

Item 7

THE PROPOSED VIRTUAL YOUTH CLUB FOR SURREY HEATH SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE IN SURREY HEATH

22nd July 2004

KEY ISSUE:

This report outlines the plans for a virtual youth club in Surrey Heath.

SUMMARY:

A virtual youth club would be based on an interactive web-site. The virtual youth club would link services together and be accessible by all young people in Surrey Heath. The set up costs of a virtual youth club are estimated to be in the region of £42,000. Existing Youth Development Service budgets can meet £15,800 of this initial set up cost. This leaves £25,635 to be funded. The ongoing costs are estimated at £14,000 per annum which compares favourably with the operating costs of a static site.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Surrey Heath Local Committee

1. notes this report, and:
2. allocates funds of £15,000 towards the project.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Surrey Heath comprises of 9,500 hectares of urban and rural land in North West Surrey and has common boundaries with other Surrey districts and authorities in Hampshire & Berkshire. The 2001 Census showed the population of Surrey Heath to be at 80,314

Census 2001	Male		Female		Total
Age 10-14	2702	51.5%	2545	48.5%	5247
Age 15-19	2403	51.5%	2264	48.5%	4667
Tot Population	39701	49.4%	40613	50.6%	80314

2. The total population for this area has increased by 1.5% since the 1991 census; the age group breakdowns have remained fairly static for this ten-year period. In comparison with other Surrey districts, Surrey Heath has a generally younger age profile.

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

3. The Virtual Youth Club is an idea that is based upon engaging with young people over a larger geographical area. The concept is based upon a web-site that is genuinely interactive and has the capacity of being able to work and engage with young people. The virtual concept enables the provision and support to be provided without the requirement of any numbers of fixed locations. This will assist the Youth Service in accessing young people who live in the rural villages by being able to offer a consistent means of engagement. This could incorporate playing games, chatting to mates, meeting new friends, sharing ideas and views, and experiences. Speaking to youth club leaders about problems – getting advice.
4. The 'virtual' concept enables young people to be active, by encouraging them to participate in a number of local initiatives, such as the pilot transport policy for Surrey. The scheme can also empower the young people to become pro-active in their community, by having the confidence, support and knowledge to take responsibility, in dealing with the wide range of issues during adolescence.
5. This concept moves away from any traditional unit activity, to a service accessible by all young people - linking to schools, libraries, connexions and other statutory and non-statutory agencies.
6. It is anticipated that in the long-term this type of pilot project can offer greater efficiencies in staff time, and will not require the exclusive use of a youth centre.
7. The needs of young people continually change; this is particularly witnessed over the past 5 years. The Youth Development Service provision has adapted to sustain an effective 2-way communication with young people. To enable the service to continue to develop, support of new initiatives and pilot schemes is crucial.
8. The 'virtual' scheme will enable a myriad of communication to take place, please see below for initial ideas.
 - Access a wide range of activities, which includes transport building the gap between urban and rural.
 - 2-way communication process to obtain opinions of young people.
 - Revise the 'open debate' discussion.
 - Give young people a voice in the community.
 - Share concerns with policy makers.
 - Information exchange - peer lead.
 - Access to active and accredited learning.
 - Create the capacity for young people to make decisions that affect youth service delivery.
 - Issue driven provision - with a proactive response engaging young people.

9. From initial thoughts workstations could be located in:
 - Youth Clubs.
 - Schools/Colleges.
 - Libraries.
 - Connexions.
 - A Town centre cyber café or youth café.
 - A local coffee bar and or other young people user friendly sites.
 - Two town centre work stations (Land West of Park Street).
 - St Michael's Community Project – 'The Flat'
 - Local events such as the Camberley Carnival & Extravaganza.
 - The laptops to be used in the mini-bus, which will be used for activities, where the static locations are not accessible e.g. the rural villages.
 - SNAP (say no and phone)discos.
 - Youth Councils, student unions etc.

10. The design and timing schedules are based upon a commercial external organisation designing the web-site.
 - Virtual Youth Club design timescales - 12 weeks
 - Funding £20k to include a 3-year maintenance
 - January 2005

11. Resources required are:
 - Computers x 4
 - Laptops x 2
 - Rent a mini bus and or;
 - Taxi vouchers
 - Advertising within the area i.e. schools, poster-sites, flyers, local press editorial etc
 - Two work stations in Camberley town centre - computer terminal sites

12. Personnel required:
 - Part-time Youth Workers
 - Part-time - Driver
 - Administrative support

13. Stationary & printing costs will also need addressing.

14. The virtual site will follow all current child protection policies presently operated by Surrey County Council, and will aim to follow national good practice guidelines.

15. Targets
 - 25% of the Young People population of Surrey Heath within 18 months
 - Research how the provision is used on Virtual Youth Site.
 - Continual feed back.

- Pilot a transport Policy for Surrey - on the delivery of consumables and costs.

CONSULTATION

16. This proposal is in response to the needs of young people raised at the following forums:

- Local Director Youth Workshop - February 2004
- Local Youth Clubs
- Outreach Workers feedback
- Local schools

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

17. The proposed ongoing costs would be estimated at £14,000 per annum to operate a virtual Youth Club. This compares favourably with the operating costs of a static site.

18. The following set up costs for a virtual youth club can be met from the existing Youth Development Service budget:

Category	Costs
Youth worker provision	6,800
Administrative costs	2,000
Stationery & printing	2,000
Advertising	2,000
Special Promotions	1,000
Accredited learning	1,000
Courses	1,000
TOTAL	15,800

19. However, the following costs need to be met:

Computers x 6	6,000
Web-site design	16,275
Annual maintenance contract for web-site	3,360
TOTAL	25,635

20. Both Surrey Heath Borough Council and Surrey Police are supportive of the project and it is hoped that both will contribute to the costs of the project.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

21. None.

CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

22. Further access to targeted youth services will provide information and support for young people who are at risk of being disengaged from the

community. Particular targeted attention will be directed towards young people at risk of crime.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

23. The virtual youth club will serve as an outreach service to all young people in Surrey heath as well as professional organisations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Surrey Heath Local Committee

1. notes this report, and:
2. allocates funds of £15,000 towards the project.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:	None