased skills
- Positive group atmospheres
- An increased ability to assess risk and make informed decisions
- An increased ability to take a wider "world view" and awareness of social responsibilities

**Q2. Do you have any examples to share of good youth work?**

The HMle Report on the inspection of Community Learning and Development in Dundee in 2005 identified a number of examples of "very good youth work".

YouthLink are currently compiling a bank of information referencing best practice in youth work in Scotland, examples of Youth Work delivered by Dundee City Council will feature in this resource.

It is important to reach agreement on a clear definition of Youth Work. The Purpose Statement produced by YouthLink achieves this very effectively and draws an important distinction between Youth Work and the much wider field of work with young people

This statement has gained wide support from across the service sector.

**Q3. To what extent should youth work opportunities be generally available to all young people, or be targeted at those who are particularly vulnerable or disadvantaged?**

We recommend that Youth Work opportunities should be available to all young people. There should be universal base provision.

Inevitably, however, Youth Work resources are targeted at those in greatest need. This may be because of identified community priorities or those lead by other agencies eg Youth Justice, Health. In addition the increasing need to access short-term funding in order to develop Youth Work opportunities invariably requires Youth Workers to target particular groups of young people or address certain issues. This leads to anomalies in provision and imbalances especially between geographical areas.

**Q4. To what extent will different types of youth work or youth organisations require different treatment in the National Youth Work Strategy?**

We are of the view that it is important to recognise the distinction between organisations that are dedicated to Youth Work (2005) as defined in YouthLink's "Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work" and those organisations carrying out valuable work with young people but which don't meet the criteria of Youth Work. This essentially is the definition difference between a Youth Work Strategy and a Youth Strategy.

**Q5. How do we attract and retain more volunteers to help deliver youth work opportunities?**

In order to attract and retain volunteers to help deliver youth work opportunities we need to be clear about defining those opportunities and providing the necessary level of support to volunteers in order that they can successfully work in a Youth Work setting.

Some compliance issues, while necessary and unavoidable, can be a factor in an individual's decision whether or not to volunteer. The media portrayal and image of youth work as a volunteering option will also have a significant influence on self-esteem of volunteers.

Of particular importance here is the role of young volunteers providing peer support and the opportunities for personal development that this offers. Greater recognition of volunteers and the valuable contribution they make will help address recruitment as will positive local/national support for this activity.

**Q6. How can better links be forged with schools and other providers to improve the opportunities available to young people?**

We are currently developing models of integrated working which is bringing the key professions/agencies together in order to focus on achieving better outcomes for young people. It is important that all relevant agencies work together to achieve this aim and recognise the distinctive contribution of youth work in working with young people on personal/social and citizenship issues.

We accept that Youth Work can take place in a variety of settings and that it is vital to maintain a community-based youth work presence. Youth Work is most effective when managed in a user-friendly Youth Work environment by professionally trained staff.

**Q7. What particular skills can youth workers bring to work within or around schools, especially to keep young people engaged?**

We are of the view that Youth Work is most effective when it is community-based and able to work in partnership with others as appropriate.

Our experience has been that when we bring Youth Workers together in partnership with school-based support workers they are able to bring a different and complementary dimension to engagement with young people.

This can be characterised by voluntary, negotiated engagement with young people during which they identify their own learning goals and programmes.

Youth Work can offer opportunities for young people which encourages participation, develops self-esteem and challenges negative self-perception. The approach can be of particular benefit in working with disengaged young people.

In our experience professional support within an inter-agency environment is likely to be more successful in keeping young people engaged than trying to integrate Youth Work into a schooling environment.

## **National structures**

### **Q8. What type of support is needed at national level to improve opportunities and outcomes for young people**

We are supportive of the view expressed by the Community Learning and Development Managers (Scotland) that the structures created at national level should be able to fulfil the following key roles:

- Champion the role of Youth Work within the wider national policy context
- Advise the Scottish Executive on all matters relating to Youth Work
- Create a focal point for debate and policy development
- Undertake a development role for Youth Work at a national level
- Support the development of Youth Work at a local level
- Monitor and support the implementation of the national Youth Work strategy at local level
- Develop local and national resources

We recommend that YouthLink Scotland should be recognised and resourced as the National Youth Agency in Scotland and be empowered to carry out the roles described above.

