

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE LEAD MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Decision Made: 18 April 2023

Shop Fronts Planning Guidance

Issue for Decision

Historically MBC had a Design Guide for shop fronts (c.1990s) in the form of supplementary planning guidance (SPG) but no current guidance exists. The proposed guidance provides an understanding of the development of shop fronts and introduces the elements that make a good shop front with a heritage setting, it also provides initial guidance on the other factors that require consideration, such as planning, building control and licensing authorisations.

The reason for the guidance is to aide shop owners/ occupiers to provide high-quality, suitable design shop fronts, and to offer design support for case officers when dealing with planning applications. The guidance could be adopted in the Council's DPD for "Design & Sustainability" and the Town Centre Strategy.

Decision Made

RESOLVED: That

1. The proposed guidance document, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed as a material planning consideration; and
2. The guidance be promoted for inclusion in the forthcoming Design and Sustainability DPD.

Reasons for Decision

The reason for the guidance is to aid shop owners/ occupiers to provide high-quality, suitable design shop fronts, and to offer design support for Case Officers when dealing with planning applications. The guidance will therefore form a benchmark for future applications within the borough's retail areas.

Officers are looking for the guidance to ultimately be adopted in the Councils emerging DPD for "Design & Quality" and be fundamental to the Town Centre Strategy. It is the intention of the Economic Development Team to use the guidance with the roll out of a shop front grants scheme for the Town Centre, subject to the approval of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure PACs and subsequent approval by the Executive.

The document is designed to support the planning process and help improve the retail frontages within Maidstone Town Centre, and the smaller areas.

Whilst this is not, and cannot be used as a policy, it will provide guidance for

owners/ occupiers and for Case Officers to ensure good quality, suitable shop fronts (and associated advertising, etc) to our retail areas to encourage footfall by creating attractive places to visit.

By creating attractive areas, it is envisaged to encourage public to visit and spend time (dwell time) within the Town Centre, and the other retail areas within the Borough. By creating the guidance, this will give assistance to both the public and case officers on best practice to encourage a high level of quality and design.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

Option 1 – That the recommendations set out in the report be agreed.

Option 2 – That the recommendations set out in the report are not agreed.

It is not recommended that the guidance be rejected, as its approval would provide a clear steer on design for shopfronts to those making applications to change shop fronts as well as providing a valuable tool for officers in assessing such proposals. There is currently a policy vacuum on what is an important matter. There will also be benefits to wider projects run by the Economic Development Team and as part of the Town Centre Strategy.

Background Papers

None.

I have read and approved the above decision for the reasons (including possible alternative options rejected) as set out above.



Signed: _____
Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure

Full details of both the report for the decision taken above and any consideration by the relevant Policy Advisory Committee can be found at the following area of the [website](#)

Call-In: Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call-in form signed by any three Members to the Proper Officer by: **5pm on Tuesday 25 April 2023**