

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to the Cabinet

Meeting Date: 24 October 2017
Cabinet Member: Councillor Craig ab Iago
Contact Officer: Catrin Thomas
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Item Title: Re-Modelling the Youth Service

1. DECISION SOUGHT.

1.1 The Cabinet accept the report.

1.2 The Cabinet authorises the Head of Economy and Community to undertake a consultation on the future direction for the Youth Service, based on Option 3 being the preferred option.

2. REASON WHY DECISION IS NEEDED.

2.1 A review of the Youth Service has been completed which identifies the need for change, options for future re-modelling, and recommendations as to the preferred option, and these are presented in this report. The Cabinet are asked to consider the report, and the options prior to conduct a consultation, before taking a final decision on the re-modelling.

3. INTRODUCTION.

3.1 The provision of Youth Support Services is a statutory requirement under the Learning and Skills Act 2000. Welsh Government directs local authorities to provide, ensure provision or contribute to the provision of Youth Support Services. Welsh Government provides direction for Youth Work and Local Authority's Youth Services via the "Extending Entitlement Guidance (2002)", Wales Youth Work Strategy 2014-2018, The Youth Engagement and Framework 2015-2018, and the Youth Charter 2016.

3.2 Youth Support Services contribute towards supporting and sustaining young people through their adolescent years to adulthood (11-25 years old). Young People receive Youth Support Services in Gwynedd from a variety of organisations which includes the Information Service (Gwynedd-Ni), health services, youth service, education, training and careers services, housing services, and access to travel and transport services. In addition, for those young people who require a little more help there are specialist support services available which include children's social services, youth justice and

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police service, benefits services and advice services such as Barnados, Childline, NSPCC, Action for Children and others.

3.3 In addition to the Youth Support Services there are a number of activities, clubs, and societies for young people throughout the county that brings young people together based on their interests, and to socialise with their peers independently from their parents / guardians and their families. These include opportunities such as sports clubs, choirs, arts groups, Urdd, Chapel and Church Youth Groups, cadets, Young Farmers Clubs.

4. REASON AND JUSTIFICATION BEHIND THE DECISION.

4.1 A review of the Youth Service was undertaken during 2015-2017. See appendix 1 for a report on the review.

4.2 The Review has looked at the current Youth Service and started gathering opinions and ideas about the direction for the service to the future. The review has included an engagement process with service users, young people, internal and external partners, schools, and organisations that currently receive a grant from the service, to ensure their input to the review and to shape the options for the future.

4.2 The Review has identified a number of challenges facing the Youth Service:

4.2.1 Ability to respond to what's important to young people.

During the engagement process with young people (via Youth Club Evaluations, focus groups, questionnaires etc.) they reported that the following matters were important to them – safety, self-image, sexuality and healthy relationships, health and emotional well-being, developing skills not gained at school or at home, developing communication skills and work readiness skills. Young people also reported that socialising and having fun with friends were also important to them (See 3.2.3 of Appendix 1).

Engagement with partners and other services that support young people have stated that the Youth Service has a role and a contribution towards the preventative agenda, because Youth Workers could be in a position to engage, support and work with young people in informal settings to tackle issues.

4.2.2 The need to respond to changes in the strategic / policy context for Youth Work.

There is no change to the statutory requirement as outlined under the Learning and Skills Act 2000, however, Welsh Government direction and guidance has seen a change of emphasis for local authority youth services to support young people with learning and education. There has also been an increase on the emphasis on supporting young people, 16 years and over, who are not in education, training or work (see 3.1 of appendix 1).

4.2.3 Meeting the changes in population trends.

The review has found that issues such as health (e.g. pregnancy rates, substance misuse), mental well-being (e.g. mental health referrals) are on an increase in this age group, 11-

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25, in Gwynedd. (See 3.2 of Appendix 1). Young people who participated in the engagement process confirmed the trends identified by the data.