We also recommend that there should be sufficient, dedicated resources provided to enable implementation of the Youth Work strategy within local authority areas. The government in England and Wales has significantly enhanced the funding base for youth work. We would encourage a similar approach for young people in Scotland.

### **Q9. Do you have any views on how YouthLink Scotland can best support and represent the range of youth work providers?**

We are of the view that YouthLink, Scotland should be empowered and resourced to deliver on the key functions described in the response given to question 8.

The Council notes that it is difficult at present for YouthLink to effectively represent such a wide and diverse sector as that represented under the heading of Youth Work without the authority and confidence required to carry out the roles described in the response to question 8.

### **Q10. How can we help national youth work organisations to work more with each other to share good practice, build capacity and make best use of their resources?**

We recommend that this is a role for YouthLink and one that is currently being developed and piloted by the YouthLink Members Network.

## **Better information for young people**

### **Q11. What can be done to improve the information available to young people and their ability to access it?**

We are of the view that the continued support and development of the Young Scot booklet/ card and advice and information services are vital to improving information to young people.

Within Dundee we have developed a well-established process of distributing the booklets and cards to young people in partnership with schools. The Council is of the view this is an effective model and worthy of consideration as a national development with the service cost

provided by national government funding.

It is important to note that the quality of information while important, will not guarantee that it is accessed or used. It is the accessibility and presentation of information that requires support and attention. In this respect the relationship between young people and Youth Workers is important in prompting access to information and the ability to make the best use of it. Youth Information competence is seen as a key youth work process tool for all youth workers.

**Q12. How can young people be more involved in developing information for other young people?**

We endorse that continued support for the national Young Scot and Dialogue Youth initiatives are important if greater involvement by young people in developing information is to be achieved. There are positive advantages to having both these initiatives merge operations and support.

There are many examples of effective practice in this area. Young people are involved, in Dundee, in the development of information for other young people. Our Peer Education projects in Dundee demonstrate clearly the effectiveness of this approach to involving young people in delivery to their peers

We propose that there is a greater role here for the Scottish Youth Parliament.

**Access to opportunities for young people**

**Q13. What do you think are the priorities for youth work in the 21st century?**

We are of the view that the priorities for Youth Work in the 21st century are:

- The establishment of a clear legislative base which underpins the development of Youth Work across Scotland
- Recognition of the unique role played by Youth Workers in the personal and social development of young people
- Continued focus on the provision of Youth Work opportunities for all young people
- Co-ordinated local provision based on the identified needs of young people
- Investment in ongoing training, staff development and support for paid and voluntary Youth Workers
- A clear focus on citizenship and re-engaging young people.

**Q14. How do we make sure that youth work is accessible to all young people, including equality groups and those in rural areas, and respects their differences?**

We reiterate the view that Youth Work opportunities should be available to all young people, however, delivery needs to balance the benefit of a Youth Work entitlement for all young people with the priority to target resources on areas of greatest need.

**Q15. How can youth work contribute to good community relations?**

We are of the view that the "Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work" produced by YouthLink, Scotland clearly describes how Youth Work can contribute to good community relations.

We continue to work towards the provision of increased opportunities for young people to participate and contribute to key groupings such as Community Planning Partnerships and Community Safety Forums.

We note that too often young people are portrayed as having a negative influence on their communities and that increased action is required to promote the positive contribution made by many young people.

Fundamentally, good community relations will only be achieved by positive work, including Youth Work, which takes place between communities not within separate communities. The same would apply to inter-generational work; where there is a need to promote models which highlight adults as positive role models.

