

Minutes of: YOUTH CABINET

Date of Meeting: 16 July 2026

Present: Councillors S Haroon, D Green, G Martin and T Pilkington

Youth Members: Noah (Chair), Rujeen, Charlotte, Chloe, Evie, Eva, Hannah, Alexandro, Tobais, Suriya, Lilly, Lisa

Also in attendance: Jen Mills – Service Manager, Family Resources, Jon Hobday – Director of Public Health, Heather Walton – Youth Participation Worker, Beth Osbaldeston – SEND Inclusion Ambassador, Kelly Barnett – Democratic Services

Apologies for Absence: Councillor D Duncalfe, Councillor L Ryder, Councillor M Smith and Councillor S Walmsley, , Emma Russell – Youth Service Team Manager, Jeanette Richards – Director of Children and Young People, Chief Inspector Wright – GM Police
Youth Members – Zakariya and Tyler

INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and attendees introduced themselves.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See apologies for absence noted above.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was noted that Eva should be added to the list of attendees for the previous meeting. Subject to this amendment, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

Referring to the discussion at the previous meeting regarding improving communication with young people around multi-agency working, Jen Mills asked whether Members would find it beneficial to receive a quarterly multi-agency report relating to children at risk of involvement in crime. Members agreed that such reports would be useful.

Agreed:

1. Jen Mills to provide quarterly reports to future meetings of the Youth Cabinet.

POLICE UPDATE

Members worked in small groups to identify the single priority they would most like Greater Manchester Police to focus its resources on. Each group then presented its views to the Cabinet.

Increase in the Number of Corner Shops

A discussion took place regarding shops selling vapes to underage children and concerns about whether some businesses were operating legitimately.

A Councillor informed Members of a motion unanimously approved by Council at its meeting on 15 July 2026. The Council and partner agencies have undertaken visits to premises across the borough. As a result, some shops have had licences revoked and have subsequently closed. A progress report will be presented to Councillors in six months time.

Youth Members were encouraged to report any shops suspected of selling vapes or alcohol to underage children to their local Councillor.

Agreed:

1. Kelly Barnett to share the Council motion video from the Full Council meeting with the Youth Service for circulation to young people.

Households Where Neglect May Go Unnoticed

Members discussed concerns that neglect can become more prevalent during school holiday periods when regular contact with schools is reduced.

A Councillor highlighted the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, which provides activities and meals for young people during the summer holidays.

Discussions also took place regarding the promotion of extracurricular activities and community groups, such as Scouting, as a means of identifying and supporting vulnerable children.

Members further suggested that there should be a greater police presence in tunnels and other locations where young people may gather and engage in anti-social behaviour.

Bullying, Harassment and Hate Crime

Members discussed experiences of hate crime, bullying and harassment. Feedback highlighted concerns about young people being targeted because of their appearance, clothing choices, or alternative styles of dress.

It was suggested that some children and young people do not always recognise what constitutes bullying and may mistakenly view unkind comments as simply expressing an opinion. Members also noted that sarcastic remarks can often amount to bullying.

In response to a question from a Councillor regarding whether young people felt they were treated differently by the police because of their age, some Youth Members expressed the view that complaints made by adults may be taken more seriously. Youth Members also commented that young people can be stereotyped by businesses, for example through increased scrutiny while shopping.

YOUTH LED HEALTH DISCUSSION

Members worked in small groups to identify health-related priorities and shared their views with the Cabinet.

Access to Mental Health Services

Members discussed the importance of being able to access support when it is needed and acknowledged that mental health provision has improved in recent years, although challenges remain.

Healthy Weight

Discussions took place regarding obesity, weight gain, weight loss, and the challenges faced by young people who are underweight.

Members suggested that schools could provide more education on healthy approaches to weight management. It was also recognised that issues relating to weight can have a significant impact on mental health, and that young people who are overweight may be at greater risk of bullying.

A Councillor referred to a Council Motion passed the previous evening concerning endometriosis and highlighted a concern that some schools have restricted toilet access during lesson times. It was noted that pupils experiencing conditions such as endometriosis may require greater flexibility.

In response, a Youth Member advised that, due to issues such as anti-social behaviour, vaping, and loitering in toilet areas, it was common practice in their school for pupils to seek permission before leaving lessons.

Lack of NHS Dentists

Members discussed the difficulty of accessing NHS dental services and concerns regarding dental practices moving from NHS to private provision.

It was noted that long waiting times for orthodontic treatment can negatively affect young people's confidence and wellbeing, particularly where concerns about dental appearance contribute to bullying.

Access to Affordable Gyms

Members expressed concerns about the cost of gym memberships at local leisure centres and the impact this may have on young people's ability to access fitness facilities.

In response to the feedback received, Jon Hobday thanked Members for their contributions and acknowledged that access to NHS dentistry is a national issue. He advised that, while the North West performs better than some other regions, significant challenges remain.

