

CABINET

**COUNCILLOR SOPHIE PORTER
COMMUNITY & RESIDENTS PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

14th January 2025

Key Decision No

Report No ACE2501

YOUNG PEOPLES' PLAN

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This plan outlines a proposed approach for how the council can help improve opportunities for children and young people in Rushmoor and support them to live happy, healthy and rewarding lives. For the purpose of the plan, a young person is someone aged up to and including 24 years old.

The plan focuses on 4 priorities for 2025/26:

1. Raising young voices.
2. Providing safe spaces and trusted relationships.
3. Raising aspirations and opportunities.
4. Supporting better physical and mental health.

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

The plan has been developed following a PPAB meeting on 23rd July 2024 where Members took part in a workshop to discuss and inform the formulation of a plan. In a follow-up meeting on 24th September 2024 Members requested further work to refine the draft plan and recommended that it proceed for Cabinet approval.

Cabinet is recommended to:

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

Endorse the longer-term approach to developing further iterations of the plan (post 2026) which seeks to increase young peoples' role in influencing the work of the council.

Support the exploration of longer-term delivery models, specifically the concept of a hub for young people.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Young Peoples' Plan outlines a proposed approach for how the council can help improve opportunities for children and young people in Rushmoor and support them to live happy, healthy and rewarding lives. For the purpose of the plan, a young person is someone aged up to and including 24 years old.
- 1.2. The plan recognises the importance of young peoples' voices in shaping the work of the council and valuing their contribution to the community. It is rooted in empowering young people and supporting them to fulfil their potential.
- 1.3. The plan outlines what the council will do to directly support and engage young people. This has been developed with an understanding of key partners experiences and focus, to best identify where the council could and should add value.
- 1.4. The plan has been developed as an iterative plan, with an initial one-year focus for 2025/26, although some work is already underway. This allows the development of key engagement routes and the establishment of a corporate approach to elements of the plan.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. At the 2021 Census, Rushmoor has a population of 99,800, with 28,513 children and young people aged 0-24 (29% of the local population). 41% live in Aldershot and 59% live in Farnborough.
- 2.2. Cherrywood, Aldershot Park and Wellington are in the top 20% most deprived wards in England. 7% of all children and young people living in Rushmoor live in one of these areas of multiple deprivation.
- 2.3. There are significant levels of deprivation throughout the borough in relation to income, health inequalities and education, all of which add to the challenges young people face, such as:
 - 2.3.1. According to the 2021 Census, 6% of children aged 15 and under are considered disabled under the Equality Act. This data includes young people who have been identified as neurodiverse, although it is widely recognised that the actual number of neurodiverse people is likely be under-reported.
 - 2.3.2. The Department of Health and Social Care's Obesity Profile shows that nearly a quarter of all reception-aged children in Rushmoor are overweight, with nearly 11% classed as obese.
 - 2.3.3. The Census also recorded 131 children in Rushmoor aged 5-15 who are providing unpaid care, 44 of whom provide in excess of 20 hours unpaid care each week.
 - 2.3.4. Rushmoor has low educational attainment levels, with the majority of its state-maintained secondary schools below the Hampshire average.
 - 2.3.5. Whilst the cost of living crisis, fuel poverty and food insecurity have impacted most people in some way, it has disproportionately impacted

families with a low-income. In 2022/23 2,712 children were living in low-income households in Rushmoor (around 12% of all local children), and in the same period Rushmoor was recorded by the End Child Poverty Campaign as having 5,000 children living in poverty.

