

Report Title:	<b>Resident Scrutiny Suggestion – Breastfeeding</b>
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Meeting and Date:	People Overview and Scrutiny Panel - 16 June 2022
Responsible Officer(s):	David Cook, Scrutiny Officer
Wards affected:	All

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

- The report outlines a suggested topic submitted by a resident for consideration by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Topics can be suggested by residents and then considered by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel for further consideration (criteria outlined in paragraph 1.1.) Residents are able to access the criteria on the [council's website](#).
- Details of the resident who has submitted this topic have been anonymised.
- The suggested topic received as follows: “How about making RBWM a breastfeeding friendly town where mothers are supported to BF. It would mean all places offering food other areas encouraging mothers to use them.”
- It is recommended that this topic is considered by the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

## **1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)**

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1.1 **The Public Health, Economic Growth and Achieving for Children Health Visiting team all recognise the importance of breastfeeding, and therefore recommend that a piece of engagement work is considered to interact with local businesses in RBWM to understand the current offer of breastfeeding friendly services/venues offered within the borough. The Public Health team will consult with the Economic Growth team as to how best to engage with local businesses.**

## **2. CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT FOR SUGGESTED TOPICS RECEIVED BY RESIDENTS**

- 2.1 Residents should only submit topics that relate to **a service, event or issue** which affects the social, environmental or economic wellbeing of a group or community of people in the Borough.

- 2.2 What makes a good scrutiny topic?

- **Scope** – is it an issue of concern to our local communities and other associated organisations?
- **Significance** – could a review of this issue improve the Council's (or other organisations) processes or performance and make a positive difference to the lives of our residents?
- **Appropriate** – is this review timely and does it avoid duplicating other work?

### 2.3 Items that will not be considered include:

- Individual service complaints for which there is a corporate complaints procedure (please click [here](#) for more details)
- Topics outside of the remit of the council or where the council has no powers or influence to change an outcome
- Issues which scrutiny has considered in the last 12 months
- Areas relating to quasi-judicial functions e.g. planning, licensing and standards

## 3. INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED TOPIC

### 3.1 Scope:

- 3.1.1 Breastfeeding is an important public health priority; evidence shows that breastfeeding has a positive effect for both the mother and the baby's development.
- 3.1.2 The current local breastfeeding support offer in place includes health visiting education and advice, support via new birth contacts with a qualified Health Visitor and Well Baby Clinics in the community (4 weekly clinics and 1 monthly clinic) available to all RBWM residents. There is currently a weekly breastfeeding drop-in cafe in Maidenhead in operation (as per January 2022) with a view to expanding to Windsor (subject to staffing levels) - this all forms part of the health visiting offer, commissioned by the local authority.
- 3.1.3 It is important to highlight that to work towards achieving a 'breastfeeding friendly town' status would require a wider consultation with partners across the council, such as Achieving for Children and the Economic Growth team.

### 3.2 Significance:

#### 3.2.1 Public Health - Comments

- 3.2.1.1 Evidence highlights that supporting families to breastfeed and increasing the number of babies who are breastfed, offers the best possible start in life. WHO and UNICEF have highlighted the importance of baby and breastfeeding friendly initiatives and how fundamental they are to significantly improving breastfeeding rates, ([Nutrition and Food Safety \(who.int\)](#))
- 3.2.1.2 Research by [Victoria et al., 2016](#) and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) highlights the positive impact of breastfeeding, it demonstrated that:

- exclusive breastfeeding should be recommended for the first 6 months of life with continued breastfeeding alongside solid foods for at least the first year of life
- improving breastfeeding rates in lower socioeconomic groups and young parents can play an important role in reducing health inequalities
- responsive feeding has benefits for mother and infant, including emotional attachment
- benefits against the risk of respiratory infections, gastroenteritis and ear infections
- improved oral health and reduced tooth decay
- reduced risk of sudden unexpected deaths in infancy in breastfed babies
- breastfeeding can be protective against obesity, particularly in those who are genetically predisposed; breastfeeding for 3 months in the first year of a baby's life reduces the risk of obesity by 13% in later life
- lowered risk of breast cancer in women who breastfeed and some protection against ovarian cancer ([Early years high impact area 3: Supporting breastfeeding - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#))

3.2.1.3 Local data and commentary is provided on the number and proportion of infants who have been fully, partially or not at all breastfed at 6 to 8 weeks after birth. Current prevalence of those who are partially or totally breastfed stands at 73.7%, (March 2022 – [data available on InPhase](#)).

