

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Services Scrutiny Committee
DATE OF MEETING	31 July 2012
TITLE OF ITEM	Review of the Youth Service
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Paul Thomas

1. Background and Context

1.1 An Improvement Working Group was established by Gwynedd Council's Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 5 June 2008 with the aim of:- "Holding a full review of the Council's Youth Service", including:

- Researching and analysing information about the current implementation of the Service
- Responding to the findings of the Estyn reports
- Assessing the provision for young people by other organisations in Gwynedd
- Being aware of good practices in other areas and within various organisations
- Discussing and finding savings and cuts

1.2 The Improvement Working Group submitted its report along with 21 recommendations for the future to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 17 December 2009.

1.3 The report was accepted by the Scrutiny Committee and the Youth Service adopted a 5 Year Action Plan.

1.4 The 5 Year Plan is a challenging plan which combines a programme of efficiency improvements and a programme of business transformation. The plan has begun by focussing on establishing systems and processes for gathering information, rationalising property and resources before proceeding towards managing change in the structure and provision of the service on the basis of five areas.

1.5 The Youth Service has been reporting back to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee annually on the progress against the 5 Year Plan. The Plan was reviewed following the feedback provided.

2. Gwynedd Youth Service

2.1 Youth Work is defined as a service that offers personal and social education opportunities for young people between the ages of 11-25.

2.2 Youth Workers have a unique relationship with young people with a primary focus on identifying the individual issues that affect their personal and social development and assisting them to achieve their potential.

2.3 Youth Work is driven by the voluntary principle which acknowledges that young people have the right to chose whether or not they are going to participate in youth work provision. All work with young people is based on a trusting and credible voluntary relationship, unlike relationships with other professionals such as teaching, the workplace or the courts.

2.4 The purpose of the Youth Work is to:

- Encourage and promote opportunities for every young person so that they can achieve their potential as powerful individuals and as members of groups and communities
- Support young people through significant changes in their lives, and assist them to understand their rights and responsibilities
- Encourage young people to develop information, knowledge, mental attitudes and values that enable them to make constructive use of their skills, resources and time.

2.5 Youth Work through its practice should:

- Promote opportunities and access for all young people whatever their race, gender, sexual identity, language, religion, disability, age, background or personal circumstances
- Challenge oppression and inequality
- Recognise the importance and value of the Welsh language and the need to promote it's use
- Recognise the importance of sustainable development
- Recognise that citizenship encompasses responsibilities and rights as global as well as local and national citizens

2.6 Youth Work through its voluntary relationship with young people, offers inclusive opportunities for learning that are:-

- Educational – Enabling young people to gain skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values needed to identify, advocate and pursue their rights and responsibilities as individuals and as members of groups and communities, locally, nationally and internationally. The learning stems from the way a youth worker sees and opportunity in everyday situations to enable young people to learn informally. Accreditation is not a priority. Accreditation is of

highest value when it enables young people to develop their understanding of what they have learnt.

- Expressive – Encouraging and enabling young people to express their emotions and aspirations, through creative, sporting and challenging opportunities which raise awareness of the following:
 - Cultural identity
 - Bilingualism and the value of one's own language
 - Heritage
 - Respect and Diversity
 - Citizenship and respect for others
- Participative – Where young people are encouraged to share responsibility and to become equal partners, fundamental to the learning processes and decision-making structures which affect their own and other people's lives and environments.
- Empowering – Encouraging and enabling young people to understand their rights and responsibilities so that they, as responsible citizens of the communities of which they are part of, are able to engage with the personal, social and political issues which affect their lives and the lives of others.

2.7 Youth Work is not:

- When enforcement is required
- When young people beyond the ages of 11-25 are included
- When the same activity is reiterated year after year
- If the main aim is to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour
- When it is formal education in a classroom lesson
- When it is a sport club/ snooker club etc.

3. 5 Year Action Plan

The 5 Year Action Plan is attached in Appendix 1

3.1 First Year 2009-10 (Academic year) Achievement

- Adopting new aim and objectives for the Service
- Establishing service level agreements with the Urdd and Young Farmers
- Co-ordinating Youth Work Training in the county by offering a 'Youth Work' Training Package to the third sector
- Holding a Agored Cymru Level 1 course for Older Members
- Offering Agored Cymru accreditations
- Appointing an Accreditations Worker
- Establishing and offering Duke of Edinburgh Awards
- Establishing and offering John Muir awards
- Offering the service of a Youth Worker in a school in three catchment areas.
- Targeting areas of need – Marchog, South Pwllheli, Peblig and Blaenau Ffestiniog.

- Targeting a grant to appoint a Youth Bus Worker
- Adopting the QES information collecting system

The effect of the Achievement of the First Year on the Young People of Gwynedd:-

- 16 older members achieving Agored Cymru Level 1 accreditation
- 146 accreditation completed in the Bangor catchment area
- 15 accreditation completed in the Dwyfor catchment area
- 8 young people completed and achieved Bronze Level Duke of Edinburgh Award
- 5 young people completed and achieved the John Muir Award
- 10 NEET young people supported in weekly engagement sessions
- The Mobile Bus Service has visited 17 communities

3.2 Second Year 2010-11 (Academic year) Achievement

- The Services' Youth Workers qualifying in an Outdoor Cards course
- Extending the accreditations provision to new areas of the County
- Targeting European resources to broaden the Youth Workers' network in Schools
- Extending the provision to target more areas in need, namely Talysarn and Barmouth
- Holding Duke of Edinburgh Award courses for youth workers and secondary school teachers
- Discussions on transferring and disposing of vacant buildings are ongoing, specifically for Dinorwic and Llanllechid.
- Strengthening consultation arrangements with young people
- Setting a target for each youth club to establish a forum and/or members committee in order to include young people to control and influence their club.

The effect of the Achievements of the Second Year on the Young People of Gwynedd:-

- The young people of Gwynedd gaining new experiences e.g. participating in BBC Radio Cymru's Battle of the Bands competition, establishing gardening clubs, dancing clubs, outdoor clubs.
- The young people of Gwynedd who are at risk of disillusion with access to informal learning through the network of five Youth Workers in schools.
- The young people of Gwynedd receiving opportunities to gain qualifications.
- 86% of older members (13 in total) have completed a Level 1 Older Member course
- 80% of older members (8 in total) have completed Level 2 Youth Work course

- 16 young people from Deiniolen and 11 young people from Pwllheli have completed a NICAS Level 1 accreditation in Climbing.
- 4 young people from Tywyn have completed a Level 1 accreditation in Creative Writing
- 17 young people from Bangor have completed and achieved the John Muir Award
- 5 young people from Barmouth have completed and achieved the John Muir Award
- 9 young people from Tywyn have completed and achieved the John Muir Award
- 48 young people have completed the Duke of Edinburgh Award
- 6 clubs have extended their opening times for an additional seven weeks
- 5 youth clubs and 2 School Projects have received a Clywed certificate – listening to the voice of young people
- 9 NEET young people are supported in Maesgeirchen
- 144 Agored Cymru accreditations completed in the Bangor catchment area, 47 in Pwllheli and 12 in Tywyn.
- The QES Information Collection System holding the details of 1307 young people.

3.3 The Plan is now in its third active year 2011-12 (academic year). A progress report is included in appendix 2 on the progress of the third year thus far.

4. Looking to the Future

4.1 The Youth Service has just participated in Estyn's mock Inspection (July 2012). The Service will use the feedback from that inspection to review the Action Plan for the coming year.

4.2 The Service will review the Action Plan during its self-assessment in September 2012. The feedback from this Committee will be used as part of that self-assessment.