- 2.4. Whilst the council recognises the challenges that these statistics represent for local young people, the plan seeks to steadfastly recognise and support their potential. It also recognises the universal value of all young people, regardless of their background and/or experience.
- 2.5. The approach to the plan has been informed by the council's new set of priority themes and reflects the drive to put sustainability, diversity and inclusion at the heart of all council activity. These themes are:
 - Skills, economy and business.
 - Homes for all: quality living, affordable housing.
 - Community and wellbeing: active life, healthier and stronger communities.
 - Pride in place: clean, safe and vibrant neighbourhoods.
 - Vision for the future and financial sustainability.The Young Peoples' Plan promotes the importance of young peoples' voices throughout these priorities.
- 2.6. The council is working in partnership to tackle health inequalities and deprivation through several routes, including: The Supporting Communities Strategy; Whole Systems Approach to Tackling Obesity; and Increasing Physical Activity Working Group.
- 2.7. In recognition of the local and national contexts, the plan seeks to balance an increasingly challenging financial backdrop for local authorities with a renewed ambition to make a positive impact on young peoples' lives. This balance necessitates strong partnership work and clearly identified ways for local young people to raise up and engage with the council on the things that matter to them most.

3. DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

About the plan

- 3.1. The Young Peoples' Plan sets out how the council will work to **help improve opportunities for children and young people in Rushmoor and support them to live happy, healthy and rewarding lives**
- 3.2. The plan outlines 4 priorities: raising young voices; providing safe spaces and trusted relationships; raising aspirations and opportunities; and supporting better physical and mental health. These priorities have been identified to balance the priorities of the council's new administration, experiences of existing work to date, and feedback from valued partners and Rushmoor Youth Voice.

- 3.3. The plan seeks to benefit a broad range of young people but also highlights opportunities where disadvantaged young people could be prioritised.
- 3.4. The plan and the work within it are intended to reinvigorate the council's relationship with young people, putting in place some initial structures that will allow us to recommence a dialogue about what matters to them locally. It has been developed as an iterative plan with an initial one-year focus to allow these structures to be put in place, with future iterations of the plan being more firmly driven by local young people themselves.
- 3.5. The work contained within the plan will be monitored and measured via service plans and quarterly monitoring. Specific outcomes will be developed with Rushmoor Youth Voice, in consultation with local young people.

Alternative Options

- 3.6. Continue to support children and young people on an ad-hoc basis, without developing a Young Peoples' Plan with them.

Consultation

- 3.7. As agreed at PPAB on 24th September 2024, the council has engaged with a range of partners who have provided valuable feedback and insights from their experiences working with young people. In total, 18 organisations were invited to take part in a survey designed to understand their experience of working with and for young people. 11 responses were received, and 9 organisations requested follow-up meetings for further discussion. These organisations are:
 - Alderwood School
 - Bohunt School
 - Hart & Rushmoor Early Help Hub
 - Headroom Young Peoples Charity
 - Local Childrens Partnership
 - Police Young Peoples Education Partnership Team
 - Step by Step Young Peoples Charity
 - TalkPlus
 - The Source Young Peoples Charity
 - Turnstyle
 - Youth Independent Advisory Group
- 3.8. The council has also delivered a workshop for Rushmoor Youth Voice to invite their views and amendments, which have been incorporated into the plan.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Risks

- 4.1. Both council-run youth clubs, including youth worker salaries, and outreach work are wholly funded by external grants. There is no core funding to continue the delivery of aspects of this work from as early as summer 2025. In addition to this, both areas of work have low staffing resilience which present an ongoing risk.
- 4.2. These represent a reputational risk to the council should it not be able to continue these aspects of service delivery. Regular reporting is key to ensure that outcomes are improving, risks are identified, and remedial action is taken to mitigate those risks.
- 4.3. In addition to the ongoing management of risk we will utilise a vacant youth worker position to recruit an adapted role that will include youth work (in council-run youth clubs), community engagement and outreach.

Legal Implications

- 4.4. The Council is required by section 10 of the Children Act 2004 to co-operate with Hampshire County Council with a view to improving the well-being of children in the Borough. The Young Peoples' Plan will help the Council to continue meeting this obligation.
- 4.5. Many of the projects have limited funding. It is likely that if further funding is required the Council may be required to enter into contractual relationships with organisations which may place further obligations on the Council which may have implications for staffing and resourcing. This will be reviewed on a case by case basis to ensure that the Council can meet any contractual requirements and that procurement law is followed correctly.
- 4.6. The Young Peoples' Plan requires officers to interact directly with children and young people. The Council will ensure that the correct safeguarding provisions are in place to protect children and young people from harm. The Council will ensure that where relevant officers have DBS checks and data protection legislation is complied with.

