

# Briefing Notes

Social and Community Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee

01 March 2010

This note contains information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee but where no decisions from Members are needed.

If Members have questions relating to matters shown, they are asked to contact the Member/Officer indicated.

## Youth Café Update

### Background

For some years I have been convinced that the young people accessing the town centre would benefit from a safe and enjoyable space, where they are free to relax or use the facilities.

Whilst the Youth Service deliver successful provision in other areas of Cheltenham, the fact is that young people do congregate in the town centre.

### Progress to date

Visits were made to Bewdley Youth Café and the Chill Out Zone in Newent. Whilst the differences between the two towns and Cheltenham were appreciated, it was felt that a similar model could be replicated in Cheltenham and prove equally successful.

Meetings have been held, to which representatives from Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucestershire County Council, the Police, Youth Services, YMCA, County Community Projects (CCP) Cheltenham businesses, and local Churches have attended.

Meetings have been fairly well attended and people around the table have been supportive of what is being proposed.

Membership has not been formalised and every effort has been made to extend the invitation to anybody that would like to attend.

It was agreed that we would need to undertake some form of consultation with young people, to identify what attracts them to the town centre and what else could be provided to make it safer and more attractive.

The 'You and YOUR Town' survey was developed, with the help of the Youth Service and MAD Youth.

The survey includes the following questions;

- Gender?
- Age?
- Do you visit the town centre?
- If not, why not?
- If so, when?

- What day(s) of the week?
- At what times?
- Why do you go to the town centre/
- What would you like to see in the town centre for young people/

The survey was distributed through as many avenues as possible. The majority of returns were being gathered by Town Centre Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers and Youth Workers, from young people in the town centre.

To date we have received 283 responses, of which 134 (47%) indicated that they would like to see a 'youth centre' type provision, somewhere safe and warm where they can spend time with their friends.

In January 2010 it was agreed by the group that met, that we needed to consult with a wider range of young people and the obvious way to do this was with the help of Schools.

All Secondary Schools in Cheltenham were contacted and asked to be involved in the collection of surveys and at the start of February surveys were delivered to each of the Schools.

Separately, CBC have been asking park users what they would like to see the garden lodge in Montpellier Park being used as. Several mentioned that the property could be used as a youth centre of some type.

As such, the Officers involved in the review, contacted me and I have had initial discussions with them about the prospect of using the lodge as a venue for a youth café.

### **What's next?**

We have acknowledged that further consultation would be required to gauge from young people what they consider as the town centre (Lower High Street or Montpellier Park), where a 'youth café' would be best placed and what issues would face those accessing it.

The group are next meeting on Wednesday 10 March, at 4pm in the Pittville Room.

### **Contact:**

Councillor Barbara Driver, Chair – Youth Café Group

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