

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 19 April 2022
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Cannon, Forecast, Harper, Hinder, Naghi, Newton, Round
(Chairman), R Webb and S Webb (Vice-Chairman)

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

AGENDA

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Urgent Items
4. Notification of Visiting Members
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers
6. Disclosures of Lobbying
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.
8. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 15 February 2022 1 - 4
9. Presentation of Petitions
10. Question and Answer Session for Members of the Public
11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)
12. Committee Work Programme 5
13. Reports of Outside Bodies
14. Hazlitt Theatre Business Plan 6 - 22
15. Maidstone Business Boost update 23 - 31

Issued on Thursday 7 April 2022

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

16. 2022 - 23 Events Plan	32 - 40
17. Decommissioning Public Art Policy	41 - 49

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting, either remotely or in person, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Wednesday 13 April 2022). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5p.m. on Wednesday 13 April 2022). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk.

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk.

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to the **Policy and Resources Committee**, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by **three** Councillors, to the **Head of Policy, Communications and Governance** by: **Monday 14 March 2022**

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2022

Present: Councillors Cannon, Forecast, Harper, Hinder, Newton, Round (Chairman), R Webb and S Webb

124. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Naghi.

125. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no Substitute Members.

126. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

127. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

There were no Visiting Members.

128. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

129. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

130. **TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION.**

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

131. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2022**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2022 be agreed, subject to the additional wording to Minute 116 – 'Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14 December 2021', to read:

'The committee commended the Clerk on the quality of the Minutes produced.'

132. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

133. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

134. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

135. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development updated the Committee that the 'Future of Maidstone Leisure Centre' item would be moved back to the April meeting, and that the 'Decommissioning Public Art Policy' would be brought to the March meeting. The 'Carriage Museum Report' would be amended to 'TBC' as legal advice relating to the report was required. 'Economic Development Programme: Council's role within Partnership Arrangements' would be removed from the work programme and circulated to the Committee as a briefing paper.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

136. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

137. 3RD QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement introduced the report and explained that there was a small overspend for the year to date with an overspend of £292,000 projected for the year. This was largely due to losses incurred at the Leisure Centre and the reduced income generated from the market, however the target for the following year would be adjusted to reflect the market's performance.

Within the Capital budget, the bus station redevelopment had been completed and the Mote Park visitor centre and dam works were underway. Although key performance indicators (KPIs) continued to improve they had not met their targets for the quarter. Progress on the recovery and renewal projects were reported.

In response to questions, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement confirmed that savings had been made throughout the year due to vacancies not being filled, and that the salary slippage may resolve by the year end. The position taken on the compensation claim from Serco was supported by legal advice, and negotiation was ongoing.

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development explained how footfall data was collected and alternative methods of capturing footfall data using anonymised mobile phone data. The new business park planned at Woodcut Farm had the potential to create over 1000 jobs and Mid-Kent College were building a new centre on the Oakwood site. The delay in opening MidKent College Skills Hub in the Mall was due to work needed to improve the condition of the unit being used, and it was confirmed that monies allocated to the project through Recovery and Renewal funding would not all be paid upfront.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 3 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted;
2. The Capital position at the end of Quarter 3 be noted;
3. The Performance position as at Quarter 3 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted; and
4. The Recovery & Renewal Update be noted.

Note: Councillor Cannon arrived during this item.

138. **ADDITIONAL RESTRICTION GRANT AND TOP UP PAYMENT**

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development introduced the report and explained how the scheme would be delivered for businesses adversely affected by the pandemic. The deadline for awarding the grants was 31 March 2022, and following further allocations since publication of the report, the funding remaining was £240,000. Letters of thanks were appended to the report from businesses who had benefited from the Maidstone Business Boost.

In response to questions, the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development explained that businesses were required to re-complete paperwork for the second round of funding due to strengthened checks put in place, and would also capture any change in circumstances since the initial bid for funding was submitted.

RESOLVED: That

1. The progress on the delivery of the Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme be noted;
2. The Government's additional funding allocation, announced in December 2021, to support businesses severely impacted by the Omicron variant, be noted; and

3. The team be thanked for their work throughout the pandemic to effectively support local businesses through their efficient administration of the grant schemes.

139. TIMELINE FOR GALLERY AND GOVERNANCE UPDATE

The Museum Director introduced the report and explained that the time estimate for completing refurbishment of the Archaeology Gallery was three-and-a-half years. Assumptions made included that the current opening hours and staffing levels at the museum would be retained.

The timeline outlined in the report was explained in further detail and it was highlighted that the programme would need to be revised throughout the project. The first action for the governance review was underway, and would identify any changes that could affect the decision made by the Committee in 2017 to retain direct governance of the museum.

In response to questions, the Museums Director confirmed that visitors to the museum would be able to pass through the gallery for as long as possible while work was carried out to maintain visibility of the refurbishment. The design work should start in March 2022, which would enable a more detailed project plan to be written. A project steering group would be recruited to include Committee Members and updates could be reported back regularly.

RESOLVED: That the timescales for the gallery refurbishment and the museum's governance review be noted.

Note: Councillor Forecast arrived during this item.

140. MAKING MAIDSTONE MORE ACTIVE CONSULTATION

The Leisure Manager introduced the report and explained that the focus groups would identify priority projects for each service centre. Separate focus groups would be held for schools to facilitate participation, and the relevant education teams at Kent County Council would also be consulted.


In response to questions, the Leisure Manager explained that the improvements to the leisure centre would have a greater impact on those living closer to the town centre, and so as part of the Making Maidstone More Active project, the areas furthest away had been prioritised. Projects would then be identified in other parts of Maidstone, working from the outer areas of the Borough towards the centre.

RESOLVED: That focus groups be undertaken in the five rural service centres identified.

141. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30pm to 7.55pm.

2021/22 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Origin	CLT to clear	Lead	Report Author
Museum 5-year plan	ERL	TBC	Officer Update		John Foster	Victoria Barlow
Future of Maidstone Leisure Centre	ERL	TBC	Officer Update		John Foster	Mike Evans
Recovery & Renewal - 4-month review of Community and Skills Hub - <i>tbc by P&R</i>	ERL	TBC	Cllr Request		John Foster	John Foster
Carriage Museum Report	ERL	TBC	Officer Update	Yes	John Foster	Victoria Barlow
Town Centre Strategy	ERL	TBC	Officer Update		Phil Coyne	Phil Coyne/Charlotte Yarnold
Review of Revised Museum Opening Hours and Working Arrangements	ERL	TBC	Cllr Request		John Foster	Victoria Barlow
 Governance Arrangements to deliver the Museum's 20-Year Plan	ERL	TBC	Cllr Request	Yes	John Foster	Victoria Barlow
Pump Track Development	ERL	TBC	Officer Update	Yes	John Foster	Mike Evans

Agenda Item 14

Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee

19 April 2022

Hazlitt Theatre Business Plan

Final Decision-Maker	Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	John Foster, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Mike Evans, Leisure Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All wards

Executive Summary

A report on the 2021/2022 business plan for the provision of theatrical, cultural and community activities at the Hazlitt Theatre and Arts Centre.

