

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Thursday 17 October 2024

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Baggaley, Blackham, A. Carter, McKiernan, Sheppard and Tinsley.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Bacon, Keenan, Knight and Marshall.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

43. WELCOME FROM COUNCILLOR STEELE, CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Councillor Steele, Chair, welcomed everyone to the special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board which was once again supporting the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge (CCTOC) by working with Rotherham Youth Cabinet (RYC), many of who were present today.

He introduced Alex G, who would be taking over as Chair of this meeting, but before he handed over a warm welcome was also afforded to officers, Cabinet Members and others from outside organisations.

It was noted that this meeting was not streamed live and the recording would only be kept for training purposes only for the young people participating.

(Alex G assumed the Chair)

44. INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION FROM ROTHERHAM YOUTH CABINET - HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Chair, Alex G, introduced herself and confirmed she had been a member of the Youth Cabinet since February. She issued a warm welcome from Rotherham Youth Cabinet and members of the UK Youth Parliament. She invited other Youth Cabinet Members to introduce themselves and to give a brief history on how long they had been involved with the Youth Cabinet. They included:-

Tom
Ashaz
Amogh
Alex B
Tilly
Mabrookah
Zac
Giancarlo

Harrison
Hope
Dillon
Nana
Falak
Lilia

A new promotional video was shown providing information about Rotherham's Youth Cabinet and Youth Parliament. The video set out how the Youth Cabinet worked, how it was made up, decision making having a positive impact on the lives of young people across Rotherham and how it consulted with young people to tackle issues they faced.

The Youth Cabinet provided young people with a voice. The Youth Cabinet had two elected members of the Youth Parliament which were elected nationally. They were elected every two years and made sure that the youth voice was heard.

The Youth Cabinet also assisted with interviewing county directors and commissioning people for the borough. In addition, this included attending civic events like the Remembrance Day Parade.

Every year a new manifesto was developed and launched at the Town Hall and this included issues raised by young people through discussions, and consultations. The aim was to work with people throughout Rotherham in order to create positive change. This could be with elected members, officers and directors from the Council, representatives from schools, charities and even regional mayors and MP's.

The Youth Cabinet also worked with other young people locally, regionally and nationally to strengthen its voice, such as young people's police independent advisory groups.

The Youth Cabinet also worked with other groups such as the Youth Parliament, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, Regional Youth Climate Assembly, Regional Ethnic Minority Youth Group and others.

A further presentation about the Youth Cabinet detailed what the Youth Cabinet was all about. Further information was provided on the Youth Cabinet's Manifesto 2023/24 which involved over 4000 young people taking part in the consultation.

Health and Wellbeing came out as the issue nationally and locally with the Manifesto's aims for 2024 including:-

- Health and Wellbeing.
- Vaping and Smoking.
- Climate Action.
- Anti Violence.
- Religious Education.

This Take Over Day Challenge was a fun, imaginative and exciting activity to encourage organisations across England to open their doors to children and young people to take over adult roles. It put children and young people into decision-making positions and encouraged organisations and businesses to hear their views.

This year's Take-Over Challenge had chosen health and wellbeing as a theme and was broken down into four sections:-

- Section 1 Vaping
- Section 2 Mental Health
- Section 3 Physical Health
- Section 4 Healthy Eating

The top two issues were mental health and crime and safety. This national result mirrored what young people in Rotherham said and they had voted mental health and crime as the main issues in Rotherham.

During campaign work around health and wellbeing, the Youth Cabinet aimed to raise awareness around the risk to health from vaping and smoking and in doing so to look at issues around marketing and promotion of vapes aimed at young people.

Mental health and wellbeing was important and as a result the Youth Cabinet was campaigning on improving services for young people. Its aim was to promote projects, groups, sessions which young people could access in order to support their wellbeing.

Work already undertaken included collaboration with:-

- With me in Mind.
- Podcast.
- Mental Health Awareness Day.
- Support to CaMHS.
- Exam stress.

In terms of the Youth Cabinet's themes in its manifesto it was confirmed that of the vaping market:-

- 20.5% of all young people have tried vaping.
- 43% of vapers mostly use disposable vapes.
- 143 million vapes were discarded annually.
- 8 out of 10 purchased their vape via a third-party seller.
- Vaping among 15-year-old girls rose from 10% in 2018 to 21%.
- 57% of teenage vapours buy them from a shop, mostly newsagents, and this figure rose 29% in the last three years.

Given the concerns, the ingredients used in vapes and the health risks it was believed this should be looked into further and the Takeover Day was

a first-class platform to do this.

Mental Health was also a huge issue in Rotherham with 4595 children and young people being referred to mental health services between April 2021 and March 2022. According to the action for children, one in six children aged five to sixteen were likely to have a mental health problem. This figure had gone up by 50% in the last three years,

In addition, the proportion of young people aged seventeen to nineteen in England with a probable mental health disorder jumped from one in six to one in four. Mind and mental health support service for young people suggested that secondary schools were struggling to meet the needs of young people with mental health problems.

A recent survey from approximately 2,000 young people across the UK found 96% reported that their mental health had affected their school work at some point. UK Youth highlighted that a lack of youth services contributed to an increase in mental health issues for several reasons. Firstly, without access to supportive programs and resources, young people may feel isolated and unable to cope with stressors in real life. Additionally, limited services could mean fewer opportunities for positive social interactions, which were essential for emotional wellbeing.

When young people could not access mental health support, it could lead to untreated health issues which escalated over time, resulting in higher prevalence of anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges. Mental health was a big issue for young people, and this was also evident in the make your mark consolation results.

The next issue for the Youth Cabinet was physical health. There was a strong scientific NHS evidence that being physically active could help you lead a healthier and happier life. Exercise could reduce the risk of major illnesses, such as coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer and lower the risk of early death by up to 30%.

The NHS also stated that regular exercise had lots of health benefits for children and young people, such as providing an opportunity to socialise, increased concentration, improving academic scores, building stronger heart, bones and healthier muscles, improving self-esteem, lowering stress and improving mental health.

Finally, healthy eating was chosen as a subject to highlight today's takeover day meeting. Eating a healthy balanced diet was an important part of maintaining good health and reducing the risk of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. Government guidance stated that healthy eating was important as childhood excess weight was a significant health issue for individual children. Nearly a third of children aged two to fifteen, about 28%, were overweight or obese, and younger generations were becoming obese at earlier ages and staying obese for longer.