Financial Implications

- 4.7. Many projects outlined in the plan are already funded via external grants or existing budgets. There is no additional request for funding from the council, other than officer time to support and facilitate the delivery of the plan.
- 4.8. Pending further information about the UKSPF, the council could allocate further funding where needed.

- 4.9. Projects involving children and young people in the borough to improve health, happiness and opportunities may lead to reduced financial requirements from the public sector in the future.
- 4.10. Any further budget requests would be presented through the committee process on a case-by-case basis.

Resource Implications

- 4.5 The success of the plan will require ongoing engagement and work from across the council, notably: Community & Partnerships; Community Safety; Economy & Growth; Democratic Services; and the People Team.
- 4.6 The plan requires a corporate commitment from the council to support the priorities and demonstrate our role as a community leader.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.5 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 Cabinet is recommended to endorse the plan and associated projects/work to support all young people, but with a concerted effort to reach young people who experience disadvantage.

LIST OF APPENDICES/ANNEXES:

Young Peoples' Plan

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Young Peoples' Plan 2025/6.

Foreword.

I am pleased to introduce the Council's Young Peoples' Plan for 2025/26. This plan captures our ambition for local young people as we know if we get it right for them, we are building a better future for us all.

The Council's priorities place sustainability, diversity and inclusion at their very heart, and the Young Peoples' Plan will establish and develop ways for young people to get involved with and influence the work we do for our community. Their voices, regardless of background or experience, matter.

Our new Council priorities are really reflected in this plan that delivers opportunity and growth for the future generation of Rushmoor. We will develop more opportunities for young people to build their skills and career pathways, helping them become economically active adults in the future. The plan promotes better physical and mental health for young people, focused on rooting them in our communities, which will strengthen communities longer term. We want young people to feel a sense of ownership of where they live, have a safe place to belong and one they can feel proud of. All of these things recognise that investing in young people is an investment for the future, and we have engaged with young people to develop this plan and their longer-term vision of how they would like to see things.

We recognise that improving opportunities for young people takes consistent and sustained effort, and we are immensely grateful for the work of our statutory and non-statutory partners, many of whom engaged so positively with us in shaping this plan. We are grateful also to the many council teams who have worked collectively to develop a plan which focuses on our organisation's role as a community leader. The Young People's Plan reflects Rushmoor Borough Council's commitment to helping young people be the best that they can be.

Councillor Sophie Porter.

Deputy Leader and Community & Residents Portfolio Holder.

Context.

The Young Peoples' Plan is designed to improve opportunities for children and young people in Rushmoor and support them to live happy, healthy and rewarding lives. For the purpose of the plan, a young person is someone aged up to and including 24 years old.

The plan has been developed to outline how the Council will directly support the improvement in opportunities for young people in Rushmoor and actively engage young people who experience disadvantage within this.

It has been developed at the same time as the Council's new set of priority themes and reflects the drive to put sustainability, diversity and inclusion at the heart of all council activity – we recognise that young people have a key role in how we deliver the council's priorities. In addition to this, by developing our connection to them we can engage and develop our future workforce, acknowledging the importance of having local people working within their own communities.

The plan aligns to the Council's Supporting Communities Strategy, which has an overarching priority to support young people, raise aspirations and reduce inequalities. This strategy is due to be refreshed in 2025.

