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MEETING	DECISION SESSION - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES
DATE	25 JANUARY 2010
PRESENT	COUNCILLOR RUNCIMAN (EXECUTIVE MEMBER)

### **32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Executive Member was invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests she might have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

### **33. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services Decision Session held on 12 January 2010 be approved and signed as a correct record.

### **34. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/OTHER SPEAKERS**

Ben Drake spoke on behalf of Unison and Aspect regarding the proposed cuts to the arts consultants posts. He raised the following issues of concern:

- There had been a lack of consultation, and the timescale for making representation had been totally inadequate. There had been no informal consultation to identify other options for saving money.
- The proposal stated that three consultant posts would be redundant and yet staff would be appointed to undertake project work. This was not lawful and legal advice was being sought on this matter.
- The service was greatly valued, as evidenced by the number of representations that had been received in the short timescale since the proposal was put forward. The service also contributed to a number of statutory requirements and directorate priorities. It had not been identified how this work would be delivered and paid for.

Unison and Aspect requested that the proposal be referred back to the Directorate in order that the process of proper informed consultation could take place with staff and to identify alternative savings.

The Executive Member was presented with additional written representation that had been received by Unison.

Tina Wright, drama teacher, expressed concern at the proposal to cut the arts consultants posts. She expressed concern that the arts were to be the only teachers to be deprived of an invaluable source of support. The proposal would affect parents, teachers and, above all, the children whose lives were enriched by this provision. She quoted from a teacher at Applefields School and from the Head of Drama at Manor School who paid

tribute to the work that the arts consultants carried out. The Executive Member's attention was also drawn to the role that the arts consultants played in respect of the Arts Award and of the many events and cultural opportunities that they arranged for young people. Reference was also made to Sir Michael Bichard's comments in his address to the North of England Education Conference regarding the need for education to help children to develop their own creativity. The Executive Member was asked to consider the implications of the proposed decision and the impact that it would have on the creativity of many young people.

Liz Wilson, Chief Executive of York Theatre Royal, spoke against the proposal to cut the arts consultants posts. She paid tribute to the benefits that they brought to the city as a whole and the cross-curricular work that they carried out. Their posts enabled the city to have cost effective access to expertise as they had a depth of knowledge and practitioner skills. They were also in touch with developments in the arts both nationally and internationally. They were a key factor in the high number of schools in the city that had achieved the Artsmark Award. The council was requested to reconsider the proposal in view of the disproportionate effect that it would have on the community.

The Executive Member thanked the speakers for their contribution. Thanks were also expressed to those who had submitted written representation in respect of the proposals or who had attended the meeting.

### **35. REVENUE BUDGET ESTIMATES 2010/11**

The Executive Member received a report as part of the consultation on the 2010/11 budget process. The report presented the budget proposals for Children and Young People's Services and included:

- The revenue budget for 2009/10 (Annex 1 of the report) to show the original budgets
- The base budget for 2010/11 including the 2009/10 budget rolled forward and adjusted
- The cost of pay and price increases, increments and settlement of pay and grading appeals for the portfolio
- Budget service pressure costs and savings proposals for the portfolio area (Annexes 2 and 3 of the report)
- Fees and charges proposals (Annex 4 of the report)
- Residential Homes, Foster Carers, Sharing Care, Adoption and Residence Order Weekly Allowances (Annex 5 of the report)

Full details of the budget would be considered by the Executive on 16 February 2010 and then Budget Council on 25 February 2010. The report sought the comments of the Executive Member on the proposals put forward.

The Executive Member stated that the budget for 2010/11 was being considered at a time of worldwide recession and of great financial stringency for both national and local government. The focus had to be on the council's core functions, the statutory services, front line delivery and

working to maintain excellent services. Following the Baby P case there had been an increase nationally in the number of children coming into care and this had financial implications in terms of the costs of care and court costs. There were particular pressures on the directorate in respect of children's social care costs and it was proposed to make significant investment in this area. These children had no voice in the public arena and it was the council's duty to care for them.

The Director gave an update on the directorate's financial position and areas on which there were significant financial pressures. He stated that it was acknowledged that the work that the arts consultants carried out was of a high quality but the issue was one of prioritisation.

Officers went through the key issues in the report.

The Executive Member stated that she had a longstanding commitment to the arts but that the council had a responsibility to the children in its care. The representation that had been received would be forwarded to the Executive. The Director would be asked to look at other options for funding the arts consultants posts and to write to schools to advise them that the services of the arts consultants could be purchased directly by schools.

- RESOLVED: (i) That it be confirmed that the proposals were in line with the council's priorities.
- (ii) That the report be referred to the Executive for consideration.
- (iii) That the written and verbal representations made to the Executive Member be taken into consideration when the Executive considers the final budget proposals.
- (iv) That a letter be sent by the Director to all schools to outline the budget constraints and to point out that the services of the Arts Consultants could be purchased directly by the schools<sup>1</sup>.
- (v) That the Director be requested to investigate alternative options for funding the Arts Consultants posts<sup>1</sup>.

REASON: As part of the consultation on the Children & Young People's Services budget for 2010/11.

Action Required

1. Director to send letter to schools and explore funding options PD

Councillor C Runciman, Chair  
[The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 4.40 pm].