Public Health England highlighted that there could be serious implications for the physical and mental health of a child, which could follow on into adulthood with significant health inequalities for the poorest families.

Rotherham's Youth Cabinet wanted to support the ambition of the Government to halve childhood obesity rates by 2030 and significantly reduce the health inequalities that persisted.

These were the reasons why Rotherham's Youth Cabinet have chosen health and wellbeing for the theme of today's takeover day.

45. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH OFFICERS

A series of questions had been provided from Rotherham Youth Cabinet for partner agencies to answer. A number of recommendations would also be put forward which could hopefully be agreed.

Today's meeting was being recorded for internal purposes only and the Youth Cabinet would review what had been said and agree an action plan going forward. This would be shared in due course with the aim of a further meeting in six months' time to look at progress of the recommendations and actions highlighted.

There were fifteen questions put forward which were broken down into categories. After each category, recommendations would be detailed for that issue.

Vaping

1. What were you doing about reducing vaping adverts in public spacing?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health, here on behalf of Ben anderson, Director of Public Health

The Public Health team were supporting the development of an RMBC Advertising Policy to ensure inclusion of vapes and tobacco related restrictions. The proposed advertising policy would ban any communications or adverts featuring vapes on Council owned advertising space or in our online communications. Public Health were not aware of any space that was owned by the Council that currently did not meet this commitment.

Unfortunately, there was advertising space in the borough that was not under the control of the Council, which made further restrictions difficult. However, Mayor Oliver Coppard had committed to an advertising ban on South Yorkshire public transport, which stopped pictures of food high in fat, salt and sugar, as was put in place by Transport for London, but Public Health and the Council would work

together for a broader health approach including vapes.

2. What were you doing about vape wastage? Had you considered vape recycling?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment

To start with all retailers of vapes were required by law to offer a takeback recycling service.

Vapes and disposable vapes could not be placed in your kerbside bins but could be disposed of at local household waste recycling centres. These were then set for recycling and component parts broken down. Residents were advised to remove all batteries before disposal where possible. For more information, a member of site staff could provide advice on where to place vapes and disposable vapes.

This information was supplied on our Council website - [A to Z of Waste – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council](#)

Supplementary - It was asked if it was being made easy for the people who vape, to actually remove the batteries or would they actually know that they had to go to a local recycling centre to dispose of their vape.

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment

There was great onus on the retailers. All the retailers should have places in the shops that made it clear that vapes could be disposed of responsibly and make sure this was available to the customer.

3. What was the Multi-agency Tobacco Control Steering Group doing to try and reduce vaping among young people - such as identifying sources of vapes from young people?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

There were several actions in the Tobacco Control Steering Group's action plan relevant to reducing vaping amongst young people:-

- Support schools to minimise uptake of smoking and e-cigarette use amongst Rotherham children and young people.
- Reduce exposure to second-hand smoke and de-normalise smoking and vaping by expanding and enforcing smokefree place policies.
- Create a hostile environment for tobacco fraud and underage sales through intelligence sharing.

- Tackle illegal activity including sales of counterfeit and illegal nicotine containing products.
- Change perceptions about illegal tobacco sales and the harms of buying and using illegal vape products.

A vaping toolkit was shared with teachers last year to provide key facts for young people, families and teachers around vaping. Copies of this information for parents, young people and teachers on vapes was available on the [RotherHive website](#). Some secondary schools had worked with Trading Standards and an organisation called Pain 2 Success and was funded through a grant from the Safer Rotherham Partnership's Emerging Issues delivered assemblies in the spring term of the 23/24 academic year. This was delivered as a pilot project across four educational settings with separate sessions for professionals delivered both in-person and virtually for maximum reach. Wider roll out to all secondary schools is being considered for funding options for this year.

ROADS (the Rotherham Drug and Alcohol Support Service) had school's workers who were able to provide support and education sessions for Year 6 and secondary schools. School nurses could also provide one-to-one support as well as groups sessions around stop smoking or vaping and there was a lead school nurse for this role.

The Police Inspector leading the Rotherham Central Neighbourhood Team was co-ordinating meetings to bring together key partners specifically to discuss vapes and young people. This included Public Health, Trading Standards, Education Safeguarding Officer, Community Safety Officer, ROADS Young Person project lead, and the Police. These meetings took place quarterly but also acted as a starting point in the event that a meeting needed to be called in relation to a significant vape incident.

Factual information alone would not stop young people taking up vaping. Social norms were very influential. Work was taking place to develop new signage for smokefree areas, to ask people not to smoke or vape in public outdoor spaces where families or young people spent time. This helped create a smokefree norm which could be supportive in both helping people to quit smoking and to not ever start smoking or vaping.

The other main opportunity for reducing youth vaping was to make it harder for young people to access vapes. More investment had been put into a new Trading Standards Officer who had recently joined the team with a dedicated focus on illicit and underage sales of tobacco and vapes. Last year 28,163 vapes were seized, alongside 2,178 liquid bottles with a street value of £318,975. Schools were encouraged to share intelligence with Trading Standards about known sources of illicit or underage sales of tobacco or vapes so this

could be investigated.

4. Do you believe you were doing enough to discourage young people from vaping within school grounds? What else could you do?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

Schools had highlighted that vaping was an increasing problem but was one that was dealt with by the school as part of their behavioural policies. Schools in Rotherham did have no smoking and no vaping policies in place. The most effective way of stopping young people vaping in schools, would be to stop young people from vaping. As mentioned above, this would need a combination of factual awareness, a change in societal/social norms and more restrictions on access to vapes.

Further response from Niall Devlin, Assistant Director for Education.

It was an important question about whether or not the Council thought it was doing enough. There needed to be a look at what a strategy or a plan would look like. That would include six basic points.

There was a clear need to engage young people, to confiscate vapes and also to try to engage schools in the process. The next thing would be to stop young people who wanted to stop vaping within a range of programs. It would be interesting to learn how to engage the wider community, including retailers, parents, police, and services. The use of effective data and how this was collected on the numbers and to record incidents of vaping in the region would shape plans.

