

REPORT TO CABINET

16 JULY 2026

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET INFORMATION ITEM

Children & Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Clare Besford

Bright Minds Big Futures – Annual Update

Summary

The information report provides Cabinet with an update on Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF). As Cabinet will recall BMBF is a youth-led movement working together with the Council to make the Borough a great place to grow up.

The report is presented by representatives of the BMBF team.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

BMBF welcome the opportunity to present their progress made towards achieving their 2025-2026 Health & Wellbeing and Crime & Disorder objectives. Since March 2026, BMBF have focussed on their main objectives that came out of the 2026 Make Your Mark consultation which are Health & Wellbeing and Jobs, Training & Opportunities. The report also highlights areas of good practice and identifies future projects and opportunities. At the June 2025 update to Cabinet, BMBF posed a series of questions to Cabinet and responses received on these are at Appendix 1.

Recommendations

1. Progress made over the last 12 months by BMBF to be noted.

Detail

1. As you will hear from the presentation, excellent progress has made in the last 12 months. Some examples are detailed below:
 - Recruited 21 young people as SBC Correspondents at SIRF (August 25). This has led to some of these young people joining BMBF and provided

young people with important volunteering experience that they can reference for college, university and job applications.

- A Second Dance Prom Project has raised £1,460, providing 98 prom outfits to young people. This funding will be reinvested for 2026/27 to continue the project. Many of the young people supported by the scheme may otherwise not have been able to attend their prom due to the high cost of sourcing an outfit.
- 14 young people joined in Take Over Day at the Council, giving them experience of working in various departments within the local authority. A number of these young people are keen to do further work experience within the Council and has also given inspiration of which career path they would like to take.
- 806 young people from across the borough responded to the Have Your Say North East campaign in March 2026 and voted that Health & Wellbeing and Jobs, Training & Opportunities are their top 2 priorities. This enables BMBF to focus on the issues that really matter to the young people in our borough.
- Other social action volunteering projects have included BMBF members supporting the Community Gift and various Community Fun Days.
- Health & wellbeing initiatives such as voting to provide match funding to run a series of boxing sessions in the Ropner area to provide diversionary activities for the young people in this area.

2. These achievements will be expanded upon in the supporting presentation.
3. An ongoing recruitment campaign is in place to increase membership of BMBF. This activity seeks to ensure that BMBF is representative of our young people across the borough. Strong links have developed across Council services, including the Leaving Care Team and Home School Team as well as YUSA and other partners.
4. Members are also asked to note that BMBF are now represented locally through Youth Focussed North East, with young people from BMBF attending the first regional session in May 2026.

Looking ahead

5. From March 2026, BMBF's new objectives, which came out of Have Your Say North East consultation with 806 young people, are Health and Wellbeing and Jobs, Training and Opportunities. BMBF have already started working towards these and ongoing takeover days, for example, will provide opportunities for BMBF members to learn more about council roles and functions.
6. BMBF are currently undergoing a recruitment process to form a Youth Council from which two members of Youth Parliament will be elected. The recruitment drive also

continues to ensure that BMBF is representative of our young people across the borough. It is hoped that the process for the Members of Youth Parliament will increase the number of young people on BMBF

7. BMBF will host a development day in September 2026 where the young people will look at how to build upon the success of the last 12 months and plan further projects and activities. Looking ahead, in order to bring in more than the current restricted £5,000 per year, they are looking to change the governance arrangements of how they are constituted allowing them to bring in further funding to carry out further work across the Borough.

Consultation and engagement

8. Ongoing consultation with young people through BMBF

Next Steps

9. BMBF ask that the report be noted and continue to receive ongoing support through Cabinet.

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Appendix 1

Questions posed by BMBF to Cabinet at the June 2025 Annual Update

Question 1: Can we be involved with more events for young people in Stockton High Street?

Progress to date:

- A number of Second Dance Prom events have taken place in Wellington Square
- Here 2 Help Youth Event was held aimed specifically at young people with activities and organisations present
- BMBF invited to the High Street Forum meetings and have attended
- Here 2 Help Summer Event – volunteered in the pre loved uniform shop in July 2025. The event was aimed specifically at young people and their families.
- SIRF correspondents activity took place during August 2025
- Fundraising opportunity at Stockton Sparkles. Young people had the opportunity to have a market stall to raise money for BMBF in November 2025
- BMBF invited to a pre opening visit of the Waterfront Development in June 2026

Question 2: Young people to be represented on a regional basis

Progress to date:

- Working regionally with young people to increase the capacity of regional meetings
- BMBF have attended Have Your Say North East conferences
- BMBF looking to host a Have Your Say North East in Stockton
- BMBF are currently undergoing to process for recruitment of 2 Members of Youth Parliament which will give Stockton a local, regional and national voice.

Question 3: Can we have support to be able to promote BMBF to schools

Progress to date:

- Have attended 3 school assemblies to promote BMBF
- Attended governor meetings to promote BMBF and drive recruitment
- BMBF advertised in the headteachers newsletter
- Strong links formed with Home School Support team
- Strong relationship with Care Leavers team and 2 young people took part in the Take Over Day
- Have attended sessions in sixth forms and colleges to promote BMBF

Question 4: Can BMBF have a Tik Tok account?

Progress to date:

- Earlier this year the Government started a consultation in social media use for those under 16. Last month (19 June) the Government announced plans including a

proposal for a ban for under 16s to use platforms and apps such as Tik Tok and Instagram.

- The Government's proposals also state that 16 and 17 year olds will be able to access social media, but live streaming, and stranger communication including in gaming, will be switched off by default for these ages. We need to understand how the platforms respond to these proposals and will continue to monitor the guidance.