Purpose of Report

Noting

This report makes the following recommendation to this Committee:

1. That the contents of the report are noted

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	19 April 2022

Hazlitt Theatre Business Plan

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>The Hazlitt Theatre materially improves the Council's ability to achieve A Thriving Place.</p>	Leisure Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The Hazlitt Theatre supports the achievement of Health Inequalities being addressed and reduced and deprivation and social mobility being improved, by providing arts and cultural activities to residents.</p>	Leisure Manager
Risk Management	Refer to section 5 of the report.	Leisure Manager
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Regeneration and

		Economic Development
Legal	There are no legal implications from this update report.	Team Leader, Contracts and Commissioning
Privacy and Data Protection	Data is held by the Council in line with our retention schedules.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	There is no impact on Equalities as a result of the recommendations in this report. An EqIA would be carried out as part of a policy or service change should one be identified.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the theatre, its operations and services have a positive impact on population health and wellbeing and that of individuals.	Senior Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The theatre and the Hazlitt's arts and cultural services have a positive impact on crime and disorder.	Leisure Manager
Procurement	There are no procurement implications associated with this report.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report have been considered and there are no direct implications on biodiversity and climate change. The Hazlitt Theatre management team work to minimise the negative impact that the theatre has on carbon emissions in the borough.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Hazlitt Theatre is managed by Parkwood Leisure, whose 15-year contract to run the theatre and provide services from it began in 2013 and ends in 2028. The services include live shows in the main auditorium and arts and cultural services in the Exchange Studio and Fourth Wall.
- 2.2 By way of a Deed of Variation, the contract was varied to relax the KPI requirements and provide some additional financial support in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the impacts that had on theatres. The Deed of Variation expired on 30 September 2021 and the theatre is now continuing to adapt and recover following the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 2.3 One requirement of the contract is that Parkwood Leisure's management team at the theatre provides the council with a copy of the annual business plan each year. The contract states that the business plan should include:
- Programming
 - Pricing structure
 - Outreach programme
 - Marketing strategy
 - Customer satisfaction surveying
 - Cultural Development strategy
- 2.4 Through constructive dialogue each year the business plan is amended, agreed and implemented for the forthcoming contract year. Contract years at the Hazlitt Theatre run from 1 October to 30 September.
- 2.5 In the 2021/22 business plan year particular attention is given to the outreach programme and cultural development, most notably through the creation of the Hazlitt Institute which will deliver increased opportunities for local people to take part in arts and culture as well as going to the venue to watch and observe. The Hazlitt Institute is particularly targeted at local young people, but it is not exclusively aimed at them.
- 2.6 ERL Committee members previously expressed a desire to review the annual business plan and it is presented here for observation and comment.
-

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 There are no matters for decision in this report. The committee is asked to note the contents but may choose to take further action depending on the matters reported here.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The committee is requested to note the contents of the report.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 There are no direct risk management implications to this report. The contract mechanisms and monitoring manage risks to the services contract at the Hazlitt Theatre and Arts Centre.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The council has not completed any consultation for this report. The business plan process includes consultation with local groups and theatre users as well as following industry trends and responding to local demand.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Feedback from Members can be considered in future annual business plans.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Hazlitt Theatre and Arts Centre Business Plan 2021/22
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

HAZLITT THEATRE

Business Plan 2021/22

Year 9 of 15

October 2021 - September 2022



Contents

Executive Summary	2
Company Update	4
Vision Aims & Objectives	4
Current Performance	4
Council Subsidy	4
2021/22 Plan	5
Pricing	5
Staffing	5
Strategy 2021/22	6
Programming	6
Pantomime	7
Audience Development	7
Outreach Programme/Cultural Development:	7
Customer Satisfaction	8
Marketing Strategy	8
Operational Standards	9
Customer Service	9
Cleanliness	9
Buildings Maintenance	9
Health & safety	10
Operating Tools & Investment	11

Executive Summary

The period of this Plan covers proposed activity at The Hazlitt Theatre over the contractual period October 2021 through September 2022, which constitutes the 9th year of the 15 year contract between Parkwood and Maidstone Borough Council.

As we learn to live with Covid in the coming year we will continue to face challenges. We will need to increase some prices to combat the economic challenges from rises in minimum and national wage and rising supply costs, in particular for utilities. These rises will be restrained however, mindful of the pressures being faced by the local community on their wallets and purses due to inflationary effects on households.

Our energies will remain focused on providing safe and comfortable facilities for our customers to enjoy the creative arts. The presented programme is already full, and we anticipate our classes returning to pre pandemic attendance levels. We remain confident that all KPI's can be at least met if not exceeded, but we do expect a tough year commercially. Ticket sales for next year are below pre pandemic levels but we recognise that there is caution and hesitancy in the market at present, and this is being witnessed across UK theatreland. The 2021 year end pantomime will not hit the heady attendance heights we had reached pre pandemic. Many of the local schools have cancelled due to covid concerns, and their ticket allocation has been shifted into 2022. The lack of a junior performing company will also impact sales this year, but this is something that we felt was unavoidable due to the risks presented backstage of infection, leading to cancellations.

Our Hazlitt personnel have returned to work and due to their efforts in getting the Hazlitt to the strong place it was in 2019, we are confident that we have weathered the worst of the storm and can build rapidly back to, and then beyond the achievements we previously have attained. It is also clear that the Maidstone community are with us.

Note on current challenges inflicted by the pandemic

2020/21 was an unprecedented year for the theatre sector in England. According to Arts Council England "The Covid-19 pandemic has represented the biggest crisis for the cultural sector since the Second World War, with many organisations among the first to close and last to reopen during national and local lockdowns."

As predominantly a receiving house, the Hazlitt main stage experiences all of the bumps in the road, stresses and traumas that the wider industry is currently encountering. As a local community arts participation provider, which is the other side of the Hazlitt offer, other different challenges are being faced up to.

In year 8 of the contract term the venue's opportunity to generate income was restricted to the period from May to October, and within that period, covid measures and cautionary behaviours impacted. Virtually all of the staff were furloughed or part furloughed for the entire contract year with the job retention scheme only finishing at the end of September. Moreover we had to deal with the Council decision to terminate the contract and then the reversal of that option.

The intervention of the government's cultural recovery fund and job retention scheme, aligned with Parkwoods astute management of resources meant that the Hazlitt made it through the year. However, Covid has not exited stage left, and with a lack of published financial support mechanisms on the horizon, we face a testing year ahead.

After reopening to audiences in May theatres did have a surge in sales but that plateaued around September and we have not managed to reach sales comparative to pre pandemic levels. This is the current reality for all UK theatres. With covid cases on the rise and impending threats of further measures to combat rises, we anticipate that sales will remain sluggish and unpredictable for the majority of contract year 9. In addition sales patterns are now very different with late sales being far more prevalent. This undermines confidence for producers, a lot of whom are more hesitant to send tours out. The theatre industry is speculating that it could take up to four years for the sector to recover to pre pandemic position.

We face problems with recruitment, in particular on the technical side and with front of house stewards. The entire industry is facing skilled technical staff shortages as many have chosen to leave the industry with more lucrative offers from other industries such as transportation. Competition and wage inflation has made theatre front of house pay rates uncompetitive. New national minimum wage and national living wage rates will be a challenge as they shrink the gap between casual and contracted staff rates, which will inevitably lead to a call to increase wages across the board. Current inflation rates at 3%+ also provide additional pressures.

Supply chains to the industry are under stress and unprecedented delays are the current norm. Whether it be timber for set builds or food and drink supplies for the bar we are having to adapt, compromise and deal with it.

Cost of living challenges will impact on our patrons ability to buy tickets as household budgets feel the strain. Utility prices are going to make a much greater indent into expenditure lines than previously felt.

With all of the above in mind we approach the period of this Plan which covers proposed activity at The Hazlitt Theatre over the contractual period October 2021 through September 2022, which constitutes the 9th year of the 15 year contract between Parkwood and Maidstone Borough Council.

It will be a tough year and we will need to increase some of our prices to combat the challenges outlined, but also be mindful of the constraints being faced by the local community. If our energy is focused and we tackle all of the risks in the way we have managed the pandemic thus far, we will have a successful year, even if it is not a commercially lucrative one.

Company Update

Parkwood Leisure has managed the Covid-19 period more robustly than almost all of our leisure operator competitors. However we know that we must now transition into an equally challenging period, where not only we drive recovery but embrace the huge inroads we have made in systems; strategy and innovation and broaden our horizons to start embracing the 'art of the possible!'

Our mission is to create strong, lasting partnerships, built on a foundation of efficient and effective delivery, to encourage happier and healthier lifestyles. Our collaborative approach is based on honesty and transparency, working closely with local authorities to deliver against their own corporate, commercial and social objectives.

Hazlitt Aims & Objectives

- Maximise the number of persons using the Hazlitt in the most cost effective manner.
- Promote the Hazlitt's availability as a venue and encourage residents of and visitors to the Borough to make use of them.
- Invest in improvements to existing programmes and facilities and/or the development of new ones.
- Continue to build on the work put in place creating best practice relationships with other local businesses and outlets.
- Encourage the activities of bodies concerned with the promotion of theatre and arts within the Borough.
- Support the Council's objectives and priorities to:
 - Provide excellent performing and educational facilities
 - Support programming and operational activities for community events
 - Reduce the overall cost to the Council
 - Improve maintenance standards.
- Take account of the need to develop young people
- Engage with the Council and the community to deliver and/or support other cultural events.

