

AGENDA

ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING



Overview and Scrutiny

Date: Tuesday 26 August 2014
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors: Butler (Vice-Chairman), Cuming, Fissenden, Harper,
Mrs Hinder, Hogg, Paterson (Chairman), Powell
and Vizzard

Page No.

1. **The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be webcast**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Notification of Substitute Members**
4. **Notification of Visiting Members/Witnesses**
5. **Disclosures by Members and Officers**
6. **To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information**
7. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 29th July 2014** **1 - 5**
8. **Events and Festivals Policy; Events Review SCRAIP update** **6 - 26**
Interview with Laura Case, Cultural Services Manager.
9. **Twilight Economy Review Draft Scoping Document** **27 - 61**
10. **Future Work Programme** **62 - 82**

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in

Continued Over/:

Issued on 13 August 2014

Alison Broom

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council,
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone Kent ME15 6JQ**

alternative formats. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact Sam Bailey on 01622 602263.** To find out more about the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk/osc

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Economic and Commercial Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29 JULY 2014

Present: Councillor Paterson (Chairman), and
Councillors Butler, Cuming, Fissenden, Mrs Hinder,
Hogg, McKay, Powell and Vizzard

Also Present: Councillors Mrs Gooch, Greer and Round

12. THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER WHETHER ALL ITEMS ON THE AGENDA SHOULD BE WEBCAST

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be webcast.

13. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

14. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Chairman provided an update on committee membership, following the full council meeting held on the 23rd July. Councillor Paul Harper had replaced Councillor Fay Gooch on the committee.

It was noted that Councillor Malcolm McKay was substituting for Councillor Paul Harper.

15. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS/WITNESSES

Councillor Malcolm Greer, Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development, was in attendance as a witness for item 8 on the agenda- Cabinet Member Priorities for 2014/2015.

Marcus Lawler, Commercial Projects Manager, was in attendance as a witness for item 9 on the agenda- Draft Commercialisation Strategy.

Councillors Martin Round and Fay Gooch were in attendance as visiting members.

16. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

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

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

18. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1ST JULY 2014

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

19. CABINET MEMBER PRIORITIES FOR 2014/2015

Councillor Malcolm Greer, the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development, was invited to speak on item 8: Cabinet Member Priorities for 2014/2015.

The committee enquired about the relationship between the proposed developments at Maidstone East, The Mall, Springfield and the Powerhub.

Councillor Greer responded that all of these developments were privately owned and were independent of each other. Councillor Greer emphasised that the developments would only be accepted if they were right for Maidstone, and that most of these developments required an enabler in the form of a supermarket.

A member of the committee asked Councillor Greer for a more in depth update on phase 3 of the regeneration of the Town Centre.

Councillor Greer updated the committee on the following areas:

- Board 3 had been set up, in a similar way to which boards 1 and 2 were set up for phase 1 and 2 of the High Street regeneration. The aim of Project Board 3 was to ascertain the financial benefits and construction costs of the proposed projects;
- Consultation had taken place with stakeholders and the general public; and
- No funding was in place, however these schemes needed to be analysed to ascertain their business case and cost to implement. Funding would be from contributions of future developments.

The committee asked Councillor Greer whether there had been any progress in speeding up of the time taken for utility companies to replace the granite paving on the high street, following repairs and maintenance.

Councillor Greer informed the committee that an agreement had been reached between Kent County Council and the utility companies. It was noted that the granite paving would be replaced within 2 weeks of commencement of works. Within this agreement it was specifically stated that there was a ready supply of granite blocks in Maidstone Borough Council's possession that utility companies could use to re-surface areas that had been worked on.

The committee was interested to hear whether Councillor Greer had any plans for introducing a supermarket tax.

In response, Councillor Greer stated that there were no plans for a supermarket tax. Councillor Greer also stated that whilst many of the proposals for redevelopment in the town centre required a supermarket as an enabler, it remained to be seen how many supermarkets would actually decide to invest in these schemes.

In response to a question about any plans for the river area, Councillor Greer explained that this was not currently in his plans. This was because regenerating the river area would require a large funding commitment; not just to design and implement but also to maintain; and that funding wasn't available.

A member of the committee asked Councillor Greer what his priorities for rural areas were for the coming year. Councillor Greer explained that the main barrier in rural areas was transport, particularly for young people, and that he would be working to address this in the coming year.

A visiting member pointed out to Councillor Greer that there were no timescales listed against his priorities, and that some of the pieces of work had implications for other pieces of work (e.g. the local plan).

RESOLVED:

- a) That, where appropriate, timescales be added to the list of cabinet member priorities and circulated to members of the committee; and
- b) That Councillor Greer be invited to report back to the committee at the end of the municipal year on his achievements against his priorities. This should be added to the Future Work Programme.

20. DRAFT COMMERCIALISATION STRATEGY

Marcus Lawler, Commercial Projects Manager, was invited to speak on item 9:- Draft Commercialisation Strategy.

Mr Lawler made a presentation to the committee, which covered the following points:

- The Draft Commercialisation Strategy would enable the council to continue to provide services to its residents in the face of continued funding reductions;
- As such, the Draft Commercialisation Strategy was part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- The strategy outlined four activities to be undertaken:
 - Commissioning;
 - Business Improvement;
 - Fees and Charging Reviews; and
 - Trading Activities.
- None of these activities in themselves were new to the council, however this strategy rationalised the council's approach to these activities.

Mr Lawler outlined the following funds that would be available to pursue the strategy:

- £500,000 from the Invest to Save Fund. Any successful projects that used this funding would have a mechanism to claw back some of this money to replenish the fund;
- A £500,000 fund to extricate the council from failed projects; and
- £6 million of prudential borrowing to invest in trading and investment activities.

A member of the committee asked Mr Lawler whether the purpose of this strategy was to turn Maidstone Borough Council into Maidstone PLC. Mr Lawler responded that this strategy was not an end in itself, but a means to deliver savings and profits so that the council could maintain and enhance services for local residents in the face of funding cuts.

Mr Lawler was asked by the committee whether there was any risk in setting up a holding company for the council's commercial activities. Mr Lawler explained that in every business case there was a risk, however these risks would be made clear in any business case that was submitted to Cabinet. Ultimately it would be for Cabinet to decide whether it was worth taking that risk.

The committee enquired whether the result of the commissioning exercise would be that everything would be brought back to in house service delivery. Mr Lawler answered that each service would be treated on its own merits, and that all methods of service delivery would be judged fairly. However it would be for Cabinet to take the final decision on service delivery.

The committee suggested that it may be beneficial to prioritise carrying out a commissioning exercise on the planning and planning enforcement service.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Cabinet be recommended to adopt the Commercialisation Strategy, as part of the medium term financial strategy, on 13 August 2014; and
- b) That the Commercial Projects Manager be recommended to give priority to carry out a commissioning exercise for the planning and planning enforcement services.

21. **FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

Sam Bailey, Research and Performance Officer, introduced the draft future work programme of the committee.

Sam Bailey suggested that a scoping meeting be set up in order to draft a scoping document for the proposed night time economy review.

Sam Bailey corrected the future work programme, stating that under the meeting of the 29th July, the Economic Development Strategy should not have been on as an agenda item.

The Chairman informed the committee that neither herself, nor the Vice Chairman, would be available for the meeting of the 23rd September therefore it was proposed that this meeting be cancelled.

The Chairman reminded the committee that there would be two meetings in October due to the joint meeting with the Planning Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the Employment Land Qualitative Report and the Economic Development Strategy.

A visiting member suggested the topic suggestion of 'barriers to rural business' be changed to 'barriers and opportunities for rural businesses'.

RESOLVED:

- a) That a meeting be set up to scope the proposed night time economy review and that a draft scoping document be considered by the committee on the 26th August for comment and approval;
- b) The suggested topic of 'barriers to rural businesses' be changed to 'barriers and opportunities for rural business'; and
- c) That, subject to discussion with the proper officer, the meeting of the 23rd September be cancelled.

22. DURATION OF MEETING

19:30hrs to 21:09hrs

Agenda Item 8

Maidstone Borough Council

Economic and Commercial Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

26th August 2014

Events and Festivals Policy; Events Review SCRAIP Update

While reading the following report you may want to think about:

- What you want to know from the report;
- What questions you would like answered.

Make a note of your questions in the box below.

As you read the report you may think of other questions.

Questions I would like to ask regarding this report:

-
-
-
-
-

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

TUESDAY 26 AUGUST 2014

**REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

Report prepared by Laura Case

- 1. EVENTS AND FESTIVALS POLICY; EVENTS REVIEW SCRAIP
FOLLOW UP**
 - 1.1 Issues for Consideration
 - 1.1.1 To consider the draft Festivals and Events Policy.
 - 1.1.2 To consider the Events Review SCRAIP.
 - 1.2 Recommendation
 - 1.2.1 That the committee considers the draft Festival and Events Policy and makes its recommendations accordingly.
 - 1.2.2 That the committee considers the Events Review SCRAIP and recommends that the points raised and agreed have been or are being addressed in the Festival and Events Policy and the agreed timetable.
 - 1.2.3 That the committee gives consideration to the development of major and large events in the Borough and that it considers the number and size of events that can be held in the Boroughs parks and open spaces and makes recommendations accordingly.
 - 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation
 - 1.3.1 The Festivals and Events Policy provides a strategic framework for events and festivals in Maidstone Borough.
 - 1.3.2 The Festivals and Events Policy sets out the priorities, aims and objectives for the delivery of the Council's Events and Festivals programme and ensures that any current or proposed event, whether organised or supported by the Council or as an activity held on its

land, can be evaluated against a set of guiding principles (Outlined in **Appendix A** Page 4 & 5 Section 3: Aims and Objectives)

- 1.3.3 The policy will enable the development of a festivals and events programme that has a significant contribution to the status and the image of the Borough benefiting the local economy and creating a lively and vibrant place to live, work and visit; whilst looking to minimise any negative impacts i.e. on the environment.
- 1.3.4 The Policy will ensure that we can hold events and festivals in MBC venues and ensure they all follow the same process to enable MBC to limit the amount of negative impacts and complaints.
- 1.3.5 The Festivals and Events Policy will enable MBC to increase the income streams from Events and Festivals and ensure a sustainable use of the Borough's venues.
- 1.3.6 The progression and development of the Boroughs Festivals and Events are an integral part of delivering core elements of the Council's Strategic Plan, Commercialisation Strategy and Maidstone Culture and Leisure Business Plan.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 MBC could decide not to adopt the policy and could continue to run Festivals and Events as they currently do. This would mean that significant additional income would not be achieved and funding would need to be sourced from elsewhere.
- 1.4.2 It would also have an impact on smaller events as they would not be as well supported to start and develop events and festivals in the Borough's venues.
- 1.4.3 MBC would miss the opportunity to develop a sustainable programme of quality Festivals and Events which would enhance the borough as a destination.
- 1.4.4 To continue to run Events and Festivals in the Borough without a policy, which includes the development of toolkits in support of events, leaves MBC open to criticism and complaints as each event would not be measured or booked with aims and objectives to support them.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 1.5.1 The Festival & Events Policy sits in support of MBC's Corporate Objectives:

2. For Maidstone to be a decent place to live

Maidstone already has a clean, attractive and well designed and built environment. We wish to maintain this and ensure that proper respect is paid to its diverse and valuable assets so that Maidstone is a place where people want to live. We will continue to support our most vulnerable residents and seek to reduce the different forms of deprivation across the Borough in both urban and rural areas.

3. Corporate and Customer Excellence

The Council will have a productive workforce with people in the right place at the right time, delivering cost effective services. Services will be affordable, delivered on time and to agreed standards in an accessible way.

1.5.2. Progressing the measures to bridge the Annual Savings Targets (as defined in the Budget Strategy) will be critical in ensuring that funding exists so that: 'Effective, cost efficient services are delivered across the Borough.'

1.6 Other Implications

1.6.1

1.	Financial	X
2.	Staffing	X
3.	Legal	X
4.	Equality Impact Needs Assessment	
5.	Environmental/Sustainable Development	
6.	Community Safety	
7.	Human Rights Act	
8.	Procurement	
9.	Asset Management	X

1.7 Relevant Documents

1.7.1 Appendices

Appendix A: Draft Festivals & Events Policy
 Appendix B: Events Review SCRAIP

1.7.2 Background Documents

- Maidstone Culture and Leisure Business Plan
- Commercialisation Strategy

<u>IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?</u>		<u>THIS BOX MUST BE COMPLETED</u>	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, this is a Key Decision because:			
.....			
Wards/Parishes affected:			
.....			

Maidstone Borough Council
Festivals & Events Policy 2014

Version 2
February 2014

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

INDEX

	Detail	Page
1.	The Vision	
2.	Background	
3.	Aims and Objectives	
4.	Type and Frequency of Events	
5.	Evaluation	
6.	Venues	
7.	Finance and Commissioning	
8.	Marketing and PR	
9.	Associated Policies and Strategies	
10.	How to Apply	

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

1. THE VISION

“To develop a festivals and events programme that creates a lively and vibrant place to live, work and visit, whilst ensuring the sustainable use of the Borough’s venues and;

That by 2017 Maidstone borough is recognised as a destination that hosts and develops high quality sustainable festivals and events; and cultivates community creativity for maximum economic benefit and social enjoyment.”

2. BACKGROUND

Well organised festivals and events are recognised for their ability to produce benefits for the local economy, bring life to an area, create interest in the area and reflect the place. This strategy will focus on events that take place in the boroughs parks and open spaces.

This document provides a strategic framework for events and festivals in Maidstone Borough. It recognises the fact that major events represent business, cultural leisure and sporting assets; they make a positive contribution in influencing perception of an area, in helping to stimulate economic activity and in enhancing social and cultural wellbeing.