Jon Hobday also explained that operating leisure facilities is costly and that extensive benchmarking is undertaken to ensure pricing remains competitive. He undertook to share Members' feedback with the Health and Wellbeing Board.

SCHOOL COUNCIL PROJECT

Heather Walton provided an update on the Youth Cabinet motion relating to school councils. She outlined the work undertaken to date, including the delivery of school council training to all

secondary schools and consultation with schools regarding the operation and effectiveness of their school council arrangements.

Heather Walton advised that the findings from this work have been incorporated into a report, which is currently awaiting approval from senior leaders. She then presented the report's conclusions to Members:

- The survey findings demonstrated that pupil voice is well established across participating schools. School councils and other leadership structures provide valuable opportunities for young people to contribute to decision-making processes and influence school improvement.
- SEND representation was identified as a particular strength, with almost all schools reporting active involvement of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) within representative structures.
- Strong support was expressed for further collaboration, training opportunities and the proposed Change Champions initiative.
- Overall, the findings provide a strong foundation for future borough-wide work aimed at strengthening inclusive participation, enhancing pupil voice and developing student leadership opportunities across Bury schools.

TALKING TO TEENAGER TRAINING

Heather Walton updated Members on the recent Talking to Teenagers training programme, which had been very well received.

Twelve participants attended the session and feedback was unanimously positive. Suggestions for improvement were also received and will be considered when planning future training delivery.

CO-PRODUCTION KITEMARK

Heather Walton informed Members that a group of young people would be undertaking an assessment during the summer as part of the Co-Production Kitemark programme.

In recognition of the young people's commitment and contribution, a Youth Cabinet summer trip had been arranged for Thursday 6 August. The visit would include a tour of the John Rylands Library, a city-centre treasure hunt, and a meal at Wagamama. Transport and lunch costs would be funded by the Youth Service.

YOUTH PARLIAMENT UPDATE

Youth Parliament representatives provided an update on recent activities, including attendance at a residential event where they met with members from across the country to discuss issues affecting young people.

Key discussion topics included media literacy and political education. As part of the event, participants developed campaign proposals to take back to their local Youth Cabinets.

Members proposed undertaking a survey to assess young people's levels of political knowledge, with the intention of using the findings to support a campaign for enhanced political education within the curriculum, particularly in light of proposals to extend voting rights to 16 and 17 year olds.

Representatives also reported discussions with North West Youth Parliament members regarding employment opportunities and work experience for young people. Work experience was identified as a key regional priority, and a proposal was discussed to develop a website through which young people could share opportunities and raise concerns relating to employment and work experience.

Following consideration of the Make Your Mark campaign priorities, Members voted on the issues they wished to support.

Agreed:

Bury Youth Cabinet will prioritise lobbying on the following three issues:

1. A united commitment to tackling hate crime in the UK.
2. Preparing young people for life.
3. Universal mental health support in educational settings.

GREATER MANCHESTER YOUTH COMBINED AUTHORITY UPDATE

The Chair provided an update on meetings of the Greater Manchester Youth Combined Authority held on 9 June 2026 and 14 July 2026.

Key discussion topics included:

- Employment, training and career opportunities for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Bury.
- Co-Chair arrangements and leadership development.
- Communications relating to elections and democratic engagement.
- The development of a technical education tool to support young people in exploring education and career pathways.

FEEDBACK FROM THE BEE TRAVEL NETWORK MEETING

The Chair provided feedback from the most recent Bee Travel Network meeting.

Discussion focused on the following areas:

- Improvements to bus services across Greater Manchester.
- Planned service improvements on the 471, 472 and 474 bus routes.
- A Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) consultation regarding Simister Island.
- The development of bike repair hubs ("Bike Hospitals") and additional cycle hubs across the borough.

URGENT BUSINESS

Tobias provided an update on behalf of the Changemakers group, highlighting the following areas of work:

- The development of an accessible and inclusive Easy Read version of the Short Break Duty Statement, alongside a series of short explanatory videos.

- Work with Jo McMaster, Designated SEND Officer for Bury, to develop a multi-agency SEND guide.
- Participation in SEND reform meetings with Ben Dunne, Director of Education.
- Engagement with Wendy Young, Head of SEND Services, regarding Communities of Practice.
- Attending a celebration event recognising the achievements of Changemakers members over the past year.
- Recognition of the recent positive Ofsted inspection outcome, which identified improvements across all six SEND priority areas.

Agreed:

1. All future full meetings of the formal Youth Cabinet meetings will be held on a Tuesday evening to align with other youth meetings.

THE BIG DEBATE

It was agreed that the debate topic would be: Does social media bans protect children?

It was agreed:

1. To carry forward the debate to a future meeting.

**NOAH
Chair**

(Note: The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.50 pm)