

FEBUARY 18 MEETING

Purpose

To consider the effectiveness of the Wales Youth Agency in providing a corporate and strategic link *between government policy the youth service and the needs of young people*

This would be considered within a framework that has an understanding of:

1. The relationship between European, UK, National and Local Government policy
2. The clearly articulated purpose of the youth service that recognises its history and traditions, including its relationship with and within stated policy
3. The properly determined needs of young people
4. The contemporary social, economic and political context specific to Wales

Consideration of these issues is considered important at this time because of a number of crucial developments with the potential to affect the youth service in Wales in a fundamental way.

- f The policy of New Labour to promote policy driven by economic/social regeneration underpinned by social justice (Also an articulated policy of European government) and its developed/developing link with both *the youth service* and the *needs of young people*
- 4 The National Assembly (with its intent to create a national identity) and its ability to create secondary legislation
 - * The youth service debate in England with its potential to affect and influence developments in Wales (with its drive towards more formal arrangements with a wider and more diverse range of partners)
 - * European Structural Funds, including education and training objectives and their interface with *youth service provision* and their management to ensure compatibility with the *needs of young people*
 - * The changing needs of the field i.e. maintained youth service, voluntary youth service and the independent youth service (This issue requires us to consider how, in a corporate way, we deal with competing priorities and interests between these groups)
 - * The development of a Lifelong Learning culture focused on the *knowledge economy* and the concept of *creative learning*

There would seem to be a need for the Agency to be able, in a corporate sense, to help locate the youth service clearly with regard to both its purpose and its relationship with a wide range of related organisations. If we are unable to offer clarity and consistency on the values and purpose of the youth service at this time we may be in danger of being absorbed into areas of work that are inconsistent with our history and traditions.

It would seem appropriate within this environment to "check out" our corporate and strategic approach to a number of "key elements" of the work of the Wales Youth Agency e.g.

4 Research and Publications

* Advocacy

4 Policy Dissemination 4

Curriculum Development 4

Training

Consideration would need to be given to the prioritising of these and other issues within the current Operational Plan of the Wales Youth Agency. There is also a need to review current management systems including: 4 Quality Standard and Quality Assurance Systems 4 Management Supervision procedures

* Financial Management systems-including delegated budgets to Project Managers

I believe that there is also a need for us to examine and consider the values that drive our work and which would, given the right circumstances, cause us to question and challenge political dogma when it is in direct conflict with the work to which we are committed. This last point requires, I believe a debate that considers both the limits of our possible acquiescence to government policy and our corporate responsibility in challenging where necessary issues that do not sit comfortably within the youth service or the culture of the Wales Youth Agency.