Maidstone Borough has an established history and tradition of hosting Events and Festivals. There is a comprehensive and diverse range of activities; from music events, to community events that have direct links to the well-being and cohesion of the local community.

Due to the broad dynamics of events and festivals, which cover sports, leisure, special interest, culture, heritage and the arts they can each have a positive impact and make a significant contribution to the status and image of the Borough. Specific areas impacted by an events programme include:

- Quality of life improvements
- Community engagement and cohesion
- Economic value
- Social inclusion
- Education
- Prevention and diversion of anti-social behaviour
- Health, vitality & wellbeing
- Publicity & media exposure
- Added value to the Borough as a visitor destination
- Delivering & inspiring sporting opportunities
- Culture and artistic expression

Therefore, Events & Festivals constitute a fundamental element and vital component to the Borough; although all activities must be managed effectively and efficiently to maximise

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

opportunities (e.g. by extending the season to create economic value), they should also minimise any negative impacts (i.e. on the environment).

The Borough's Events & Festivals are an integral part of delivering core elements of the Council's Strategic Plan, Economic Strategy, Community Development Strategy and Maidstone Culture and Leisure Strategy.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Festivals & Events policy sets out the priorities, aims and objectives for the delivery of the Council's Events and Festivals programme and ensures that any current or proposed event, whether organised or supported by the Council or as an activity held on its land, can be evaluated against the following set of guiding principles:

3.1 Aims

Each event or festival should meet at least two of the aims and five of the objectives outlined:

- i. **Economy**
 - a) Generate income for the local economy.
 - b) Help to regenerate parts of the Borough.
- ii. **Community**
 - a) To develop, generate, facilitate and support cultural, economic, community and social events for the benefit of the Borough and its residents to improve quality of life.
 - b) Interest or involve the Boroughs diverse communities.
 - c) Prevent and divert anti-social behaviour.
 - d) Increase the number of volunteers at events.
- iii. **Destination Publicity**
 - a) Maximise promotional, publicity and marketing opportunities through the Events and Festivals programme
 - b) Promote Maidstone borough as a vibrant, successful place.
 - c) Encourage people and businesses to live in, invest in and visit Maidstone.
- iv. **Education and Employment**
 - a) Provide skills & learning opportunities for the community.
 - b) Interest or engage young learners.
 - c) Provide new temporary employment and work experience opportunities.
- v. **Income opportunities**
 - a) To create opportunities to maximise Income and sponsorship for the Council.

3.2 Objectives

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

- a) Maximise enjoyment for those persons participating at an Event or Festival.
- b) Contribute towards the Council's Strategic priorities.
- c) Deliver and support cultural events in the Borough.
- d) Maximise the contribution made towards the economy of the Borough through increased visitor and participant spend.
- e) Maximise sustainable, inclusive economic growth from festivals and event activities.
- f) Contribute towards the Council's objective of creating a safe, inclusive and diverse day, evening and night time economy in Maidstone.
- g) Contribute and facilitate sporting events and activities that support healthy living and contribute towards an improved quality of life.
- h) Support volunteer schemes.
- i) Manage, develop and generate local, regional, national and international publicity for the Borough.
- j) Increase the positive image and reputation of the Council and Borough.
- k) Support & encourage social inclusion, well-being and healthy living activities.
- l) Undertake sustainable event practices to ensure the protection of the environment, ecology and wildlife.
- m) Increase and obtain sponsorship and income to sustain the Events and Festivals' programme and to generate efficiency savings and ensure value for money.

3.3 Outcomes

- a) Each event or festival maximises its economic opportunities and social benefits.
- b) Delivers recognised quality improvements from inception, management and delivery of events and festivals.
- c) Increases community involvement and civic pride in events and festivals.
- d) Reduces crime and anti-social behaviour throughout the Borough.
- e) Create a safe, inclusive and diverse day, evening and night time economy in Maidstone.
- f) Achieves greater community participation in activities.
- g) Contributes to delivering a sustainable and self-financing events programme by maximising sponsorship and income opportunities.

4. Type and Frequency of Events

To be included once research and planning has finished. This will define what we mean by a major, large, medium and small event and the type i.e. Commercial, charitable and community.

5. Evaluation

As well as balancing existing events with new ones, we want to support the expansion and development of the programme of events. Occasionally an event may arise which is

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

exceptional and will be supported even if it doesn't meet the criteria outlined above. This will be managed via the application process.

In order to ensure that all major supported events and festivals continue to meet the above aims and objectives the council has adopted the use of an Economic Impact Toolkit which all council run or funded events and festivals will be required to undertake www.eitoolkit.org.uk

For smaller events we will expect the organisers to use the event evaluation form in the Toolkit or their own equivalent evaluation questionnaire.

6. Venues

The Borough has over 30 parks and open spaces and a number of venues that have been identified as suitable for holding events. This strategy aims to ensure that the use of these venues is sustainable and that the impact of events on parks and open spaces is managed.

6.1 Mote Park

Mote Park is within walking distance of Maidstone town centre. It is 460 acres parkland site and includes a large 30 acre lake, amenity grass areas, sports pitches as well as large areas of woodland and natural grassland which are managed for conservation. Over recent years the park has hosted a number of events ranging from: Radio 1 Big Weekend in 2008, an event attended by 30,000 music fans; the CBeebies Mr Blooms Roadshow in 2013 which attracted 18,000 people; the annual Mela which is a successful multi cultural event and the Social Festival dance music event held for the first time in 2013. In 2012 a series of Lottery funded improvements took place in the park, as part of this regeneration project a programme of smaller events put on in a partnership between officers and the Mote Park Fellowship friends group was started. This partnership continues to put on events and education walks and in 2013 put on 22 walks and worked in partnership putting on a number of events attracting over 20,000 people.

The park has huge open spaces which gives it the capacity to host very large events and potentially more than one small event at a time. There is limited infrastructure for larger events such as number of toilets and capacity and availability of power supplies but these can be overcome and brought onto site.

Whilst large areas of the park are set aside for conservation the amenity areas are of such scale that festivals and events can easily be accommodated.

6.2 Whatman Park

This 25 acre park was created as part of the Millennium River Park. The park has great potential for hosting festivals and events as it is located within walking distance of the town centre; it is surrounded by the railway line and the River Medway and has only three entrances which eliminates the need for fencing for an event; the River stage in the park provides a covered performance area as well as

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

having a substantial electricity supply and is designed to host medium sized events. Currently the only event which has been regularly hosted in the park is Proms in the Park which has taken place every May. This has been a free event which attracts up to 1,000 people.

6.3 River Park Amphitheatre

This was built in 2000 as part of the same project as Whatman Park. It is located near to All Saints Church. Because it is located near to residential property it has limited scope for amplified music events and is more suitable for open air theatre type events. This area has a capacity of up to around 150 people.

6.4 Cobtree Manor Park

This park forms part of the Cobtree Estate which also includes Kent Life, Cobtree Manor Golf Course and a large field located between Forstal Road and the M20. There is currently an event plan for the park but this is limited to mostly educational and informative guided walks. A new visitor centre will open in this very popular park in spring 2015, which will provide much needed visitor facilities. There is limited capacity in the park for hosting larger events but these could be potentially located elsewhere on the estate.

6.5 Brenchley Gardens

These gardens are located within the town centre of Maidstone. It is a traditional town centre park with flower beds, ornamental trees and a bandstand. It has the capacity to host small events but due to the proximity of residential property these will be limited to non amplified events. The gardens are also located next to Maidstone Museum providing the potential for joint events.

6.6 Jubilee Square and Lower High Street

Jubilee Square is a large open public space in the middle of Maidstone Town Centre. It was created as part of the High Street Regeneration scheme and is conveniently located on Maidstone High Street, in-front of Maidstone Town Hall. The space has access to event specification power and water supplies and has the capacity for both small and large events. As the site is located adjacent to the High Street, and the site is accessible by loading vehicles before 10.30am and after 5.30am, all events will need to consider how these vehicle movements will be managed.

The Lower High Street XXXXX

6.7 Maidstone Museum and Bently Art Gallery

The Maidstone Museum & Bently Art Gallery's multi-layered history and award-winning modern architecture provides a totally unique environment for a range of events.

Available for hire are 3 unique meeting rooms and 2 gallery spaces suitable for 2-130 delegates. Each meeting room has natural daylight and Wi-Fi. The Glass room is

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

equipped with automatic blinds, air conditioning and hearing loop. Interactive TV and other AV equipment are available.

The Museum boasts an experienced events team with dedicated staff who are on hand to make sure your event runs smoothly, along with caterers offering a selection of locally sourced, freshly prepared produce.

The Museum and its collections can be incorporated into your event offering private viewing of current exhibitions, guided tours through its galleries and viewing of artifacts stored behind the scenes. The Museum is perfectly positioned to Brenchley Gardens allowing the possibility of joint events. Exclusive hire of the Museum can also be offered.

Located centrally within the town the Museum is a 2 minute walk from the Maidstone East train station or 5 minutes by car from junction 7, M20. Various bus routes stop outside, there is limited parking onsite with a multi-storey car park located opposite.

The Council will also consider requests for events in parks, open spaces and other venues that are not listed above. As with all requests, permission for events is based on suitability and considered on an event by event basis.

7. Finance and Commissioning

Event and festival organisers should undertake to self-finance activities through income and/or sponsorship opportunities. Subject to the Borough Council's annual budget review the Council may have limited financial support available to assist charity and other not for profit community groups to deliver and develop a range of events and festivals that meet the aims and objectives of the events & festivals policy. The Council will also commission a number of festivals and events through a procurement process.

An application form together with the associated terms & conditions will be available from XXX. Each application will be considered against the aims and objectives of the Festivals and Events Strategy.

7. Marketing and PR

The Council will maintain a Festivals and Events Diary on the Visit Maidstone website and will encourage all events organisers to provide information on their events in order that the website can be kept up to date.

The Festivals and Events programme will be promoted via social media and organisers will be encouraged to cross promote events and collaborate on marketing activity.

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

All organisers of Festivals and Events that will potential impact on the community surrounding the venue, as assessed by the application process, will be required to inform the community affected in advance about the nature of the event and when and where it will be taking place.

8. Associated policies and strategies

8.1 What policies underpin Maidstone Borough Council's strategy on festivals and events in the borough?

There are a number of key council policies and strategies that relate to all cultural, leisure, sporting, recreational or community activity and to the delivery of events in the borough as a whole.

8.1.1 Strategic Plan

Maidstone Borough has many attractive urban and rural places, a relatively robust economy and diverse communities. With both a rich heritage and an ambition for growth we want to make the best of our past and the future to support people, strengthen the economy and develop the public realm to build vibrancy and prosperity.

The Strategic Plan is a four-year document produced by Maidstone Borough Council, written for residents, staff and partners. It sets out clear priorities and expected outcomes by 2015.

In order to provide focus to our efforts we have identified three priorities for the Council:

1. For Maidstone to have a growing economy.
2. For Maidstone to be a decent place to live.
3. Corporate & Customer Excellence.

The Council's refreshed [Strategic Plan](#) is available on our website and a new Strategic Plan is being developed for 2015/16 onwards.

8.1.2 Green Spaces Strategy 2005

This strategy document is currently being superseded by a new Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy which the council is currently developing. Once this new document is completed a decision will be made as to whether an additional Parks and Open spaces strategy is required.

8.1.3 Community Development Strategy

Community development is at the heart of the Council's aim to enable a vibrant and economically stable community. Engaging local people on a range of issues, so that they can influence the decisions affecting their local area and the development of services to meet local need will be at the heart of our approach. This strategy encourages strong partnerships between the Council, other agencies and residents

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

and promotes good working relationships internally between councillors and council officers, in order to achieve better outcomes through more effective and targeted allocation of scarce resources.

The Council's full Community Development Strategy is available on our website.

8.1.4 Equalities Policy

As a public authority, we believe we have a leading role to play in the promotion of equal opportunity in the community, both as employer and provider of services to the population of Maidstone and its visitors.

We would expect all events and festivals organisers to:

- Recognise their duties under legislation and be committed to meeting them.
- Take action to combat direct and indirect discrimination in all areas in respect of disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, age, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation as far as is permitted by statute law and associated Codes of Practice.

The Council's full Equalities Policy is available on our website.

8.1.5 Environmental Policy

All events are opportunities to communicate environmental messages to the public. The Council aims to actively work with organisers to ensure that best practice is introduced at all stages of event management.

