

Appendix 1
Cobtree Manor Park Café Business Review January 2017 Update

Problem Area	Detail	Solution	Action taken	Further action	January 2017 update
1. Limited opening hours	Not enough staff to rota later closure, missing out on early evening trade.	Build pool of casual staff on contract and open later when weather is good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplified recruitment process agreed with HR. • Continuous recruitment process with adverts in window. • Opening hours increased from 4pm to 5pm since mid-June. • Weather dependent opening until 6pm during summer holidays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular advert in local paper and Jobs in Kent. • Work with Mid Kent College to engage students from their Catering Courses as Casuals and apprentices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous recruitment has resulted in 4 appointments • 2nd recruitment drive in October resulted 2 successful appointments. • Pool of 10 casuals maintained
2. Reliance on agency staff	High cost of agency staff as compared to contracted staff and inconsistency in quality affecting bottom line.	Recruit more directly employed staff.	As 1 above	As 1 above	Decreased reliance month on month on Agency staff as casual pool has increased
3. Staff shortage at busy periods	Unable to cope with demand at	As 1 and 2 See 8	As 1 and 2	As 1 and 2	Second reactive point of sale for ice

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	very busy times and losing some customers.		See 8	See 8	creams and soft drinks successfully reduced queues. A permanent second point of sale would allow sales of ice-creams, drinks, pre-packed sandwiches and confectionary to be sold. Extension of existing sales counter currently being investigated.
4. Not able to take card payments	Customers can only pay by cash and as a result a lot of business has been turned away.	Install merchant services machines.	Machines installed 19/07/16	Agreed minimum transaction i.e. £5 or card charge of 50p.	Card machine introduced mid-July 2016, now accounting for an average of 28% of payments
5. Recruitment advertising not effective	Not getting a lot of applications to job adverts.	Review advertising methods and focus adverts in most appropriate place/s.	Advert for Casual Catering Staff displayed in the Visitor Centre with application forms available.	Local papers. Council social media.	Adverts displayed on site has led to enquiries into vacancies

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6. Recruitment process too long	Even with a simplified recruitment process staff have not taken up appointments due to the length of time taken to issue contracts	Investigate with HR feasibility of 'subject to references' which is standard in the industry.	As 1 above.	References by email.	Variable results with some staff in post within weeks and some over several months
7. Weather	The daily take correlates to the weather and in 2016 to date this has been poor.	Investigate indoor family activities that could be offered in the Visitor Centre on poor weather days			Discussions with child-minding network identified that the space would be used but would not increase business from this group. Under 5's paid activities eg music, yoga, art being researched.
8. Ice cream points of sale	Customers who wish to make quick purchases of e.g ice cream and soft drinks are being deterred by length of queues at busy periods.	Requires additional staffing and is time consuming.	Additional point of sale is now operational at busy periods.	Ice cream bike to be introduced during the summer holidays	Second point of sale inside the café proved effective but additional items to ice-creams and soft drinks i.e sandwiches, cakes, confectionary required. Extension

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					of existing sales counter currently being investigated.
9. Inconsistent mark up on sales	Standard industry mark-up not being achieved on all lines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review pricing structure and increase where appropriate especially on low value items such as water and confectionary. Review portion control. 	Pricing review undertaken. This will be introduced when new EPOS management system is operational – target date 01/08/2016	New menu for school holidays.	Winter menu reduced and price rises calculated. Delays by Spa-EPOS full usability and providing training have led to a delay in implementing. Price increases. This is now close to being dealt with.
10. Menu too long and may not reflect average customer.	At busy times delivering the full menu can be challenging as everything is cooked to order.	Review menu and simplify/shorten to a standard menu with regular changing 'specials'.	Menu review undertaken. This will be introduced when new EPOS management system is operational – target date 01/08/2016	Carry out market research with MPC customers to refine offer.	EPOS analysis identified popular and non-selling items. Streamlining of offer to refine stocking and preparation processes.
11. Some customers unaware of takeaway service.	Takeaway service not promoted or visible as all food made to order.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put up signs to advertise takeaway service internally and externally. 		Consider vending machines from drinks and confectionary.	Takeaway signs and information on menu

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce fliers for local industrial area to increase telephone orders • Introduce pre-made sandwiches, salad boxes and children's packed lunches and an express till for takeaway. 			<p>Fliers produced but telephone fault not repaired until November to allow distribution of fliers.</p> <p>See 3</p>
12.Change float not sufficient	Currently operate with a £200 cash float imposed by Finance. Turning many customers away as don't have change exacerbated by inability to take card payments. Causing a high number of complaints. Staff wasting time going backwards and forwards to the bank for change.	Increase cash float to £1,000	£1,000 float agreed 12 July 17.	Monitor if sufficient once card payments enabled.	Float increased to £575 sufficient for change management. Regular change orders with Lloyd's bank entails one Manager bank visit per week

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13.PR and Marketing	The café is not receiving enough exposure outside the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop dedicated page on Visit Maidstone website. • Step up social media activity around offers and seasons. 			Website created but not yet launched. Marketing activity will increase substantially related to the website

Other ideas to increase trade and monitor trade
A. Free WI-FI for customers This is now operational
B. Add park footfall figures to daily takings record along with weather report Footfall recording 3 monthly therefore currently only delayed analysis possible
C. Introduce loyalty cards In conjunction with website
D. Refund car park ticket on sales over £? – tear off portion required on parking ticket This has not been implemented and is not seen as an issue. Customers are regularly visiting just for food without visiting the park.
E. Develop special offers and marketing campaigns i.e. OAP early dinner fish and chips; parent and toddler offers. In conjunction with website
F. Develop retail sales such as children’s toys, dog food, sun screen, CMP merchandise. Toys successfully sold during summer months
G. Develop catering for parties Several children’s parties catered for profitably, some community and business meetings booked. Catering menu produced and to be promoted on website.