Current Performance

In the eighth year of the contract October 1st 2020 to September 30th 2021 we sold 15,115 tickets for performances at the Hazlitt. This forecast figure represents a fall in sales from the 42,357 for the same period sales achieved in the previous 2019/20 contract period. The obvious reason for the fall in sales was due to covid and for the period 20/21 we were shut for most of that time.

As it stands, and taking the pantomime production out of the equation, we currently have 37,727 seats on sale in 2022 of which 6,202 are already sold meaning possible seats sold to capacity currently stands at 17%. The contractual year, October 2021 to close of September 2022, will see 293 live performances take place as scheduled at this point. This is an exceptional number of live performances due to all of the rescheduling that took place following the forced closure from the covid pandemic. For the venue to reach 50% capacity this would mean the venue selling 49,810 seats.

With the expansion of our community offerings and the dense programme the venue will be

dormant for only 42 days in this contractual year meaning the number of days of usage stands at 323. For purposes of maintenance and statutory compliance works we do not see any of the remaining 42 dormant days for other programming or events.

2021/22 Plan

Pricing

Ticket pricing is largely determined by the visiting company depending on possible capacities. The venue does on occasion negotiate if the price being suggested is too low or, in some cases, too high. There is a general price bracket for the Hazlitt Tickets which falls between £22 - £30. We also have to be mindful of other local theatres and their ticket prices for similar shows to remain competitive but at the same time affordable.

Our hire prices were set to rise at the beginning of 2022 but due to the pandemic we are holding off a price hike to ensure and encourage our community companies to continue to use the Hazlitt Theatre. This will be reviewed during 2022 with an option to increase hire prices in 2023 following consultation with the Hazlitt User Group.

Ticket prices continue to be negotiated with promoters and managers on individual visiting shows but on the whole we have increased the booking fee per ticket from £1.50 to £2. This booking fee is to cover the administrative duties in the selling of the ticket and with utilities and minimum wage going up in this contractual year this was one revenue stream that could be raised to aid offsetting the extra expenditure.

We have the desire to keep this year's outdoor project at £5 a ticket but that is dependent on funding streams.

The price of the dance sessions and the choir have gone up for the first time in Parkwood Leisure's tenure. Both the Choir and Dance Membership has gone from £55 to £65 per term. This is still either below or extremely competitive with other local establishments that offer similar services and as both of these groups have grown we are having to employ more staff.

Staffing

2020/21 saw the venue fill these roles.

- Two new technicians have joined the team following the departure of several staff members from this department.
- One box office team member.
- One Youth Theatre Leader (Maternity cover - job share)
- Numerous bar and FOH staff
- Numerous Youth Theatre/Dance assistants

The 2022 budget will facilitate the return of the Caretaker role at the venue and very recently the Marketing & Development Manager left their post so we are in the process of replacing that role.

Strategy 2021/22

We will continue to have plans in place to facilitate any further possible changes regarding covid and or restrictions. However the desire is to deliver an extremely busy programme of events even more so now following the amount of rescheduling forced upon us due to the closure.

We have for, some time now, wanted to capitalize on our community offerings, expand them and develop the current outreach. The pandemic that forced the closure of the venue has given us the opportunity to do this as some of our regular users have not come back so we see this as a starting point to offer what those groups delivered but using our in-house team.

2022 will see the launch of the Hazlitt Institute (HI). HI will encompass all that we presently have by way of our Youth Theatre, Dance Company, Choir and outreach work but be expanded by delivering more opportunities for our customers. As an example two users that haven't come back are Dancing for Fun (a dance session aimed at an older demographic) and Hopshed (an inclusive theatre company for young people) so we aim to now deliver similar sessions plus expanding what we currently do. The Dance Company has moved quickly in terms of numbers and 2022 will see a brand new weekend delivery offering new dance disciplines and genres. We want the Hazlitt Institute to go from strength to strength in 2022.

There is a desire for the venue to become more sophisticated in its use of social media to promote all that we do. We are now working more closely with Parkwood's central marketing team to develop some of the staple promotional tools we have in place such as the website. However, we are also now working with specialists in the social media field, such as we are with the Pantomime 2021, to enhance what we offer in an attempt to develop new audiences as well as keep our current customer base up to date with the tools we know they use.

Programming

The programme, to a degree, has looked after itself for the reason stated earlier which was all of the rescheduling. We are still able to offer a wide and varied programme but due to the amount we are concerned that some shows may slip by the way. We are keen to cease further rescheduling and agreeing with managers and promoters that some shows should be cancelled at no cost to either party.

The genres that the contractual years programme will cover include the following; Drama, Music, Dance, Tribute, Comedy, An Evening With, Family, Alternative. A full list of the shows on offer can be found using the link below.

<https://www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk/hazlitt-theatre/Whats-On>

Pantomime

2021 will see the venue deliver a version of Jack and the Beanstalk. In an attempt to mitigate financial risk, as well as take the opportunity to see what difference it makes, if any, with ticket sales, we made the decision to not cast a celebrity and move from a live band to pre-recorded tracks for the musical element of the show. We have pondered over the years as to how

important a celebrity name is to a production and this felt like the perfect year to produce a show without the name and the cost that brings. Whereas a live band is a lovely luxury to have, we have noticed that other, larger, pantomime producers have made the switch to pre-recorded tracks. With the software available at the moment it has increased the quality of the final sound of pre-recorded work immensely.

The 2022 pantomime is looking like a return to Sleeping Beauty and will be launched at the opening of the 2021 pantomime.

Audience Development

We are seeking opportunities to develop our own work in order to target new and specific audiences. A specific audience we know we should be attracting a lot more people from is the 20 - 35yr old age category. We are hoping that the programming of the regular comedy stores will attract this age group and then to develop the programme for this age group further from the feedback we receive. A new explanation of how we will be gathering feedback is given later in this document.

We want to become more inclusive and diverse and have shows to try and attract a different audience and offer opportunities for all people to enjoy the theatre. Examples of this type of programming are 'Sign Along With Us' which is a show aimed at deaf people or those that are hard of hearing, The Kakatsisi Drummers who are a group of traditional drummers from Ghana and we will be offering a relaxed performance at our 2021 Pantomime.

One area that we are keen on audience development is to follow up on the success of 2021's outdoor production of Alice in Wonderland at Cobtree Park. It was successful on so many levels but none more so than the amount of audience it attracted but also the type of audience. With most of the production being underwritten by the Cultural Recovery Fund we were able to offer the performances with £5 tickets. This gave the opportunity for families who can't necessarily afford the average ticket price to attend a live piece of theatre, it meant we attracted a lot more families and it appealed to those customers that are looking for a more unique experience when it comes to watching theatre. We are looking at another show this summer but seeking some funding is paramount to its success.

Outreach Programme/Cultural Development:

Pre the lockdown the Hazlitt Theatre was sharing a professional partnership with Maplesden Noakes which saw both parties mutually benefit from working together in a bespoke manner. Since then we have been contacted by a few more schools and now have Maidstone Grammar School for Girls and Oakwood Grammar on board. A professional partnership is a bespoke package resulting in the schools receiving workshops, theatre visits, forums, one to one work with students, ticket discounts and work experience opportunities and in return the theatre is remunerated for work delivered and the theatre and its events and programme are promoted within the school and its wider community.

We aim to re-engage properly with our community groups at the beginning of 2022 by way of holding regular meetings as we did prior to the pandemic. Most of these groups still have bookings at the venue for this contractual year and we see the opportunity to once again

communicate with them face to face highly important so that they can understand any changes that have occurred during the pandemic that may affect them going forward.

The Hazlitt Institute as earlier commented on will be the catalyst for developing the outreach programme and cultural development the Hazlitt Theatre has to offer. The bigger picture going forward is to develop the institute and what we offer by including an educational arm to the venue and be offering performing arts opportunities for students looking at 16+ education.

Customer Satisfaction

Recently the Hazlitt Front of House team have been asking customers that are at the venue to take a quick survey for us to be able to gauge customer satisfaction. The first set of results will be issued in the Quarterly Report 4. The venue is aiming for a 70% result in customers being satisfied and will respond if we fall short of that number by acting on what feedback has been given as to why we are not reaching the set target.

We continue to use Purple 7 to provide basic post show feedback surveys.