Finally, agencies should be working nationally and locally to help shape policy.

Further response from Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

The Children and Young People's Partnership Board chose to scrutinise the activity referenced in the Rotherham Together Partnership Plan to reduce the prevalence of smoking. When considering this for young people, this was mainly relating to vaping, with less children stating they smoked. During the meeting, colleagues from Public Health and Licensing provided some data, explained the risks associated, and what controls were in place.

In the meeting, issues about vaping in groups was discussed and the concern that vaping had become the 'norm' with more young people vaping than smoking. Concerns were expressed that the risks were not well understood by young people, and their parents.

Recommendations from the Youth Cabinet:-

1. That consideration be given to making public buildings vape free zones, where possible.
2. That the Director of Children's Services works with the Youth Cabinet to promote the Government consultation for children and young people.
3. That the Public Health Team, work with the Youth Cabinet to develop a 'Rotherhamised' campaign relating to vaping.

Upon a vote, these recommendations were agreed.

Mental Health

5. Evidence was suggesting that a lack of a youth offer was impacting on young people's mental health, what was the council doing about spaces for young people in Rotherham?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment

There were fifteen Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs located across the borough. Located in the heart of Rotherham's communities, libraries were recognised as neighbourhood hubs that were welcoming and safe and places to access information along with recreational, cultural and learning activity. The service offered young people a space for quiet study or reading, a range of activities, events and groups which bring people together these included:-

- Makerspace activities – facility for making, learning, exploring and sharing.
- Bee bot's robot club.
- Weekly Lego sessions.
- ICT courses.
- Readers groups.
- Warhammer club.
- Board games and jigsaw club.
- Homework club.
- Activities and events e.g. Harry Potter book day, Halloween crafts.
- Free PC and internet/ Wi-Fi access.

- Printing and photocopying.
- Wide range of physical books, eBooks, e-Audio, e-Magazines and e-Comic books.

The service also supported young people to undertake work experience and volunteering opportunities within the library which boosted confidence and improved skills in readiness for work.

There was evidence to suggest that engaging in physical activity and sport could also support positive mental health and wellbeing. The Council had a good network of parks, green spaces, multi-use games areas, sports pitches and leisure centres, which all provided places for young people to exercise. Services work with the Moving Rotherham Partnership, which included voluntary sector partners such as Rotherham United Community Trust, as well as Health partners, to better promote the value of physical activity.

Next year, Children's Capital of Culture would deliver a wealth of new opportunities for young people to participate in creative and cultural activities, both in school and within their communities. As well as a regular programme of public events – such as Signals Music Festival, Uplift festival of urban sports, Roots community carnival and Plug In and Play – a gaming festival, there would be many more opportunities to take part in local community venues, libraries and parks.

Further response by Kirsty Woodhead, Manager in Early Help and Engagement

The Council was committed to having an inclusive universal offer for all young people that included places to go and things to do in all wards across Rotherham. This formed part of the wider Early Help offer. Through the Universal Youth Work fund, Early Help provided funding to voluntary and community sector organisations to expand the existing youth offer and create high quality, universal youth provision for young people across the Borough. This was to ensure young people have somewhere safe to go and socialise, providing an opportunity to learn new skills, with a trusted adult who was skilled and trained to support them.

Funding was open to constituted voluntary groups, charities, private sector organisations, schools, faith groups who could demonstrate they could meet the minimum standards of a high-quality offer for young people, with funding provided based on identified need and gaps in existing provision.

The Rotherham Healthy Holidays Programme (HAF), which was funded by the Department for Education provided support to families who may find school holidays difficult. The funding enabled eligible children from reception to Year 11 to access holidays clubs for free.

The programme was delivered by a range of providers over the Easter, Summer, and Winter School Holidays. Each activity lasted four hours per day. Programmes were for four days at Easter and Winter, and sixteen days over the Summer Holidays. Each activity included a nutritious meal and a variety of sports and enriching activities.

In 2023/24 Rotherham Healthy Holidays commissioned a total of 35,022 sessions that were available across the Borough, provided a total of 27,388 meals, with over 6,500 children and young people attending. In 2023-24 20% of children attending provision were secondary age and work continues with providers to ensure an appropriate offer which was attractive for teenagers.

The Youth of Rotherham website provided an online space to showcase the range of provision available for young people across the Borough and included:-

- Events in libraries were mostly free of charge.
- Event at Magna for reading challenge.
- YP quality for Rothercare which provides discounts.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Youth Cabinet for bringing such a great range of questions to the meeting but wished to make an input on this one as quite a lot fell within his portfolio.

One of the golden threads was for the young people to have access to as many positive activities as they could, but also for there to be no barrier for accessing all those. Almost everything provided within the library network was free of charge. Sometimes there was a very small fee for certain sessions, but there was always some help towards accessing those.

There was also a great celebration weekend coming up at Magna where all of the young people and their families, who have completed the summer reading challenge, were able to have a great day out. Along with the presentations there would also be African acrobats this year. Each year it was a different theme, but most importantly it was free to all those families that engaged with the library's summer reading challenge.

In terms of physical activity, quite a few of the Youth Cabinet were in the age range of sixteen to twenty which meant they qualified for a RotherCard. This provided discounts in leisure centres for a lot of activities. Youth Cabinet Members were encouraged to apply.

As already mentioned, Rotherham's Children's Capital of Culture would mean 2025 would be an incredible year. Many of the events planned were free of charge and hopefully many of the Youth

Cabinet could get involved.

Supplementary Question - So from the specific activities mentioned that took place in libraries were there anymore that were specifically aged at people that were in the age range eleven to eighteen rather than to younger groups. In addition, did the Council think that people of that age group were going to want to spend their leisure time in a library or did they think they needed a dedicated youth space?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment

Lots of young people already spent a lot of leisure time in the libraries, which was great to see. Certainly, people were encouraged to interact with the libraries to use those more. However, if the Youth Cabinet believed there was more that could be done outside of the libraries, the team would be more than happy to discuss this further.

The Deputy Leader responded saying that focusing on more activities, this was certainly something the Council had invested in, so this was relatively new. Visits had been made to other local authorities who had brought additional services into their library network. This included 3D printers and activities for a broader range of ages.

