

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Luke Mason

DATE OF MEETING: 29 March 2023

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on areas of activity within my portfolio including performance against strategic priorities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic Priority 1: To critically engage with young people across Middlesbrough to ensure their thoughts, ideas and opinions are heard and help inspire them to take action in their local communities.

Update: I have continued to visit students from various wards across Middlesbrough and spoken about a wide variety of topics, from the importance of political participation in elections through to their ambitions for the future. It is crucial that we as a local authority do all that we can to help facilitate these discussions in local schools and colleges.

Some recent visits include:

- Abingdon Primary School
- Berwick Hills Primary School
- Captain Cook Primary School
- Pallister Park Primary School
- Acklam Whin Primary School
- Acklam Grange Secondary School



It was particularly positive to see that many of our schools are establishing School Councils and developing leadership roles to give children the opportunity to participate in serious discussions around the governance of their respective school.

On the whole, young people are generally satisfied with their local areas across much of the town and are happy to live in Middlesbrough. One common area of concern was anti-social behaviour at play parks and this is something which we should look to monitor moving forward.

Our MYP's continue to champion our area on a national level and are actively involved in a range of activities such as hosting youth debates and helping to promote key topics which matter to them.

DIRECTORATE PRIORITIES

Directorate Priority 1: To ensure that people in Middlesbrough have access to the training and learning they need to enter the world of work and help reduce overall unemployment in Middlesbrough.

Update: We will be relaunching our employment hub at the MME (Middlesbrough Media Exchange) towards the back end of March 2023. The Employment Hub is funded by the DWP and managed by Middlesbrough Council. The hub, which is based on Corporation Road, will support those aged 16+ with short interventions to move them closer to employment. This will include increasing employability skills and confidence, progressing them to training and education as well as work experience and volunteering.

There will be a DWP work coach on site two days a week to focus on those aged 16-24 years old. We will also have support from the National Careers service and a range of other providers and additional services from around Middlesbrough to offer further support. The overall aim here is to create a 'one-stop shop' to reduce unemployment levels in Middlesbrough by offering information, advice and guidance through short interventions and signposting.

This represents further support which we are offering our younger people in addition to the work currently being carried out at the MME and also the Lingfield Countryside Centre in Coulby Newham.



Directorate Priority 2: To increase Youth Participation with the Council across a range of different areas.

Update: We continue to look to increase the number of opportunities which young people have to engage with the Council. As well as hosting a number of 'one off'

events throughout the year we also have a number of ongoing events which offer a chance for engagement such as:

- Children in Care Council: This is a fortnightly group for young people to tell us what is important to them and have their views heard. So far 60 care experienced young people have engaged. The group frequently host events ranging from brunch and picnics to seasonal parties. Corporate parents and senior managers attend events regularly and areas which are looked at are decided by the young people involved.
- Older Care Experienced Young People: This has involved 16 care experienced young people redesigning/ rewriting their offer. The participation team will be meeting young people in residential homes to capture their views and meeting care leavers when they are free. A new offer for care leavers is due to be produced in June 2023.
- Youth Council: 8 young people currently attend the Youth Council and they are producing a manifesto with the main topics centring on the Cost of living crisis and mental health. Moving forward these young people will be working with key decision makers to make a difference in their communities and address the main points outlined in their manifesto.
- SEND young people Group: A number of young people attend a fortnightly group to develop/ design their own conference and have a voice on other matters that are important to them. The Youth Voice Conference 2023 will consist of a number of workshops which will be led by young people based on issues which are most important to them.

If members would like further information on the journey participation has undertaken in Middlesbrough or would like a calendar of upcoming events please email me in the first instance.

HIGHLIGHTS

As ever, listening and speaking to our young people across the town remains a key highlight. It's brilliant to see that the authority is continuing to expand provision to enable people to succeed in education and gain the necessary skills to achieve their ambitions in the wider world. MBC staff continue to go above and beyond in helping support our young people and this passion is clearly having a hugely positive effect.

THE TIME AHEAD

I will undertake several further visits to local schools and academies before Purdah (Pre-Election Period) comes into effect and continue to liaise with our participation team to assess the relative success and participation levels of our groups. Work continues to encourage local businesses and contractors to offer apprenticeships to our young people in an effort to increase the number of job opportunities. Regardless of the outcome of the upcoming election it's crucial that the voices of young people continue to be heard and opportunities to help shape policy and engage with decision makers is continued.

NAME Luke Mason
DATE 29/03/23