8.1.6 Health and Safety

9. How to Apply

There will be a single point of entry for all festivals and events in the Borough via the Council's website. The website will provide all the relevant information on running a festival or event in Maidstone in the form of a toolkit which will include information on:

- Event Classification
- Application Timescales
- Do I need to apply for any other licences?
- Legislation
- Pre Planning
- Detailed Planning
- Final Preparations
- Health & Safety
- Help with your Risk Assessment
- Road Closures
- Stewarding

Appendix A- Draft Festival & Events Policy 2014

- First Aid and Medical Cover
- Insurance
- Contingency Planning
- Counter Terrorism
- After the Event
- Event Notification Form
- Road Closure Notification Form
- Event Application form: Public Open spaces
- Event Risk Assessment Form

DRAFT

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SCRAIP)

Committee: Economic & Commercial Development Overview & scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date: 2013/14

Minute N^o:

Topic: EVENTS REVIEW

Cabinet member response:

Recommendation ⁱ	Cabinet Member ⁱⁱ	Response ⁱⁱⁱ	Timetable ^{iv}	Lead Officer ^v
a) That where MBC provide funding for an event, it should take on the role of Event Organiser (and the legalities set out above involved in this) and delegates the event management to a responsible person/s.	Cllr Greer	Not agreed - The Council does not have the resources to do this, nor would it be appropriate to organise others events. It is crucial that Festivals and Events organisers understand and take on the responsibility of organising and delivering an event and demonstrate their capability to do so. Where MBC delivers its own events or leads on a joint event this will apply.	N/A	Dawn Hudd
b) That the event documents should be reviewed in conjunction with the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) with the aim of creating an Events Pack for anyone wishing to hold an event which includes a checklist.	Cllr Greer	Agreed - This is already underway with a Festivals and Events Toolkit being developed to accompany the Festivals and Events Strategy, which will be available on the Council's website.	December 2014	Dawn Hudd
c) That the Committee supports the compiling of an Events Calendar by the Cabinet member for Economic & Commercial Development.	Cllr Greer	Not agreed - Festivals and Events organisers are and will continue to be encouraged to provide information for inclusion on the Visit Maidstone website 'What's On' section at www.visitmaidstone.co.uk Public events which are to take place on Council owned property will be	N/A	Dawn Hudd

APPENDIX B- Events Review SCRAIP

		automatically included.		
d) That once in place, the Economic Impact Assessment online tool should be used for all regular events that happen in the borough that receive funding or support from the Council.	Cllr Greer	Agreed - This is included as a condition in the Festivals and Events Strategy for events of an appropriate size. It will be a condition that any organisation receiving funding and support from the Council for a Festival or Event will use the Economic Impact Assessment tool to evaluate the impact of the event where appropriate.	Immediate.	Laura Case
e) That once in place, the Economic Impact Assessment tool should be publicised to event promoters and those who have held events in the borough over the past three years.	Cllr Greer	Agreed - all Festival and Events organisers that contact the Council will be made aware of the EIA and encouraged to use it. Links to the EIA on-line tool will be provided through the Council website.	January 2015	Laura Case
f) That a debriefing should happen with the relevant Head of Service following each Council funded or supported event to capture feedback and understand what lessons can be learnt.	Cllr Greer	Agreed - this already happens with council funded or supported events and will continue.	Immediate	Laura Case
g) That the Council works with Maidstone Area Arts Partnership, and other partners, to create an Economic Impact Assessment tool for smaller events; including a matrix to determine which tool should be used for each event.	Cllr Greer	Agreed -this will be developed alongside the Festivals and Events Toolkit.	January 2015	Laura Case
h) That there should be a single point of contact at the	Cllr Greer	Agreed - this will be identified through the Festivals and Events Strategy and	January 2015	Dawn Hudd

APPENDIX B- Events Review SCRAIP

Council for Event Organisers.		development of Maidstone Culture & Leisure Service (MCL). Work is currently underway to process pay the existing customer journey with a view to simplification and single point of entry.		
i) That an Event forum is set up to facilitate better sharing on information between the relevant event organisations/partners.	Cllr Greer	Not agreed - there are currently no resources to enable this to happen except in an on-line forum if external parties feel this would be useful.	N/A	Dawn Hudd
j) That consideration is given to resurrecting the database of leisure and cultural based organisations, including the possibility of sharing the maintenance and administration of this database with another agency.	Cllr Greer	Agreed - a Customer Relationship Database is currently being developed for use across the Council. This will enable a database of leisure and cultural based organisations to be maintained across the council and potentially to share with partners.	September 2014	Dawn Hudd
k) That the possibility of sending out an Events Pamphlet with the Annual Council Tax bill be investigated for 2015 and beyond.	Cllr Greer	Not agreed - there is no funding for this kind of activity and the Council is moving away from producing printed material wherever possible as it goes out of date very quickly Festivals and Events will be promoted via websites, social media, Downs Mail, Posters and any other means available to us.	N/A	Dawn Hudd
l) That investigations be carried out into the feasibility of extending sharing arrangements with items from Maidstone attractions and events to promote and signpost to	Cllr Greer	Agreed - Partners/attractions will be encouraged to do this if they think it appropriate as part of a future marketing strategy.	January 2015	Laura Dickson

APPENDIX B- Events Review SCRAIP

other attractions. For example, by having a piece from Kent Life displayed at the Hazlitt.				
m) That consideration is given to introducing an early warning system to inform residents about events taking place in their area.	Cllr Greer	Agreed - As part of the permission to hold a Festival or Event on Council property the organiser will be required to inform local residents who may be adversely impacted by the event due to noise, additional traffic and other factors.	January 2014	Dawn Hudd
n) That a mechanism for signposting people in the Town Centre to events happening elsewhere in the borough be introduced, as well as exploring opportunities for cross marketing of events.	Cllr Greer	Agreed - Work is being undertaken to develop a brand for Maidstone Borough as a destination for Festivals and Events. This will include workshops with stakeholders and partners. Festivals and Events organisers will be encouraged to cross promote each other's events.	January 2015	Laura Dickson
o) That the council should compile a list of all the event equipment it holds and publish this list accordingly, and encourage other event organisers/providers to do the same.	Cllr Greer	Not agreed - the council does not hold a stock of events equipment other than a few gazebos and hi-viz jackets. Specialist and appropriate equipment relating to the individual event is hired in as appropriate.	N/A	Dawn Hudd
p) That arrangements for hiring event equipment, when it is not in use, to partners and other event providers in the borough be investigated.	Cllr Greer	Not agreed - as the Council has very little events equipment there is no scope for hiring out to third parties.	N/A	Dawn Hudd

Notes on the completion of SCRAIP

ⁱ Report recommendations are listed as found in the report.

- ii Insert in this box the Cabinet Member whose portfolio the recommendation falls within.
- iii The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box either the acceptance or rejection of the recommendation.
 - If the recommendation is rejected** an explanation for its rejection should be provided. The 'timetable' and 'lead officer' boxes can be left blank
 - If the recommendation is accepted** an explanation of the action to be taken to implement the recommendation should be recorded in this box. Please also complete the 'timetable' and 'lead officer' boxes.
- iv The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box when the action in indicated in the previous box will be implemented.
- v The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box the Officer responsible for the implementation of the action highlighted in the 'response' box.

Maidstone Borough Council

Economic and Commercial Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

26th August 2014

Twilight Economy Draft Scoping Document

While reading the following report you may want to think about:

- What you want to know from the report;
- What questions you would like answered.

Make a note of your questions in the box below.

As you read the report you may think of other questions.

Questions I would like to ask regarding this report:

-
-
-
-
-

Maidstone Borough Council

Economic & Commercial Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 26 August 2014

Twilight Economy Review Scope

Report of: Sam Bailey, Research and Performance Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following the meeting of the 29th July, a working party was set up to draft a scoping document for the Twilight Economy Review. This will form one of the Committee's reviews for the 2014/15 municipal year.
- 1.2 An extract of a report called 'Maidstone by Night'; which was prepared by the University of Westminster and Bone Wells Associates in 2007; is attached at **Appendix B**. This will provide some extra context on work that has been carried out in this area since the Night Time Economy review in 2001/2002. Page nine onwards will be of particular interest to the committee regarding the Twilight Economy.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Members discuss the scoping document that has been prepared attached at **Appendix A** and consider:
 - The objectives and desired outcomes of the review;
 - The equality issues that will be considered as part of the review;
 - The witnesses required;
 - The methods used to seek evidence e.g. site visits, workshops;
 - Information or training required;
 - The suggested timescale for the review;
 - Its link to the Council's priorities;
 - Its delivery of effective scrutiny principles; and
 - The suggested co-optees and expert witnesses.
- 2.2 A major part of the scope will be to agree the definition of the 'Twilight Economy'. The Research and Performance Officer recommends that the Twilight Economy be defined as 'Economic activity that occurs in the town centre after ordinary shop and workplace closing times (around 5.30pm) but before the usual pub closing times (around 11.30 pm)'.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 At the meeting of the 29th July 2014 the committee decided to undertake a review on the Night Time Economy; with a particular focus on leisure activities in the early evening.

4. Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 4.1 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priority:

- For Maidstone to have a growing economy.

- 4.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities. Actions to deliver these key objectives may therefore include work that the Committee will consider over the next year.

5. Relevant Documents

- 5.1 Appendix A – Twilight Economy Draft Scope
Appendix B – Maidstone by Night Report

Appendix A- Twilight Economy Review Draft Scope

Name of Review: Maidstone's Twilight Economy
What are the objectives and desired outcomes of the review The Twilight Economy will be defined as 'Economic activity that occurs in the town centre after ordinary shop and workplace closing times (around 5.30pm) but before the usual pub closing times (around 11.30 pm)' <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To assess whether there is a need for a more vibrant twilight economy;• To investigate whether there is a will for town centre stakeholders to provide for a more vibrant twilight economy; and• If the answer to both of the above is yes, what can be done to improve the twilight economy in Maidstone.
What equality issues will need to be considered as part of the review – giving consideration to the 9 protected characteristics: Members will consider whether the twilight economy is accessible to those with any of the protected characteristics. Any recommendations that are made as a result of the review will be made with due consideration to the protected characteristics.
Which witnesses are required? First set of witnesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cabinet Member• An officer from Economic Development• A representative from Town Centre Management Second set of witnesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town centre stakeholders in the twilight economy including Hazlitt Theatre management, local business owners/managers from the sector etc.• Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce• Federation of Small Businesses• Youth Forum
Other ways to seek evidence? E.g. site visits, involving members of the public, consultation. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If possible, the High Street Regeneration Phase 3 consultation document;• Site visits of Maidstone, and other places (perhaps one aspirational, one that we don't want to be like)• Some form of public consultation on demand for the twilight economy• Any previous work carried out on this subject by MBC, Town Centre Management or any other organisation

Appendix A- Twilight Economy Review Draft Scope

Suggested time for review and report completion date:

- Draft scoping document presented to the committee at the meeting of 26th August;
- First set of witnesses to be interviewed/evidence to be presented at the meeting of 28th October;
- Second set of witnesses to be interviewed/evidence to be presented at the meeting of 25th November
- Draft report presented for sign off for the meeting of 23rd December or 27th January (depending on whether December meeting goes ahead)

How does the review link to council priorities?

This review will help contribute to the following priorities:

- For Maidstone to have a growing economy- by encouraging the twilight economy to grow, providing a benefit to business owners and to increase quality of life for residents which attracts inward investment; and
- For Maidstone to be a decent place to live- by increasing quality of life for residents

How does this item deliver CfPS effective scrutiny principles?

- **Provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers**
- **Enables the voice and concerns of the public**
- **Is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role**
- **Drives improvement in public services**

Any co-optees or expert witnesses?

None

1. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

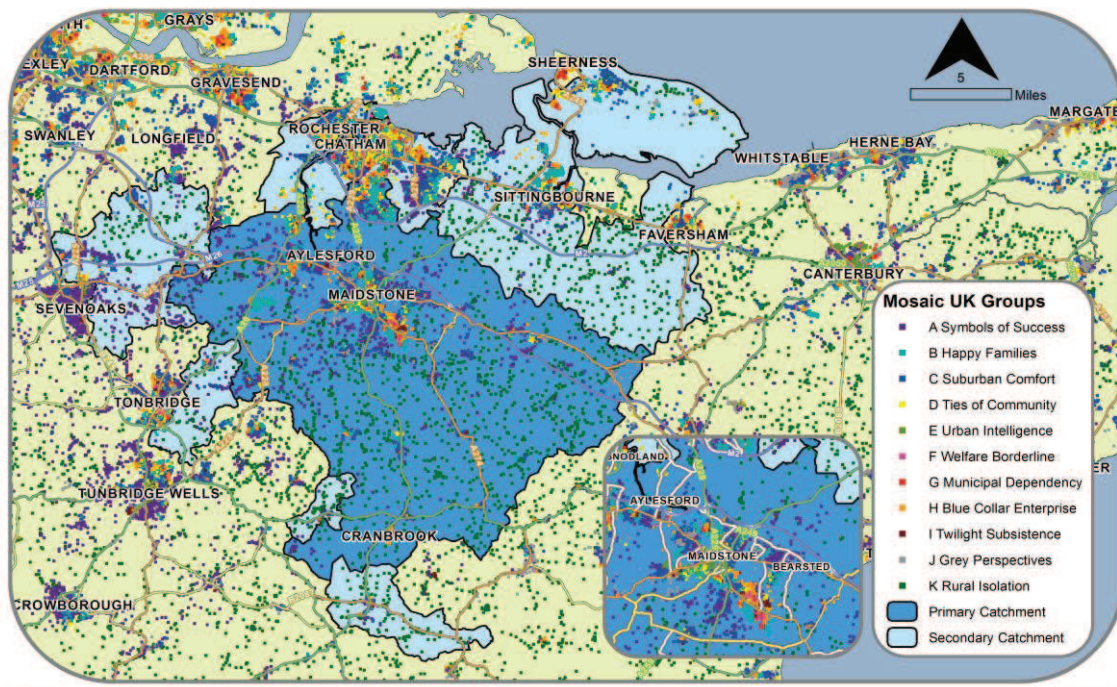
The report’s findings and recommendations have been made in terms of the five key local factors: catchment, competition, choice, convenience and character that determine the role and performance of a town centre and the actions that are appropriate to enable it to compete more effectively (originally identified in the BCSC *Smaller Towns Report*, 2004). The majority of our recommendations, particularly for new facilities, have come from Maidstone’s own residents, managers and operators through our surveys and consultation. Others reflect best practice from our knowledge and research in other town centres in the UK and overseas.

In each section the key issues are outlined and our recommendations are shown in a shaded box.

1.1 Catchment and Competition

The social and economic position of the geographical area the town serves, the extent of competition from other centres and the ability of the centre to attract public and private investment.