4.2.4 Capacity to recruit and develop the workforce.

The review, by engaging with staff, assessing business plans and risk register has identified that recruiting, developing, training and administrating a large sessional workforce is challenging. Currently the Service employs 100 youth workers who work between 3, 6 or 9 hours per week, and it is increasingly difficult to recruit new people to these types of role. This sessional staffing structure means here is little flexibility for the youth workers to respond to the needs of young people outside of the hours / nights contracted to run a youth club. Young people's feedback stated that they wish to gain access to youth workers at school, in their community and at times convenient to them such as weekends, school holidays, after school and evenings.

4.2.5 Deliver within Budget.

The review has considered the consultation and decision taken through Challenge Gwynedd. The Council, March 2016, decided to cut the Youth Service budget by £200,000, in addition to an efficiency savings target of £70,000. (See 3.3.6 of Appendix 1). This decision means that the Youth Service in its current form cannot be an option for the future. This review, and the engagement work with stakeholders to identify ways of responding to the challenges above has been done within this financial context.

4.3 The review and the feedback from the engagement process suggests that the Youth Service for the future should concentrate on helping young people to learn and develop their personal, social and educational skills within informal settings – to ensure that they engage fully with their education or training, they are prepared for the world of work, and they can contribute fully to their community.

4.4 The review, the feedback from the engagement process, and the feedback and decision of Challenge Gwynedd have been used to identify options for the future re-modelling of the youth service.

4.5 A long list of options has been identified, but on their own none of these options on their own would meet the reduction in the budget, for example:

- Reduce or Stop Grant funding to the third sector
- Cut the Youth Bus
- Stop the Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Change caretaking and property management
- Reduce or remove mini bus fleet.

4.6 There are 4 options for the Cabinet to consider, which are:

| | What is it? | How would it look? |
|----------|--|---|
| Option 1 | Continue to provide the same, but less of it (close some youth clubs | Continue to run 10 Youth Clubs in <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Maesgeirchen2. Caernarfon |

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| | | |
|-----------------|--|--|
| | <p>and reduce the grant given to the third sector)</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Bethesda 4. Dyffryn Nantlle 5. Pwllheli 6. Porthmadog 7. Blaenau Ffestiniog 8. Dolgellau 9. Tywyn 10. Bala <p>Youth Club provision will be available School Term only.</p> <p>The same will be offered to all 11-25 year olds.</p> <p>A reduction of 50% grant to the third sector.</p> |
| <p>Option 2</p> | <p>Continue to provide the same, but less of it (close more youth clubs) and no grant given to the third sector.</p> | <p>Run 14 Youth Clubs in</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maesgeirchen 2. Bangor 3. Caernarfon 4. Bethesda 5. Llanrug 6. Dyffryn Nantlle 7. Botwnnog 8. Pwllheli 9. Porthmadog 10. Blaenau Ffestiniog 11. Harlech 12. Tywyn 13. Dolgellau 14. Bala <p>Youth Club provision will be available School Term only.</p> <p>The same will be offered to all 11-25 year olds.</p> <p>No grant to third sector.</p> |
| <p>Option 3</p> | <p>Provide in a different way, by a Programme of Activities and Projects that goes from location to location throughout the county, and commission additional activities from external partners.</p> | <p>A County Wide Club which delivers a programme of activities and projects in school and in the community for 11-19 year olds throughout the year.</p> <p>Youth Worker attached to every high school.</p> <p>Personal Support provided to 16-25 year olds who</p> |

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| | | |
|----------|---|--|
| | | <p>are facing barriers to education, training or work.</p> <p>Commission the third sector to deliver activities and projects on behalf of the Youth Service to meet specific needs.</p> |
| Option 4 | <p>Provide in a different way, by a Programme of Activities and Projects that goes from location to location throughout the county, and establish a community grant for third sector organisations to provide opportunities for young people.</p> | <p>A County Wide Club which delivers a programme of activities and projects in school and in the community for 11-19 year olds throughout the year.</p> <p>Youth Worker attached to every high school., but contact would be less than option 3.</p> <p>Personal Support provided to 16-25 year olds who are facing barriers to education, training or work.</p> <p>A Community grant of (£40k) through Cist Gwynedd open to third sector organisations to fund activities for young people.</p> |

