



SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE IN EPSOM & EWELL

YOUTH CAFÉ

28th NOVEMBER 2005

KEY ISSUE

The Epsom Youth Café hosted by Starbucks in the Ashley Centre is about to enter its third year of operation. This report reviews the operation of the café over the last year since January 2005 and discusses the long term sustainability of the café.

SUMMARY

The Youth Café opens every Friday night between 7 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. (with a 'drinking up time' to 10 pm.) for young people aged between 13 - 17. The Youth Café provides a safe environment and a fun and entertaining atmosphere within the town centre where young people can meet socially in an alcohol free venue.

The Youth Café in Epsom has been held as an exemplar of good practice and as a result many similar initiatives are now being run across the County, including venues in Staines and Cobham.

The original concept was that the Youth Café would become self-financing by the end of the first year. The Youth Café has not become self-financing and it has been accepted that it is unlikely to achieve this, given the costs of the Youth Development Service staffing and the door staff. Therefore, the Local Committee is asked to consider making a contribution of £2,000 towards the costs for the period April 2006 to March 2007.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee supports the continuation of the Epsom Youth Café and makes a contribution of £2,000 from Members' allowances.

1 Background

- 1.1 The original idea for a Youth Café came from discussions held with YELL (the local youth forum) about what type of provision/activities they would like to see for young people. YELL responded that they wanted a venue in the town centre, which was safe, fun and just for young people. The idea of a youth café was put forward, because young people do not necessarily want to go to a youth club or more organised youth activities, they wanted somewhere that was more informal, a place to meet friends and to chat.
- 1.2 The Youth Café came into existence in January 2004 as a result of innovative partnership work between the Youth Development Service, Epsom & Ewell Business Partnership, the Borough Council, the Police and Starbucks. The Business Partnership brokered the original agreement.

2 The Youth Café

- 2.1 The Youth Café opens every Friday night, except for bank holidays and the six week school summer holiday period. It was found in the first year of operation that the café had very low attendance during the school summer holidays and it was therefore felt that it made most sense to close during the summer holidays. The café is open from 7p.m. to 9.30 p.m. with a 'drinking-up time' to 10 p.m. when the café closes. The café is for the sole use of young people aged 13 – 17.
- 2.2 The Youth Café is staffed by Youth Development Service staff, and it is the youth workers who are responsible for running the café.
- 2.3 The Youth Café has undergone some operational changes this year. The steering group for the Youth Café agreed that, from September, a £1.25 entrance fee would be charged. On payment of the entrance fee, the young person is issued with a voucher entitling them to a free Starbucks drink. Previously, many young people were using the café but not purchasing any drinks, and the entrance fee was introduced to encourage them to buy beverages.
- 2.4 Originally Starbucks beverages were sold to the young people at a 30% discount rate, but during the first year of operation it was found that, even with this discount, young people did not have the level of disposable income to make the purchases that would allow the Youth café to become self-financing. As a result, the £1.25 entry fee was introduced, along with a separate menu for the Youth Café. Both of these initiatives were introduced at the request of Starbucks.
- 2.5 The Youth Café now has its own menu of drinks, which the young people can be involved in choosing and devising. The primary reason for the introduction of the menu was to make it more efficient and time effective for the Starbucks staff.

- 2.6 The café also hosts themed evenings which have included, for example, live acoustic music performed by emerging local young local musicians, and food tastings.

3 Objectives and beneficial outcomes

- 3.1 The Youth Café has changed to continue to meet the needs of its users and the partner organisations involved in the café. The Youth Café now forms a core part of the Youth Development Services plan and specifically it has enabled the service to develop a Friday night strategy.
- 3.2 The Youth Café has given young people in the Town Centre a choice of venues - just as adults require a variety of venues so do young people. The Youth Café has continued to increase its popularity with young people, as the attendance figures demonstrate.
- 3.3 The operational changes that have occurred this year have been at the request of Starbucks. Starbucks continues to be a willing partner but views their role as that of enabler, to provide the premises, staff and beverages. Starbucks has never seen this as a commercial venture but equally did not want to make a loss as a result hence the continuation of the £500 subsidy each quarter.
- 3.4 The Youth Café also received a contribution of £4,000 from the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) for the last financial period. The Police involvement in the actual running of the Youth Café has reduced but the Police continue to support the scheme as members of the steering group. A report is also being taken to the CDRP executive meeting to seek funding.

4 Sustainability and Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Youth Café was averaging 44 people attending every Friday night between April and the summer school holidays this year. Since September and the introduction of the £1.25 entry fee, attendance figures have continued to grow with an average of 85 people attending over the last 10 weeks.
- 4.2 The original cash flow forecast was made on the basis of an expected £4 spend per guest, but the average for the first year fell well below this, at £1.77 but since the introduction of the £1.25 entry fee the average spend per guest is now £1.48. This is a reflection of the levels of disposable income available to users of the café, and it is important that cost does not act as a barrier to users.

Summary 2005	Average Nightly Sales	Average Guest Count	Average Spend per Guest
Quarter 1 (10 weeks)	£82	45	£1.80
Quarter 2 (12 weeks)	£86	43	£1.98
Quarter 3 (12 weeks)	£117.5	79	£1.56
Quarter 4 (not started yet)			

Starbucks has been provided with a level of subsidy to cover their fixed costs and the cost of the discount provided through the free drink vouchers issued on payment of the entry fee. The company is content to continue to offer a discount through the continuation of this arrangement. The subsidy paid to Starbucks currently equates to £500 per quarter, £2,000 for a whole financial year. The other cost is that of the door staff which, at £79.31 per night/ £951.72 per quarter, amounts to £3,806 for the whole financial year. The total subsidy that the Youth Café needs to continue for the next financial year is £5,806.

5 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 The Youth Café has successfully provided an alcohol and smoking free meeting place for young people. It discourages under-age drinking and anti-social behaviour and is seen as a valued resource by the young people who use it. It's costs are subsidised by Starbucks, the Youth Development Service and the CDRP and it represents good value for money. In order to guarantee the continued operation of the café, a further subsidy to cover the period to March 2007 is required.

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