## POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD (PPAB)

# COUNCILLOR SOPHIE PORTER COMMUNITY & RESIDENTS

24th September 2024

Key Decision: No Report No ACE2410

#### YOUNG PEOPLES' PLAN

#### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This plan outlines a proposed approach for the Council to co-ordinate and improve opportunities for children and young people and support them to live a happy and rewarding life.

The plan is based on 3 objectives:

- 1. Realising aspirations through opportunities and education
- 2. Supporting young people by creating safe environments
- 3. Fostering meaningful communication and engagement

It identifies a range of projects and activities, some of which specifically target disadvantaged young people or those from deprived areas.

The plan has been developed following a PPAB meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 where Members took part in a workshop to discuss and inform a future plan.

Recommendation

PPAB is recommended to:

Endorse the plan and associated approach to supporting all young people, with a concerted effort to reach young people who experience disadvantage.

Support further consultation to be carried out with Rushmoor Youth Influence and partners prior to seeking Cabinet approval.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Young Peoples' Plan outlines a proposed approach for improving opportunities for children and young people in Rushmoor to support them to live a happy and rewarding life.

- 1.2. The Plan recognises the importance of young people's voice in shaping services and valuing their contribution to the community. It is based on empowering young people and supporting them to fulfil their potential.
- 1.3 The Plan is about what the Council will do to directly support and engage young people. Whilst it will involve working with partners it is fundamentally about Council related opportunities.

#### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1. Rushmoor has a population of 99,800. 22,919 (23% of the population) are children and young people aged 0-19, with 59% living in Farnborough and 41% in Aldershot.
- 2.2. Cherrywood, Aldershot Park, and Wellington are in the 20% most deprived wards in England. There are significant levels of deprivation throughout the borough in terms of income, health inequalities and education all of which add to the challenges young people face. These challenges are outlined below:
- 2.3. According to the 2021 Census; 6% of children aged 15 years and younger are considered disabled under the Equality Act. 131 children aged 5 to 15 are providing unpaid care each week, 44 of whom provide over 20 hours of unpaid care each week.
- 2.4. The cost of living, fuel poverty and food insecurity has impacted most people but has disproportionally impacted families from deprived areas. In 2022/23 2,712 children lived in relative low-income households (around 12% of children) and in 2022-23 Rushmoor had nearly 5,000 (22.8%) children living in poverty (End Child Poverty campaign).
- 2.5. 24.4% of reception age children in Rushmoor are overweight, and 10.9% are obese. In Year 6, 36.9% of children are overweight (including obese), and 22.3% are obese (Department of Health and Social Care's Obesity Profile).
- 2.6. Rushmoor has low educational attainment levels. The majority of the state maintained secondary schools in Rushmoor have results below the Hampshire and England average.
- 2.7. The Council, in partnership, is tackling health inequalities and deprivation through a number of workstreams including: The Supporting Communities Strategy, Whole Systems Approach to Tackling Obesity and Increasing Physical Activity group. The Young Peoples' Plan aligns to the objectives and priorities in the Council's Supporting Communities Strategy which has an overarching priority theme to support young people and reduce inequalities.

#### 3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

#### About the plan

- 3.1. The Young People's Plan sets out how the Council, in partnership, will work to improve opportunities for children and young people in Rushmoor and support them to live happy and rewarding lives.
- 3.2. To support this the plan has three objectives: realising aspirations through opportunities and education, supporting young people by creating safe environments and fostering meaningful communication and engagement.
- There are three proposed approaches to support the delivery of each objective.
   Open Access open to all young people without restrictions, 2. Targeted targeted to specific disadvantaged groups and 3. Mixed a mix of open access and targeted.
- 3.4. Examples of specific disadvantaged groups can include but is not limited to young people who: live in deprived areas, are part of Armed Forces families, are not in education, employment or training (NEETS), carers, care experienced, young people who attend community groups that support specific demographics, such as neurodiversity, LGBTQIA+, young people with disabilities.
- 3.5. The plan is intended to help reinvigorate the council's relationship with young people, putting in place some initial structure to allow us to recommence a dialogue about what matters to them locally. As such, the plan will evolve in time and aspires to move young people's voices to a more central role in civic life.