Figure 1.1 Experian Mosaic catchment analysis (see section 3.3.6 for full page version)



- Experian's Where Britain Shops Survey indicates Maidstone has a primary shopping catchment (50% of all shoppers) as shown in dark blue and a secondary catchment (75% of all shoppers) as shown in light blue. Maidstone has a wide, affluent, family oriented shopping catchment (see section 3.3.6) that is not particularly well served by the current night time economy offer. Focus groups discussions with professionals over 40 showed the majority chose to pursue evening entertainment in locations other than Maidstone (see section 3.2.1), while parents characterised the town's restaurants as not catering to families (see section 4.2.1).
- Maidstone town centre's night time businesses turnover over more than £75,000,000 and directly provide 1,500 jobs (see section 3.3.2).
- Despite closure of a number of bars and restaurants, business confidence in Maidstone's night time economy appears to be high. A significant number of refurbishments are in progress, or planned, and one major new planning application has been approved.
- Maidstone's night time economy faces competition from:
 - Bluewater – 25minutes away by car, providing cinemas and late night shopping until 10.00pm every evening, with free parking.
 - Tunbridge Wells and Canterbury – large theatres, specialist retail and non-chain restaurants
 - Rural villages West Malling, Bearstead and Staplehurst – pubs with restaurants.
 - London's West End – shopping, theatre and clubs.
- In contrast the town punches well above its weight as the 'nightclubbing capital of Kent' (see section 3.3.6) attracting people from Chatham, Medway, Orpington, Dartford and Bexley who might also go to London, Brighton or even further afield.

Recommendations / Action Points

1. Overall the night time economy offer in Maidstone needs to be expanded to appeal to its older, more affluent and family oriented catchment without destroying its current USP (unique selling proposition) as the nightclubbing capital of Kent. How this can be achieved is detailed below under the headings of choice, convenience and character.
2. Experian have identified a number of wealthy sub regional towns and cities that are the 'best match' to Maidstone (see section 3.3.6). Five of these: Ipswich, Chelmsford, Lincoln, Peterborough and Gloucester are a particularly close match demographically. They are likely to experience similar problems to Maidstone and may have found transferable solutions. It would be beneficial to forge links and even set up a network with these towns to share information, good practice and experiences.
3. Similarly, the town should look to build links and possibly set up a network with other places with significant nightclub circuits like London, Portsmouth, Bournemouth and Bristol.

1.2 Choice

The reasons people use the town centre, the range and quality of the retail, entertainment, residential, educational, cultural and tourism facilities available in the town centre.

1.2.1 Maidstone's night time economy businesses

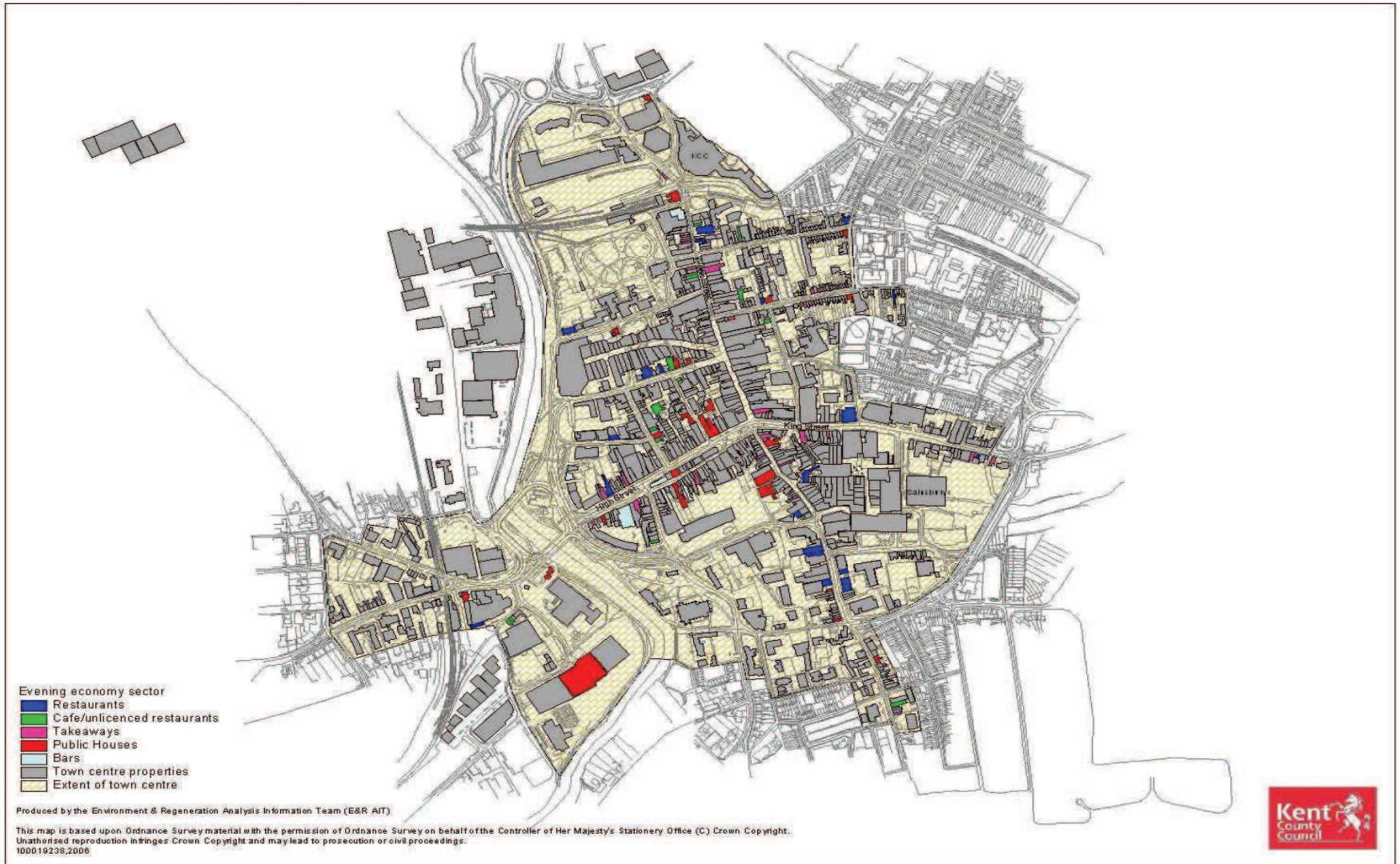
Maidstone's night time economy businesses can be broadly categorised as:

- **Night clubs** - Maidstone has three true nightclubs providing large venues for late night drinking and dancing: The Loft, Strawberry Moons and Ikon. There are a number of other clubs that charge entry and /or provide music and DJs including the River Bar, Jumpin' Jaks, Chicago Rock Café and Roadhouse.
- **Bars** - there are wine bars and specialist bars like The Ashes (a sports bar) and a number of bars that blur the boundaries with clubs like ME1, Ethos and Mu Mu's.
- **Pubs** - these divide into traditional town centre pubs, some of which provide live music, and large format pubs like The Society Rooms and The Muggleton (both owned by JD Wetherspoon) that trade particularly on price.
- **Restaurants** - there has been a significant growth in restaurants over the past four years particularly in Earl Street. There are now 28 restaurants, about half of these are national chains like Pizza Hut and Zizzi.
- **Takeaways** - there are a large number of takeaways ranging from international chains like KFC and McDonalds to very small establishments on the periphery of the town centre.
- **Theatre** - there is one small theatre the Hazlitt (capacity 350) and an associated venue the Exchange that can be used as a flat floor or with tiered seating. The theatre is subsidised by the Council and puts on a mixed but safe selection of amateur and professional shows.
- **Museum and Art Gallery** - this currently closes at 5.30pm but facilities are being upgraded so the Brenchley Rooms can be used for events (including night time use).
- **Cinema** - there is an eight screen multiplex in the Lockmeadow complex.

Beyond these there is a well-attended bowling alley and a successful bingo club in the old cinema. A comedy club in Union Street has not been successful and is currently up for sale. There are only two small hotels in the town centre

Kent County Council has mapped the night time economy of Maidstone as part of the county-wide Health Check as follows.

Figure 1.2 Maidstone town centre evening economy sector



There are four basic strategy options open to Maidstone to further develop the town's night time economy (discussed in more detail in section 2 strategies and implementation). In order (lowest first) of risk and ease of delivery these are:

1. Market penetration - expanding the existing night time economy.
2. Market segmentation and extension - attracting new users to the existing town centre at night.
3. Product development - developing alternatives to the pub and club venues for the young people that currently dominate the town centre at night.
4. Diversification - developing a new product for a new market, catering to a wider consumer base and completely new uses.

1.2.2 Expanding the existing night time economy facilities

Concentration of pubs and night clubs

- Currently pubs and nightclubs are concentrated in Bank Street, Lockmeadow, Gabriel's Hill and Market Buildings / Rose Yard (see section 1.2.1).
- This means police resources can be targeted on these areas and other areas can be developed to appeal to different customers, like restaurants in Earl Street (see section 3.2.3).

Recommendations / Action Points

4. When drafting the next licensing policy in 2007 the question of whether Maidstone has reached saturation on MVVD (mass volume vertical drinking) establishments will need to be addressed. While this study has identified that the evening economy is well supplied in Maidstone saturation has not been reached.
5. It may be preferable for Planning to identify specific areas, like Earl Street, where development of MVVD establishments would not be permitted.

Pubs and Bars

- Focus groups identified Maidstone as offering primarily down-market bars over-filled with young drinkers (see section 4.2.1).
- Focus groups also raised concerns about the general hygiene in venues, particularly the toilets (see section 3.2.1).

Recommendations / Action Points

6. Operators should be made aware of these concerns and the opportunity to develop alternative venues that are less frenetic where people can socialise with friends.
7. There is an opportunity to adopt multi-agency visits to venues to ensure they are well managed and for the Licensing department to introduce an accreditation scheme for pubs, bars and clubs similar to the 'Best Bar None' scheme to raise standards (see section 4.4.2).

Nightclubs

- There is a feeling, picked up amongst the younger focus groups, that the night clubs in Maidstone have not moved on, they offer large venues with one type of music when clubs elsewhere have diversified into providing a number of different rooms offering different music and atmospheres (see section 4.2.3).

Recommendations / Action Points

8. Ikon and Chicago Rock Café are having refits this year that should enable them to regain lost ground. Other operators could be made aware of this criticism.

1.2.3 Attracting new users to the town centre at night**Quality restaurants**

- Most of the restaurants in the town centre are chains. Although Maidstone is reasonably well supplied with ethnic restaurants (Indian / Chinese / Mexican) it lacks more formal and up market 'white table linen' dining. 41% of questionnaire respondents identified that they wanted to see better quality restaurants, one of the highest ranked wishes (see section 3.3.6).
- Participants in focus groups (of all ages), town centre businesses and other stakeholders also put forward the view that the town needs more restaurants and cafes to provide sufficient variety for people to use the town centre regularly (see section 4.2). This view was backed up by 34% of questionnaire respondents wanting a wider range of restaurants (see section 3.3.6).

Recommendations / Action Points

9. Analysis by Experian (see section 3.3.6) has identified higher quality chain restaurants like Bombay Brasserie and Café Rouge that closely match Maidstone's catchment and are found in benchmark towns comparable to Maidstone. Economic Development should take a proactive approach contacting these chains to see if they would consider opening an outlet in the town – this is how shopping centre owners would use the same information.
10. Beyond this the council could work to promote the opportunities for independent restaurants. Extending the remit of the Art at the Centre project to work with Economic Development is probably the best vehicle for this.

Developing the twilight economy - shopping and markets

- The number of voids, charity shops and discount (pound) shops and low levels of stock intensity indicate that the town is currently in a period of transition, reflecting the sudden expansion of retail space as a result of Fremlin Walk opening in 2005. A separate retail capacity study is in production.¹
- This under trading is compounded by the fact that late night shopping (Thursday to 8.00pm) is a non-event. The shops in Fremlin Walk open but late opening in the rest of the town is patchy (see section 3.3.1). Focus group participants were not even certain the town centre shops opened late (see section 4.2.3).



Late night shopping in Fremlin Walk – three people shopping

¹ See Maidstone Retail Capacity Study Sept 2007

- Focus groups identified shopping in Maidstone as not on par with nearby towns, singling out the Chequers Centre as depressing and run-down (see section 4.2.3). They suggested the lack of interesting independent shops and the opportunity to wander and window shop was a limitation of the night time economy.
- The household questionnaire identified interest in designer / craft shops that would make the centre more interesting to visit (see section 4.3.3).
- Maidstone lacks a town centre market which could add to the evening economy e.g. on late night shopping days.

Recommendations / Action Points

11. All retailers throughout the town centre need to be encouraged to open late and a package of promotions and events is needed to support participation. Refurbishment of the Chequers Centre might provide the opportunity to make late night opening a requirement of leases.
12. The Borough could consider fostering an afternoon / evening market as an innovative development not found in neighbouring towns.
13. The Art at the Centre project is currently concentrating on creating and artists' network and organising events and publications. It is also working with representatives from retailers in Market Buildings, Earl Street, Pudding Lane and Rose Yard. This provides the best mechanism to understand the needs of independent retailers in Maidstone and how the sector can be supported and encouraged.

1.2.4 Developing alternatives to the pub and club venues for young (and older) people

Cafés

- Cafés currently close in the early evening (see section 3.3.1). Such places serve the needs of a range of ages who want somewhere to meet or relax without having to go to a pub or youth dominated bar.
- The household questionnaire identified significant interest in seeing more non-alcoholic meeting places like evening coffee bars (see section 3.3.1).
- The Maidstone Youth Forum have identified a clear need for a teenage activity centre and a funding proposal has been made to establish an innovative 'youth café'. If this is not successful then it may be possible for the council to work with the private sector to deliver this facility (see section 4.4.2).