Any ideas that the Youth Cabinet had were welcomed that could be employed and piloted across the library network. With fifteen locations there was plenty of scope to promote positive activities.

6. In the Director of Public Health Report for Rotherham, 2023, it was noticed that there was a feeling of continued anxiety among certain cohorts of young people. What were you doing to ensure that young people felt confident to interact normally and achieve full integration with society?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

The Council had an Early Prevention and Intervention Service which focused on early prevention and intervention; ensuring children and young people, their families and carers were able to access appropriate support to improve and maintain positive emotional wellbeing, to expand and widen positive self-esteem and to increase their self-efficacy in order to create resilience. Work was taking place in collaboration with schools/education settings/external agencies to enhance and improve relationships. It was hoped that this would support educational settings to develop a whole school approach to emotional health and wellbeing ensuring that positive mental health was recognised as everyone's business and all pupils/adults could access an environment that developed and strengthened coping skills that underpinned resilience.

Schools had been doing a lot of work on mitigating pandemic impacts, including putting in Educational Welfare Officers and pastoral support, and support through the 0-19 service. There was [anti-bullying work](#) with information available online, work on supporting young people into school through adapted timetables and sharing of good practice around a range of inclusion topics, including taking trauma-informed approach.

[With Me In Mind](#) had coverage across 70% of Rotherham schools. With Me in Mind was the name of one of the national Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) and there were teams based in both Doncaster and Rotherham. The service was identified following the release of the Government Green Paper (2017), “Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health” in which there was a focus on earlier intervention and prevention, especially in, and linked to schools and colleges.

One of the core proposals from the paper was to fund new Mental Health Support Teams, which were predominantly being supervised by NHS Children and Young People’s Mental Health Services as well as local charity/private services. The service was committed to ensuring that the Mental Health Support Teams reached those most in need of the support. The team were currently working in selected educational settings in Rotherham, and offering support to students not in mainstream education, including working in some special education schools, home educated pupils and to pupils attending certain alternative provision settings.

Kooth was an online mental health service available for 11–25-year-olds available to all young people in Rotherham. More specialist support was available from talking to a GP and accessing community mental health services.

Young people’s voices were feeding into plans and service delivery through various ways, including Young Inspectors and Guiding Voices as well as wider surveys including the schools survey. The findings of school surveys were shared anonymously with schools so that they could consider ways to support the issues raised by their pupils. CaMHS were attending the Youth Partnership Board this month (22nd October). This Board looks at different aspects of the NHS Place Plan and CAMHS would present to be questioned at this event.

Finally, to be mentally well everyone could benefit from simple changes to lives that could be helpfully remembered as the five ways to wellbeing. These included:-

- Connect – ensuring some meaningful social time was built into

days to talk to other people.

- Be active – ensure some physical activity every day, even if it was a short walk – being active had many physical and mental benefits for health.
- Take notice – evidence showed that being ‘in the moment’ such as noticing little changes in nature, or spending time colouring, could help to be aware of feelings and help shift focus from worries about the past or future.
- Learn – finding out or achieving new things could give a rewarding sense of achievement and focussed brain break, even doing a sudoku or crossword puzzle.
- Give – being part of a community or doing something kind had been shown to help us feel happier.

Ensuring there were lots of opportunities for young people to make these things part of their everyday lives, such as through opportunities in the Children’s Capital of Culture or school or community-based activities would help all young people to have better mental health.

Further response from Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

Access to mental health support was a priority in Rotherham and a key workstream under the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) was reflected as a specific priority for children in the Place Plan. The SEMH Strategic Group met bi-monthly to oversee progress against this priority.

Rotherham had maximised available funding for Mental Health support teams, successfully engaging schools to ensure all secondary schools and the majority of primary schools have access to With Me In Mind (tier 2 mental health support). This means 80% of pupils across the Borough were supported. With Me In Mind ambassadors were ensuring children and young people’s voice influences service development. Parent carer groups were supporting consistent application of advice and guidance for children and young people.

Five bases were offering open access youth groups, activities, drop-ins and 1-to-1 support to improve social engagement, emotional wellbeing and mental health. Here, a trusted adult would also help young people access other opportunities in the project through our ‘basket of support and provision.’

The number of children waiting for tier 3 mental health support was reducing, with fewer children waiting longer than 18 weeks for support than last year. Children and young people continue to be

supported by tier 2 services whilst waiting, with regular review to inform re-prioritisation if appropriate.

Where children and young people required in-patient support from tier 4 mental health provision, access assessments were offered. Partnership relationships with the Provider Collaborative and NHS England enabled appropriate challenge and escalation if provision was not available.

The volunteer sector had secured £899,000 of funding from the National Lottery to be able to deliver smiles for miles for another three years across the borough, and that was providing children and young people aged 8 to 19 or up to 25 with special educational needs or disabilities, with a variety of activities offering open access youth groups, drop-ins, one-to-one support, with a view to improving social engagement, emotional wellbeing and mental health.

This would mean a trusted adult that would help young people access other opportunities through what they described as a basket of support and provision.

Supplementary – What were the five bases?

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

This information was provided by Voluntary Action Rotherham. More specific information would be obtained, and this would be fed back to the Youth Cabinet.

7. Lots of young people in Rotherham faced stress as a result of school. How were you planning to work with schools to ensure there was enough effective support for young people?

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

A digital counselling service (KOOH) was jointly commissioned providing access to information, guidance and support to children and young people aged 11–25-year-olds. A service for adults (QUELL) was also available to 18–25-year-olds.

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and young people.

A clear multi-agency continuum of need had been developed and was launched at the SENCO network meeting on 3rd July 2024. This was supported by ASPIRE Pupil Referral Unit Outreach, With Me in Mind, the Specialist Inclusion Team and the Educational Psychology Service. It was timetabled to be reviewed at the joint CAMHS and SENCO network in March 2025.

The SEMH graduated response had been developed and was part of the toolkit alongside the continuum and competency framework. This would be further developed as part of the thresholds of need guidance documentation. This would continue to link to the multi-agency continuum, but would provide additional clarity regarding assessment, teaching and learning strategies, interventions and resources and staffing. Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) outcomes would also be embedded into the new version.