In working with partners, this plan seeks to identify and strengthen where the council can play a role that adds value to the lives of young people. Consideration and development of this has been informed by the work and experiences of a range of partners who have long-standing and respected experience in this field. Their feedback has highlighted a number of key themes:

- Consistent increase in poor mental health for young people, with specific concerns for those not regularly attending school and lack of support for neurodiverse young people.
- Importance of safe/trusted places for young people to grow that aren't linked to school or home.
- Careers work highlighted as a real route to inspire, encourage and support young people to navigate moving from education to work.
- Importance of adults in organisations listening to young people and working with them to develop initiatives.
- Increase in needs/complexity of needs against a backdrop of depleted/at-capacity services. Accessing services and thresh-holds were identified as barriers to getting help. As a result, demand for partner services is increasing, with many being signposted/referred to as alternatives to primary care.

In recognition of the local and national contexts, this plan seeks to balance an increasingly challenging financial backdrop for local authorities with a renewed ambition to make a positive impact on young peoples' lives. This balance necessitates strong partnership work and clearly

identified ways for local young people to raise up and engage with us on the things that matter to them most.

Given this context and intent, this plan has been established as an iterative plan with an initial one-year focus for 2025/2026. This will allow the opportunity to test out the projects within it and, more critically, allow time to develop and embed a variety of ways for young peoples' experiences, views and ambitions to inform how we work as a council, and future iterations of this plan.

Outcomes.

In developing this plan, we recognise the council is part of a wider system that supports local young people. Many organisations have longstanding work and positions within the field and there are a range of long-term measures already in existence within the health, education and employment sectors. Whilst these capture specific outcomes, we want to better understand how young people assess the quality of their own lives. Part of this plan's work will be to support Rushmoor Youth Voice to lead and shape the questions young people want to be asked, which we can use to develop a local set of young peoples' outcomes.

Our priorities.

In identifying the priorities for this plan, we have drawn on a range of sources of information. Recognising the importance of both quantitative and qualitative information, we have striven to ensure the focus of this plan is reflective of the needs of young people as we currently understand them – for 2025/26 our priorities will be:

- 1. Raising young voices.**
- 2. Providing safe spaces and trusted relationships.**
- 3. Raising aspirations and opportunities.**
- 4. Supporting better physical and mental health.**

Each priority overarches a range of work and/or projects which the council is committed to for the forthcoming year – **a summary of these can be found at Appendix 1**. These will be monitored and reported on through the council's usual service planning and quarterly monitoring, as well as via the Supporting Communities Partnership.

Priority 1: Raising young voices.

We believe it is important to raise young voices. A big part of this is about helping young people understand how they can use their voice and have a say in the things that matter to them most or that affect them the most.

Under this priority we want to offer a range of specific opportunities alongside developing a longer-term approach to enabling youth-led work in the borough. This is important because we hear that young peoples' wellbeing can be significantly improved when they feel part of something, whether that be at school, a club, or their wider community.

Council Open Day.

We understand the importance of helping young people learn about democracy and their role within it from a young age. Recognising this, we will commit to holding up to 2 open days per year for junior schools, where pupils can experience the workplace and engage with a diverse group of council officers and politicians.

The day will include participating in fun activities designed to offer them an interactive experience in how to use their voice, while getting an insight into the range of work within the council. Elements of the day might include:

- Scavenger hunt – a fun, active way to learn more about the council's democratic and civic history and role.
- Meet the Mayor – learning about the role of the civic figurehead of the council with chance to ask questions.
- Design a playground – a fun, interactive challenge to design a playground that balances budget and imagination.

This opportunity will be offered to junior schools, with priority given to those located in areas of deprivation. This is important because we know young people who experience disadvantage are often in greater need of opportunities to be inspired when thinking about their futures.

Young Peoples' Debate.

Building on the work to help young people learn about democracy at an annual open day, we also want to provide an annual opportunity for secondary school and college-aged young people to take part in a debate about the issues that matter most to them.

We want this to be designed and led by young people, so we will work with Rushmoor Youth Voice to identify the topics for debate and structure of the event. In time, we see this as one of the routes for young people to influence the council, with the potential for this annual event to be aligned with the priority setting cycle of the council and its Cabinet.

Young Peoples' Survey.