Recommendations / Action Points

14. Cafés and other relevant operators should be made aware of this currently unmet demand. Such places could serve alcohol but the need is for a continental style of premise where alcohol is a supplementary rather than a dominant characteristic.

1.2.5 Developing new facilities and attractions to diversify the night time economy and cater to a wider consumer base

Theatre / Concert Hall / Music venue

- There was a strong wish to see a concert hall and a larger theatre in the town centre, cited by 50% and 47% of questionnaire respondents respectively. Scoring the highest of any facility (see section 3.2.1).
- Plans to create a studio space in the Corn Exchange may allow the theatre to put on more adventurous productions but the requirement is for a much bigger venue that can compete with Tunbridge Wells, Canterbury, Dartford and Bromley.
- The council has identified a large development site on the west bank of the river that could accommodate a concert hall and conference facilities.

Recommendations / Action Points

15. In order to appeal better to its catchment Maidstone needs to accomplish a step change in the calibre of attractions the town centre provides. It will be difficult to develop a 'me too' theatre venue that can compete in this already crowded marketplace. In contrast Kent does not have a concert hall / live music venue. Providing a concert hall / music venue would raise the cultural profile of Maidstone, draw in people from a wider catchment and attract a more varied clientele to the town centre at night, breaking down the perception that it is only for young people and drinking. It could enable re-branding of the town in the same way that the Sage has in Gateshead/ Tyneside, albeit on a larger scale.

The River Medway

- There was a consensus in focus groups that the river represents a wasted opportunity for Maidstone and the council is blamed for failing to make the most of the town's riverside setting (see section 3.2.1).
- This was endorsed in the household survey where 46% of respondents said better use of the riverside would encourage them to visit the town centre more often (see section 4.3.1).
- The Council is setting up a steering group Making the Most of the Medway to take forward the Recreation and Community Services Overview Scrutiny Report on opportunities to enhance the riverside and encourage greater use of the river.²
- Light elements, an interactive lighting installation on St Peter's and Maidstone Bridges, is part of the Walk of Art project. It adds interest and a sense of fun but does not improve ambient light levels on the bridges and their surrounds that were persistently described as unsafe in focus groups (see section 3.2.1).

² Making the Most of the River, April 2007

Recommendations / Action Points

16. The Council should examine how to create a riverside outdoor eating area with tables close to the core of the town preferably as part of a wider strategy for making better use of the river. The triangle site on the river adjacent to St Peter's Bridge and the surroundings of Lockmeadow (discussed later) represent the best remaining opportunities to capitalise on the River Medway. The triangle site is likely to be developed as a restaurant, piazza and retail. The Council should ensure that this development provides much desired riverfront facilities for Maidstone.
17. Lighting levels along the riverside should be looked into.

Hotel

- Focus groups and the questionnaire identified the need for a large hotel in the town centre with a bar, entertainment and dining that could provide a different atmosphere (see section 3.2.1). A 4 star quality hotel can attract a mature affluent clientele as day visitors in addition to paying guests.

Recommendations / Action Points

18. The Council have identified that Medway Street car park is needed despite Fremlin Walk opening, but this site could be developed for a hotel provided the parking is retained.

Casino

- Perhaps understandably, a number of operators were in favour of a casino, suggesting that it would bring in a different clientele. However, this was not identified as desirable by many in the household survey (2.5%).
- Maidstone Borough Council recently applied for a small casino but was not successful in the early stages of the selection process.

Health / community centre

- A facility which can improve the vitality of secondary centres is a civic/ community centre providing health and other services. Although fully operational during the day such a centre can remain open into the evening, meeting a wide range of needs. A centre of this type recently developed in Wealdstone, Harrow has been a success and increased footfall in the High Street. That building included a library, healthy living centre, primary care trust health services, youth centre and meeting rooms.
- 21% of respondents to the household survey identified a GP/ health centre as a facility they would like to see in the town centre.

Recommendations / Action Points

19. The Council could explore the possibility of developing a health/ community facility that provides a range of services under one roof, possibly including the youth café discussed earlier.
20. In the short term the Council should review library opening hours and consider late closing for several evenings a week (see also recommendation 46 for museum).

Sports and recreation facilities

- Government Advice Note PPS6 makes specific reference to the contribution such facilities can make to town centre vitality and they generate strong evening demand. Maidstone town centre appears to lack much of a sports/ recreation offer which would appeal to the after work market. Although the town centre does have two private gyms (currently under-subscribed) it lacks a major sports/leisure attraction like a swimming pool.

Recommendations / Action Points

21. As suggested above with regard to sports and recreation facilities the Borough should consider the possibility of attracting or developing a larger scale sports / recreation facility in the town centre to complement the existing health / fitness centres. Finding a site would be difficult and The effect on Mote Park facilities would need to be considered.

Residential development

- Town centre living is increasing with about 850 new apartments and accommodation above shops planned, under construction or recently completed. These new residents are likely to create new demand for the night time economy.
- However, in the household survey 39% of respondents stated they had suffered disturbance by noise from the night time economy, 8% had experienced vandalism and damage and 17% had experienced public urination and vomiting.

Recommendations / Action Points

22. If residents being disturbed by noise and antisocial behaviour from the night time economy becomes a significant issue the Council might consider introducing the internet based Community Alert Scheme developed by UCL CASA that allows householders to record on line where and when problems such as petty crime and antisocial behaviour occur, enabling the police and other managers to develop an accurate picture of the problem and allocate resources accordingly.

23. Planning policy guidelines for new town centre residential development should ensure the layout of the development is designed to prevent people being over-looked, minimise disturbance from deliveries and provide adequate soundproofing. While developers of mixed-use schemes should be encouraged to use leases to control, for example, waste collections, how bottles are dealt with and general noise levels.

Education

- The lack of a substantial student population was identified by businesses as a limitation on further growth of the night time economy. This was both because students provide a significant element of the night time economy spend, increasing viability by contributing to a more even patronage during the week (venues reported sales in Maidstone are significantly higher during holidays than in term time) and because they provide the majority of the part-time labour employed in the night time economy.
- Maidstone has Higher Education Institutes and UCCA will have University status in 2008.

Recommendations / Action Points

24. Developing the university and expanding the student population a University is a long-term goal commensurate with the town's ambitions as the regional capital.

Events

- Focus groups consistently identified the street entertainments seen in Covent Garden as a major draw (see section 3.2.3).
- Public events/ family / street entertainment were the fifth most sought after attraction in the questionnaire and the third most sought after by the mid aged group (30-39) who have most children (see section 3.2.1).
- The River Festival gives rise to mixed responses from 'the best thing to happen in Maidstone' to 'a major source of trouble' (see section 3.2.3. The police view is that problems associated with the festival are historic and they are now scaling back their presence at the event.

Recommendations / Action Points

25. There is an opportunity to licence street entertainers, particularly in the evening (see section 4.4.2).
26. While problems previously associated with the River Festival have been resolved there remains work to be done to convince people that it has changed and everyone can feel safe.
27. The Tour de France is an opportunity to attract new people to the town centre and change any negative perceptions.

1.3 Convenience

The price people have to pay in terms of time, money and hassle to use the town centre's services and facilities.

1.3.1 Parking

- The lack of free, safe, on-street parking and the cost and inconvenient opening hours of the multi-storey car parks was identified in focus groups (see section 3.2.1) and by businesses (see section 3.2.2) as a major deterrent to using the town centre at night.
- Fremlin Walk car park closes at 11.30pm, presenting problems for some dining in Earl Street. The Chequers Centre closes at 7.30pm. While Lockmeadow is free from 6.30pm to 8.00am, and other short stay car parks charge £1.00 for parking between these times, it is inconvenient, and unsafe, for anyone who has drunk a lot the previous night to have to move their car by that time (see section 3.2.4). The focus groups relayed stories about wardens being overly eager just before 6.30 pm and after 8.00am.
- The household questionnaire indicates that 66% of respondents travelled to town by car at night, illustrating how significant this issue is (see section 3.2.1).
- A lack of coach parking was identified by operators (see section 3.2.2).

Recommendations / Action Points

28. The Council needs to reconcile parking revenue with the desire to support the night time economy. This is particularly significant in relation to parking fines that bring with them the distinct possibility that ticketed drivers will decide to avoid Maidstone at night.

The Council should introduce a parking policy to support the night time economy:

- all parking to be free after 6:00 pm, and convenient for overnight use, i.e. for retrieving vehicles in the morning
- street parking permitted within the pedestrianised framework
- off-street parking spaces allocated for coaches

Whilst it is appreciated that car mode does not always sit well with environmental sustainability there is currently no viable public transport alternative and it is preferable to encourage the borough's residents to drive into the town centre at night rather than travel further afield.

1.3.2 Public transport

- Although five evening bus services operate they are very infrequent (see section 3.3.5) and the buses observed in the town centre during the evening were largely empty. Less than 5% of household survey respondents said they came into the town centre at night by bus. While buses may offer some residents a realistic method of getting into the town, they are not generally satisfactory for returning home at the end of the night. Parents discussed

the difficulty of using buses with prams, while young women were reluctant to travel on late buses unaccompanied.

- Taxi provision may have been assessed as adequate but people wait up to an hour for a taxi at night (see section 3.3.5). Queuing for taxis at night is a problem, identified by focus groups, and graphically illustrated by the correlation between crime and taxi ranks/pick up points (see section 3.3.3). Although Licensing Department report that the police no longer consider this a major flash point since the licensing law changed.

Recommendations / Action Points

29. Maidstone needs to develop an innovative approach to getting people home at the end of the night. With a limited population a mixed approach to town centre transport at night is appropriate, responding to different requirements at different times. For the early and mid evening periods buses should be encouraged, while accepting that a night bus service cannot be run commercially, so people will travel by car or taxi in the late evening.

Estimates produced in 2004 indicated that providing an hourly service to five areas from 11.00pm to 3.00am would cost £62,400 annually (see section 3.3.5). Offering a free night bus service for 2-3 days a week (removing the need to handle money late at night) is worth considering. The cost could be split between the 90 or so night time economy businesses in the town centre and would equate to a contribution of c. £14 per business per week, although it would be fairer to allocate costs by rateable value. This could be seen as quid pro quo for the council relinquishing night time parking revenue.

Alternatively, the Council could look at introducing 'taxibuses' where taxis run as registered bus services, either commercially or on contract (see section 3.3.5). Such a service could operate at a premium to conventional bus fares, perhaps with some financial assistance, at least in the inception phase.

30. Taxi rank queues and fights caused by people stealing other's pre-booked taxis needs to be actively policed as part of a wider reassurance exercise discussed below.

1.3.3 Safety and Policing

- Maidstone town centre is not particularly dangerous at night (see sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.3). Violent crime is low but at weekends, after 10.30pm, it is dominated by drunken young people. However, public perception, borne out by the Fear of Crime Survey (see section 3.3.3) and focus groups (see section 4.2.2), is that Maidstone is not a safe place to be at night.
- Although the householder survey indicated actual experience of robbery / violent crime and vehicle theft were low, at 3% and 4% respectively, rowdiness and youths hanging about and fear of crime were identified a major deterrents from visiting the town centre at night (see section 4.3.3).
- Maidstone Youth Forum raised specific concerns about how young people in the town centre feel both harassed and neglected by the police (see section 4.2.6).
- The police, CCTV Operations and Nitenet work together as a proactive partnership identifying and dealing with problems before they become more

serious (see section 3.3.3). However, the public are unaware of how these teams work together and how good the town centre CCTV coverage is. The two improvements householders identified would be most likely to encourage more use of the town centre at night were visible police (63%) and CCTV (48%) (see section 4.3.2).

- There are suggestions that policing can be a bit 'macho', implying they expect trouble, which tends to reinforce the perception that the town is unsafe at night (see sections 3.2.2 and 4.2.6).
- There are crime concentrations in Maidstone in Gabriel's Hill, the bottom of the High Street, Lockmeadow and Week Street but it is probably better to concentrate bars and clubs in these areas so that police resources can also be focused there and other areas can be developed to appeal to different age groups (see section 3.2.3).
- Initiatives are under consideration to introduce voluntary Street Pastors and a medical first response team in the town centre at night and during weekends (see section 3.2.3).
- Focus groups identified, and even joked about, the fact that under age drinking does occur, although this was denied by operators (see section 4.2.2).

Recommendations / Action Points

Changing public perception of safety at night in Maidstone will be a long-term project but the following initiatives are recommended:

31. Introducing reassurance policing in addition to the night time tactical team
 - At least four officers from the policing family walking the streets at night (to 1.00pm Thursday, Friday and Saturday night) dealing particularly with antisocial behaviour (urination, litter etc.), policing taxi ranks and providing a calming presence.
 - Establishing a night time police booth (like the pavilion at Piccadilly Circus illustrated below) to provide an accessible police presence and refuge point. This could involve remodelling the entrance of the Town Hall Information Centre or positioning the Police caravan at the top of the High Street on Friday and Saturday. Although far cheaper and immediately available the latter option would be less approachable and could imply there is a problem. This could be combined with night time cleaning services and first response medical services (see below) to provide a multi-agency centre.
 - The introduction of Street Pastors, currently under consideration, would provide extra eyes on the street and a calming influence, but Street Wardens would be preferable.
 - The need for a first response medical team in the town centre is unclear given that violent crime is rare. It may be better to delay making a decision until information on admissions to A&E relating to the night time economy are available in the summer.
 - A senior police officer should attend the Maidstone Youth Forum in order to understand how their policing concerns can be resolved.
 - Experience elsewhere suggests that serving Fixed Penalty Notices on bar staff who serve under age drinkers is the best way to tackle this problem (see 4.4.2) and Licensing are already implementing this.