SEMH provision had been developed to meet need. The SEMH Special Free school opened in September 2022, providing an additional 125 specialist SEMH places. Capacity at the school had been developed with 179 children now on roll.

Two new SEMH integrated resources had been established offering twenty places (one primary and one secondary offering ten places each) and there was an additional primary SEMH integrated resource scheduled to open in January 2025 offering a further twenty places, these were on mainstream sites.

Supplementary – following the Youth Parliament elections which were based on manifestos, but more specifically to the improving school communication, how did the Council feel young people's voices were being reflected in terms of their mental health, what provisions were being gathered feedback from and what was being done at the moment.

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

This was a little more difficult with separating what type. The Me and Mind Service were gathering lots of feedback from children and young people with some in training to be ambassadors.

Those young people were having a voice around how they influenced activities within their own schools. The ambassadors were influencing activities to support children's emotional wellbeing and mental health, not just in their schools, but across all services.

The Children and Young People's Partnership Board and the Youth Cabinet where young people were able to provide feedback to

influence the development of services and this was taken very seriously. Much the same if it was feedback from parents and carers or from other services.

In terms of whether this was enough, particularly in relation to the education places being developed, probably more could be done to engage with children and young people. CAMHS were keen to meet with children and young people to do a little more in terms of engaging when preparing education provision.

8. We were concerned about the time it took to diagnose neurodiverse young people. How could RMBC and RDASH support the increase of earlier diagnosis of young people?

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

Some children and young people had, had to wait longer than eighteen weeks to access health services they needed. Pathways with waiting times above NICE guidance were discussed in development meetings and formally acknowledged in contracting meetings. Where single agency improvement plans did not reduce waiting times, a partnership approach was taken to systemically address the issue, exploring demand management and 'waiting well' in addition to increasing capacity for diagnostic assessment. Trajectories were then established to achieve eighteen week waits, these were monitored in the development and contractual meetings.

The Council did not pay for or design CAMHS services, this was under Health. The Council provided support to try and help when children were waiting for assessment.

Where waiting times were consistently longer than eighteen weeks e.g. neuro developmental pathways, we had worked to ensure pathways encourage the identification of need and provision support at the earliest opportunity. The schools led referral pathway for 5–19-year-olds was a good example of our systemic approach. Referrals were screened within 4 weeks of receipt and opportunities for re-prioritisation were regular throughout the waiting time.

Signposting to available support whilst waiting routinely took place (at screening and through regular bespoke communication to those on the waiting list and via Rotherham Parent Carer Forum (RPCF) and the Local Offer). This included access to universally available services and targeted services including the Early Help disability service and RPCF Peer support.

The Council would also work with NHS South Yorkshire and other representatives to look together at how improvements for young people could be supported and this was done via the SEMH Group,

through the Ascend Executive Board, chaired by the Director of Children's Services and the Director of the ICB. The Groups collectively would determine whether or not the single agency plan was working and was on trajectory. So, the trajectory meant that for every month RDASH were asked how many children they thought would be waiting, how many referrals did they think they were going to get, how many assessments were they going to manage to undertake and how many children at the end of that month were still going to be waiting.

The trajectory that RDASH had put in place for the neurodevelopmental pathway showed that they would get down to a four-week wait by December 2026. That was ambitious, so this was dependent upon staffing resources be available and being able to recruit if people left very quickly. Realistically this wait could be reduced down to eighteen weeks by that time and all involved were working very hard to do this with the investment provided.

In Rotherham, for referrals for a neurodevelopmental assessment for a school aged child, the school were asked to get involved in making that referral asking for information from children and people themselves. Parent and care information was still required, but by asking the school, the school had to implement the graduated response with children and young people requiring other assessments looking specifically what the child needed and the support that would then begin to be put in place.

The Rotherham Parent Care Forum also offered some peer support, particularly for parents because diagnosis tended to happen at an earlier age. Further work had been done that where children and young people were nearing eighteen the assessment should be in place before their eighteenth birthday. Once reaching the age of nineteen a young person would need to be assessed by an adult service.

Work also took place with children and young people if they had been referred for neurodevelopmental assessment close to their eighteenth birthday to decide on the most appropriate pathway for them to be on.

Supplementary – Children could be on CAMHS waiting lists for two years so did the service think it was doing enough to minimise this.

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

The only CAMHS waiting list that was two years or more, was for that neurodevelopmental assessment. To be really clear the numbers of children that were waiting for the normal CAMHS provision like family therapy or psychological therapies, there were

waits of up to two years for those.

If children were waiting for two years it was suggested that they speak to somebody who had made the referral and get in touch with CAMHS because waiting that long was not appropriate. Professionals would need to know that this was the case so it could be followed up urgently.

It was known that the neurodevelopmental waits were longer. Every effort was being made to get this reduced for the last three years. There had been significant investment to get the waiting times reduced and it was hoped this would be more reasonable by 2026. The biggest difficulty being faced, even with great investment, was that the demand was ever increasing for assessments.

Only by now working really carefully with schools was this now improving the quality of those referrals. It used to take eighteen weeks to undertake a CAMHS assessment for neurodevelopmental, but with the support of schools for both. ADHD and ASD where a joint assessment was undertaken, the waiting time had reduced to twelve weeks with quality information from schools to inform the assessment process.

With additional staff and investment, improvements were being done to the referral process with very few inappropriate referrals. Currently there were around fifteen referrals each week and with the fluctuations with referrals during term time and school holidays, the actual demand was more manageable.

The Chair invited questions from any Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Members.

Councillor McKiernan asked if there were any telephone numbers that young people could get in contact for mental health support where it was not necessarily a referral. Whilst there were a number of charities that did this was there anything being advertised within schools? Someone for a young person to contact or to speak to. Was this being implemented?

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

As had been mentioned previously KOOOTH and the Me and Mind Service were widely used by schools and the services were good.

The continuum of needs described lots of other places not just for young people themselves, but actually if teachers wanted some advice, they could get this too. This had only launched in July with SENCOs, but this would be shared more widely with a check in March to make sure this was embedded in schools.

Certainly, there was a great deal of support available, but it was more about ensuring everyone had access.