#### **Alternatives**

3.6. Continue to support children and young people through existing youth club provision and other activities, where possible, and not to produce a Young Peoples' plan.

#### Consultation – How we have developed the draft proposal

- 3.7. The Council held conversations with key partners including Vivid, Step by Step, schools and The Source about our plans and proposed approach. We discussed where it may compliment the work they are delivering, and how they could add value to the projects identified in the plan.
- 3.8. Further consultation with young people directly will take place through Rushmoor Youth Influence, youth clubs and existing outreach work.

#### 4. IMPLICATIONS

#### Risks

4.1. The youth club provision and the outreach support are funded externally. There is no core funding to continue the delivery aspects of this work from as early as Summer 2025. In addition to this, both initiatives have low staffing resilience which present an ongoing risk.

All of these risks, present a reputational risk to the Council should it not be able to continue these aspects of service delivery.

Regular reporting is key to ensuring that outcomes are improving, risks are identified, and remedial action is taken to mitigate those risks.

#### **Resource Implications**

4.2 The success of the plan will require ongoing engagement and work from across the Council, notably: The Community & Partnerships team, Community Safety, People team and Democratic Services.

#### **Equalities Impact Implications**

4.3 The plan will advance the equality of opportunity for children and young people, with a focus upon those who are experiencing or at increased risk of experiencing vulnerability and or deprivation.

#### 5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The Young Peoples Plan is a Council-led plan to deliver structured support and opportunities for young people in Rushmoor.
- 5.2 PPAB is recommended to endorse the plan and associated approach to supporting all young people, but with a concerted effort to reach young people who experience disadvantage.
- 5.3 Support further consultation to be carried out with Rushmoor Youth Influence and partners prior to seeking Cabinet approval.

#### LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

Young People's Plan

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# Young Peoples' Plan.

The Young Peoples' plan is designed to improve opportunities for children and young people in Rushmoor and support them to live happy and rewarding lives.

The Council recognises that improving opportunities for our young people will take consistent and sustained action and that it requires people to work together. By working with communities and partner organisations we can significantly improve the opportunities and prospects for our young population.

#### Context.

The plan has been developed to consider how the Council can directly support the improvement in opportunities for young people in Rushmoor and actively engage young people who are disadvantaged.

The plan aligns to the Council's Supporting Communities Strategy, which has an overarching priority to support young people, raise aspirations and reduce inequalities.

Through collaboration with partners, it will complement existing partners strategies, enhance existing work to address gaps, and meet the needs of young people effectively.

# Our objectives.

The following objectives have been identified as having the potential to make the greatest impact:

- 1. Realising aspirations through opportunities and education.
- 2. Supporting young people by creating safe environments.
- 3. Fostering meaningful communication and engagement.

# Proposed approach.

The Council has identified three approaches to support the delivery of the objectives to support a range of young people:

- **Open access:** open to all young people with no restrictions.
- Targeted: targeted to specific (disadvantaged) groups.
- Mixed: a mix of open access and targeted.

Examples of specific groups initiatives could be targeted to include young people who:

- Live in areas of deprivation.
- Come from armed forces families.
- Are not in education, employment, or training (NEETS).
- Are care experienced.

 Attend community groups that support specific demographics, such as neurodiversity, LGBTQIA+, etc.

**Recommended approach:** that a mix of open access and targeted options be put in place, dependant on the initiative. In collaboration with partners and schools we would like to ensure that opportunities for disadvantaged young people to participate can be prioritised where appropriate.

# Objective 1: Realising aspirations through opportunities and education.

#### We will:

- Collaborate with schools to expand students' opportunities.
- Work more closely with school leadership teams.
- Co-ordinate and provide a council work experience programme.
- Commit to supporting schools' mock interviews and careers fairs.
- Develop and deliver council open days.
- Facilitate an annual schools' debate.
- Continue to provide apprenticeships.

#### Collaborate with schools.

The Council will hold annual open day for junior schools to visit and learn more about the Council.