32. A PR campaign to redress negative coverage and to get the message out that the town is well managed and that systems are in place to ensure that if people cause trouble they will be caught. This could be achieved through:
- A press launch of the new CCTV centre when it becomes operational, supported with an information pack detailing the success of the Mailsafe / NightNet partnership approach and the low levels of violent crime experienced in Maidstone.
 - An 'Our town centre' education programme targeted at school children (age 7-11) taking them into the new CCTV control centre and showing them how the Police/CCTV/ Mailsafe/ NightNet work together. This is likely to have a 'Blue Peter' effect getting this information out to the wider community.



Police pavilion at Piccadilly Circus



Entrance to the Town Hall

1.3.4 Cleanliness

Urination

- Male public urination is the norm in the town centre and by the end of the night alleyways, phone boxes and shop fronts are awash. While the temporary urinal provides an alternative at weekends it is a somewhat anonymous lump of grey plastic that does not appear to be much used (75 litres are collected per weekend).
- A decision was made not to proceed with gating alleyways due to the excessive cost involved.

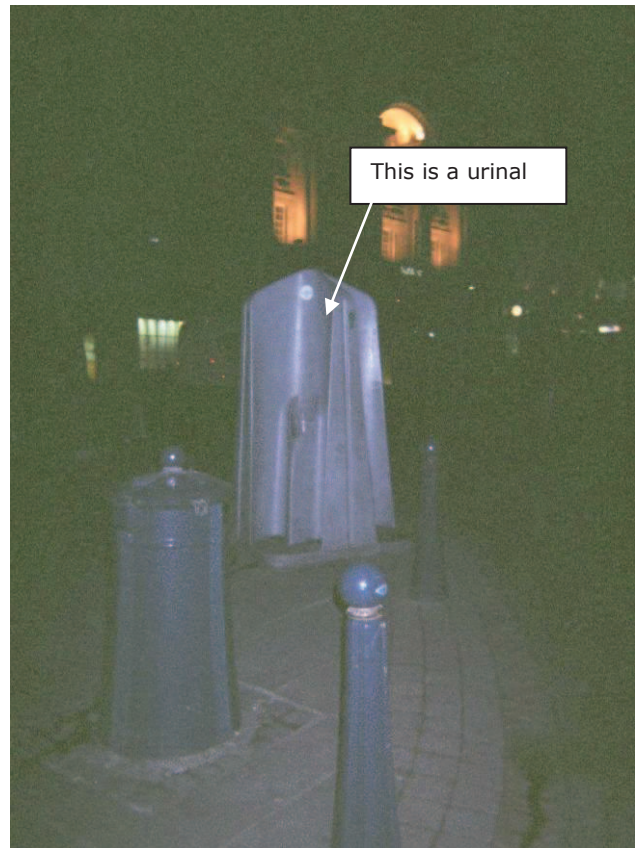
Recommendations / Action Points

33. The urinal needs signage to highlight that it is there and what it is and more urinals may need to be provided. Clubs, pubs and bars should also be encouraged to stay open to allow people to use toilets before leaving.
34. Best practice elsewhere (see section 4.4.2) indicates gating alleyways can have a positive effect on town centre image so perhaps the decision not to proceed with gating could be revisited.

Fundamentally this is a cultural issue and the only thing that is likely to alter this behaviour is the presence of disapproving people on the street. Proposals to increase 'eyes on the street' are discussed elsewhere in this report.



Public urination



Litter

- The night time accumulation of litter was the worst the University of Westminster have seen during night time economy observations. Whilst it is cleared away by the next morning the presence of take away food and packaging and bottles on the street contributes to the feeling that the town centre is unsafe.
- Take away outlets are not prepared to clean up until after they have closed for staff safety reasons and because they are needed to serve customers.



The corner of Week Street at 3.00 am and the same view at 10.00 am.

Recommendations / Action Points

35. There are two possible solutions to this problem:
- Either, Street Litter Control Notices should be enforced to require takeaways to clean up during the night so that litter does not accumulate. They could also be required to print the name of their store on all packaging. This has been proposed elsewhere (see Appendix 4.4.2).
 - Or, a continuous cleaning operation is needed at weekends to prevent the build up of rubbish and provide further presence on the street to discourage urination.

1.4 Character

The physical urban environment, the historic and cultural heritage and how the town is perceived both by local people and outsiders.

1.4.1 Perceptions of Maidstone town centre at night

- Feelings about the character of Maidstone were mixed with comments ranging from 'improving' to 'chavy' to 'a no go area for older people at night' (see sections 4.2 and 4.3)
- It is clear that quite a lot of people feel the town centre is only for young people at night.
- Operators felt the town wasn't being promoted properly and there was a need to promote late night shopping in particular (see section 3.2.2)

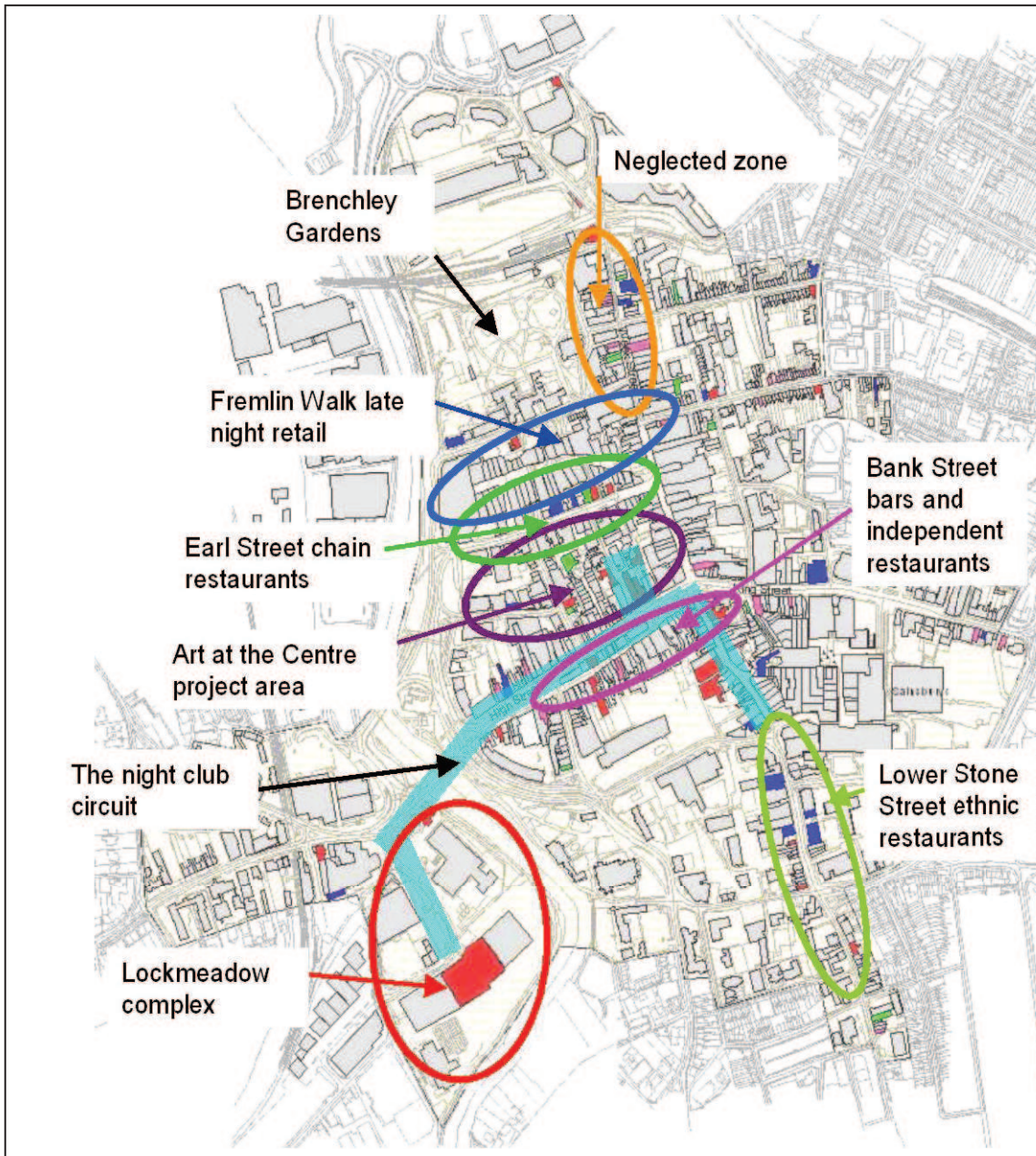
Recommendations / Action Points

36. Developing a clear vision of where Maidstone town centre is going will allow marketing activities to be channelled to address negative perceptions. A co-ordinated marketing programme of events is required.
37. Interest expressed in businesses coming together to jointly fund an advertising campaign to promote the town centre at night should be investigated.

1.4.2 Night time character areas in Maidstone town centre

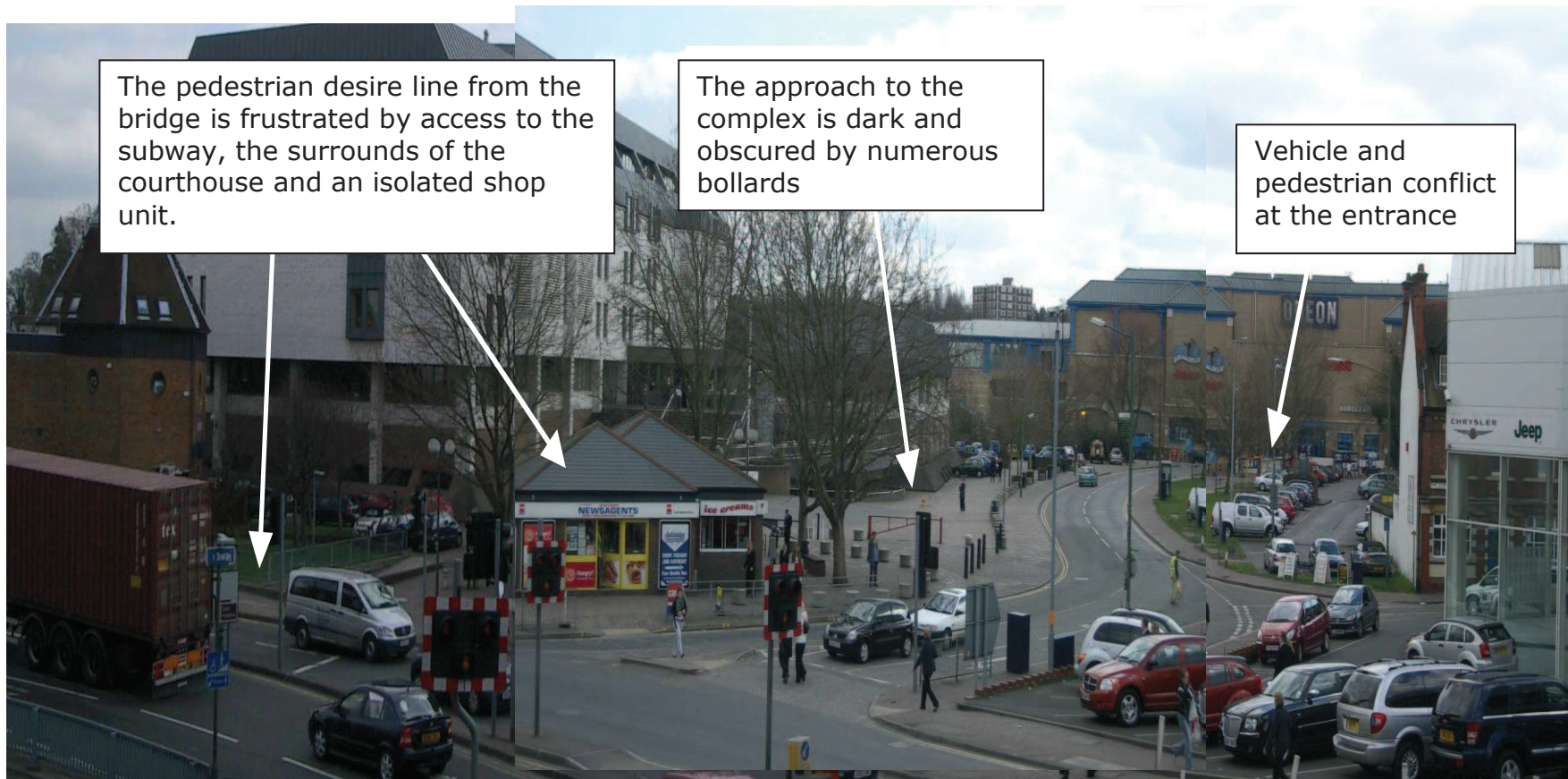
- Maidstone has a clearly identified 'nightclub circuit' running from Gabriel's Hill through the High Street and across the river to Lockmeadow. This is where the majority of the night time economy businesses are located, where most people circulate at night and where most trouble occurs.
- Best practice in managing the night time economy elsewhere suggests identifying and developing policies for micro-districts within the town centre (see section 4.4.2). Through observation and analysis the following night time character areas have been identified within Maidstone.
 1. Lockmeadow complex
 2. Art at the Centre Project Area (Pudding Lane, Market Buildings, Rose Yard)
 3. Earl Street – chain restaurants
 4. Fremlin Walk – late night retail
 5. Brenchley Gardens – public park
 6. Week Street – neglected zone
 7. Bank Street/ Gabriel's Hill – bars, clubs and independent restaurants
 8. High Street / King Street – night club circuit
 9. Lower Stone Street - ethnic restaurants

Figure 1.3 Night time character areas in Maidstone



Lockmeadow Complex

53



- There is a vehicle-pedestrian conflict in Barker Road at night arising from the flows of cars and people trying to use the same space. This is exacerbated by poor lighting and provides a sub-standard access to the leisure complex. The pedestrian desire line from the bridge is frustrated by access to the subway, the surrounds of the courthouse, an isolated shop unit and numerous bollards.
- It is a crime concentration point (see section 3.3.3). Comments from the focus groups suggest that a rape and murder that occurred there some time ago has taken on 'urban myth' status and the area is perceived as very dark and dangerous (see section 3.2.1).
- The complex makes remarkably little use of its superb riverside setting. Surface car parking occupies the best views of the Archbishop's Palace, while the building itself offers no views out to the river.