Recommendations from the Youth Cabinet:-

1. That the Council sought to encourage all schools in the borough to ensure that young people feel listened to within the schools, and that schools were committed to support.
2. That consideration was given to how the provision of a dedicated youth space for young people could be achieved, for example, a development of a space similar to the Barnsley Youth Zone.
3. That the Council worked with its partners to enhance early detection and diagnoses of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and the potential need for an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to assist with the reduction of potential waiting times for the young person to access the EHCP provisions.

Upon a vote, these recommendations were agreed.

Physical Activity

9. Certain areas of Rotherham had been found to be unhealthier and unhappier than their peers in other areas - what was the council doing to target them?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

Rotherham had been chosen by Sport England as a new Place Expansion Programme. This meant we had the opportunity to bid for some additional funding to support people to become more active, reduce inequalities in levels of activity and inspire children and young people.

As part of the first development phase a bid had been submitted which included an ask for resource for a dedicated officer for young people. This person would work with other officers in neighbourhoods where it was known physical activity levels were the lowest, to hear from young people what could be done to help them get more active and build that activity into their daily lives. Furthermore, funding could be bid for in 12-18 months for the second main phase of the bid to help support the changes that would be prioritised from this insight and co-design work.

This work would be linked to the Children's Capital of Culture programme, which would include physical activity opportunities, such as Uplift, giving young people access into a wider range of ways to be active. It would also link to the School Games programme, which had delivered specific events to young people identified as less

engaged in sports or activities to widen opportunities.

This would also be linked to a wider programme of work in specific neighbourhoods, as it was known where anyone lived impacted on opportunities to be active, so some of the changes identified might be small changes to local pocket parks, or streets, to help people feel safer being active as part of their daily routines or giving young people the opportunities to play.

Work would continue with partners, including Rotherham United and Places Leisure to bring programmes to communities or offers to facilities that reached less active young people and improve opportunities. An example of this was swimming lessons for children and young people with learning disabilities, who could now access more appropriate individual lessons, but at the same price as children's group lessons. Places Leisure also offered a variety of activities for young people including free holiday camps in partnerships with RUFC for children on free school meals and foster families and free swimming for under 8's.

Supplementary - what areas/types of young people have been identified as less active or less engaged with this sort of stuff?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

It was difficult to measure how active people were as greater understanding of groups was needed and where they lived. From national data the areas where income was lower was where it was likely to see lower levels of activity.

People with long-term health conditions or disabilities were also less likely to be active and certain ethnic groups might be less likely to be active in different ways. For example, girls, the amount of activity that they did as they got older reduced quicker than the amount that boys did as they got older. Some group activity was known, but it was intended to do some more work in Rotherham to gain a much better understanding.

Supplementary - The Council were going to be doing a lot of things next year and the year after that, but what was the Council doing right now to target really young people and what was the Council doing now in the current moment for 11- to 18-year-olds specifically?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

Perhaps this question would be better responded to in writing where a detailed response could be provided due to the level of different activities.

To note, however, there was a tremendous level of work taking place

in the partnership, so it was not specifically just the Council,

10. Could we work with you to create an activity walk similar to that found in Grenoside woods.

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

It was hoped Rotherham would benefit from development grant funding from Sport England over the next eighteen months with a bid to be submitted in October. During this period priorities would be established to take forward into a larger funding application. It was envisaged outdoor (free/ family) activities such as this would be an outcome from the funding to create activities such as activity walks as described.

The Council was also going to be doing more work at Thrybergh and Rother Valley Country Parks, where there would be specific investment in new walking routes at both of those locations.

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

As described in the previous question response, the Sport England programme would enable us to be creative in increasing activity levels in neighbourhoods and green spaces. As well as a new Active Young People Officer funding had been sought for an Active Outdoors Officer to help engage with communities and hear what changes could be made to help residents use green spaces in the borough more. This could include marked walks and trails and views were welcome on where this could be successful.

11. What were you doing to make physical activities more accessible and attractive to young people in Rotherham?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

Places Leisure offer a variety of activities for young people including free holiday camps in partnerships with RUFC for children on free school meals, SEND swimming lessons through secured funding and free swimming for under 8's.

Investment at Thrybergh Country Park would see improved paths and play facilities, as well as a refurbished cafe, which would help to make this beautiful park more attractive to young people.

Investment at Rother Valley Country Park would see improved play facilities and a new cafe and events space. It was worth noting that the playing pitches there had been renamed after Lioness, Millie Bright – a source of inspiration to young people, particularly girls.

Work commenced just over a week ago and would continue over the next year.

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

With the support of the Sport England Place Expansion Programme this would enable and add more focus and resource to continue to build on Rotherham's physical activity offer. There was already lots of fantastic green spaces, leisure facilities, sports clubs and facilities that were well used by young people. There was a need to ensure these were welcoming to all young people as well as increasing the breadth of options available, so that those interested in other ways of being active could find what they liked to do. The Children's Capital of Culture would allow for learning in ways of working with young people to ensure they were part of the design for solutions.

Supplementary - What do you do about skateboarding, scootering, BMXing and stuff more down that end?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

Absolutely these types of activities need to be part of that solution. Uplift was a good example of that where those urban sports could be brought into the town centre. The programme had changed over the last few years as to how it had been delivered. It was now growing year on year. It would still be part of Children's Capital of Culture.

Supplementary - The Uplift Festival was not as good as expected, was there anything that could be done that was more long-term rather than just a weekend festival?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

To capture these experiences an invitation was extended for the young people to attend a feedback session to hear more about their experiences. It would be most helpful and useful for the culture and tourism team who had put it on to find out more about it. Certainly, the work with Sport England was about the environment. It needed to be about making those opportunities not just inspiring people in a one-off, but still provided opportunities for young people.

Supplementary – Referring to long-term skate parks and stuff there were areas of green space near different homes so was there any opportunities to have something different, maybe an exercise type of equipment not specifically play areas, but things that were accessible to all ages to make it more appealing.

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

These were the sorts of things that were being looked at within the country parks, but also when it came to new developments in the borough the Council would work with developers to ensure they put in play facilities and sports facilities. This was something that could be negotiated with developers as part of planning applications.

Supplementary – Thrybergh and Rother Valley Country Parks had been mentioned. Rotherham was a big place. If you lived far away from those places as a young person, you could not drive there. Do you think that these places were accessible for everyone no matter where you lived?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

This point was valid. Obviously, Rother Valley was right at the southern edge of the borough, so if you lived in the north of Rotherham this was not very accessible. The Council wanted to look at opportunities across the borough and certainly would welcome engagement with the Youth Cabinet on thoughts for other locations where similar things could be done.