Each year the council surveys residents to help the council understand how people feel about living in the borough, council services or to help shape the council's priorities – each year the focus of the survey will alter slightly. Historically, younger residents, 34 years old and under, are underrepresented in responses, despite promotion on social media channels where the minimum age requirement is 13.

As part of our commitment to increasing engagement with and providing opportunities for young people to share their experiences and views, we want to find ways to make this survey more accessible and/or relevant. For 2025/26 we want to invite Rushmoor Youth Voice to work with us in experimenting with different ways to feed-in younger residents' views to what we already do. This might range from tailoring the survey to a younger audience to running engagement workshops in schools, colleges and youth clubs. We want to be open to young peoples' thoughts on how to do this and will work with Rushmoor Youth Voice to take this forward.

Climate Ambassadors.

Following the declaration of a climate emergency in Rushmoor in 2019, we have been working to make the council carbon neutral and to make Aldershot and Farnborough greener and more sustainable. Through running our Climate Trackers programme for schools and engaging with Rushmoor Youth Voice, we've heard that climate change is an issue that many young people care deeply about.

We want to build on this work and develop a network of Climate Ambassadors through schools and colleges. This recognises the importance of involving young people in how we respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by climate change, and to future-proof our collective response.

Rushmoor Youth Voice.

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

We recognise the immense strengths and passions many young people have and want to help them raise up issues that are important to them by engaging in the political process that takes place at Full Council. Rushmoor Youth voice could play a pivotal role in this, acting as the connector between local young people, council officers and elected members.

We want to keep supporting them to play a role in connecting local young people to the work that we do so it is important that Rushmoor Youth Voice reflects the diversity we have in our wider young population. In order to support and develop this we will specifically support introductions to the group from partner organisations who, via working on this plan, have identified young people who want to get involved. We will also support the group to establish

its own social media presence, enabling them to raise awareness and promote opportunities for their peers to get involved in community discussions and decision-making processes.

Priority 2: Providing safe spaces and trusted relationships.

We believe in the importance of spaces for young people to connect and grow that are different to home and education environments. We've heard that these alternative spaces are critical as they centre on young peoples' autonomy to attend and engage, whilst being supported safely by trusted adults.

Under this priority we will seek to strengthen local youth clubs, outreach work, and the Legacy Project pilot beyond direct delivery and through developing a more networked approach. This is important because we hear that young people who need support and a place to belong can often fall down the cracks when their relationship with one organisation ends.

Local Youth Clubs.

The council currently operates two youth clubs: the Youth Café in Aldershot funded by a grant from the National Lottery and the Prospect Youth Club in Farnborough funded by a grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner. These provide a space with trusted adults, activities, food and support. Both are located in areas of multiple deprivation and elevated levels of anti-social behaviour.

The Youth Café in Aldershot opened in May 2024 and as a newly established project, youth workers are collaborating with young people to define the club's identity and offer, supporting them to feel a sense of ownership. The Prospect Youth Club has been running for over 15 years and is a well-established resource in the local area, offering young people a safe and supportive environment where they can engage in various activities while receiving support and guidance based on their individual needs. We want to keep running both youth clubs and work with young people who attend to promote them to encourage increased and broader attendance.

We also want to strengthen our partnership working with expert organisations in the borough to deliver tailored support within youth club settings. We know youth clubs often become familiar and safe environments for young people, and this offers the opportunity to explore and support a range of issues. To enable this, we want to pull together youth clubs from across the borough, not just those run by the council, so youth workers can share their experiences, challenges and successes in supporting young people. We hope that by creating a networked approach we can identify ways to collectively support young people, including sourcing external funding to commission expert organisations to run dedicated sessions across all youth club settings, based on young peoples' needs.

Outreach work.

Since October 2023 the council has been delivering targeted outreach work, funded to summer 2026 by Police Crime Commissioner ASB Taskforce and the Safer Streets 5 Home Office Fund.