Marketing Strategy

Marketing is key to any venue and a sizable amount of the 2022 budget is given over to the Marketing Department to engage with customers, build relationships with other local businesses and promote the programme of events.

With the departure of the Marketing Manager very recently we made the decision to delay employing a new person to the role until January 2022. A more concise and detailed Marketing plan will be created with the new employee using the abilities and skill set they provide coming into the role.

In searching for the new employee one major factor we will be looking for is experience and knowledge in the use of social media as this element of marketing is growing and expanding all of the time. We have had huge success over the last few years in forming relationships with local companies and businesses to gain sponsorship opportunities for our events and even though we still see this as extremely important the focus in 2022 will be a little more on the venue's use of social media.

We are also working more closely with the main Parkwood Marketing team in developing the website but, more importantly, creating opportunities for strategic training possibilities. The current stock of four venues Parkwood Leisure manage all have different skill sets, different demographics, varying degrees of community offerings that are beginning to be shared so the learning can also take place within the in-house team.

Operational Standards

Customer Service

We continue to provide customer service training for new staff members and then run refresher courses at strategic points in the year for existing staff.

As stated earlier in this document we will trial an onsite survey with customers in order to capture very immediate feedback to enhance our results requested from MBC.

Cleaning

The venue underwent a very thorough and deep clean process before it opened its doors again back in April 2021. New products used across Parkwood Theatre sites ensured a very high level of sanitization took place and continued to do so all through the time the venue was open under restrictions. The venue has returned to its previous cleaning operation but we still have hand sanitizers in use at strategic points in the building and signage is still in place ensuring customers are aware of the cleaning we are carrying out plus reminding them of some procedures they can follow so that we can operate safely as safely as possible. We are fully equipped and prepared to return to operating procedures that were put in place when in lockdown or under restrictions.

Building Maintenance

We will continue to keep the venue up to date with regards to stat compliance however it's somewhat of a difficult matter to predict what maintenance will be carried out over the contractual year as so much of it is responsive and prioritised. As you will see below some of the items we know that are going to happen are listed but like every year the great majority of what we do is in response to something breaking, shutting down or going wrong.

One issue that we will be investigating further in this contractual year, and stems from ventilation needs due to covid, is an air handling system. As it stands the old mechanism that used to exist before Parkwood took on the management was disabled. We will first be looking at what the job would entail to reinstate the existing system, as well the cost.

Post-lockdown closure, a lot of work was done on statutory compliance, which brought the compliance score to 100%. We are committed to continue these efforts.

In conjunction with the landlord, we are to install edge-protection & mansafe systems on the building's roofs, to ensure proper continued maintenance in difficult areas.

We will continue to push the landlord to keep to their responsibilities with regard to maintenance of the building and the maintenance matrix document.

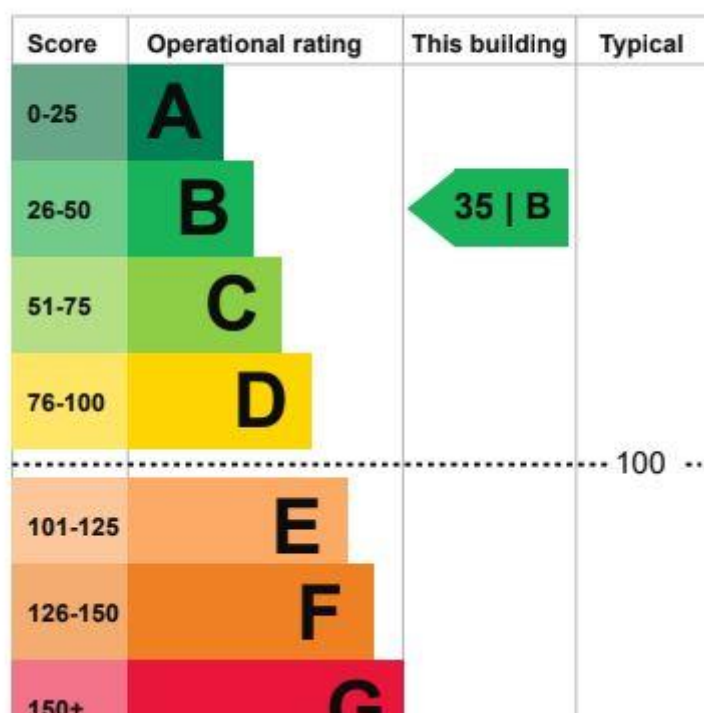
Work has been completed, and will continue into 2022, on magnetically-closing fire doors throughout the building.

Undersized pipework has been identified in the heating system, in the Hazlitt dressing rooms. Work has been scheduled to replace this pipework with the correct diameter piping, in 2022, after asbestos was recently removed to enable these works to happen.

Using Parkwood Capital Expenditure funds, we are to update the CCTV in the later part of 2021/early part of 2022.

Our efforts to reduce energy consumption have been reflected in The Hazlitt's Display Energy Certificate, year upon year since the contract began. A typical score for such a building would be 100. The Hazlitt's is now just 35 (see attached image). In 2020-21 we installed new, custom-made LED lighting in the two studio areas and gallery. We also plan to replace the Hazlitt auditorium and dressing room lighting with LEDs soon. This will further reduce our energy consumption.

The typical score for a public building is 100. This typical score gives an operational rating of D.



Health & safety

We will continue to keep up-to-date with any recommended Covid-19 measures, including, as appropriate, displaying QR codes and collating visitor information for monitoring and contacting purposes etc.

As well as updating the CCTV system, we will update the lighting in the traditionally-troublesome bins area.

We are planning to install gates in Rose Yard at our entrance/exit to the building. This should stop Source Bar and others from placing their industrial bins at our fire exit.

The Hazlitt Theatre's health and safety committee meets regularly, and all staff are encouraged to submit their thoughts and ideas to these meetings.

The two main recommendations of any health & safety audits in the last few years have been the rigging of lights on the Hazlitt's advance bar and side booms, and the old and potentially dangerous strip lighting in the dressing rooms. By the second quarter of 2022 we will have eliminated both of these risks- the lighting bars will be motorised, and the dressing room lighting will have been replaced.

Operating Tools & Investment

We will continue to provide the correct tools so that our people can do the best job.

In 2020/21 we received a small amount of capex money to update and reinforce the CCTV system.

Capex is a well established working tool within the processes and procedures of Parkwood Leisure in which venues can source varying items or equipment to enhance the building's aesthetics or its working procedures and there are plans in place for a healthy amount of investment into the venue in 2022. Staff have been made aware and asked to share ideas on how we could best spend the money.

Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee

19 April 2022

Additional Restrictions Grant and Top Up Payment

Final Decision-Maker	Economic, Regeneration and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	John Foster, Head of Regeneration and Place
Lead Officer and Report Author	Rachael Bennett, Economic Development Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

To update the Committee on the performance of the Maidstone Business Boost programme which includes the spend of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) allocated to the council initially in July 2021 with a further allocation in December, specifically for businesses affected by the Omicron Covid variant.

Purpose of Report

Noting

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To note the completion of the spend of the ARG Grant.
2. To note the success to date and the legacy of the Maidstone Business Boost support programme.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Economic, Regeneration and Leisure Committee	19 April 2022

Additional Restrictions Grant and Top Up Payment

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>The activity set out in the report has aided the council's ability to achieve the objective of A Thriving Place.</p>	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The activity set out in the report supports the achievement of the Deprivation and Social Mobility cross cutting objectives by supporting local businesses and jobs.</p>	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Risk Management	Refer to section 5 of the report.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Financial	£1,355,082 Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) funding was provided by government in July 2021 for the purpose of discretionary business grants. An additional allocation of £338,941 was made in December 2021 to support businesses affected directly by the Omicron variant of Covid. All funding was	Director of Finance and Business Improvement

	spent by 31 March 2022. It has been confirmed that additional resource can be funded by the new burdens funding allocated by government to cover additional expenses incurred by the council in relation to the administration of the grant scheme.	
Staffing	The new burdens funding referred to above enabled the recruitment of 2 additional members of staff on fixed term contracts, the continuation of 1 member of staff employed to administer earlier ARG rounds and an Agency, which has provided the necessary support to the team to enable the project to be managed effectively.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Legal	Payment of grant by Government to a Local Authority is established under s31 of the Local Government Act 2003. This also enables control over the amount and manner of payments. Criteria are set out within Additional Restrictions Grant Guidance for Local Authorities updated 20/01/22.	Corporate Governance Team Leader
Privacy and Data Protection	With consent businesses that have been contacted through the Maidstone Business Boost scheme have been added to the database managed by The Economic Development Team. This will increase the volume of data held by the Council and has been reflected in our internal documentation. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	No impact identified	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	The activity set out in the report will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Crime and Disorder	The activity set out in the report will not negatively impact on Crime and Disorder.	Head of Regeneration and