Supplementary - You mentioned a lot of actions the Council was doing, a lot of great actions, but were young people consulted before you made those decisions or were they just made by the Council?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

There had been a lot of engagement through the Children's Capital of Culture Programme over the last four or five years on what young people wanted to see. It would be interesting to hear about experiences with the Uplift Festival as the team had been enthusiastic about and looking to grow every year. If this was not meeting the needs of young people, then those voices needed to be heard and to consider what changes could be made.

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

Just on that point specifically about young people being able to influence, the Council did do quite a lot of work to try and consult with young people when big proposals were coming up. One of the things that the Council was keen to do through the Children and Young People's Partnership Board was actually to get young people involved in setting what they thought the priorities needed to be. Lots of the questions had been about things that obviously impacted on budget and not a lot of funding was available across Rotherham. On this basis it would be really useful to have an opportunity to engage with young people and with the Youth Cabinet about actually when

the money was limited, what were the priorities so that this was in consultation when we decide to do something.

This was about understanding across not just the Council but the NHS, the voluntary sector, the private sector, what were the priorities for young people, what would be the things that young people absolutely needed.

There was a real opportunity because the Rotherham Together Partnership Plan was up for review next year and young people would be welcome to get involved in setting parts of the priorities for that plan.

The Council were attending the Children and People's Partnership Board on Tuesday to talk about the refresh of the Council Plan, so again this was an opportunity to come up with new priorities because it was a refresh, not a complete rewrite. This would allow for consulting with young people and for them to be given the opportunity to influence what went in there.

Decisions could be influenced, but it was difficult coming to a decision on what the Council spent its money on.

Councillor McKiernan asked if the Council had an active Travel Officer and if so felt it would it be a good idea for them to attend the Youth Cabinet and ask for any opinions on active travel be it walking, cycling or other means of getting to and from home to school or getting from home to the actual park.

Rother Valley Country Park had been mentioned, but what about the other green spaces within Rotherham. In the past there were more opportunities for short circular routes so people and families could take the children out for the cheapest form of exercise, walking or running. Could the Council not only look at country parks, but at working with the South Yorkshire Combined Authority for routes across the whole of South Yorkshire.

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

There was an opportunity coming up with South Yorkshire Combined Authority in the new year where they would be consulting on their Nature Recovery Strategy, which in part would be about how better to use green spaces across the region. This would be out for public consultation in the new year, and it would be coming to the Cabinet and then out for public consultation.

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

In terms of the Sport England, work had taken place closely with

Sheffield Hallam and Sheffield University. There was a strong partnership through Yorkshire Sport Foundation who worked across all of South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire of sharing best practice.

Supplementary - You said something about a music festival. Could the youth perform at that music festival?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

The Children's Capital of Culture next year would see a whole host of opportunities for people not only to visit events, but to participate. The Council wanted to see people actively participating so there would be plenty of opportunities to join that, particularly for music events.

Councillor Baggaley noted there was mention of new developments. What were the Council doing to ensure that new developments looked at infrastructure and activity beforehand? For example. Waverly, the new development there. Parks had been built for young children, 0-5 years old, but it had taken ten years to get the BMX pump track installed from a Sports England bid. This was ten years for a teenager with nothing to do. How did we ensure that developers were bringing forward these activities quickly to support young people in new developments specifically?

Answered by Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

This was a very valid question. From personal experience three of the largest house builders in the country were taken to court over failure to deliver Section 106 obligations. This was not uncommon that developers held back, but it was incumbent upon us as the Local Planning Authority to hold developers to account and deliver on their Section 106 agreements obligations for community facilities in a timely fashion. It was necessary for fixed timelines to be set for developers.

Recommendations from the Youth Cabinet:-

1. That the Council sought assurances from schools within the borough that they would consider increasing extracurricular clubs, including the range of sports.
2. That the Council aimed to ensure that all parks within the borough were kept in good condition and safe.
3. That consideration was given to providing exercise equipment to all parks in the borough, where possible and that activity-based walks were considered at popular locations, in conjunction with the Rotherham Youth Cabinet.

Upon a vote, these recommendations were agreed.

Healthy Eating

12. What influence did you have over the meals provided within schools?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

Schools decided who they wanted to provide their school meals. However, unlike in many other areas of the country, in Rotherham, the Council still provided school meals to many of schools through Riverside Catering, the internal catering provider. Riverside Catering provided school meals for 14,000 pupils every day across Rotherham, Sheffield and Doncaster. For schools who chose to get their meals from Riverside Catering there was some influence on the meals available.

13. What could Rotherham Council do about making school food healthier?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

If schools chose to use the Council's Riverside Catering for their school meals, they had access to a healthy balanced meal. Meals were prepared according to the Government's nutritional guidelines using fresh locally sourced produce. Riverside Catering had maintained their Soil Association Food for Life Served Here Bronze award accreditation.

In addition to this Riverside Catering offered attending parents' evenings with sample menus showing the food variety and the balanced meals so that parents could see what their child got and tasting sessions in schools so that the children could taste new foods before they arrived on the menu.

They also attended school council meetings to meet with the pupils, listened and where possible implemented some of their ideas (as long as they were within nutritional standards). Surveys were also undertaken with pupils and parents to ensure the thoughts of many were being captured.

Every year Riverside Catering took part in the "Eat them to defeat them scheme" making eating fruit and vegetables a fun and good thing. Trained chefs from Riverside Catering based in schools often worked with pupils to increase education and awareness of healthy food and to encourage tasting of healthy options with talks to the children about balancing meals and eating healthy.

Food was provided for many cultural and medical diets and meetings

with parents were held to ensure the food provided fit in with each individual child's needs, with allergen trained cooks and assistants.

Councillor Keenan asked if the Council felt enough was currently being done to incentivise schools to use Riverside Catering rather than an external service?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

At the moment the Council offered that service, but it was about what additional benefit a school could get from having Riverside Catering as opposed to another catering provider. Obviously, it was a competitive market for schools. Some of which, would come down to what schools wanted to pay for. One of the things being looked at was what could be offered around extra services with chefs providing those activities, the children's choices and links with local providers.