The focus of this work is to engage young people in public spaces and places across the borough, guided by reports of antisocial behaviour to the council and Police, and forming trusted connections to young people, some of whom might be at-risk, 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 the relay of critical information about at-risk young people to other statutory services for safeguarding purposes.

These interactions are often short in timeframe, but repeated over several weeks, allowing the opportunity for outreach workers to build relationships with young people who might not otherwise engage with the council. We want to secure funding to continue this work further into 2025/26 as we believe that these interactions can help young people connect to other sources of support or interest, which safeguards in the longer term.

The Legacy Project.

The Legacy Project launched in September 2024, funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner as a 1-year pilot, run by Hampshire-based organisation Yellow Brick Road Projects. It seeks to provide 13 mentoring sessions to up to 25 young people aged 11-18 at risk of exploitation or exclusion.

Via a nominations process that centers the young person and their needs, applications are considered by a diverse panel drawn from statutory and non-statutory organisations, who work collectively to consider the best route to offer support. Nominations that cannot be taken forward are supported via other routes, whilst those that are accepted are given 13 mentoring sessions to understand and begin to address the challenges they face. Part of this work involves developing a practical action plan together, aimed at fostering longer-term, sustainable change for the young person. At the end of the programme, the young person is supported to access further opportunities tailored to their specific needs – these may include work placements, referrals to services, or participation in youth groups, etc.

We will continue working with Yellow Brick Road to facilitate delivery of the Legacy Project and help connect local organisations into it. As well as measuring the impact of the Legacy Project itself (and any consideration to apply for further funding to extend it), we are committed to learning about the issues that at-risk young people face and how well equipped we are locally to support them with this.

Exploration of a hub model for the future.

In developing this plan we've heard that many young people need a (safe) place to go, and often when they successfully access help or support, it's hard when they need to move

between organisations. We've also heard from partners that demand for their services is growing as pressures on statutory services increase – all of which can make it hard for young people to get the help they need. Demand for community-based support is, in places, growing in a way that necessitates bigger and/or more flexible spaces for partners to work from, and contained within these considerations are potential opportunities for us to collectively think about what we can offer young people in the longer-term.

We recognise increasing openness in partners to work in collaboration, not only with the council, but with each other, based on mutual respect for the range of expertise respective organisations hold. In light of this, and as part of our longer-term work with and for young people, we want to commit to exploring the concept of a young peoples' hub by the end of the year.

Priority 3: Raising aspirations and opportunities.

We recognise the potential in every young person but understand that there are many factors, often outside young peoples' control, that might affect their aspirations and achievements. We also recognise that the council has a unique and significant role in the borough. With our diverse range of services, employees and relationships with other statutory, non-statutory, charity, community and business organisations we are uniquely placed/connected to facilitate and deliver different opportunities for young people.

Under this priority, we want to continue our support to careers work in schools, as well as offering high-quality work experience placements, develop an internship programme and explore what young people want and need from volunteering opportunities. This is important because we hear that young people want adults to see and support their potential, helping to inspire and support them in their chosen career.

Supporting careers work in schools.

Alongside many local businesses and community organisations, we understand the value of supporting schools/colleges and their students with their careers work. We know that young people really welcome the chance to work 121 with an adult at mock interview, and we also want to keep promoting the council as an employer at careers fairs because we believe there is great strength in local people working for their local council.

For 2025/26 we are committed to broadening and embedding our support of these activities more corporately within the council, particularly around supporting local secondary schools with their mock interviews. Guided by an employee volunteering policy that grants every employee 2 volunteering days per annum, we will encourage council officers to use these days to support mock interviews in schools. We think this is important because our collective time and expertise is something we can all contribute freely.

In addition to this broader work, we will pilot a 1-year project for young people who are refugees, asylum seekers, or where English isn't their first language. Funded by the Hampshire Career's Hub and the UKSPF, the Pathways to Success Careers Programme will support up to 20 pupils across 2 secondary schools.

Work experience.