		Economic Development
Procurement	No impact identified	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and it is noted that business development/growth may impact on increased energy consumption and increased emissions from additional transportation. Future business development should be aligned with the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy and seek low carbon transportation options and alternative energy solutions. It should also be noted that part of the work of the Maidstone Business Boost scheme is to help promote support available to businesses to reduce and be conscious of their carbon footprint.	Biodiversity & Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following on from the update given at ERL in February 2022 on the performance of the Maidstone Business Boost scheme and spend of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) it has been requested that a final report be brought back to committee. All ARG payments to eligible businesses must be made by the end of March 2022. Any spend not made would be returned to government.
- 2.2 In September 2021 ERL committee approved the Additional Restrictions Grant policy which included recruitment of additional staff on temporary contracts to improve business engagement. The 'Maidstone Business Boost' team offers wider business support and advice on available grant funding, in addition to assessing businesses affected by Coronavirus and confirming ARG awards. On the 21st December 2021 The Government announced a further ARG allocation of £339k. This fund was intended to enhance support to those businesses severely impacted by the Coronavirus restrictions due to the rise of the Omicron Variant. The 31st March 2022 spend deadline applied to both the initial and further funding allocations therefore the top up was delivered under the Council's existing approved ARG Policy.

2.3 The policy states that to be considered for ARG funding, businesses based in the Maidstone Borough, severely impacted by coronavirus restrictions, need to fall into one of the following categories:

Category A – Diversification & Growth of Maidstone based businesses

Category B – Strategic importance

Category C – Resilience Fund – Targeted at hospitality and leisure businesses who have been significantly impacted by the pandemic.

2.4 The Maidstone Business Boost (MBB) scheme was expected to:

- Deliver all ARG funds by 31st March 2022
- Manage the expectations of receiving additional funding correctly.
- Engage new businesses through proactively approaching.
- Increase the awareness of support (financial & non-financial).
- Improve the take up of support (financial & non-financial).
- Enhance the Database for future communications.
- Leverage the 'Value' of MBC support.
- Achieve maximum impact from the available funding for the benefit of the local economy.

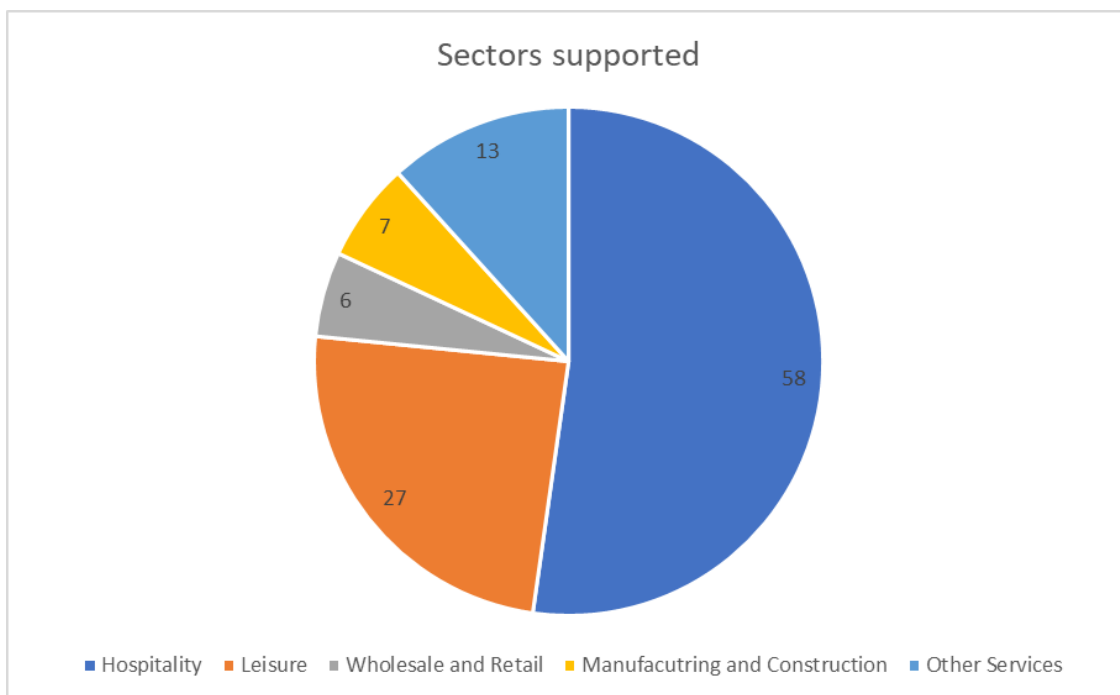
2.5 Conclusion

2.5.1 Delivery of Additional Restrictions Grant

All funds were allocated and paid by 16th March 2022, ahead of the 31st March deadline. In total 112 awards were made. The awards were given based on costs incurred but that were unable to be met by the business. This loss had to be attributable to the impacts of covid.

Over half the awards made were to the hospitality sector, with the leisure industry receiving 27 awards which aligned to the BEIS guidance issued.

MBB Performance Summary – 21/03/22		Total Funding Allocation	£1,694,023
% Funds awarded	100%	Total Awards made	£1,694,023
% Time elapsed	95%	Payments pending	£0
On track?	Yes	Funding remaining	£0



2.5.2 Management of fund & expectations

The MBB/ARG scheme has received one appeal which was declined.

2.5.3 Engage new businesses, increase awareness, & improve take up of support

The precursor to an ARG award being made was an initial assessment. Delivering the initial assessments enabled the team to capture and signpost businesses that hadn't necessarily been loss making or that didn't fit into the policy criteria to other forms of support available. 288 diagnostics were completed during the 5 months.

Scheme	Overview	Businesses Referred	Successful Applicants	Awards	Match funding
WSX	Marketing training courses, mentoring & grant funding	185	54	£22,000	-
SEBB	Grant funding or Support	79	8	£48,600	£113,000
MGP	Mentor support & grant funding	18	11	£36,000	£108,000
LoCASE	Grant funding or support	62	4	£56,700	£116,800

C-CARE	1-2-1 Support & grant	90	24	£24,000	-
TOTALS				£187,300	£337,800

*Data provided as of 21st March 2022 from organisations delivering the support.
'-' represents unknown data or data not provided.*

The table above gives the main additional support providers, others do exist and have had businesses referred to them. Successful Applicants does not include businesses 'in process' so we do expect these figures to increase.

SEBB (South East Business Boost) has reported outputs of 12 Jobs and 6 new to firm products or services. Anecdotal feedback given has stated that the ARG awards made have also secured jobs and allowed businesses to invest in diversification which supports their long-term sustainability.

The proactive engagement has developed positive relationships with new businesses who are now active supporters of how the council has helped them. We are utilising this support by showcasing their stories on social media to continue to develop our reach to the wider Maidstone business community.

2.5.4 Enhanced database for future communications

The business database now stands at a cleansed nearly 4,000. This is a 15% increase since November. Additionally, our social media engagement has increased 16% over the same time period, with an average of 9,000 monthly engagements since MBB began. We now have a strong reach to local businesses enabling us to communicate messages more effectively. The last newsletter received a click through rate of 32.5%

2.5.5 Leveraging Value & achieving impact for the local economy

The programme has developed relationships with key sites in the Town Centre, Lockmeadow, Fremlin Walk, The Mall and Royal Star Arcade. It has highlighted the support available to businesses and the various ways the council can help and awarded independent start-ups moving to the borough.

The programme has generated opportunities between businesses to support each other, most notably the move by West Tree Boxing Club to the YMCA which otherwise would have had to close.

Follow-up calls are being made to businesses that received the initial diagnostic assessment. This has provided anecdotal feedback that the scheme has secured jobs and companies futures. Examples of new equipment being purchased, and new job creation.

