



PETITION

KNAPHILL YOUTH PETITION LOCAL COMMITTEE WOKING

20 OCTOBER 2008

SUMMARY:

Wording of the petition:

We the undersigned ask the Woking Local Committee to endorse the view that Surrey County Council should take a full leadership role in providing more 'places to go and things to do' for young people as part of the overall Youth Offer within Surrey. We ask that underused youth centres and school premises are regarded as a resource that can be 'brought to the table' locally in partnership with authorities such as Woking Borough Council and with Voluntary organisations to provide a wide range of positive activities for young people out of school hours, with affordable access by public or community transport.

In the Knaphill area, we request that a Youth Offer be developed which includes:

- Lakers Youth Centre open regularly at evenings and weekends as a 'youth hub' and including youth café style provision.
- Youth café style provision compatible with its present use being developed at Woking Youth Arts Centre
- An additional 'drop in'/youth café facility on the Brookwood Hospital estate and within walking distance of any new housing.

- More sports opportunities for all local young people using existing school facilities and recreation grounds.

Presentation of the Petition:

We understand the petition is signed by at 235 people and will be presented to the Committee by Cllr Olly Wells.

Youth Development Service response:

The Government is putting greater emphasis on Youth Services working with more vulnerable and marginalised young people and using targeted approaches to do this. Whilst this does not mean that Youth Services will no longer offer accessible facilities and activities to all young people it is likely that more efforts and resources will be focused on young people who are less likely to engage with other services.

Bearing this in mind the County Council are currently reviewing the Youth Development Service to agree a direction forward that both addresses the expectations of national government, but also meets the needs identified at a local level. It is expected the findings of this review will be presented shortly.

The County Council does have a role in providing places to go and things to do for young people, but youth centres are only part of the landscape of opportunities available to young people locally. Woking Borough Council has a wide and varied portfolio of leisure facilities and there are a number of voluntary organisations that have established provisions that are popular with Woking's youth. We all need to do better at making young people aware of these facilities.

Locally, the Youth Development Service regularly works with partners to utilise youth centres when there are no YDS activities taking place. This is the case for all the youth centres in Woking.

With regard to Knaphill and Goldsworth Park, the YDS is in the process of appointing a new full time youth worker for West Woking who will take a lead in increasing the YDS output in the area with the resources available. However, if additional facilities are to be developed with YDS involvement then additional resources will need to be identified as current budgets only cover the existing establishment.