4.7 An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared (see appendix 2) and has identified the following possible impacts:

- Every option will have a negative impact on 11-16 year olds due to the reduction of provision available.
- Option 3 and 4 will have a positive impact upon the 16-25-year-old group because it will deliver a specific service to target needs.
- Option 1 and 2 will have an impact on specific communities (28 to 32 communities) but will have a positive impact in 10 to 14 communities where a Club will be located.
- Option 3 and 4 could have a negative impact in 42 communities by moving away from running clubs – seen as less provision. But could have a positive impact in communities where the service would deliver activities and projects as part of its annual programme.
- Every option could have an impact upon groups with equality characteristics.
- Every option could have a negative impact upon Welsh Speakers due to a reduction in the opportunities for them to use Welsh in social settings.
- Option 3 and 4 would have greater impact upon disadvantaged communities.

4.8 Every Option could be a means to promote the Futures Generations Act’s objectives amongst young people in Gwynedd. The Youth Service could support young people to develop activities and projects that contribute towards these objectives. However, Option 3 and 4 are the only options that embraces the Act’s new way of working. Under option 3 and 4, the Youth Service, would be expected to co-design, integrate and jointly deliver interventions with other organisations. Under Option 3 and 4, the Youth Service would

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also support young people to identify answers and solutions to those matters that affect them and their communities.

4.9 The 4 options have been assessed against the following criteria:

- Ability to meet the need of young people, and the changes affecting this age group / demography.
- Ability to deliver the local direction required of the service to the future, including meeting the statutory requirement, and changes to policy and strategic direction.
- Meets current budget and best placed for future financial context.
- Can respond to the challenges of recruiting and developing a safe workforce.
- Has the least negative equality impact and best mitigating actions. The assessment has also taken into consideration the spatial impact of the options, and their impacts on the third sector because these were identified during the review as matters that needed attention.

4.10 The full assessment can be seen in appendix 3, and the results are listed below:

| | Option 1 | Option 2 | Option 3 | Option 4 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Meets young people's needs (young peoples, opinions, trends) | | | | |
| Responds to the context (policy, strategic and statutory) | | | | |
| Meets the budget (affordability and sustainability) | | | | |
| Recruit Safe Workforce (recruit, training and staffing) | | | | |
| Impact Assessment (equalities, social, third sector) | | | | |

4.11 Based on the assessment, Option 3 is the preferred option because:

- It best meets the needs of young people, and brings results to individuals.
- Best meets the context, and best placed to respond to policy and strategic direction.
- Has some negative impacts that can be mitigated, and also has some positive impacts.
- This provides the best option to respond to recruiting, training and sustaining a workforce for the future.
- Meets the current budget cuts and best for future financial context.

5. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE.

5.1 Undertake a consultation to gather the opinion of 11-25 year olds and other stakeholders on the options during November – December 2017 for six weeks. It is

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intended to use digital and social media as the main format of consultation (but provision will be made for other formats as required).

5.2 Present an item to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee in January 2018.

5.3 Present an item to the Cabinet for final decision in February / March 2018.

6. VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS.

Head of Finance:

“A decision has been taken that the Youth Service would deliver a financial saving of £270,000. I can confirm that option 3, as the preferred option here, is affordable within the budget, and the financial saving having been realized. I note that the remodelling will be subject to discussion and consultation.”

Monitoring Officer:

“It is appropriate that the Cabinet consults on the proposed direction for the service before making a decision. There are legal requirements concerning consultation processes. However, it is appropriate to identify a preferred option and the factors that lead to this within such a process. After completing the consultation, the Cabinet will be required to evaluate the results, together with all other factors that are relevant to the decision before establishing the final way forward.”