**Q16. What particular issues and barriers do young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled young people and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) young people encounter in accessing youth work opportunities?**

We are of the view that all young people face barriers of various kinds but that specific groups may experience additional barriers because of prejudice, fear and/or a lack of knowledge/understanding. Youth Work can and should challenge stereotypes and prejudice.

Specific focus is required to ensure that young people are supported to overcome whatever barriers they encounter. This is best served by working in partnership with organisations representing the interests of marginalised groups of young people.

It is recommended that there should be identified confidential points of information and support for marginalised groups.

**Q17. Are there any gender issues or other issues affecting equality groups that we need to consider?**

We believe that mental health issues for young people are an area which requires further consideration.

There is an ongoing need to be sensitive to cultural/religious considerations.

**Q18. What can be done to provide the right kind of opportunities for young people of school age?**

We are of the view that the joint participation of all partners, with an interest in young people, is vital to ensuring that better outcomes are achieved.

Youth Work is delivered most effectively from a community-based model but partnership are enhanced.

The Curriculum for Excellence provides a focus for all partners to work together to ensure better outcomes for young people especially within integrated working with young people.

Within Dundee structures are in place under Community Planning/Community Learning & Development Planning and Integrated Children's Services to provide opportunities for partners to come together to respond to the needs of young people.

**Q19. And what can be done to provide the right kind of opportunities for young people who have left school?**

We are of the view that Youth Work has a strong contribution to make to work with young people characterised as NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training).

Youth Work has a key contribution to make and can be a means to re-engage young people who have left school without achieving literacies competence.

Positive motivation through sports, arts and person-centred training is most effectively delivered by employing youth work methods.

**Q20. How do we make sure that partnerships and youth work providers are focused on delivering better outcomes for young people at local level?**

It is important to continue to develop partnership working through Community Planning/Community Learning & Development Planning and Integrated Services structures.

We propose that the starting point for the development of work with young people should be achieving better outcomes.

In developing the Regeneration Outcome Agreement for the City, the Dundee Partnership gave particular emphasis to the development and measurement of meaningful outcomes relating to the nation strategic priority of Involving Young People. These focused on the importance of creating activities for young people which offered opportunities to influence decision-makers and to increase confidence and self-esteem.

Young people have had a direct influence in the allocation of Community Regeneration funding in their neighbourhoods either directly through participation in the decision-making Forums or by shaping the allocation of dedicated funding to youth work priorities.

**Q21. What more can be done to enable all youth work providers to engage in and influence local networks and partnerships, including the community planning framework?**

We take the view that consideration must be given to the different abilities of a diverse range of Youth Work providers to mitigate against factors that prevent them from engaging. This is best achieved through the Community Planning framework and structures and that of community learning and development support.

**Q22. How can youth organisations expand the numbers of young people they deal with?**

We recommend that increased and dedicated resourcing of Youth Work is fundamental to reaching greater numbers of young people.

We bring to your attention that the reliance on short-term funding to increase the capacity of Youth Work is detrimental to a sustainable model of provision and detrimental to quality improvement and planning.

**Q23. What steps can be taken to make the best use of buildings and facilities to deliver youth work opportunities?**

It is important to ensure that facilities etc are accessible for young people and this should include cost, location and style (ethos).

While we are committed to opening up buildings such as schools and libraries to greater public access it is important to note that ownership by young people is very important in their relationship to the "space" available to them. The nature of youth activities, their need to create identity and to express themselves needs to be taken into account in the location and design of facilities.

**Empowering and engaging young people**

**Q24. What more can be done at national, local and organisational levels to make sure that young people can participate in decisions that affect them?**

We recommend that in order to ensure that young people can participate in decisions that affect them genuine opportunities need to be available and that young people should be treated with respect and their views valued.



The Council notes that very often it is the capacity of adult structures to embrace the needs of young people that needs challenged.

Youth Work requires the resources to support young people to participate. Active support for young people to register as voters and to use their vote should be promoted by all those working with young people.