The awards have made a significant difference to the recipients, noted by the letters and phone calls of thanks the team received.

2.6 Next steps

The contract for the temporary staff has now ended and all three have secured new roles, one of which has stayed within MBC.

Going forward MBB will continue to be the point of contact for businesses, with a monitored e-mail address, and we will continue to build the brand via our newsletter and social media platforms.

Any requirement for 1-2-1 support will be covered by our Business Advisor. This 3-year tender was recently secured by Let's Do Business Group.

To continue the momentum and promotion of Maidstone Business Boost we are working with support providers to run post-covid recovery workshops to promote the support that continues to be available.

3 AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 The report is for noting.

4. RISK

4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 In September 2021 ERL Committee resolved that the Additional Restrictions Grant Top Up Policy be approved, and a report brought back to the Committee in 6 months for review.
 - 5.2 In February 2022 ERL Committee received an update on performance of the scheme for noting.
-

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 MBB@maidstone.gov.uk will continue to be the inbound contact point referenced for all communications made to the Maidstone Business Community
- 6.2 The Economic Development Team will use success stories from local businesses to showcase the work Maidstone Business Boost has delivered and helped to unlock. Demonstrating the value, and training and grants

available, illustrating accessibility to further increase investment in the local economy.

6.3 MBB will launch a programme of workshops to run in conjunction with grant and training schemes to continue post-Covid recovery support for businesses.

6.4 MBB will continue to offer individual business support by the contracted Advisor.

7. **REPORT APPENDICES**

None

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

Agenda Item 16

Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee

19 April 2022

2022 – 23 Events Plan

Final Decision-Maker	Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	John Foster, Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Ann-Marie Langley, Arts & Culture Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report outlines all of the events we are planning to deliver during the 2022/23 financial year utilising the new Arts & Culture budget, other funding sources and officer time.

Purpose of Report

Noting

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That this report be noted

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee	19 April 2022

2022 – 23 Events Plan

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>• Accepting the recommendation will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve 'A Thriving Place' through delivering a variety of high quality arts and cultural events.</p>	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendation supports the achievement of the 'Heritage is Respected' cross-cutting objective by raising awareness of the town's history and heritage through specific events.</p> <p>The report recommendation supports the achievement of the 'Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced' cross-cutting objective by helping to reduce social isolation and delivering improvements in physical and mental health for target groups through participation in arts events and activities.</p>	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Risk Management	Refer to paragraph 5 of the report	Head of Regeneration

		& Economic Development
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Legal	Acting on the recommendations in line with any necessary consents or licenses is within the council's powers.	Team Leader, Contracts & Commissioning and Property & Regeneration
Privacy and Data Protection	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation of this report has no impact on Crime and Disorder	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Procurement	On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises for delivery of events. We will complete those exercises in line with financial procedure rules.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development; Section 151 Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and action should be taken to ensure events are plastic free and minimise single use products, utilise sustainable vendors, consider public transportation options to access events, and encourage recycling and reuse	Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report outlines the programme of events being planned for the 2022-23 financial year. There are two categories of event, those being fully funded by MBC and those being funded through other sources but where MBC officers are providing support. The programme is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 A second programme is attached at Appendix 2 which includes details of all other known commercial/charitable events planned for this financial year, to demonstrate the full number and type of events that will be taking place.

Events being funded/supported by MBC:

- 2.3 Elmer on Tour – Elmer will visit 7 rural libraries around the borough (4 weeks in 4 locations and 2 weeks in 3 others). At the 4 main locations we will offer a free arts workshop for the local community, led by local artists. Each library will be encouraged to offer additional events/activities while Elmer is with them.
- 2.4 Proms in the Park – this will have a Jubilee theme. It is managed by Parkwood Leisure as part of their contract. It is funded entirely through sponsorship from Weston Homes but with support from the Visitor Economy & Events team, including all marketing.
- 2.5 Platinum Jubilee Tea Party – organised by the Communications team. 70 invited guests, who were born in 1952, will join the Mayor for afternoon tea in Jubilee Square to mark the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.
- 2.6 Street Festival – building on the success of last year’s Fusion Festival event, this will offer a mix of performances and activities around the town centre. Our ambition is to further develop this into a full-scale Arts Carnival and Parade which can be held bi-annually, starting in July 2023.
- 2.7 Bandstand concerts – a mix of contemporary and traditional live music from local bands and performers.
- 2.8 Youth theatre workshops – these will offer a mix of drama and dance with two sessions per day to maximise participation. One of the sessions will be dedicated to neuro-diverse participants.
- 2.9 Art in the Park – a week of art workshops in Brenchley Gardens. Two sessions per day using a variety of mediums (acrylics, watercolours, charcoal, pastels and street art)
- 2.10 Outdoor theatre - we are hoping to bring a production to the amphitheatre in August, which will also be delivered at Cobtree Manor Park in September. Tickets will be subsidised to help cover the costs of delivery.
- 2.11 Hidden Histories event – a follow-up to the 2021 event including more geophysical survey and potentially a couple of ‘test pits’ to confirm findings from last year’s survey. Public engagement activities and an invitation to

sign up to take part in a larger project being planned for 2023 (subject to a successful funding bid).

- 2.12 Talk of the Town - a live-action history event, working with the Hazlitt Youth Theatre and members of the community. Characters and events from Maidstone's past will be researched and brought to life through dramatic performances as part of the national Heritage Open Days Festival.
 - 2.13 Community Mela – organised and delivered by Cohesion Plus with a financial contribution from MBC. Officer time from the Visitor Economy & Events team on the event management, plus additional marketing support.
 - 2.14 Walking Festival – organised by the Visitor Economy and Events team. The event is an action from the Destination Management plan, originally planned for 2020. A launch event was held on 26th March and the main festival will take place over 3 days, in partnership with a number of other organisations.
 - 2.15 Chinese New Year – organised and managed by Maidstone Cultural Group and Cohesion Plus. Financial contribution from MBC and officer support.
-

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 That this report be noted
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That this report be noted
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The events programme builds on the series of successful events delivered in 2021, including the Fusion Festival, bandstand concerts and amphitheatre workshops.
- 6.2 The Fusion Festival contributed to a 7% increase in footfall to the town centre that week, and a 10% increase compared to the previous Saturday.
- 6.3 The 5 bandstand concerts attracted over 100 people to each event; more than 50 children and families enjoyed the workshops at the amphitheatre.
- 6.4 Members of the ERL committee have expressed a desire to see a greater number and variety of events being delivered in the town centre.

- 6.5 In January 2020 ERL Committee resolved to give Kent Equality Cohesion Council a grant of £5,000 per year for three years to run the Mela, starting in 2020. Due to the pandemic the event did not take place in 2020, so the three years started in 2021.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The Arts & Culture Officer will work closely with the Communications team to ensure all events and activities are well promoted and advertised across all available media (print and online). Regular meetings will be held to discuss progress and any additional marketing support that may be required for individual events/activities.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: 2022-23 MBC Events Programme
 - Appendix 2: 2022-23 FULL Events Programme
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Date	Event	Location(s)	Partners	Arts & Culture budget	Other budgets/Funding sources
May - Nov	Elmer on Tour	7 rural libraries around the borough	Kent Libraries; HoKH; Elmer artists	£3,000.00	
28-May	Proms in the Park - Jubilee special	Whatman Park	Parkwood Theatres		£20,000 Sponsorship (Weston Homes)
01-Jun	Mayor's Platinum Jubilee Tea Party	Jubilee Square			£5,000 (Business Rates Pool)
16-Jul	Street Festival	Town Centre locations	RFQ sent	£12,000.00	
31 Jul; 14 & 28 Aug	Bandstand concerts (Sundays)	Brenchley Gardens	MAAP	£3,000.00	
6 & 20 Aug; 3 Sept	Bandstand concerts (Saturdays)	Brenchley Gardens	Make Some Noise	£4,500.00	
2, 4, 9 & 10 Aug	Youth theatre workshops x 8 (4 x drama and 4 x dance)	Amphitheatre	Hazlitt Youth Theatre	£2,880.00	
15 - 19 Aug	Art in the Park	Brenchley Gardens	Local artists; Kent Adult Education	£3,500.00	
27 Aug, 3 & 4 Sept	Outdoor theatre	Amphitheatre & Cobtree Manor Park	Parkwood Theatres	£8,000.00	
10-Sep	Hidden Histories event	Mote Park	Wessex Archaeology; KCC Archaeology; MAAG		Support in kind; officer time
10 & 17 Sept	Talk of the Town (live action history event)	Town centre, Brenchley, Jubilee Square	Hazlitt Youth Theatre	£4,120.00	
11-Sep	Mela	Mote Park	Cohesion Plus, Maidstone Cultural Group		£5,000 MBC / £20,000 ACE
30 Sep - 2 Oct	Heart of Kent Walking Festival	Various	MVCP, Explore Kent, Kent Downs AONB, SUSTRans, Community Rail Partnership, plus more..		£6,000 WBF (website); £1,500 tourism budget; support in kind
28-Jan	Chinese New Year	Town Centre, Jubilee Square	Cohesion Plus, Maidstone Cultural Group	£2,500.00	£2,000 Maidstone Cultural Group