The open day will include a variety of activities designed to engage the students, such as an introduction to the council, guided tours of the council chambers and the mayor's office, as well as interactive sessions involving a budgeting tool and park design exercises. These activities aim to provide an initial insight into the functions of the council and inspire local children about work opportunities.

**Recommended approach**: targeted – offered to Junior schools in areas of deprivation.

#### School leaderships teams.

We will engage with the Junior Leadership Teams within secondary schools by working with the PSHE leads to understand their work programmes and explore how we can support their initiatives.

**Recommended approach**: open access – available to all schools.

#### Work experience.

To ensure we are fully accessible and reaching as many young people as possible, we would like to offer a three-tiered approach to our work experience programme:

- An in-person work experience programme for secondary-school aged young people, spending 1-2 weeks across a range of council services, including peer-to-peer work and the potential for council officers to act as work experience mentors.
   Recommended approach: mixed\*.
- 2. Explore options around a virtual work experience offer that is free to access and available online.
  - Recommended approach: open access\*.
- 3. Explore options around an annual internship programme for college aged people and older, spending time with different departments to gain a deeper insight into working for the Council.
  - **Recommended approach**: mixed\*.

\*Recommended approach: Where there is a mix of open access and targeted approaches, we will work with schools to ensure young people from higher needs groups are given a priority.

We will link work experience closely with partner organisations such as Step by Step to ensure that placements are open to young people from all backgrounds, focusing on those that may have a disadvantage if not encouraged, i.e. at risk, vulnerable, young carers.

#### Mock interviews and careers fair.

The council will continue to encourage staff participation in mock interviews for Year 10 and 11 students across secondary schools in the borough, including Samuel Cody. We will also commit to supporting school careers fairs by attending and promoting opportunities within the council.

**Recommended approach:** open access – we will commit to offering our support to all schools.

#### Annual schools' debate.

The Council will work with secondary schools and colleges to host and facilitate an annual debate in the Council Chamber.

Recommended approach: open access.

#### Apprenticeship scheme.

Through the Apprenticeship Levy the council has successfully funded 17 apprentices, with 5 going on to securing permanent positions within the organisation.

The council will explore the possibility of offering a set number of apprenticeships to young people who might struggle to gain employment without support. Part of this commitment could include workplace mentoring to support longer-term aspirations and options.

**Recommended approach:** targeted.

# Objective 2: Supporting Young People by creating safe environments.

#### We will:

- Continue to deliver and develop our outreach work.
- Provide a youth club/safe space in Aldershot and Farnborough.
- Support delivery of the Yellow Brick Road Legacy project.

#### Outreach work.

We will continue to deliver targeted outreach to engage with young people in public spaces and places across the borough. This will continue to be guided by reports of antisocial behaviour to the Police and seek to form trusted relationships with at-risk young people, rather than approach them from an enforcement perspective.

Outreach workers focus on engaging young people, addressing issues and providing guidance (including targeted signposting via a QR code resource), which also allows them to relay critical information about at-risk young people to other statutory services for safeguarding purposes.

Whilst this approach is critical in connecting with harder to reach young people, the delivery model holds inherent risks as it is currently delivered as an additional responsibility by 2 full-time members of staff. In addition to this, the work is externally funded by the PCC and at its longest, is only funded until early summer 2025 (if work pauses over the winter months).

**Recommended approach:** mixed – outreach work is targeted to hotspot and known areas, but outreach workers will engage with any young people they come into contact with.

#### **RBC Youth clubs.**

The council operates two youth clubs: the Youth Café in Aldershot and the Prospect Youth Club in Farnborough. These provide a safe space with trusted adults, activities, food, and support. Both clubs are in areas of multiple deprivation and elevated levels of anti-social behaviour.

The Youth Café in Aldershot opened in May 2024. As a newly established project, staff are collaborating with young people to define the club's identity and offer, supporting and empowering them to feel a sense of ownership of the club.

The Prospect Youth Club has been serving the community for over 15 years, establishing itself as a vital resource in an area of multiple deprivation. The club offers young people a safe and supportive environment where they can engage in various activities while receiving guidance based on their needs.