**Q25. What more can be done at local or national level to support the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) to engage with and represent young people in Scotland?**

Dundee City Council accepts that the Scottish Youth Parliament should be recognised as the representative body for young people in Scotland, however, there are challenges inherent in this position. Not least of these is the need for greater consistency from the S.Y.P nationally in how young people are supported. Procedures and processes would benefit from a review and from greater consistency in implementation

**Improving Quality**

**Q26. Are you getting enough support with self-evaluation and with identifying and measuring outcomes and impacts? If not, what would help?**

We are satisfied with the level of support provided and recognise the value of effective self-evaluation. The new HMI(e) self evaluation and quality improvement guidance will be helpful.

We are committed to developing staff capacity to engage in the self-evaluation process.

It is important to differentiate between full-time staff and part-time staff/volunteers and their ability to engage with self-evaluation with regard to time and competence/knowledge levels.

**Q27. How can youth workers work more closely with others (for example, health workers) to make sure that young people's needs are identified and met?**

We are working to ensure that the structures and in Dundee facilitate joint working to ensure better outcomes for young people.

Youth Workers are fully engaged in these structures/groupings and we feel that this question should be directed at other service sectors which have less experience of working outwith "normal working hours" with young people, in youth work settings.

**Q28. How do we make sure that young people receive recognition for informal learning?**

We note that Youth Work makes effective use of accreditation programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award/Youth Achievement Awards to ensure that young people receive recognition for their learning and development.

We propose the need for work to be established to clarify the place of informal learning in the formal education curriculum. The Curriculum for Excellence should help to facilitate and extend this concept.

Dundee has the highest percentage of Youth Achievement Awards for all Local Authorities in Scotland

**Q29. How do we ensure that employers and others understand and value these achievements?**

We believe that work is required with employers to promote greater awareness of the value of informal learning. Groups such as the SMITH group have recognised this and are well placed to champion a broader view of achievement.

The Scottish Executive should further profile the impact of Youth Work on young people's lives especially the more effect use of positive media portrayal.

**Q30. How can we promote and encourage excellence in the youth work sector?**

We recommend that the Scottish Executive should adopt the definition of Youth Work as stated in YouthLink's Statement on the "Value and Purpose of Youth Work" (2005).

We are of the view that it is important to recognise at national and local levels the value of Youth Work and the need to celebrate the achievements of young people as a result of being involved in Youth Work opportunities.

We propose that a strong, clear image of Youth Work should be promoted. The integration of youth work with sports, arts and life-long learning creates the potential for a more meaningful curriculum to evolve.

**Training**

**Q31. What skills, qualities and support does a 21st century youth worker need?**

We note that the skills necessary for a 21st century youth worker are fully described in the National Occupational Standards and the competences agreed by employers and training providers through Ce Ve.

**Q32. Do volunteers need the same skills and support?**

We value the role played by volunteers and the contribution that they can make to Youth Work.

We believe that it is vital that the needs of volunteers are identified and addressed through effective development opportunities and support. Volunteer roles should recognise the need to support and the complementary nature of the relationship between professionally qualified worker and volunteer.

**Q33. How do we attract and retain more people as youth workers on a full or part-time basis?**

We recommend that providing greater professional recognition for Youth Work and ensuring that adequate resourcing and good conditions of service are in place will assist the ability of Youth Work to attract and retain Youth Workers.

We are concerned that short-term funding is proving detrimental to achieving this position.

**Q34. Are there specific types of training that are difficult to access and that workers or volunteers need to do their job more effectively?**

We propose that staff development opportunities should be made available according to the needs of the job that Youth Workers are expected to undertake.

**Q35. Is there enough information about the training available? If no, what would help?**

We recommend that further work should be undertaken to clarify the range of training available and the possible routes open to Youth Workers.

**Q36. How do we make sure that any measures put in place to strengthen standards, including registration, are suitable and work effectively for volunteers?**

Dundee City Council recommends this is a role for YouthLink.