Car park occupying the best view in Maidstone



Pedestrian route from the bridge

- Inside the Lockmeadow complex there is a culture clash at night between the people queuing to get into the bars upstairs (Hot Shots and Jumpin' Jaks), some of whom are already drunk, and the families and older age groups using the cinema and restaurants (see sections 2.3.1 and 4.2.1). This is particularly serious on the monthly under 18 nights (Wednesdays) and Friday and Saturday nights when there can be queues for the bars down the escalators. It is likely that this enforced meeting of such different groups reinforces perceptions that Maidstone is unsafe and youth-dominated.

Recommendations / Action Points

There is an opportunity for a major reappraisal of the Lockmeadow site, externally, internally and in relation to the river.

38. Access could be redesigned, re-directing traffic down Hart Street (which may need to be widened) and reconfiguring Barker Road to provide a boulevard approach to the complex, improve lighting and create a taxi rank. This could involve loss of the Barker Road Council car park, but nearby Lockmeadow is lightly used and extensive other parking in the vicinity might also be used.
39. The incompatible mingling problem could be mitigated by remodelling the building internally to provide separate entrances for the bars and the cinema and provide seating within the mall area. Ikon/ Jumpin' Jaks / Hots Shots are scheduled for refurbishment this year and these changes may be feasible. The Council should seek to input into the remodelling process.
40. The riverside setting could be enhanced by reducing surface car parking, improving access, lighting and landscaping. It should be possible to develop a riverside café/restaurant within the complex either in front of the Millennium Bridge or as an extension of the internal walkway.

Art at the Centre project area

Market Buildings

- This area contains the Hazlitt Theatre and the Exchange together with a good selection of independent retailers.
- It is the focus of the Art in the Centre project to create an Artists' Quarter in Maidstone and promote independent retailing (see section 3.2.3).
- There are vacant underused premises with scope for accommodating new service / retail outlets.
- Operators have identified the provision of loading bays as inadequate.



Market Buildings

Recommendations / Action Points

41. As part of the Art at the Centre project an inventory should be prepared to identify potential premises for independent retailing, restaurants, artists' studios and workshops. This should also identify the typical rental costs, lease terms, other commercial issues and development opportunities in the area.
42. Provision of loading bays needs to be reviewed

Earl Street - chain restaurants

- This street is being styled as Maidstone's restaurant quarter and pavements on one side of the street have been widened to accommodate chairs and tables in the summer. Pavement trading is licensed by KCC (see section 3.2.3). It was identified in focus groups as a place parents could take their children (see 4.2.1).
- In response to the smoking ban coming into effect on 1st July 2007 restaurants and pubs in Earl Street want to be able to provide year round outdoor seating and shelter for smokers. This has implications for pedestrian movement (see section 3.2.2).
- The Earl Street taxi rank is not used and provision of loading bays is identified by businesses as inadequate (see section 3.2.2).

Recommendations / Action Points

43. In response to the smoking ban the Planning Department needs to develop a policy on the provision of year-round awnings with sides in Maidstone town centre.
44. The Earl Street taxi rank needs to be put into full time use or removed.
45. It may be preferable to remove all pavements in this street and create a shared access roadway with additional loading bays rather than fully pedestrianise the street.

Fremlins Walk / St Faith Street – late night retail

- The new shopping centre contributes to the urban realm because it is not a covered mall that is closed and impenetrable at night. However, there is no activity in the centre at night and the opportunity to create a mixed-use development with residential units above has been missed.
- Plans to improve catering facilities and toilets at the museum will allow the Brenchley Rooms to be used for social gatherings and will encourage night time use of the museum.



Underused space in front of the museum

Recommendations / Action Points

46. There is an opportunity to animate the space within the centre, particularly during Thursday's late night shopping, with stalls and events.
47. There may also be an opportunity to develop a focal point for the town centre, the modern equivalent of a market cross, at the junction with Week Street.
48. There is an attractive, underused space in front of the museum that could be used for evening events associated with the museum.

Brenchley Gardens

- This is described in focus groups and by the Youth Forum as a public park where people who are too young to drink legally go to hang about. It is also identified as where homeless people and drug users congregate (see sections 3.2.3 and 4.2.2).
- CCTV coverage is inadequate, as is adult supervision (see section 4.2.6).

Recommendations / Action Points

49. More CCTV cameras should be installed in the gardens to cover the area behind the bandstand and the police should be patrol regularly on foot during the night time.

Week Street – neglected zone



Pound shops and an abrupt end to the Fremlins Walk pedestrianisation scheme

- The street contains some very attractive buildings but the top part of the street has been decimated by the Fremlin Walk development with a high proportion of voids, charity shops and low cost 'pound' stores. This provides a very poor gateway to the town from Maidstone East station, although there have been attempts to address this with tree planters and public realm improvements.
- Redevelopment of the former Army and Navy store and redevelopment of the station car park represent opportunities to turn the street around and the refurbishment of Mu Mu's implies some business confidence in this part of town.
- The pedestrianisation scheme ends just above Fremlins Walk which effectively says to shoppers 'nothing of interest beyond this point' and businesses at this end of town feel they have been abandoned by the council.
- The street is the main pedestrian access to the town centre at night but it gets clogged up in the evening with cars coming to KFC, McDonalds and Blockbuster. In focus groups parents said they wanted to park near the KFC etc. in the evening, allowing this might encourage them to stay longer and do other things.

Recommendations / Action Points

50. The abrupt end of the pedestrianisation scheme, parking and access difficulties could be resolved by introducing a shared access roadway with a similar surface treatment to the pedestrianised section. This should be a priority in order to breathe new life into this neglected area.

Bank Street/ Gabriel's Hill – bars, clubs and independent restaurants



Bank Street



Gabriel's Hill

- Bank Street is pedestrianised and has many attractive older buildings that are suitable for bar, restaurant and independent retail use. Currently the top of the street is quite dark because there are a number of void shop fronts.
- Gabriel's Hill contains a large number of older buildings occupied mainly by independent retailers, bars, cafes and takeaways. It accommodates some attractive specialist outlets, but it is also a crime concentration point owing to the large numbers of people who mill about in the street late at night eating takeaways after leaving the clubs and bars. The street becomes quite scruffy at the bottom and the former cinema, now a Gala Bingo hall has been identified for redevelopment.
- This area is firmly on the rowdy night time youth circuit route from Gabriel's Hill to Lockmeadow.

Recommendations / Action Points

51. This area has the potential to emerge as an alternative to Earl Street's chain restaurants and bars providing quality independent restaurants.
52. Lighting improvements are needed in Bank Street but these should be in keeping with the character of the street.
53. Redevelopment of the Bingo Hall site could transform the bottom of Gabriel's Hill and improve linkages to the restaurants in Lower Stone Street.

High Street / King Street – the night club circuit



High Street

- At night the street is the main route between the pubs and bars in the town centre and the Lockmeadow complex. Crime is concentrated in the lower part of the High Street below Bank Street relating to the pre-booked taxi pick up point and a cluster of takeaways (see section 3.3.3).
- This is a street that has lost its function as the town's main thoroughfare.
- The Chequers, a 'value' shopping centre, was identified as tired, run down and depressing in focus groups (see section 4.2.3).
- Access to riverside across A229 from the town centre is dangerous. There are subways but people tend to cross at road level where there are pelican crossings and they will always be tempted to jaywalk, particularly when drunk.
- Operators identified lighting as poor in the High Street with damaged lights (see section 3.2.1).

Recommendations / Action Points

54. The value of restricting access to just buses and taxis is questionable, particularly since access to the Chequers car park is so difficult. Allowing vehicle access at night could help to break up the youth monoculture and provide extra 'eyes on the street'.
55. The Council should try to obtain agreement with the Highways agency to introduce speed tables (areas of raised roadway, like large scale sleeping policemen, designed to reduce traffic speeds) on the A229 as it approaches the High Street. This would be a small step in civilising the abominable severance of the heart of the town and the river created by the A229's routing. Preferably this should be part of a wider A229 severance reduction strategy involving lane reductions along the route – stretches of which have 5 and 6 lanes.
56. The Chequers Centre urgently needs refurbishment and lighting needs to be improved.

Lower Stone Street- ethnic restaurants

- On the periphery of the town centre this street has some attractive old buildings and some brutal infill development.
- It contains the town centre's only cluster of ethnic restaurants – Chinese, Indian and Mexican.
- This is a route home at the end of the night and lighting and cleaning needs to be improved.

Recommendations / Action Points

57. This area is somewhat isolated from the rest of the town centre and signage and linkages could be improved, as could lighting and cleaning.

Agenda Item 10

Maidstone Borough Council

Economic and Commercial Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

26th August 2014

Future Work Programme

While reading the following report you may want to think about:

- What you want to know from the report;
- What questions you would like answered.

Make a note of your questions in the box below.

As you read the report you may think of other questions.

Questions I would like to ask regarding this report:

-
-
-
-
-

Maidstone Borough Council

Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 26 August 2014

Future Work Programme and SCRAIP Update

Report of: Sam Bailey, Research and Performance Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Committee are asked to consider the Committee's draft future work programme (FWP) attached as **Appendix A**. The following changes have been made to the future work programme:
- The proposed moving of the meeting of the 23rd September to Monday 29th September, in order to consider the Enterprise Hub Proposals and Museum Forward Plan before a cabinet member decision in October. Dawn Hudd will also bring Formation of Maidstone Culture and Leisure to this meeting as she was unavailable to come to the meeting on the 26th August.
 - Items have been added in for meetings of 28th October, 25th November and 23rd December for the Twilight Economy Review.
- 1.2 The Committee are asked to decide whether a SCRAIP update is required for the Council as a Business Review, following the information given to the Committee at the meeting of 29th July in which the Draft Commercialisation Strategy was considered. The SCRAIP from this review is attached as **Appendix B**.
- 1.3 The Committee are asked to consider the List of Forthcoming Decisions attached as **Appendix C**.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee agree the draft future work programme.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers the sections of the List of Forthcoming Decisions relevant to the Committee and whether these are items requiring further investigation or monitoring.
- 2.3 That the Committee decides whether it needs a SCRAIP update from the Council as a Business? Review following the draft commercialisation strategy.

- 2.4 That the Committee considers its continuous professional development needs and recommends possible training or development sessions it would like to undertake.
- 2.5 That the committee, instead of cancelling the meeting of the 23rd September as agreed at the meeting of 29th July, moves the meeting to the 29th September.

3 Future Work Programme

- 3.1 Throughout the course of the municipal year the Committee is asked to put forward work programme suggestions. These suggestions are planned into its annual work programme. Members are asked to consider the work programme at each meeting to ensure that it remains appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.
- 3.2 The Committee is reminded that the Constitution states under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules number 9: Agenda items that 'Any Member shall be entitled to give notice to the proper officer that he wishes an item relevant to the functions of the Committee or Sub-Committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Committee or Sub-Committee. On receipt of such a request the proper officer will ensure that it is included on the next available agenda, the Member must attend the meeting and speak on the item put forward.'

4 List of Forthcoming Decisions

- 4.1 The List of Forthcoming Decisions is a live document containing all key and non-key decisions. The list of Forthcoming Decisions relevant to this committee, accurate at the time of publication, can be found in **Appendix C**.
- 4.2 Due to the nature of the List of Forthcoming Decisions, and to ensure the information provided to the Committee is up to date, a verbal update will be given at the meeting by the Chairman. The Committee can view the live document online at:
<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=443&RD=0>

5 SCRAIP update

- 5.1 There is no update on the SCRAIP from the meeting of 29th July.

6. Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 6.1 The Committee will primarily consider reports that deliver against the following Council priority:
- 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy'.

- 6.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities.