£43,500.00

Date	Event	Location(s)	Partners / Organisers	Arts & Culture budget	Other budgets/funding sources
28 Apr - 2 May	Fringe Festival	Town centre venues	Make Some Noise		Commercial
May - Nov	Elmer on Tour	7 rural libraries across the borough	Kent Libraries; HoKH; Elmer artists	£3,000.00	
21-22 May	Vegetarian Week event	Love Food@Lockmeadow	Love Food businesses		Commercial
27-May	Open Air Cinema	Whatman Park	Adventure Cinema		Commercial
28-May	Proms in the Park - Jubilee special	Whatman Park	Parkwood Theatres		£20,000 Sponsorship (Weston Homes)
28 May - 5 Jun	Tree trail & Jubilee celebrations	Town centre	One Maidstone		£8,500 One Maidstone (ARG)
28 - 29 May	Rock Sober	Headcorn Aerodrome			Commercial
01-Jun	Mayor's Platinum Jubilee Tea Party	Jubilee Square			£5,000 (Business Rates Pool)
02-Jun	Music Concert tbc	Mote Park	Park Live		Commercial
03-Jun	Together Kent	Mote Park	Park Live		Commercial / free NHS event
3 - 5 June	Open Air Cinema	Whatman Park	Adventure Cinema		Commercial
04-Jun	UB40 + more	Mote Park	Park Live		Commercial
05-Jun	Raver Tots	Mote Park	Park Live		Commercial
6 - 30 Jun	LGBTQ+ Walking History Tour	Town centre	One Maidstone		£4,500 One Maidstone (ARG)
18-Jun	Armed Forces Day	Headcorn Aerodrome			Commercial
24 - 26 Jun	Battle of Britain AirShow	Headcorn Aerodrome			Commercial
24 - 26 Jun	Foodies Festival	Mote Park	Foodies Festival & Musicians Against Homelessness		Commercial
02-Jul	Classical Concert	Leeds Castle	Leeds Castle		Commercial
2 - 3 Jul	Race for Life	Mote Park	Cancer Research UK		Charity
03-Jul	Heart of Kent Treasure Trail	Town Square, Lockmeadow	Heart of Kent Hospice		Charity
9 - 10 Jul	Bubble Rush	Mote Park	Demelza		Charity
8 - 10 Jul	Kent County Show	Detling Showground	Kent Agricultural Society		Commercial
16-Jul	Street Festival	Town Centre	RFQ sent	£12,000.00	
16-Jul	Wine Festival	Sessions Square	Frederic, One Maidstone		Commercial
23-Jul	Katherine Jenkins	Mote Park	Park Live		Commercial
30-Jul	Glitterbomb	Mote Park			Commercial
30-Jul	River Festival	Riverside; Lockmeadow	River Festival Committee		Commercial
30-Jul	Muggleton Village (Steampunk Fair)	Maidstone Museum	Muggleton Village		Commercial
31-Jul	Bandstand concert	Brenchley Gardens	MAAP	£1,000.00	
Aug	Summer Fun	Town centre	One Maidstone		£3,000 One Maidstone (ARG)
5 - 7 Aug	Rock the Mote	Mote Park	Park Live		Commercial
06-Aug	Bandstand concert	Brenchley Gardens	Make Some Noise	£1,500.00	
13-14 Aug	Combined Ops Military Show	Headcorn Aerodrome			Commercial
14-Aug	Bandstand concert	Brenchley Gardens	MAAP	£1,000.00	
14-Aug	Bus Station Centenary	Town Square, Lockmeadow	South East Bus Festival committee		Commercial
15 - 19 Aug	Art in the Park	Brenchley Gardens	Local artists; Kent Adult Education	£3,500.00	MBC
19 - 20 Aug	Gratitude Festival	Yalding			Commercial

20-Aug	Bandstand concert	Brenchley Gardens	Make Some Noise	£1,500.00	
20 - 21 Aug	Emergency Services Show	Headcorn Aerodrome			Commercial
2, 4, 8, 9 Aug	Youth theatre workshops	Amphitheatre	HYT	£2,880.00	MBC
27-Aug	Outdoor theatre	Amphitheatre	Parkwood Theatres	£3,000.00	MBC (subsidised tickets)
28-Aug	Bandstand concert	Brenchley Gardens	MAAP	£1,000.00	
03-Sep	Bandstand concert	Brenchley Gardens	Make Some Noise	£1,500.00	
03-Sep	Lets Rock Uk	Mote Park	Lets Rock Uk		Commercial
3 - 4 Sept	Outdoor theatre	Cobtree Manor Park	Parkwood Theatres	£5,000.00	MBC (subsidised tickets)
3 - 4 Sept	Model Show	Headcorn Aerodrome			Commercial
5 - 30 Sept	Knife Angel & activities	St Faiths Church/Brenchley Gardens	One Maidstone		£3,500 One Maidstone (ARG)
9 - 18 Sept	Heritage Open Days Festival	Various	local heritage venues; local history societies; museum; library, etc		Run by volunteers, local venues
10-Sep	Hidden Histories event	Mote Park	Wessex Archaeology; KCC Archaeology; MAAG		Support in kind; volunteers; officer time
10 & 17 Sept	Talk of the Town (live action history event)	Town centre, Brenchley, Jubilee Square	HYT	£4,120.00	MBC
11-Sep	Mela	Mote Park	Cohesion Plus, Maidstone Cultural Group		£5,000 MBC / £20,000 ACE
17-Sep	Revival	Mote Park	Park Live		Commercial
24-Sep	Soulstasia	Mote Park	Park Live		Commercial
30 Sept-2 Oct	Heart of Kent Walking Festival	Various	MVCP, Explore Kent, Kent Downs AONB, SUSTRans, Community Rail Partnership, plus more..		£6,000 WBF (website); £1,500 tourism budget; support in kind
01-Oct	Oktoberfest	Mote Park	Park Live		Commercial
Oct (TBC)	Walking Escape Room	Town centre	One Maidstone		£3,500 One Maidstone (ARG)
24 - 31 Oct	Family friendly Halloween	Town centre	One Maidstone		£7,500 One Maidstone (ARG)
5 & 6 Nov	Fireworks Spectaculars	Leeds Castle / Kent Life + others	Leeds Castle, Kent Life, etc		Commercial
13-Nov	Remembrance Day - installation of poppies	Town centre	One Maidstone		£5,500 One Maidstone (ARG)
24-Nov	Christmas Lights Switch-On	Town Centre, Jubilee Square	One Maidstone		One Maidstone
1 Dec - 1 Jan	Glow Illumination Trail	Cobtree Manor Park	Glow Arts		Commercial
Dec - Jan	Christmas pantomime	Hazlitt Theatre	Parkwood Theatres		Commercial
28-Jan	Chinese New Year	Town Centre, Jubilee Square	Cohesion Plus, Maidstone Cultural Group	£2,500.00	£2,000 external funding
03-Feb	Light Up Maidstone (light parade)	Town Centre	One Maidstone		£15,000 One Maidstone (ARG+)

£43,500.00

Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee

19 April 2022

Decommissioning Public Art Policy

Final Decision-Maker	Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	John Foster, Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Ann-Marie Langley, Arts & Culture Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	ALL

Executive Summary

Maidstone Borough Council currently has no formal policy or procedure for decommissioning public artworks.