We recognise that work experience is an invaluable opportunity for young people to get out of their comfort zones in a supported environment, helping them to work alongside adults, develop skills and feel (re)inspired about their future career options. We also know that for many young people, work experience can be hard to secure or too daunting to face.

For 2025/26, we are committed to delivering a reshaped in-house work experience programme. In order to best support local schools within Rushmoor we will:

1. Align our programme to local secondary schools' work experience timetables.
2. Offer a dedicated number of placements, per work experience period, per school.
3. Encourage schools to put forward students who might otherwise struggle to get or maintain a work experience placement.
4. Liaise with Step by Step ahead of each cohort to facilitate and provide spaces for young people they work with.

We want students who come on work experience with us to have a positive, supported experience, both with council officers and amongst their peers. To enable this we want to offer flexible placements where students can either request time with a specific team or opt to have a mixed placement covering a range of different services. We'll also offer opportunities for each work experience cohort to come together during their week with us to share experiences and learning, as well as take part in workshops to support development of the softer skills employers have fed back that young people can struggle with.

By trialing a different, more corporate approach to work experience in 2025/26, we want to learn from students and schools experience of this to keep refining our offer, so we make sure it has the biggest impact. We will also look to learn from this to consider developing an internship programme for older young people, which could support those not in education, employment, or training (NEETs).

Exploring volunteering for young people.

Volunteering can have benefits for young peoples' personal development; build self-esteem and confidence and provide a real sense of achievement and personal satisfaction from being a part of something meaningful and helping others.

We will work in partnership with Rushmoor Voluntary Services (RVS) to identify and develop volunteering opportunities for young people that are both accessible and varied and to highlight the benefits of volunteering including improving wellbeing, contributing to the community and supporting pride in place and gaining skills (and often accreditations)

We will work with local schools and colleges to engage young people and promote different volunteering opportunities. We will promote opportunities for Council led projects such as the 'Binfluencers' Litter Collection, promote suitable community activities that support initiatives such as the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, and support Rushmoor Voice to lead and develop a promotional project to secure more young volunteers in Rushmoor.

Youth Markets.

We will explore the concept of developing a youth market. Working with local schools and colleges we will provide young people with the opportunity to set up their own market stalls and sell their own products. This will give young entrepreneurs the platform and opportunity to learn new skills and gain confidence in a supported environment.

Priority 4: Supporting better physical and mental health.

We are committed to helping support active, healthier and stronger communities. We want to help support all young people to be physically active and adopt and maintain behaviours that are good for their health and wellbeing. This is not just about playing sport – although taking part in regular sport confers a range of physical and mental health benefits - it is about being active in the community, volunteering, and connecting to local life. These are all important contributing factors to enabling young people to be healthy and resilient.

Supporting better mental health and wellbeing is a priority across all the activities in this plan, but there are a number of specific activities we will lead on in 2025/26 to directly support better physical and mental health.

Mental health support for youth clubs.

We recognise that young people can feel the pressure of societal expectations - online, school/college, work and peer pressures can all impact their mental health. We've heard that young people need a space that isn't home or school, and we value the different youth clubs we have across the borough, providing space, support and guidance to a diverse group of young people. Working with a local mental health organisation and young people across all youth clubs (council and community-run) we will offer tailored sessions to support positive mental health around mood and anxiety, resilience and healthy relationships.

Healthy schools.

We want to do all we can to encourage young people to look after their physical health. In partnership with Energise Me, we will continue working with schools with the highest levels of obesity rates and develop a targeted programme to increase physical activity offers and reduce sugar intake in school. This work will be supported and monitored through the Healthy

Weights Programme which involves the NHS, Hampshire County Council and Rushmoor Borough Council.

Active Rushmoor.

We understand the importance of active lifestyles for all, and in particular for young people, the lifelong benefits of being active from a young age. In addition to the physical benefits, we know that young peoples' mental health is improved by physical activity and also the social connection that it can bring. We will work with local sports clubs and providers to develop activities at an affordable cost that will get people into clubs and sustain regular activity sessions. We will deliver a summer campaign to encourage partners to host open days and taster sessions and give young people the opportunity to try new sports and activities.