The council is committed to keeping the two clubs open and will focus on promoting these facilities, working with young people to plan initiatives that will attract more people to attend. This will include responsive work plans to bring in partners to work on specific issues and interests with the young people, e.g. mental health support, healthy relationships, learning about virtual reality and artificial intelligence technologies, etc.

The delivery model for council-run youth clubs holds inherent risk as all youth workers are employed on a casual basis. In addition to this, both youth clubs are fully externally funded (including staffing), with the Youth Café currently funded to 2026 and Prospect Youth Club to 2026.

In support of our evolving approach to working with young people we will utilise a vacant youth worker position and recruit to an adapted role that will include youth work (in youth clubs), community engagement and outreach. This will act as mitigation to some of the risk inherent in the current delivery models for both youth work and outreach work.

**Recommended approach:** mixed – both youth clubs are situated in areas of deprivation and higher rates of youth-related ASB, but they are open to all young people to attend.

#### Support the delivery of the Yellow Brick Road Legacy Project.

The Yellow Brick Road project launched in Rushmoor on 9th September for 1 year.

The project pairs young people aged 11 to 17 who are at risk of exploitation with a mentor who provides twelve mentoring sessions to address their challenges and develop a practical action plan aimed at fostering sustainable change. At the conclusion of the 12-week program the young person is directed towards further opportunities tailored to their specific needs. These may include work placements, referrals to services, or participation in youth groups, etc.

As a one-year pilot, the success of this project may enable additional years' provision, dependent on funding.

**Recommended approach:** targeted.

## Objective 3: Fostering meaningful communication and engagement.

#### We will:

- Undertake an annual young people's survey specifically designed for young people, by young people that uses appropriate social media channels.
- Develop Rushmoor Youth Influence to engage more young people and influence future Council decisions and policies.
- Provide opportunities for more young people to participate in democratic engagement and influence the council.
- Increase and promote opportunities to gain accreditations, through volunteering and participation in wider activities.

#### **Annual Youth Survey.**

We propose introducing a survey that aligns to the annual resident's survey, specifically designed by young people for the young people of Rushmoor.

The survey will be developed in collaboration with Rushmoor Youth Influence, who could help publicise the survey through their social media platforms and develop more creative ways to ensure broad participation among young people, e.g. workshops in youth clubs, in schools and utilising outreach workers to capture young people's views out and about.

The findings from this survey can be used to inform Rushmoor Youth Influence's priorities and work program and help influence future council decisions and policies.

**Recommended approach:** mixed – the youth survey will be open to all, but we will also target hard-to-reach groups to maximise engagement and representation.

#### **Develop Rushmoor Youth Influence (RYI)**

Rushmoor Youth Influence is an informal, open forum for young people to have their say on community issues and projects that directly impact them. This initiative aims to empower young people to voice their views, influence the Council and act as a catalyst for change.

We will support the group to discuss issues that are significant to young people and if appropriate, present their suggestions to full Council.

We will support the group to establish its own social media presence, enabling the group to raise awareness and promote opportunities for youth engagement in community discussions and decision-making processes.

**Recommended approach:** mixed – Rushmoor Youth Influence and its' work is open to all, but we will support them to target hard-to-reach groups to maximise engagement and representation.

#### Democratic engagement and influencing the council.

The Council will work with schools and colleges to facilitate and deliver an annual debate for young people in the Council Chamber.

Through Rushmoor Youth Influence we will encourage and enable young people to share their views and participate in Council meetings to influence local decisions and ensure the opinions of young residents are heard.

Recommended approach: Open access

#### Increase and promote opportunities to gain accreditations.

Volunteering can give young people the opportunity to better understand communities, take an active role in shaping them, and make you feel good! We know that many young people already volunteer, and many are looking for new opportunities to gain accreditations towards schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh award. We want to promote our opportunities and help young people get recognised for social action by understanding more about opportunities at the council.

Recommended approach: Open access

### **Next steps:**

- 1. Work with internal colleagues to further shape projects within this plan and incorporate work into future service plans.
- 2. Share plans with partners to complement existing strategies and opportunities across the borough.
- 3. Devise an action plan with timescales for the projects outlined in the plan and to capture success and achievements.
- 4. Consult with Rushmoor Youth Influence on the proposals in this plan.

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