

Licensing Committee – 13 December 2011

6. Zero Project Update

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Purpose of the Report

To provide information on the Zero Project to the Members of the Licensing Committee.

Public Interest

The report provides an overview of the work of the Zero Project multi-agency team. The team comprises of 7 voting members - South Somerset District Council (2), Avon and Somerset Constabulary (2), Somerset Youth Service (1), NHS (1), Venue (1) with supporting officers from the Council and the Police and Councillor Ian Martin as the project champion.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.

Report Detail

Background

The Zero project was set-up as a result of a request from the Area East Community Action Panel, to see if provision can be made for young people to access licensed premises before attaining the age of 18 years, in an attempt to change their attitude to alcohol and reduce future anti-social behaviour.

Two police officers and a licensing officer visited a young people's project in Norfolk and decided to run a similar version in South Somerset as it fitted the requirement of the request. Other agencies were approached to ascertain whether they would be interested in becoming part of the project, with the result that the Youth Service became a member of the team.

The events were first held at Chicago Rock, Yeovil in 2007 and have been held at Club Neo since 29 December 2010. Events are held on Wednesdays in school holidays.

Environment

A safe environment is provided at the premises by attendance of the partners, the presence of Security Industry Authority (SIA) qualified staff and a larger police presence towards the end of the evening. Random breath tests are carried out with alco-wands to ensure attendees haven't been drinking alcohol beforehand and also all handbags and bulky clothing is searched. Should anyone wish to leave before the end of the event, parents/carers are contacted for their permission. Safe routes home are encouraged, with the majority of young people being collected by parents/carers.

Street Pastors

The Street Pastors are supportive of the events and provide a very welcome presence at the end of the evening, when able to do so. They will escort young people to their lifts and wait with them to ensure they are safe if parents or the carer is late and also carry on the role of listening to problems, which is provided by the Youth Service and the NHS at the events.

Attendance

There has been a marked decrease in the numbers of attendees to the recent Zero Events. An investigation revealed that a number of young people were unaware they were taking place. It is thought that the reason for this decline in numbers is mainly due to the fact that the number of youth workers in schools was radically reduced by the County Council at the end of March. They played a vital role, as they took the advertising flyers to the schools for handing out to pupils and were reminding them of the events in assemblies and workshops. Now schools only have youth workers if they pay for them and their role has changed. The Youth Service member has also reported that the number of youth workers is to be reduced again in the next financial year.

The table below shows the decline in numbers:

Date of Event	Event Theme	No of attendees
29 December 2010 (First event at Club Neo)	Christmas/New Year's Party	497 – weather was bad (snowy)
23 February 2011	Valentine's Event	690
13 April 2011	Easter Party	556
1 June 2011	Dance Night	473
27 July 2011	Beach Party & Surf Machine	293
24 August 2011	Grease Night	200
26 October 2011	Halloween	257

The events in the summer holidays have traditionally been lower than other events; we believe the reasons are that the young people may be away on holiday and they haven't been at school for youth workers or peers to remind them.

The flyers are still being delivered to the schools together with letters to class teachers explaining the project, however upon asking the young people at the Halloween event, whether they received one, it appears that some schools haven't been distributing them. The irony is that a number of young people who attend a Dorset School have been attending and have been given a flyer at school, which is supportive of the events. Young people from other Dorset Schools have also attended events.

The Youth Service worker and a Council Officer are intending to visit some of South Somerset schools to help promote the next event and re-establish a link.

The South Somerset News, Winter 11 edition has been delivered to all households in South Somerset and contains a promotional advertisement for the event on 28 December. A copy can be found at **Appendix 1**

A Facebook site and a South Somerset District Council site have also been set-up at www.facebook.com/zeroclubbers and www.southsomerset.gov.uk/zero respectively to help with advertising. We are also looking into whether or not young people can be notified

by mobile phone as they provide these numbers to the DJ when requesting screen messages or music at the venue.

Pilot Project

A pilot Zero project was carried out in Chard at the Rugby Club with a total of 3 events being held there. Unfortunately due to the low numbers of attendees – the last event being only 5, the events have been put on hold, with the NHS and youth workers looking to provide some education in School before any more take place (if any). The first two events were better attended, however a larger number were turned away than admitted because of drinking before the events.

Unfortunately Holyrood School does not appear to support the project, as we do not believe that the flyers were handed out to the young people as having asked the attendees where they lived, the majority were from Crewkerne and Ilminster. Further contact was also made with the school, but again unfortunately, we are still waiting for a response, despite follow-up.

Information posters have also been displayed at numerous premises in Chard town centre where it was thought that young people or their parents might visit. The Rugby Club representative also stated that he had arranged for Chard households to receive a flyer though their letterbox before the last event.

Income & Expenditure

Our current balance for the Yeovil events is £6,104.43 and a copy of the balance sheet can be found at **Appendix 2**.

The printing service used by the project team has managed to reduce the cost of the flyers by approximately £200 per year by using a different medium of the same quality; this service remains the best value for money having obtained quotes from other businesses.

Grants

Small grants are available to organisations providing it involves young people aged between 14 – 17 years and that meet any of the following criteria:

- Provide activities in a safe environment
- Encourages young people to be involved in the organising of activities
- Reduce incidents of binge-drinking and alcohol related anti-social behaviour
- Promote parental responsibility
- Involve volunteers and/or agencies
- Provides education around alcohol

None have been issued to date, but they have been advertised and Council officers involved with young people are aware.

Legal Implications

There are no identified legal implications contained within the report.

Financial Implications

The Council pay for its Officer's time to attend these events out of the budget of the Assistant Director - Environment and other agencies also pay for employees time.

The finance is currently held and administered by SSDC on behalf of the project group.

Corporate Priority Implications

The project is aligned with corporate objective number 4 – To ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities by educating young persons about the problems alcohol can bring and that events can be enjoyed without it.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

There are quite a lot of Portuguese people living in Chard, therefore the project team would like to bring any future Zero events to their attention should events resume there in the future.

None of the attendees of previous events were of Portuguese nationality as far as we were aware. Portuguese businesses were visited as part of the advertising campaign and English speaking persons were informed of the project; if it continues in Chard, we will request assistance from the Equality and Diversity Officer in translating flyers and explaining the project through the Portuguese link worker. Unfortunately the funding for this post was of a limited duration and is shortly to come to an end; should this occur and another event take place in Chard, the Officer may be able to provide informal contacts that may be able to assist.

The Somerset Disability Forum receive details of Zero events.

Background Papers: *None*
