

Future of youth provision in Twickenham

Frequently asked questions

1. Why is the Council consulting young people given it has been reported in press that ‘young people have already been consulted and made their views known?’

The Council has consulted with existing users previously as part of the youth ‘all in one’ survey and as part of the Twickenham area action plan within the Borough. However there has never been a specific consultation on the future youth provision in Twickenham including the re-provision of Heatham House. The Council is committed to hear from young people what their views are on future youth provision. The Council has made a promise to carry out a consultation should an opportunity for redevelopment of existing provision arise. There has never previously been a consultation regarding the re-provision of Heatham House.

2. How will the consultation outcomes and young people’s views influence decision making on the future youth provision in Twickenham.

Young people’s views will be collated and presented to the Council through the Cabinet report and will be taken into consideration when making a final decision.

3. Who makes the final decision as to what will happen?

The Council will make the final decision. It will be the Leader of the Council and his Cabinet that will make a final decision, representing the Council as the landowner of Heatham House and provider of youth services.

4. Why are the Council consulting on the future youth provision when there is the Heatham House youth provision already in Twickenham?

An opportunity has arisen to provide a new youth centre facility on the former Royal Mail sorting office site, which has recently been acquired by the developer St James, part of the Berkeley Group.

Following discussions with the Council, St James has agreed to investigate the provision of a new centre as part of wider mixed-use development proposals. The outdoor facilities for Heatham House are located next to the former sorting office site and this presents an opportunity to re-provide the existing youth facilities currently based at Heatham House in a brand new, ‘state of the art’ youth centre. The new Youth Centre would be modern, cost efficient, inclusive, accessible for all and fit for purpose for providing services and activities that young people want and need. It would be wrong for the Council not to make the young people aware of this opportunity and to consult them.

5. The youth provision at Heatham House currently has an outdoor space, what about the new options?

Both options proposing a new facility would provide an outdoor space. Further discussion would take place with young people and service users should the re-provision be deemed viable with further consultation on any design specifications.

The Council is committed to ensure that young people are central to the design of any youth provision.

Both options include green space specific for young people. Option one will also have an outdoor space for seating to complement the youth café.

6. How are the local residents consulted?

At this point, the Council is consulting with young people only on the notion of having a new youth facility or retaining existing facilities. The local community may feed back their views through the Twickenham Area Action Plan Consultation. Should the development of a new youth facility go forward, there would be further consultation with young people and the local community on the design, location and any implications for the local community and environment, and would be subject to full planning application process.

7. What will happen with Heatham House if one of the other proposed options go ahead?

If the decision is to re-provide the youth provision, Heatham House will continue to serve as a youth facility until the new build youth provision is ready.

8. Has Heatham House been sold or is it on the market for sale?

No decision has been made to sell Heatham House and won't be until the Council makes a decision on the future youth provision. There is no buyer nor has an offer been made to the Council from any potential buyer.

9. Will the facilities in the new options be as good as what is currently available at the youth provision?

The Council is committed to ensure that any new facility would be a high quality designated youth facility that meets the needs of young people and service delivery operational requirements. The options put forward show that what is being offered is as good as what is currently in place.

10. How much would a new youth facility cost and where would the money come from?

The developer would include the new youth facility within their development plans under section 106 of Planning Law. Any contribution from the Council towards any new facility cost would be determined subject to detailed specification and negotiation with the developer.

11. Does this mean that the Council is making money?

If the decision is to re-provide Heatham House on the former Royal Mail sorting office site, then consideration would be given to the sale of the Heatham House building. Any capital receipt from this sale would no doubt contribute to the cost of a new facility. It is not possible to quantify if any money would be made. The key objective is to ensure delivery of a high quality youth facility.

12. Will the new options cater for disability access?

Yes, if this option is considered, the new facility would have to be fully compliant with the current DDA requirements.

13. Why can't you put money in to updating the current facility to include disability access instead of exploring a new build?

If the proposition to provide a new youth centre is deemed not viable, the Council will continue its commitment to ensure the existing Heatham House facility is maintained appropriately. There is no additional funding available to make any significant improvements to Heatham House. However, if the decision is to retain Heatham House, the Council is committed to revisit the capital project for redevelopment of the Heatham House gym, for which funding of £200,000 had been put aside.

14. Why are the new options in colour and the existing youth facility in black and white?

The initial plans have been created to show what a new facility could look like, and colour coded to explain the areas. The Heatham House building is already built so did not require any CAD (computer aided design) drawing to be made, instead the original floor plans have been used.

15. I don't go to the youth provision, why do you want my opinion?

The Council are keen to hear the views of young people who use the centre now as well as those who use other provisions or may want to access a facility in the future. It is important to have different views and provide an opportunity to all young people to contribute to informing the Council's decision making process.

16. Would the new facility be dedicated to youth provision only?

Any new facility would be designed as a youth facility; although the current ethos of the Youth Service supports and encourages the usage of youth facilities by the local community and other service providers alongside the Youth Service

17. Why does the option three: to retain Heatham House mention the high running cost of the facility as a disadvantage when options one and two: providing new youth facility do not mention running cost. Is this an equitable way of presenting the options?

The Council recognises that any new facility would present a maintenance cost to the Council. However, as Heatham House is an old listed building and subject to strict conservation requirements, this means that any general repair costs are much higher, as specialist contractors and specialist materials have to be used even for a simple job such as plastering a ceiling. Therefore, it will always be more expensive to run as a facility. Whilst any new facility will have an ongoing maintenance cost, they will be designed purposely and efficiently.