The proposed policy addresses both the decommissioning of existing public art and planning for the decommissioning of new works.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Decommissioning Public Art Policy be adopted

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee	19 April 2022

Decommissioning Public Art Policy

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place • We do not expect the recommendation will by itself materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, it will support the Council's overall achievement of its aims as set out in section 3 [preferred alternative]. 	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The recommendation does not impact on the four cross-cutting objectives</p>	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Risk Management	Refer to paragraph 5 of this report	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Financial	The cost of monitoring public art and taking steps to decommission any artworks in line with the policy will need to be managed within existing available budgets.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendation with our current staffing.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development

Legal	Acting on the recommendation will require future contracts for public art commissions to include specific clauses on life expectancy, maintenance and decommissioning.	Team leader, Contracts & Commissioning
Privacy and Data Protection	Accepting the recommendation will not increase the volume of data held by the Council.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The recommendation does not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendation will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Crime and Disorder	Accepting the recommendation will have no impact on Crime and Disorder.	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Procurement	The recommendation does not require any procurement activities	Head of Regeneration & Economic Development Section 151 Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and action should be taken to ensure that, where an artwork is to be decommissioned, all materials are recycled/reused wherever possible.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Public art is most commonly located outdoors where it is exposed to all weathers and daily wear and tear. It is also vulnerable to vandalism and site redevelopment. Public artworks may begin to look tired, out of context or lose relevance for a site.
- 2.2 It may sometimes become necessary to relocate or temporarily/permanently remove a piece of public artwork.
- 2.3 Maidstone Borough Council currently has no formal policy or procedure for decommissioning public artworks.

- 2.4 This policy seeks to address the decommissioning of existing public art and planning for the decommissioning of new works
-

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee may choose to keep the status quo. This is **not recommended** as there is currently no guidance for officers charged with decommissioning public art.

This means best practice may not be followed and opportunities to relocate/repurpose artworks may be missed.

- 3.2 The Committee may choose to adopt the policy.

This will ensure that public artworks are recorded and maintained, retaining relevance to their location and available for public enjoyment.

In the event that decommissioning becomes necessary, it will establish a formal procedure that is a fair, reasonable and transparent experience for all participants.

It will also provide guidance for new commissions regarding contracts and decommissioning clauses.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Option 3.2 is the preferred option as this will provide clear guidance for officers dealing with any future decommissioning or relocation of public artworks.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The Arts & Culture Officer was recently tasked with looking into decommissioning the 'Morning Thoughts' public artwork. The officer sought internal guidance on correct procedures for this but discovered the Council has no formal policy. They were therefore asked to develop a suitable policy to address this.

- 6.2 The proposed policy is the result of desk-based research into this subject, including national guidance (Arts Council England, IXIA: public art think tank) and best practice from other local authorities.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The next steps will be for the policy to be implemented by the Arts & Culture Officer
- 7.2 The policy will be added to the Maidstone Borough Council website
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Decommissioning Public Art Policy
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Decommissioning Public Art Policy

Introduction

Public art is most commonly located outdoors, where it is exposed to all weathers and subject to daily wear and tear. It is also vulnerable to issues such as vandalism or site redevelopment. Therefore, public artworks can begin to look tired, out of context or lose meaning or relevance for a site.

A great deal of thought and care goes into each commission and the location of such items but inevitably circumstances change, meaning it may be necessary to relocate or temporarily/permanently remove an item through a decommissioning or relocation process.



Definitions and exclusions

- **Public Art** can be defined as the work of artists or craftspeople within the public realm and can include a wide range of media, e.g. metal, wood, glass, textiles, light, sound and text, as well as artist-designed features such as public squares, planting and street furniture. It also includes artist collaborations with other design professionals, e.g. architects, engineers, landscape architects, and artist interventions in particular elements of a place or space, e.g. an artist-designed colour scheme. Public Art may be deemed permanent or temporary, and can also comprise research, participation and event-based works.
- **Excluded** from this definition for the purposes of this policy are any historical monuments, memorials or statuary already covered by Conservation policies.
- **Decommissioning** is defined as the removal from its original site, or the destruction of, a public art commission.



Policy requirements

Audit of existing work

Maidstone Borough Council will create and keep an accurate record of all existing public art commissions. This will include the name of the artwork, name of the

artist, date commissioned, material, location, and condition. It will be updated every time a new artwork is added.

Annual review of existing work

An annual review of the physical condition of the works should be carried out. Where the physical condition is cause for concern, or where attention has been drawn to the condition of a work outside the regular review, a more detailed appraisal, according to the health and safety/risk assessment policies of the Council should be carried out.



Contracts

All commissioned work should be the subject of a contract agreed between the Council and the artist. All contracts should include contact details for the artist, and a requirement to keep these details updated. All contracts should include life expectancy, maintenance, and decommissioning clauses. Commissions carried out prior to the adoption of this policy may not have contracts or decommissioning clauses in place. This policy therefore covers decommissioning of both existing commissions and planning for decommissioning of new commissions.

Alert system for redevelopment plans

Planning Officers should be made aware of the Officer responsible for decommissioning public artworks. Where any planned redevelopment may impact on an existing artwork, they should inform the Officer as soon as possible.

Planning for decommissioning

Maidstone Borough Council will seek to ensure the continued presence and integrity of any artwork which it has commissioned in accordance with the artists, designers, and craftspersons' intention and to provide continued public access to the artwork. However, Maidstone Borough Council reserves the right to decommission artwork when:



- Changes in the use, character, or design of the site for which the artwork was commissioned are planned or have occurred which are detrimental to the integrity of the artwork
- Despite maintenance and conservation, the physical deterioration of the artwork deems it cannot be restored effectively or at reasonable cost
- The condition or security of the artwork cannot reasonably be guaranteed

- The artwork requires excessive maintenance or has inherent defects which render repair impracticable
- The artwork has been irreparably damaged
- The artwork is endangering public safety

An artwork may be decommissioned earlier than contractually agreed if:

- The commissioner wishes to replace the artwork with a more appropriate contemporary artwork by the same artist, designer, or craftsperson
- No suitable alternative site for the artwork can be identified following a change in use, character, or design of the original site

Within the original commissioning contractual agreement, formal review dates for decommissioning will be stated. These are usually:

Permanent artworks: At 10 years

Semi-permanent artworks: At 5 years

Temporary artworks: Less than 5 years

Process of decommissioning

A formal review of the artwork will be carried out. The Council will take reasonable steps to contact the artist, designer, or craftsperson to ensure that they are involved in the review and decision-making with regard to any course of action.



In reviewing commissioned artworks the Council will:

- Respect the professional integrity of the artist, designer, or craftsperson
- Be informed by professional judgement
- Be sensitive to the interests of the public

All reviews will be documented and take into account:

- Discussions with the artist, designer or craftsperson concerning the reasons for the review
- Relevant contracts and agreements drawn up between the commissioner and the artist, designer, or craftsperson in relation to the creation of the artwork
- Agreements with any third party who made a financial or in-kind contribution to the creation of the artwork

Where restoration or repair is deemed feasible and at an acceptable cost

Maidstone Borough Council will give the artist, designer or craftsperson the option to conduct or supervise restoration or repair on terms and to a schedule to be agreed by and at the expense of the Borough Council.

Where relocation is considered feasible this must be to a new site consistent with the artist, designer or craftsperson's intention. The artist,

designer or craftsperson's assistance in determining such a site and their formal consent will be required.

If the permanent removal of an artwork is decided upon, the Council will offer the artist, designer or craftsperson the first right to acquire or purchase the artwork. Maidstone Borough Council will in any event notify the artist, designer or craftsperson of the name and address of any new owner and will include in any contract with a new owner comparable obligations to those in the original commission regarding maintenance, repair, and moral rights.

Destruction of a commissioned artwork will only be sanctioned when all other options have been thoroughly evaluated and the artist, designer or craftsperson consulted.

Once a recommendation has been made about the decommissioning or relocation of a public artwork, a report will be submitted to the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee who will make the final decision.

Costs of decommissioning

There are a number of costs associated with decommissioning including the cost of physical destruction or removal of a large-scale work. Planning for the expense of decommissioning should begin with the commission budget, in the same way that the planning for future maintenance costs should be addressed at the beginning of the project.

