

The Highland Council
Education Culture and Sport Committee

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Youth work – Update and Future Development
Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Summary

This report updates Members on progress made in implementing the Council's youth work policy and sets the focus for future work plans.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council agreed a significant investment in youth work spread over three financial years. The final tranche of posts was filled in January 2009. The purpose of this report is to update Members on how the investment in youth work is developing, highlighting good practice and identifying future areas of work.

The Youth service is central to delivering a number of commitments within Strengthening the Highlands:

- Support civic engagement of Highland's young people through pupil councils, the post of youth convener, developing Highland Youth Voice and representation in the Scottish Youth Parliament.
 - Ensure a youth worker is active in every Associated School Group area and that a review is completed on leisure, recreation and development opportunities available to young people.
 - Roll out a single smart card to all young people by 2011, giving access to leisure, libraries, arts and culture activities, youth information and school meals.
 - Increase the number of young people leaving school and moving into education, training or employment to 87% by the end of March 2009. Working with our partners, we will review this target by 2011.
 - Achieve full implementation of the Scottish Government's policy of "Getting it Right for Every Child" which will ensure that all children get the help they need when they need it, by 2009.
- 1.2 Youth work contributes to a number of targets set out in the Single Outcome Agreement such as those seeking positive destinations for young people; those seeking to improve the health and well-being of young people and those seeking to improve communities. There is also a specific target agreed with the

Scottish Government to increase the number of young people taking part in recognised achievement and leadership awards.

2. What Youth Workers Do

2.1 The youth work policy (May 2006) put in place a youth work post for each geographical area surrounding a secondary school i.e. the school catchment area. For the provision of community focussed services this is referred to as an Integrated Learning Community (ILC). The policy laid out five key areas of work-

- Direct work with, and support of, young people in need
- Ensuring that a mix of Council work and work with partners is coordinated to ensure local provision for all young people
- Supporting to partner organisations to deliver local services to young people
- Working with young people to ensure that they have a voice in decisions that affect them, both Highland wide and locally
- Support and develop achievement frameworks such as Excel, Duke of Edinburgh Award etc.

2.2 Examples of work in local areas are displayed in the foyer and in the presentation that accompanies this report. The following paragraphs highlight key examples against each policy heading.

2.3 Direct work with, and support of, young people in need.

Youth workers develop specific programmes to meet the needs of more vulnerable young people. This may include young people who require specific personal and social development opportunities in order to realise their potential.

Alternative Curriculum - Youth Work and Schools work together to engage pupils who are not responding to mainstream classes in alternative educational activities.

Streetwork - Youth workers in a number of areas have developed street work projects aimed at engaging with young people hanging around their communities. In Fort William, the Streetwork Project engages young people on the High Street offering advice and a link to youth and health services. The Police have also reported a reduction in anti-social behaviour.

***Future Focus** – Direct support for young people to prepare for work through the national 16 Plus Learning Choices scheme which will enable better joint planning and working with schools, Skills Development Scotland and the voluntary sector.*

2.4 Ensuring that a mix of Council work and work with partners is coordinated to ensure local provision for all young people.

Youth workers work directly with young people and their organisations. Amongst other things this provides direct diversionary activity will often result in the young people involved in local community based projects.

Extending Leisure Centre Hours - In Dingwall Integrated Learning Community

young people requested access to leisure facilities on a Friday night. Youth workers worked with staff from the local centre to allow reduced rate access to young people on a Friday night for a fifteen week period. Transport from the surrounding area was laid on. Following the success of the initial project funded by YouthLink Scotland, a further period was implemented.

Linking to Local Events - Battle for 4 Bella offered young people the opportunity to develop music skills and be given the opportunity to play at The Belladrum festival as well as, having a recording opportunity at UHI Recording studios, in addition other young people were able to attend a series of musical events which were designed for and by young people. This project was nominated for a Highland Council Quality Award.

Inverness Youth Forum put together a young people led showcase at the Inverness Highland Games with the aim of creating a “youth clan gathering”.

Future Focus – *Present the review of Leisure, Recreation and Development Opportunities for Young People at a December meeting and work with all Council services to act on its findings.*

2.5 Supporting to partner organisations to deliver local services to young people.

Youth workers take an overview of provision working with partners to ensure a range of opportunities for young people is available at a very local level.

Training - A programme of training and development opportunities for community based youth workers from both council and voluntary projects is being developed and rolled out within corporate areas. This has included Youth Achievement Award training where sessions have been held in each corporate area in the past year.

Multi Agency Working - The Place in Alness is a youth facility which is available to young people as a drop in. The youth worker has developed a range of partnerships with agencies that provide services for young people through the facility and supported by youth workers. Examples include Careers Scotland, NHS Highland, and Northern Constabulary. The facility, although remote from the school, also links to the school as a location for vocational learning and targeted provision.

