

MEETING	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
DATE	8/10/2026
TITLE	The Youth Service's 5-Year Strategy
REASON TO SCRUTINISE	Council Plan 2023-28 - Gwynedd Yfory (Tomorrow's Gwynedd)
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CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Dewi Jones

1. Why it needs scrutiny?

- 1.1. This Strategy is part of a project to extend opportunities for play and socialising for the county's children and young people that has been included in the Council Plan.
- 1.2. All local authorities are required to draft a five-year strategic plan for their area. The main purpose of the strategic plan is to state the objectives in terms of youth work for that period. The objectives must be based on evidence of needs and represent the main focus areas to develop youth work over the plan's period.
- 1.3. Scrutiny of the draft strategy will be an opportunity for the Committee to give its input prior to the adoption of the Strategy.

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

- 2.1. The forward scrutiny of the Strategy will allow the Committee to consider the content of the Youth Service's 5-Year Strategy and to offer observations.

3. Summary of the Key Matters

- 3.1. The Youth Service is included as one of the priorities of the Council Plan, under the Tomorrow's Gwynedd project - which includes the ambition to ensure that play areas and suitable facilities are available for children and young people in their leisure time.
- 3.2. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the content of the Youth Service's Five-year Strategy and to give guidance regarding the future work direction of the Youth Service.
- 3.3. The strategy notes several key strategic priorities, including:

- to promote the voice of young people and ensure that they can influence decisions;
 - support the mental health and well-being of young people;
 - early intervention to stop homelessness among young people;
 - extend opportunities to volunteer and participate;
 - ensure equitable access to youth work provision throughout the county.
- 3.4. The Strategy emphasises the importance of working in partnership across the agencies. This will build on the current joint working with schools, Council services, the third sector and regional and national organisations, with the aim of improving outcomes for young people.
- 3.5. The Strategy also includes clear arrangements to monitor and evaluate progress. Performance measurements and milestones will be used to assess any progress made and to ensure that the Service can respond to the changing needs of young people throughout the Strategy's period.

4. Background / Context

- 4.1. The five-year Youth Work Strategy has been developed in response to the changing needs of young people, social and economic changes, and the national expectations of the Welsh Government for youth work provision. The Strategy provides a framework for developing and directing Youth Work over the period 2027-2032.
- 4.2. A comprehensive process of engagement and consulting young people, schools, volunteer organisations, statutory partners and local stakeholders was undertaken to ensure that the Strategy's priorities reflect the needs and ambitions of the young people of Gwynedd.
- 4.3. The Strategy builds upon the strengths of the current provision that includes community youth work, provision in schools, targeted projects, volunteering opportunities, the Duke of Edinburgh Award and extensive partnership work across the county.
- 4.4. Seven strategic objectives have been noted for the period 2027-2032, focusing on the following areas:
- Support the mental health and well-being of young people,
 - Improve employability and develop skills,
 - Reduce inequalities and increase opportunities,
 - Strengthen community and volunteering opportunities,
 - Promote the voice and participation of young people,
 - Develop and maintain a skilful and sustainable workforce,
 - Promote and strengthen the use of Welsh in all aspects of the Service's work.
- 4.5. The Strategy supports the wider aims of the Council's Plan and national priorities for youth work, trying to ensure that every young person in

Gwynedd has access to support, opportunities and positive experiences that enable them to reach their potential.

5. Consultation

- 5.1. A comprehensive consultation programme was carried out with organisations and voluntary partners when developing the Strategy. The aim was to ensure that the Strategy reflected the needs of the young people of Gwynedd and took advantage of the expertise and experience of the organisations who work with them daily.
- 5.2. As part of the process, a series of consultation workshops were arranged in six locations across Gwynedd, namely Caernarfon, Bangor, Bala, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Pwllheli and Tywyn. A wide range of partners were invited, including voluntary organisations, youth work providers, community organisations, statutory partners and other stakeholders who work with young people aged between 11 and 25 years old.
- 5.3. The workshops were an opportunity to share information about *Youth Work in Wales: Delivering for Young People*, discussing and challenging some of the common myths about youth work, and providing a background to the process of developing of the new Strategy. The facilitation sessions afforded participants the opportunity to provide feedback, contribute ideas, discuss local challenges and identify priorities for the next strategic phase.
- 5.4. In addition to the workshops, the Gwynedd Youth Network was used as a platform to engage with partners and ensure that there were ongoing opportunities to contribute to the development of the Strategy. The responses received showed a strong consensus on many key priorities.

Partners emphasised the importance of ensuring equitable access to youth work opportunities throughout the county, including in rural communities. The need was also noted to strengthen collaboration between organisations, improve communication and information sharing, and increase opportunities for young people to participate in decisions that affect them.

- 5.5. The value of youth work as a medium to support health and well-being, develop skills, build resilience and promote community participation was highlighted. Attention was also drawn to the need to ensure that services and activities are inclusive and accessible to every young person, including those facing socio-economic, geographical or personal barriers.

- 5.6. The feedback gathered through the workshops and discussions with partners was used to inform the Strategy's priorities, objectives and actions. Consequently, the Strategy reflects the direct contribution of voluntary organisations and local partners and provides a strong foundation for continuous collaboration during its implementation period.

6. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 6.1. The Strategy builds upon the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by supporting personal development, learning and the participation of young people. By implementing the five ways of working, the Youth Service contributes positively to the seven well-being goals, helping to create healthier, more equitable, resilient and connected communities.
- 6.2. The Strategy adopts the long-term needs of young people, by focusing on developing skills, resilience and opportunities that enable young people to thrive in education, employment and community life. Service decisions and priorities are based on evidence, local and national data, together with input from partners and young people themselves.
- 6.3. Have you involved residents / service users? If not, when and how do you intend to consult them?

Young people, schools and stakeholders have contributed directly to the Strategy's development through a comprehensive programme of engagement, comprising local workshops, questionnaires, group discussions and forums such as 'Llais Pobl Ifanc'. This participatory method has ensured that views, experiences and the needs of young people have informed the priorities and the actions noted in the Strategy.

- 6.4. How have you considered the long term and what will people's needs be in years to come?

The Youth Service is also considering the long-term needs of young people by adopting a strategic method that focuses on developing skills, resilience and opportunities that prepare them for the future. The Service uses a wide range of evidence to inform its plans, including questionnaires, 'Llais Pobl Ifanc' forums, engagement with partners, performance data and information about social and economic trends.

By working with partners in education, employment, health (through SHRN findings) and support services, the Strategy seeks to ensure that young people receive appropriate support and resources to develop to become

confident, resilient and responsible adults. This method enables the Service to foresee and respond to changing needs over time, contributing to the long-term well-being of individuals and communities.

- 6.5. To ensure integration, have you considered the potential impact on other public bodies?

The Strategy supports and complements the aims of several services and partner organisations including schools, health services, social services, housing services, employability and third sector organisations. By strengthening collaboration arrangements, sharing information and coordinating activity, the Strategy contributes to providing more effective services and towards improving outcomes for young people throughout Gwynedd.

The Strategy places a strong emphasis on early intervention and prevention. The priorities noted in the Strategy include supporting mental health and well-being, reducing the risk of social isolation, preventing homelessness among young people, reducing the risk of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), and developing personal and social skills.

By providing support, activities and positive opportunities early on, the Youth Service helps young people to develop the skills and resilience they need to overcome challenges. As well as improving individual outcomes, this preventative method contributes to reducing the long-term demand on statutory services.

7. Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and the Socio-Economic Duty

- 7.1. In developing the Five-year Youth Work Strategy, consideration was given to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Reducing inequalities in access to youth work has been noted as one of the strategic aims of the Strategy. The Strategy is committed to ensuring that every young person, whatever their background or circumstances, can benefit from youth work opportunities and services. This includes young people with disabilities, additional learning needs, those who have been looked after, or those living in rural or communities that are at risk of being disadvantaged areas.
- 7.2. Full consideration has been given to the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 when developing the Strategy. Promoting and increasing the social use of Welsh among young people has been noted as one of strategic aims of the Strategy. The Youth Service will

continue to provide Welsh-medium and bilingual activities and services, creating opportunities for young people to use Welsh in community, social, cultural and volunteering activities.

- 7.3. Attention was given to the Socio-Economic Duty by ensuring that the Strategy prioritises support for young people who face socio-economic challenges, the risk of being NEET, or challenges such as homelessness. The Strategy includes actions to improve employability, develop skills, expanding community opportunities and ensuring access to services for those most in need.

By implementing the priorities noted in the Strategy, it is expected that this will contribute to creating more equal opportunities for young people throughout Gwynedd, promoting Welsh as a living language within communities, and reducing the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on life opportunities for young people in the long-term.

8. Next Steps

- 8.1. Following the scrutiny process and approval, the Five-year Youth Work Strategy will be completed and submitted to the Welsh Government, including any amendments, observations or recommendations received from the Scrutiny Committee.
- 8.2. Appropriate governance and monitoring arrangements will be established to support the implementation of the Strategy. This will include regular meetings of the Gwynedd Youth Work Strategic Group and the Gwynedd Youth Network to supervise progress, review performance and ensure effective collaboration between partners.
- 8.3. To support the delivery of the strategic aims a detailed Action Plan will be developed. This plan will note specific actions, responsibilities, timeframes, targets and performance measures to be able to monitor progress and evaluate the impact of the Strategy on the young people of Gwynedd over the period 2027-2032.

The Youth Service will continue to engage with young people, partners and stakeholders throughout the Strategy's operational period to ensure that services continue to respond to the changing needs of young people and to reflect local and national priorities that develop over time.

9. Background Information

[Youth Work in Wales: Delivering for Young People https://www.gov.wales/youth-work-wales-delivering-young-people-html](https://www.gov.wales/youth-work-wales-delivering-young-people-html)

<https://www.cwvys.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/GWAITH-IEUENCTID-YNG-NGHYMRU-EGWYDDORION-A-DIBENION.pdf>

Appendices

- Youth Service's Draft 5-year Strategy
- Q+A - Additional Questions by the Scrutiny Committee