

Public Report
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 11 December 2024

Report Title

Children’s Commissioner’s Takeover Challenge Recommendations – Health and Wellbeing

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Children’s Commissioner’s Takeover Challenge (CCTOC) is a national initiative, where children and young people take over an organisation or meeting and assume management / leadership roles. As part of RMBC’s commitment to the CCTOC, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) supports Rotherham Youth Cabinet (RYC), in undertaking a focused piece of work on a topic chosen by the young people.

RYC chose Health and Wellbeing as the theme for this year’s takeover challenge, as it was identified as an issue nationally and locally within their manifesto’s aims.

Recommendations

That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

1. Receive the report and the recommendations outlined in Appendix 1.
2. Agree that the report and recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for response.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Recommendations from the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge – Health and Wellbeing

Background Papers

Rotherham Youth Cabinet manifesto 2023/24

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, 17 October 2024 – Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge – Health and Wellbeing

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 17 October 2024

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Children’s Commissioner’s Takeover Challenge Recommendations – Health and Wellbeing

1. Background

- 1.1 The Children’s Commissioner’s Takeover Challenge (CCTOC) is a national initiative where children and young people take over an organisation or meeting and assume management / leadership roles.
- 1.2 As part of RMBC’s commitment to the CCTOC, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) supports Rotherham Youth Cabinet (RYC) in undertaking a focused piece of work on a topic chosen by the young people.
- 1.3 The CCTOC held on 17 October 2024 was chaired by Alex G, RYC. RYC chose Health and Wellbeing as the theme for this year’s takeover challenge, as it was identified as an issue nationally and locally within their manifesto’s aims, following consultation with over 4,000 young people.
- 1.4 The theme had been broken down into four sections:
 - Section 1 Vaping
 - Section 2 Mental Health
 - Section 3 Physical Health
 - Section 4 Healthy Eating
- 1.5 During their campaign work around health and wellbeing, the RYC 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.
- 1.6 Mental health and wellbeing were also important and the RYC were campaigning on improving services for young people with the aim of promoting projects, groups, and sessions which young people could access in order to support their wellbeing.
- 1.7 The RYC had already undertaken the following work in collaboration with:
 - With Me in Mind
 - Podcast
 - Mental Health Awareness Day
 - Support to CaMHS
 - Exam Stress
- 1.8 In relation to vaping, the RYC had concerns around the number of young people who had tried vaping, the number of vapes that were discarded annually, the numbers of young people who purchased their vape via shops or third-party sellers and the potential health risks due to the ingredients used in vapes.

- 1.9 In relation to Mental Health, the RYC noted the number of children and young people who were being referred to mental health services in Rotherham, with the figure rising each year. There were concerns regarding schools' abilities to meet the needs of young people with mental health problems along with the lack of youth services available. If left untreated, it was felt this could result in a higher prevalence of anxiety, depression and other mental health challenges.
- 1.10 In relation to Physical Health, the RYC noted that being physically active could lead to a healthier and happier life and could reduce the risk of major illnesses. The health benefits for children and young people included opportunities for socialising, increased concentration, improving academic scores, building stronger heart, bones and healthier muscles, along with improving self-esteem, lowering stress and improving mental health.
- 1.11 In relation to Healthy Eating, the RYC noted that eating a healthy balanced diet was an important part of maintaining good health. They raised concerns that around 28% of children aged 2-15 were overweight or obese and that this was occurring at earlier ages and children were staying obese for longer. This could lead to serious implications for the physical and mental health of a child and could following on into adulthood.
- 1.12 The RYC wanted to support the Government's ambition to halve childhood obesity rates by 2030 and reduce the health inequalities that persist.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Appendix 1 sets out the recommendations following the CCTOC held on 17 October 2024.
- 2.2 A series of questions were put by members of the RYC to Council officers covering a range of topics associated with Health and Wellbeing. The questions are set out below:

Section 1 – Vaping:

1. What are you doing about reducing vaping adverts in public spacing?
2. What are you doing about vape wastage? Have you considered vape recycling?
3. What is 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?
4. Do you believe you are doing enough to discourage young people from vaping within school grounds? What else could you do?

Section 2 – Mental Health:

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

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 are you doing to ensure that young people feel confident to interact normally and achieve full integration with society?
7. Lots of young people in Rotherham face stress as a result of school. How are you planning to work with schools to ensure there is enough effective support for young people?
8. We are concerned about the time it takes to diagnose neurodiverse young people. How can RMBC and RDaSH support the increase of earlier diagnosis of young people?

Section 3 – Physical Activity:

9. Certain areas of Rotherham have been found to be unhealthier and unhappier than their peers in other areas – what is the council doing to target them?
10. Can we work with you to create an activity walk similar to that found in Grenoside woods?
11. What are you doing to make physical activities more accessible and attractive to young people in Rotherham?

Section 4 – Healthy Eating:

12. What influence do you have over the meals provided within schools?
13. What can Rotherham Council do about making school food healthier?
14. We are aware of the HAF (Holiday Activity and Food) initiative during school holidays, how do you ensure that meals offered to young people under this scheme are healthy?
15. How are you promoting healthy eating to young people in Rotherham?

2.3 In light of the responses to the questions provided by the Council Officers the RYC developed the recommendations contained in Appendix 1. These recommendations aimed to:

- Identify the sources where vapes could be purchased by young people.
- Reduce the amount of vaping marketing on view.
- Work with schools to highlight the effects of vaping.
- Increase the provision of dedicated spaces for young people.
- Enhance early detection and diagnoses of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
- Work with schools to increase extracurricular clubs
- Increase the maintenance and provision of equipment within parks and create activity-based walks.
- Ensure healthy food options were available in schools.
- Create a marketing campaign directed toward teenagers to promote healthy eating.
- Organise a visit to the allotments for members of RYC in relation to healthy eating.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board's recommendation was that the recommendations set out in Appendix 1 are supported.

3.2 That Cabinet are asked to respond to the recommendations set out in Appendix 1.

The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules require the Cabinet to consider and respond to recommendations made by scrutiny within two months.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 The recommendations set out in Appendix 1 have been circulated to Council Officers within Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, Regeneration and Environment and Children and Young People's Services for their information, however, they were present during the meeting.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 The report will be presented to Cabinet to request a formal response on the recommendations in January 2025.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 Consideration should be given to the procurement and financial implications arising from the report's recommendations as part of Cabinet's response.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 Consideration should be given to the legal implications arising from the report's recommendations as part of Cabinet's response.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 Consideration should be given to the Human Resources advice and implications arising from the report's recommendations as part of Cabinet's response.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 Consideration should be given to any implications for children and young people and vulnerable adults arising from the report's recommendations as part of Cabinet's response.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 Members have had regard to equalities and human rights implications when developing the recommendations.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 Consideration should be given to the implications for CO₂ Emissions and climate change arising from the report's recommendations as part of the Cabinet's response to the recommendations.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 Consideration should be given to the implications for partners as part of the Cabinet's response to the recommendations.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Members have regard to the risks and mitigation factors associated with CCTOC topic of Health and Wellbeing and the recommendations had been made accordingly.

Accountable Officer(s)

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