

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 20 January 2025

**Report Title**

Outcomes from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board relating to the Children’s Commissioner’s Takeover Challenge– 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**

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

**Report Author(s)**

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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 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council’s (RMBC) 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.

This report outlines the issues raised by RYC at the takeover challenge and the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting on the 17 October 2024.

## Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Receive the report and considers the following recommendations:

### **A. Section 1 – Vaping:**

1. That consideration was given to several young people from the Youth Cabinet to support a mystery shop in vape shops to identify sources, where possible.
2. That the Council identified and considered any potential opportunities to reduce vaping adverts on shopfronts, including areas where the Council does not have direct control, where possible.
3. That the Council sought to encourage all secondary schools to work together, to ensure a synchronised response to the vaping.

### **B. Section 2 – Mental Health:**

4. 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 their young people.
5. 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.
6. 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.

### **C. Section 3 – Physical Activity:**

7. That the Council seeks assurances from schools within the Borough that they would consider increasing extracurricular clubs, including the range of sports.
8. That the Council aimed to ensure that all parks within the Borough were kept in good condition and safe.
9. That consideration be 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.

### **D. Section 4 – Healthy Eating:**

10. That the Council sought assurances from schools within the Borough, that they ensured that healthy food options were available to all young people.
11. That schools in the Borough 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.
12. That the Council and its partners gave consideration to producing a teenage-specific campaign to support healthy eating.

13. That a site visit to the allotments be arranged for members of the Youth Cabinet

2. Formally consider its response to the above recommendations within two months of receipt, in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

**List of Appendices Included**

None.

**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 – 11 December 2024

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Outcomes from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board relating to the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge – 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 OSMB CCTOC held on 17 October 2024 was chaired by Alex G, from the 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 pieces of work to support this theme 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 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:
- 2.1.1 **A. 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?
- 2.1.2 **B. 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?

**2.1.3 C. 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?

**2.1.4 D. 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?

2.2 In light of the responses to the questions provided by the Council officers the RYC developed the recommendations. 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 Cabinet is recommended to receive the report and consider its response to the recommendations.

3.2 In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules, Cabinet are required to consider and respond to recommendations made by scrutiny within two months.

#### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 Several of the recommendations have a focus on enhanced and continuing engagement with young people to ensure their views are captured and considered.
- 4.2 A number of the recommendations also have a focus on the Council consulting with schools and its partners to raise awareness of the issues considered.

#### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 Implementation of any recommendations made relating to working with partner organisations are at the discretion of the relevant partner organisation.
- 5.2 Implementation of recommendations relating to a directorate of the Council is a matter reserved to the relevant directorate. Timescales for Council directorates responding to scrutiny recommendations are outlined in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution of the Council.

#### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 Any financial or procurement implications arising from this report will be considered as part of the Cabinet response to its recommendations.

#### **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

#### **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 None arising directly from this report.

#### **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 The intention of the review was to impact positively on young people, as set out in the RYC manifesto aim:

- 9.2 ***Health and Wellbeing***

*“We aim to raise awareness around the risks to health from Vaping and Smoking. We want to look at issues around marketing and promotion of vapes aimed at young people. Also, it is also our aim to encourage young people to increase healthy activities. This will include the promotion of existing groups and projects that offer healthy activities. In addition, we want to introduce young people to accessible walking maps with fun and exciting activities to do on the way.*

*Mental Health wellbeing is very important to us, and we want to*

*campaign on improving services for young people. We aim to promote projects, groups, and sessions where young people can access to support their wellbeing.”*

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 Consideration was given to equalities and human rights when developing the recommendations, specifically with a view to influencing the provision of:
- Easier access to, along with increasing the provision of dedicated youth spaces for young people across the borough.
  - Easier pathways to access Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) provisions.
  - Healthy food options to all young people within education and holiday club settings.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 There are no implications for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and climate change directly arising from this report.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1. As mentioned in Section 5 of the report, implementation of any recommendations made relating to working with partner organisations are at the discretion of the relevant partner organisation.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 There are no risks directly arising from this report.

## **14. Accountable Officers**

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services  
Barbel Gale, Governance Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp OBE	23/12/24
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	18/12/24
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	18/12/24

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