3.2.1.4 This data is provided on a quarterly basis by the Achieving for Children health visiting team, as well as being recorded annually by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, under the Child and Maternal health Profile - [Child and Maternal Health - Data - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#). This data provides Public Health with not only an understanding of overall breastfeeding prevalence, but also an understanding of where there may be gaps within the current services available or emerging themes around breastfeeding rates.

### 3.2.2 Economic Growth – Comments

3.2.2.1 Could have a positive impact on businesses if they were seen to be welcoming to mothers who are breastfeeding. Would be reliant on engaging with the business community in the borough and then promoting breastfeeding friendly venues – this could be achieved through existing channels.

### 3.2.3 Health Visiting – Comments

3.2.3.1 There are numerous benefits of breastfeeding, these include, but are not limited to:

- There is a cost saving benefit for all groups, as breastfeeding is free
- Provides more than just nutritional benefits for the baby in form of touch, responsiveness, comfort and communication
- Benefits to the child's health includes protection against urinary infections, allergies, heart disease and childhood cancer, prevention from the development of type 2 diabetes
- Benefits to the mother's health included protection from mother developing osteoporosis in later life, which can be a common cause of hip fractures

### 3.3 Appropriate:

3.3.1 Research has highlighted that establishing a breastfeeding friendly town is a lengthy process that requires engagement and buy in from all businesses across the borough, ([Breastfeeding Network, 2022](#)).

3.3.2 While at this moment in time RBWM is not in place to be recognised as a 'Breastfeeding Friendly Town', there are some key learnings we can take forward from other local authorities who have established strategies and social media campaigns to encourage breastfeeding uptake and work towards being considered as a 'breastfeeding Friendly town'. These include:

- [Surrey County Council Breastfeeding Strategy: Building a Happy Baby 2015-2020](#) (refreshed and reviewed in 2021) – the strategy key aims include:
  - To ensure Every family is fully aware of the benefits of breastfeeding and therefore able to make an informed decision about how to feed their baby.
  - Every family can access the information, support and help they need in hospital and community settings from appropriate publicly funded and voluntary services.
  - Public and private sector services and settings all welcome and support breastfeeding mothers.
- The strategy includes a collaborative action plan to reduce the stigma associated with breastfeeding in Surrey.
- In addition to this, Kent County Council have developed the [BesideYou \(2020\)](#) social media campaign and digital platform to support breastfeeding uptake in Kent and Medway. This includes tips for breastfeeding in public, venue recommendations that are particularly friendly to babies and breastfeeding, in addition to highlighting the Health Visitor and local voluntary groups that offer support around breastfeeding.

## 4. CORPORATE PRIORITY AREAS

4.1 When assessing a topic it is important to understand whether this item would fall under one of the key objectives set out in the Corporate Plan 2021-2026, which has the overarching vision of 'Creating a sustainable borough of opportunity and innovation'. It has been assessed that this topic would fall under the following priorities:

- **Thriving Communities:** Where families and individuals are empowered to achieve their ambitions and fulfil their potential.

## 5. CONSULTATION

<b>Name of consultee</b>	<b>Post held</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date returned</b>
Charlotte Littlemore	Public Health Programme Officer	28/01/22	16/03/22
Anna Richards	Consultant in Public Health	29/03/22	06/04/22
Chris Joyce	Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth	29/03/22	30/03/22

## REPORT HISTORY

<b>Decision type:</b>	<b>Urgency item?</b>	<b>To follow item?</b>
For the Panel to consider if further scrutiny is required.	No	No

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