Alongside this, we will continue to enable Balance, Glide and Ride and Bikeability sessions in all primary schools, as well as a targeted after-school family cycle club in Cherrywood, one of the wards with the highest levels of childhood obesity. We will continue to work with the Healthy Weights Programme to develop the Active Schools Project which develops physical activity plans with schools in areas with high childhood obesity, as well as expand a pilot of active school uniforms which enable greater physical activity throughout the school day.

Community Connections.

Through working with Rushmoor Youth Voice, we understand the importance of young people being able to engage in their local community. We want to increase the number of opportunities for young people to do this, and for these opportunities to be appropriate for younger residents. We will promote opportunities and actively engage young people to get involved and influence local decisions, by sharing tailored opportunities to volunteer and join groups such as Rushmoor Climate Community and Rushmoor Youth Voice.

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APPENDIX 1 - Young Peoples' Plan 2025/26 at a glance.

Priority 1: Raising young voices	
Council Open Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, launch and trial up to 2 annual open days per year for local junior schools.
Young Peoples' Debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, launch and trial an annual young peoples' debate for local secondary schools and colleges. • Explore how Rushmoor Youth Voice could use this to contribute to the councils' annual priority setting.
Annual Young Peoples' Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Rushmoor Youth voice to experiment with developing different and more engaging ways to feed in young peoples' views alongside the annual residents' survey, including the development of youth-led outcomes.
Rushmoor Youth Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage more and more diverse young people in Rushmoor Youth Voice. • Develop Rushmoor Youth Voice as the connector between local young people and the council's political process.
Priority 2: Providing safe spaces and trusted relationships	
Local Youth Clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue running council-run youth clubs and work with young people attending to promote and increase attendance. • Recruit a Deputy Youth Worker in Charge. • Develop a network for all local youth clubs.
Outreach work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue outreach work in antisocial behaviour hotspots and use feedback from this work to develop longer-term ways of supporting young people and tailor provision to identified needs • Secure funding to continue this work beyond summer 2025.
The Legacy Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support and promote delivery of this project and facilitate signposting to other services and provision. • Review impact of the pilot and decide whether to secure additional funding to extend the project beyond September 2025.
Hub model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with relevant partners to explore the longer-term concept and feasibility of a young peoples' hub.
Priority 3: Raising aspirations and opportunities	
Supporting careers work in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue supporting careers fairs at local schools and colleges. • Introduce and embed a corporate approach to staff volunteering at secondary school mock interviews. • Support the delivery of the Pathways to Success Careers Programme and seek further funding to extend this if successful.
Work experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce and embed a corporate approach to a work experience programme for secondary schools. • Use learning from this to explore the feasibility of an internship programme for older young people.
Volunteering for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Rushmoor Voluntary Services to develop and promote volunteering opportunities suitable for young people and increase the number of young volunteers in the borough. • Work with schools to engage young people and promote volunteering opportunities for Council initiatives such as the Binfluencers litter collection and other Pride in place related projects.

Youth Markets

- Explore the opportunity to develop a Youth Market to support young enterprise.

Priority 4: Supporting better physical and mental health

Mental health support for youth clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with Fortify to deliver tailored sessions in youth settings that support positive mental health around mood and anxiety, resilience, and healthy relationships.
Healthy schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with schools with the highest levels of obesity rates to develop a targeted programme to increase physical activity offers and reduce sugar intake in school.
Active Rushmoor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with local sports clubs and providers to develop activities at an affordable cost that get people into clubs and sustain regular activity sessions, including a summer campaign to encourage partners to host open days and taster sessions.• Continue to support the delivery of specific cycling programmes within schools and develop the Active Schools Project more broadly.
Community Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase the number of opportunities for young people to engage in volunteering and local community activity.