Future Focus – *Further develop the training schedule maximising the opportunities for interaction between Council and voluntary sector youth workers and continue to channel youth work resources through Wards (£5k per ward) with the involvement of young people in decision making.*

2.6 Working with young people to ensure that they have a voice in decisions that affect them, both Highland wide and locally

Youth workers work with young people to allow their views to shape services

Ward Members and Ward Forum - Youth workers have been supporting young people to meet regularly with ward members and at ward forum meetings.

Youthbank - Youthbanks (young people led grant making), supported by youth workers, awarded approximately £90,000 to local youth projects and young people. In addition, this project allowed young people to develop a range of skills associated with the distribution of grants which assisted with the development of the four capacities outlined in a Curriculum for Excellence.

Highland Youth Voice - the youth parliament, meets twice a year to consider issues relevant to themselves. The executive committee meet on a six weekly basis to carry out the day to day working of the youth parliament. A recent paper on transport for the TECS committee agreed to address issues on school transport and for further steps to better communicate with young people be implemented.

Senior Pupils Interactive Consultation event - The youth development team and HYV schools campaign group implemented a consultation event with senior pupils to ask for comment on their school experiences. Senior Pupils Interactive Consultation Event (SPICE) took place in September 2008 and will take place again in September 2009. Every secondary school was asked to send at least two pupils to the event. Young people's views were collected on a wide variety of topics including curriculum, school buildings, PE and healthy lifestyles, achievement, ICT and school transport. The final report and findings of the event are being used to inform future developments within the service.

The Youth Convenor - Catriona Burns continues to represent the views of young people across Highland in a wide variety of settings connecting with both elected members and senior officials. A particular focus of Catriona's work has been building relationships between Services of the Council and partner agencies working with more excluded young people.

Campaigning - Local youth workers worked with one hundred young people in Lochaber to support their contribution to the A82 Campaign. Young people from this group joined others on the partnership to make presentation to fifteen MSP's and met with the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People. This has linked in with the work of the transport campaign group from HYV.

***Future focus** - The culture of engaging young people in The Council is well embedded. The future focus will be about continuing to ensure this has an impact on policy development and service delivery and widening engagement with Community Planning Partners. This will require for example the continued support of the Service Nominated Officers Group-SNO Patrol.*

2.7 Support and develop achievement frameworks.

A range of frameworks to encourage, record and reward young people's achievements are in place and being utilised in both youth work and school settings. These include Youth Achievement Award, Millennium Volunteers, John Muir Award, Duke of Edinburgh Award and Young Quality Scot Award.

Duke of Edinburgh Award - (DofE) As reported to the Highland Council meeting 25 June 2009 DofE is offered in forty-one groups across Highland, supported by over one hundred volunteers. Highland is a pilot for DofE within Curriculum for Excellence, which has resulted in every pupil within S3 in two secondary schools being offered the opportunity to take up the programme. The Dornoch

Academy DofE group has recently been filmed by Learning and Teaching Scotland as an example of good practice of the partnership between youth work and schools.

John Muir Award - Youth workers in Skye and Lochalsh have been developing a range of activities during the summer based around the John Muir Awards. 30 young people achieved their Discovery Award, 9 their Explorer Award with plans for 40 to achieve their Discovery Award, 10 their Explorer and 8 their Conserver Awards over this year.

Youth Achievement Awards - Two Integrated Learning Communities, Mallaig and Invergordon, are working on a Learning and Teaching Scotland pilot project looking at how the wider achievements of young people are recognised. In Mallaig the Youth Development Officer has been working with the school using Youth Achievement Awards as a mechanism for supporting young people to recognise their achievements in a variety of setting both within and outwith the school.

***Future Focus** - continue to expand the ways in which young people achievements can be recognised out with the exam system through the use of these achievement frameworks.*

3. Links to National Developments

3.1 Youth work services is a developing service whose direction is also influenced by national developments. Significant national developments include -

- Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), in particular Recognising Wider Achievement
- 16+ Learning Choices
- The National Skills Strategy
- Getting It Right For Every Child
- National Entitlement Card
- Inspection of Learning Communities by HMIE

Each of these developments highlights a role for youth work; the recognition of young people's achievement is highlighted with the council policy and is further supported by CfE and 16+ Learning Choices; the skills strategy encourages consideration of the employability skills as an overarching focus; GIRFEC, the integration of HMIE inspections in learning communities and national entitlement card all encourage joined up working between youth workers and other professionals in formal education and beyond.

Many of these national developments are a work in progress with implementation at the early or pilot stages and will require continued support.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The investment in youth work is now producing a consistent level of support for youth activity across Highland and is demonstrating significant added value to the work of schools. Some excellent examples of good practice are emerging. The future focus for each of the five areas of youth work provide guidance for the next phase of work, as well as the sharing of good practice.

5. Recommendation

5.1 Members are asked to

- Note the progress and examples under each of the five key areas of work.
- Agree the future focus under each.
- Note and comment on the examples of good practice.
- Note the widening expectations of the national agenda for youth work.
- Seek further reports outlining the developing local work and the national agenda and its impact on Council policies for youth work.

Signature:

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