

Appendix 5 - Initial comments from the Youth Service Scrutiny Group.

A group of four members from the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee have met with Catrin Thomas, Community Learning and Economy Senior Manager, on two occasions to understand the current situation regarding youth service provision. Information was presented on the following:

- The context and the development behind the need to change youth service provision.
- Clarity around the financial situation, as a previous decision has meant the service must meet a saving target of £270,000.
- The options that were considered by the Cabinet and the decision to consult on the favoured option, which is option 3.

In addition, there was an opportunity to discuss the draft results of the consultation.

The members of the group wish to thank Catrin Thomas for her time and work up to now.

It should be acknowledged that members hold differing opinions, and that concluding on what is best for young people in Gwynedd varies among members. The situation is also very complex, as the service needs to meet a saving target of £270,000. As a result, any proposed solution will mean that the service provision cannot stay the same; even though some members wish for that to happen. Furthermore, it was recognised that some young people in Gwynedd will benefit, and some will lose the service in the way they currently receive it.

It should also be noted that the group were not unanimous in their opinion regarding a way forward for the service, with some members factoring in local considerations. It is also true to state that there is no simple solution for this situation, as the initial comments from the consultation showing that some were positive about the change, but others had negative responses to the proposal in option 3.

However, the following comments were noted by the Scrutiny Group for the consideration of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee:

- There is recognition that a number of exemplary responses were received from the consultation, in particular among young people between the ages of 11-15, which should be praised. The group was of the opinion that the number of responses reflects the level of interest and the importance of the service for the young people of the county.
- There was an agreement with the suggested direction regarding to what the Youth Service should focus on, which is developing skills, personal development, and health and wellbeing support. It was also agreed that different services should be offered to young people aged 11-19 (a programme of fun activities) and those over 16 (one to one support).
- The members of the group wish to note that the Urdd's and the Young Farmers' contribution to the culture and the Welsh language in the county has already been recognised by the Cabinet. As the favoured option recommends not giving a grant from the Youth Service budget to these organisation, the group wish to challenge

how Gwynedd Council will support these organisation to deliver social opportunities in the Welsh language?

- There is concern that the decision to cut the budget was done before hand, without any information on a specific plan and its impact on Gwynedd residents.
- The members of the group was of the opinion that if the Cabinet decides to move forward with the preferred option, it should revised to meet some of the feedback from the consultation and the group's concern that the Youth Service is moving away from providing a safe space for young people to socialise in, that is the traditional club. The Youth Service should consider presenting a proposal to every town and community council asking if they wish to contribute towards continuing to run a Youth Club in their area, and to consider keeping some of the budget to support volunteers to set up voluntary youth clubs.