

Heather House Consultation

Final Decision-Maker	Communities, Housing and Environment Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	William Cornell, Director of Regeneration & Place
Lead Officer and Report Author	Clare Harvey, Data Intelligence Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	Park Wood

Executive Summary

The results of the Resident and Stakeholder surveys into usage and importance of Heather House Community Centre.

This report makes the following recommendations to Communities, Housing & the Environment Committee

1. That the results of the consultations with residents and stakeholders on Heather House be agreed as a sufficient evidence base to inform the decision on whether to make further investment in the facility.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	16 th April 2019

Heather House Consultation

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Heather House is a community facility that is owned and managed by Maidstone Borough Council. It is located on Bicknor Road, Park Wood, Maidstone, ME15 9PS, backing onto the Parkwood Recreation Ground. Over the last few years usage and revenues have reduced as the facilities on offer have become dated and in need of renewal.
- 1.2 In December the Committee considered a report seeking permission to undertake a procurement exercise to identify a suitable partner or partners to contribute to the design, investment and management of the new facility and requested early engagement with potential users and partners to establish potential future uses and uptake at the centre.
- 1.3 The Park Wood resident survey (Appendix 1) was distributed via post to all households in Park Wood ward (3,566), a freepost envelope was included in the mailing. The survey opened on the 11th February and closed on 24th March 2019. A total of 320 responses were received. The overall results are therefore accurate to within $\pm 4.4\%$ at a 90% confidence level, with no weighting applied to the data. This means that we can be 90% certain that the results are between $\pm 4.4\%$ of the calculated response, so the 'true' response could be 4.4% above or below the figures reported (i.e. a 50% agreement rate could in reality lie within the range of 45.6% to 54.4%).
- 1.4 The stakeholder survey (Appendix 2) was opened on 11th February and closed on 22nd March, there were six responses from the eight stakeholders contacted.
- 1.5 Both consultations sought to find out how the facility is used, its importance to the local community and to understand what support stakeholders and residents are willing to give to the project going forward. A subsequent report setting out the options for Heather House and taking into account the results of these consultations is due to committee in June 2019.
- 1.6 The full consultation report setting out the results for both consultations is at Appendix 3. The summary findings are set out below.

Summary of Resident Survey Findings

- 1.7 Only 7% of the households who responded to this survey currently visit Heather House.
- 1.8 46% of respondents last visited Heather House more than three months ago and 43% of respondents have never visited the House.
- 1.9 The most common reason why respondents have never visited Heather House was because they were unaware of it (41.5%).

- 1.10 Respondents who live within 700 metres from Heather House are more likely to consider hiring Heather House than respondents who live further away.
- 1.11 The majority of the respondents (41.8%) replied that there are not any extra facilities that would make them consider privately hiring Heather House.
- 1.12 When asked how important/unimportant Heather House is to them, the most common answer from respondents was 'Neither Important nor unimportant' at 33%; followed by 'Not important at all' at 25%.
- 1.13 Respondents who stated that Heather House is 'Unimportant' or 'Not Important at all' to them were asked to report why they felt this way:
- 47.1% of the respondents said they had no interest in Heather House.
 - 27.3% of the respondents stated that they were not aware of Heather House and have never heard of it.
- 1.14 The majority of respondents were not interested in being involved in the future of Heather House.

Stakeholder Summary Findings

- 1.15 Six out of eight invited stakeholders participated in the consultation.
- 1.16 All six participating stakeholders stated that a large sports hall (approx. 250m²) and car parking were critical to the running of their group.
- 1.17 All six stakeholder responders said that Heather house meets their group/clubs needs 'Very well' or 'Well'.
- 1.18 All six rated Heather House as being a 'Very good' or 'Good' community facility.
- 1.19 All six said they did not have an alternative venue for their club/group if Heather House was unavailable.
- 1.20 Three stakeholder respondents said they would be willing to collaborate with other clubs/groups to help develop a sustainable business plan for Heather House and the remaining three stakeholders were unsure.

2. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee could decide that the consultation data forms a sufficient evidence base to inform the decision on whether to make further investment in Heather House. This option is recommended as it ensures that the evidence is given sufficient weight and consideration during decision making.

2.2 Alternatively, the Committee could decide that the evidence provided is not sufficient to inform a decision on whether to make further investment in Heather House. This is not recommended, as further engagement and analysis may negatively impact upon the timescales for compiling a business case.

3. RISK

3.1 Committees, managers and heads of service can use survey data to support decision making.

4. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

4.1 The consultation results are presented in this report as a result of previous reports to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee on the Future of Heather House.

5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

5.1 If approved, the data from the consultation will form part of an evidence base for a Business Case Report on the Future of Heather House which is scheduled to be considered by this committee in June 2019.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The project described in this report supports the Council's Strategic Plan Objectives.	Data Intelligence Officer
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section	Data Intelligence Officer
Financial	None identified – the report is for noting.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	None identified – the report is for noting.	Data Intelligence Officer
Legal	None identified – the report is for noting.	Data Intelligence Officer
Privacy and Data Protection	Consultation was carried out in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 – all survey	Data Intelligence Officer

	results are anonymous.	
Equalities	There is no change to services at this moment in time.	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	None identified	Data Intelligence Officer
Crime and Disorder	None identified	Data Intelligence Officer
Procurement	The results of the procurement exercise relating to this issue will be presented to the Committee in June 2019.	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer

7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Copy of survey distributed to Park Wood households
- Appendix 2: Copy of survey distributed to Stakeholder users (Group Leaders)
- Appendix 3: Heather House Consultation Report

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None