It was hoped to provide extra information to contracts where food was bought, but also making contact with those suppliers who were able to come and deliver extra additional benefits for schools and for their families as an extra attractive package.

14. We were aware of the HAF (Holiday Activity and Food) initiative during school holidays, did you ensure that meals offered to young people under this scheme were healthy?

Response by Kirsty Woodhead, Manager in Early Help and Engagement

With regards to the healthy holidays programme before any funding was given to any of the providers, they were expected to demonstrate that they could meet the standards of the programme.

The first one of those was that they must ensure that at least one healthy meal a day was provided. In order to understand that they were healthy, they must meet the school food standards throughout the day. That included the meal provided, but also any snacks provided during those sessions.

Monitoring visits did take place and visits were made to some of the providers during the period of delivery in order to make sure they were compliant and in terms of delivery for children and young people.

If there were any concerns around the quality of the food or the meals that were provided, then this was challenged, and support offered to be able to address some of those concerns.

All of the providers had to have the five-star food hygiene certificate,

and this was checked that it was in place prior to the service level agreement being signed. The case study provided in the information spoke far more volumes about the impact of the Healthy Holidays programme.

Supplementary – With regards to the school food standard did schools have to follow this as well? It had been referred to in Youth Cabinet meetings that some young people do not have access to healthy foods. The school either did not have it or if they did have it, it was in a different canteen, and they did not have enough time during lunch to actually get that. On this basis did you feel there was enough being done to make sure that schools get kids healthy meals?

Answered by Helen Sweaton, Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance

From a Council perspective there were very limited things that could be done to enforce that. Who should be enforcing it, would be the school's governing service. Schools and the Council did have a responsibility to support the Youth Cabinet to do that. Everyone must make sure that information was provided, but the people who governed what the schools were doing, school governors, even school council reps would probably have as much, if not more influence than the Council did. If there were issues, then support would be provided to challenge within practice within individual schools.

15. How were you promoting healthy eating to young people in Rotherham?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

There were some very informed young people in Rotherham, including some young people from Youth Cabinet, who came with the Public Health team to Tesco in March to talk to their national head office staff about Tesco's new nutrition strategy. As those young people articulated very well, they knew what healthy food was, but they expressed frustrations that often it was not the cheapest or easiest option, and there were social pressures.

One young person explained they would not go into a local shop with their mates and buy an apple rather than a chocolate bar or his friends would think he was weird. These young people had lots of ideas, however, about marketing of healthier food, removing appealing cartoon images from unhealthy breakfast cereals and instead promoting healthier foods in the same way and increasing offers on healthier foods rather than ultra-processed foods high in fat, salt and sugar.

In Rotherham efforts were being made to promote a compassionate approach to food that recognised that shaming people for their 'poor lifestyle choices' was not useful or fair. We all faced a barrage of advertising, marketing, social, family and societal pressures as well as constraints from our skills, experience, confidence and opportunities, that all influenced the food eaten in a day. As a borough work should take place with partners to change not just knowledge and skills around food, but also the wider environment, such as the Council planning guidance on restrictions to new takeaways near to schools.

Rotherham had a Food Network of partners working together to try to tackle some of these broader issues, including supporting access to crisis food, food growing and community food events. In July, the network was awarded bronze award by Sustainable Food Places in recognition of their progress, but we know the challenge of making healthy sustainable food the easy and common choice for everyone was a big one.

Supplementary – Young people were taught about healthy eating at school but were never actually shown any or food to try. There were lessons on healthy eating, naming all these healthy foods, but why not let people try first. Perhaps there should be a dedicated PSHE lesson learning about healthy eating and healthy foods.

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

Recommendations would be taken on board and all points would be put to school governors.

Supplementary - There were comments about what the Youth Cabinet and what the Council had done already in the past, however what was being done right now?

Answered by Gilly Brenner, Consultant in Public Health

The food network had just received the bronze award working together with partners, and the Council was the one that pulled together that network. Work was taking place within working groups around specific themes where it was known there was room for development, like growing food. We know that there were some pockets of really good activity happening, There were some allotments in various different places around the borough where they had community groups working on food growing. What we wanted to do with that working group was to share that best practice with other people, some training for other groups so that we could expand what that looks like.

Similarly, around cooking, the adult weight management service had changed its delivery so that rather than that being a Slimming World

voucher, it was now a more holistic cooking session with advice and guidance for adults so they could take that home to families and that had had really good feedback.

Also around including a physical activity offer by taking away some of that stigma and looking at real opportunities for making change that made sense for people. This group looking at this met very regularly as part of those working groups to continue the action plan. The action plan would be refreshed now bronze had been achieved to see how to progress further.

Councillor Steele as Chair of the Allotment Society, which was responsible for thirty allotment sites across the borough, amounting to around 3,000 allotment holders, noted that, if people were interested in going around or visiting allotments to see how their work and food was produced, a visit could be arranged for the Youth Cabinet at some point. It would have to be in the daytime or late summer at some point, but this could be worked towards.

Recommendations from the Youth Cabinet:-

1. That the Council sought assurances from schools within the borough, that they ensured that healthy food options were available to all young people.
2. That schools in the borough to give consideration to the young inspectors completing an inspection of school lunches and lunches provided as part of Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, where possible.
3. That the Council and its partners gave consideration to producing a teenage-specific campaign to support healthy eating.
4. That a site visit to the allotments be arranged for members of the Youth Cabinet.

Upon a vote, these recommendations were agreed.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, Councillor Steele, offered his thanks for the questions and answers and looked forward to working on ideas and suggestions. Work would take place with the Democratic Services team to finalise the proposed recommendations as agreed today.

The Youth Cabinet were thanked for their attendance and in doing an excellent job in putting questions forward and also by putting the statements on the subject matters raised.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board gave its assurance that the recommendations made today would be given some serious consideration and forwarded to Cabinet Members.

Cabinet Members would make the final decision, and this would be brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. In terms of consultation, every year the Council had to agree its budget and sometimes savings had to be made. However, every effort would be made to minimise how this affected children and more so to consult with young people on these budget changes. Liaison would take place with officers as to how this could be achieved.