7 Relevant Documents

Appendix A - Draft Future Work Programme
Appendix B - Council as a Business Review SCRAIP
Appendix C - List of Forthcoming Decisions

Appendix A: Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Future Work Programme

Meeting Date	Agenda Deadline	Agenda Items	Details and Desired Outcomes	Witnesses and Report Authors
29 th July	16 th July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet member priorities-written report • Draft Commercialisation Strategy 	<p>Members would like cabinet member to provide a report highlighting priorities, and then to question him on this report.</p> <p>Meeting will begin at 7.30pm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet member • Marcus Lawler
26 th August	13 th August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events and festivals strategy • Events review SCRAIP follow up • Draft Scoping Document for Twilight Economy Review 	<p>These items will come together as requested by the committee during the work programming workshop at the meeting of 1st July because it was felt they were related.</p> <p>Scoping document for Twilight Economy review for members to comment on.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laura Case
29 th September (re-arranged from the meeting of the 23 rd September)	17 th September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise Hub proposals • Formation of Maidstone Culture and Leisure • Museum Forward Plan 	<p>Special meeting called, as Enterprise Hub proposals and Museum Forward Plan need to come to the committee before Cabinet Member decision in October. Formation of Maidstone Culture and Leisure will be taken as an item as Dawn was not available for August meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dawn Hudd • Karen Franek • Laura Case
21 st October	8 th October	Joint Meeting with Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny	Implications for the local plan, hence the joint meeting. Needs to take place before	

Appendix A: Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Future Work Programme

67

Meeting Date	Agenda Deadline	Agenda Items	Details and Desired Outcomes	Witnesses and Report Authors
		Committee to consider the Employment Land Qualitative Report and the Economic Development Strategy.	the Economic Development Strategy cabinet member decision is taken.	
28 th October	15 th October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and Employability Update • First set of Witnesses for Twilight Economy review 	<p>Following the update on skills and employability projects the committee will consider whether it wishes to do a review on skills and employability.</p> <p>First set of witnesses for Twilight Economy Review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karen Franek • Abi Lewis • First witnesses for Twilight Economy Review, as specified in scoping document
25 th November	12 th November	Second set of witnesses for Twilight Economy Review		Second set of witnesses for Twilight Economy Review
23 rd December	10 th December	Draft Twilight Economy Report ready for sign off by the Committee		
27 th January	14 th January			
24 th February	11 th February			
24 th March	11 th March			
28 th April	15 th April			

Suggestions TBC

Suggestion	Reason
Using the River Medway	Referred to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, who agreed that the Economic and Commercial Development OSC should be the Committee to consider the River Medway suggestions,

Appendix A: Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Future Work Programme

	as part of its work programme development for 2014-15, with Planning Transport and Development OSC addressing certain issues, such as accessibility, as part of their work on the Local Plan.
Policy for Discretionary Business Rates Relief	Only if MBC can have an influence on business rates. Meeting with Chair/Vice Chair and relevant Officers will determine whether this is the case. Due in August/September.
South East Local Enterprise Partnership	Only if MBC can have an influence on any of this. Meeting with Chair/Vice Chair and relevant Officers will determine whether this is the case.
Barriers and opportunities for rural business/IT infrastructure in offices (broadband)	These will be considered following scrutiny of the employment implications of the local plan in October.
Council as a Business SCRAIP follow up	Dependent on whether members feel it has been overtaken by the commercialisation strategy once they have seen both the review and the strategy
Night Time Economy	Referred to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, who agreed Economic and Commercial Development should be the lead committee. For more information, see the Scoping Document for this review (re-named Twilight Economy Review).

Appendix B: The Council as a Business? Review SCRAIP

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SCRAIP)

Report Title: The Council as a Business? Review

Report of Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Publication: 24 February 2014

Dates to report back to Committee:

Update	Date	Completed?	Note
1 st			6 months after publication
2 nd			12 months after publication
3 rd			

69

Recommendation ¹	Cabinet Member ²	Response ³	Timetable ⁴	Lead Officer ⁵
1. That a cross party, Member led, budget working group be established and meet at the appropriate critical times in the budget making process;	Councillor Moss/Councillor Greer	The Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Budget Working Group is established and has been meeting.	Completed	Paul Riley
2. That procurement and legal sections are shared with outside organisations, especially within the	Cllr Moss	The Legal Services team is part of the MKIP shared service and would look to identify business opportunities as part of MKIP. The work of the procurement team	September 2014	Paul Riley

Appendix B: The Council as a Business? Review SCRAIP

<p>public sector as a starting point from which a business section can be developed that can take on other businesses interests;</p>		<p>is being reviewed and any opportunities to generate income will be considered as part of that review.</p>		
<p>3. That the Council set up a 'work hub' facility for small businesses utilising space that is not used in Maidstone House or the Gateway. Printing and other resources including mentoring in areas of in-house expertise could be provided for a fee;</p>	<p>Cllr Greer</p>	<p>This service will be provided via the proposed Enterprise Hub at 1 King Street as part of a wider project to support business start-up and provide business support.</p> <p>Heads of Terms are currently being negotiated with the landlord and the business plan and cash flow forecasts are being finalised.</p>	<p>September 2014</p>	<p>Dawn Hudd</p>
<p>4. That an event organiser is sought and Mote Park is let for big festival events on a similar scale to the Radio 1</p>	<p>Cllr Greer</p>	<p>This recommendation will be addressed as part of the Maidstone Culture and Leisure (MCL) work programme. The business plan for MCL will be developed over the next six months and a new Festivals and</p>	<p>October 2014</p>	<p>Dawn Hudd</p>

Appendix B: The Council as a Business? Review SCRAIP

<p>Big Weekend. The viability of establishing an events team should be investigated;</p>		<p>Events Strategy is being drafted and will be consulted on shortly.</p>		
<p>5. That the Council investigate the opportunity presented by the Environment Agency with the introduction of a compulsory 'boat MOT' called the BSS (Boat Safety Scheme). Existing staff could be trained to provide BSS checks, providing a service to boat owners, but also working to improve safety on the river;</p>	<p>Cllr Ring</p>	<p>Having investigated this opportunity, the knowledge and registration requirements are significant and as there are already fifteen examiners offering this service in Kent with two in Maidstone it is not consider worthwhile to pursue.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>John Littlemore</p>
<p>6. That the Council's evaluates its facilities and assets i.e. land and</p>	<p>Cllr Moss</p>	<p>The Council will be reviewing its Asset Management Plan and the commercial opportunities arising from the review will be identified</p>	<p>October 2014</p>	<p>Paul Riley/Dawn Hudd</p>

Appendix B: The Council as a Business? Review SCRAIP

buildings with a view to hiring them out for future use to generate an income;		and evaluated to maximise income generation.		
7. That the Council develops a marketing model for hiring out its assets and utilising empty space for advertising that includes fees and charges and terms and conditions of use. This should be advertised widely and information included on www.maidstone.gov.uk ;	Cllr Greer	The Council's approach to commercialisation will include marketing and setting appropriate fees and charges.	October 2014	Dawn Hudd
8. That the Council address the potential for hiring out the Town Hall in conjunction with events held in Jubilee Square;	Cllr Greer / Cllr Moss	The Council's approach to hiring out the Town Hall in conjunction with events will be addressed in the new Festivals and Events Strategy.	October 2014	Dawn Hudd

Appendix B: The Council as a Business? Review SCRAIP

<p>9. That the Willington Street Park and Ride Site, currently closed on Sundays, is rented out to a private organiser for Boot Fairs;</p>	<p>Cllr Paine</p>	<p>This has been considered in the past for all the park and ride sites and rejected for a number of reasons. However in view of the reduced demand for park and ride this will be considered again over the next three months.</p>	<p>March – June 2014</p>	<p>Jeff Kitson / Steve Goulette</p>
<p>10. That there is a renewed emphasis on what Maidstone has to offer in terms of Tourism to maximise its financial benefits to the borough; and</p>	<p>Cllr Greer</p>	<p>Significant work has been done on the Visit Maidstone website and social media channels and an app is available. The visitor offer will be further developed via MCL and the new Festival and Events Strategy.</p>	<p>October 2014</p>	<p>Dawn Hudd</p>
<p>11. That the Council finds a more cost effective way of charging for small fees and fines so that the significant numbers of small amounts that are written off (e.g. stray dog fees) are reduced; and the</p>	<p>Cllr Moss</p>	<p>The current systems are considered to be as efficient as possible – these systems will continue to be monitored to identify any future opportunities to improve efficiency.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Zena Cooke / Paul Riley</p>

Appendix B: The Council as a Business? Review SCRAIP

Council is enabled to charge for all the statutory fees it is entitled to.				
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Appendix B: The Council as a Business? Review SCRAIP

Notes on the completion of SCRAIP

¹ Report recommendations are listed as found in the report.

² Insert in this box the Cabinet Member whose portfolio the recommendation falls within.

³ The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box either the acceptance or rejection of the recommendation.

If the recommendation is rejected an explanation for its rejection should be provided. The 'timetable' and 'lead officer' boxes can be left blank

If the recommendation is accepted an explanation of the action to be taken to implement the recommendation should be recorded in this box. Please also complete the 'timetable' and 'lead officer' boxes.

⁴ The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box when the action in indicated in the previous box will be implemented.

⁵ The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box the Officer responsible for the implementation of the action highlighted in the 'response' box.



LIST OF FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

76

Democratic Services Team
E: democraticservices@maidstone.gov.uk

Publication Date: 12 August 2014

Appendix C- List of Forthcoming Decisions

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the decisions to be taken by the Executive and various Committees of Maidstone Borough Council on a rolling basis. This document will be published as updated with new decisions required to be made.

KEY DECISIONS

A key decision is an executive decision which is likely to:

- Result in the Maidstone Borough Council incurring expenditure or making savings which is equal to the value of £250,000 or more; or
- Have significant effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in Maidstone.

At Maidstone Borough Council, decisions which we regard as "Key Decisions" because they are likely to have a "significant" effect either in financial terms or on the community include:

- (1) Decisions about expenditure or savings which equal or are more than £250,000.
- (2) Budget reports.
- (3) Policy framework reports.
- (4) Adoption of new policies plans, strategies or changes to established policies, plans or strategies.
- (5) Approval of portfolio plans.
- (6) Decisions that involve significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether Borough-wide or in a particular locality.
- (7) Changes in fees and charges.
- (8) Proposals relating to changes in staff structure affecting more than one section.

Each entry identifies, for that "key decision" –

- the decision maker
- the date on which the decision is due to be taken
- the subject matter of the decision and a brief summary
- the reason it is a key decision
- to whom representations (about the decision) can be made

Appendix C- List of Forthcoming Decisions

- whether the decision will be taken in public or private
- what reports/papers are, or will be, available for public inspection

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Cabinet collectively makes its decisions at a meeting and individual portfolio holders make decisions independently. In addition, Officers can make key decisions and an entry for each of these will be included in this list.

DECISIONS WHICH THE CABINET INTENDS TO MAKE IN PRIVATE

The Cabinet hereby gives notice that it intends to meet in private after its public meeting to consider reports and/or appendices which contain exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The private meeting of the Cabinet is open only to Members of the Cabinet, other Councillors and Council officers.

Reports and/or appendices to decisions which the Cabinet will take at its private meeting are indicated in the list below, with the reasons for the decision being made in private. Any person is able to make representations to the Cabinet if he/she believes the decision should instead be made in the public Cabinet meeting. If you want to make such representations, please email committeeservices@maidstone.gov.uk. You will then be sent a response in reply to your representations. Both your representations and the Executive's response will be published on the Council's website at least 5 working days before the Cabinet meeting.

ACCESS TO CABINET REPORTS

Reports to be considered at the Cabinet's public meeting will be available on the Council's website (www.maidstone.gov.uk) a minimum of 5 working days before the meeting.

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?

The Council actively encourages people to express their views on decisions it plans to make. This can be done by writing directly to the appropriate Officer or Cabinet Member (details of whom are shown in the list below).

Alternatively, the Cabinet are contactable via our website (www.maidstone.gov.uk) where you can submit a question to the Leader of the Council. There is also the opportunity to invite the Leader of the Council to speak at a function you may be organising.

Appendix C- List of Forthcoming Decisions

WHO ARE THE CABINET?



Councillor Annabelle Blackmore
Leader of the Council
annabelleblackmore@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 01622 833299



Councillor David Burton
Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and
Development
davidburton@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 07590 229910



Councillor Malcolm Greer
Cabinet Member for Economic and
Commercial Development (also Deputy
Leader)
malcolmgreer@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 01634 862876



Councillor Marion Ring
Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing
marionring@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 01622 686492



Councillor Steve McLoughlin
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
stevemcloughlin@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 07711 565489



Councillor John Perry
Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure
Services
johnperry@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 07770 734741

List of Forthcoming Decisions

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary:	Key Decision and reason (if applicable):	Contact Officer:	Public or Private (if Private the reason why)	Documents to be submitted (other relevant documents may be submitted)
<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: Wednesday 13 Aug 2014</p>	<p>Annual Report 2013-14</p> <p>The annual report will set out what we we achieved in 2013-14 to deliver our priorities and share some of our key activities for the year 2014-15.</p>		<p>Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy and Communications angelawoodhouse@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>Annual Report 2013-14</p>
<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: Wednesday 13 Aug 2014</p>	<p>Commercialisation Strategy</p> <p>The report asks Cabinet to adopt the draft Commercialisation Strategy.</p>		<p>Dawn Hudd dawnhudd@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>Commercialisation Strategy Cabinet Report ComStrat.doc Commercialisation Strategy</p>
<p>Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development</p> <p>Due Date: Friday 22 Aug 2014</p>	<p>Maidstone Museums' Collections Development Policy 2013 - 2018</p> <p>To consider the approval of a revised Collections Development Policy for the Council's museums</p>	<p>KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies</p>	<p>Dawn Hudd dawnhudd@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>Maidstone Museums' Collections Development Policy 2013-2018 Maidstone Museums' Collections Development Policy 2013-2018</p>

Forthcoming Decisions
August 2014 - February 2015

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary	Key Decision and reason (if applicable)	Contact Officer:	Public or Private <i>if Private the reason why</i>	Documents to be submitted (other relevant documents may be submitted)
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 8 Oct 2014	Maidstone Enterprise Hub Consideration of financing options	KEY Reason: Expenditure > £250,000	Karen Franek karenfrank@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Maidstone Enterprise Hub

Forthcoming Decisions
August 2014 - February 2015

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary	Key Decision and reason (if applicable)	Contact Officer:	Public or Private <i>if Private the reason why</i>	Documents to be submitted <i>(other relevant documents may be submitted)</i>
<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: Wednesday 17 Dec 2014</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">82</p>	<p>Budget Strategy 2015 16 Fees & Charges</p> <p>To consider the appropriate level of fees and charges for 2015 16 for services where the Council raises income by charging the user of a service and where the setting of the fee to be charged is discretionary. The Council has adopted a policy on the setting of fees and charges to ensure that a rational approach is used that takes account of all factors and creates a result that supports the priorities set out in the strategic plan.</p>	<p>KEY Reason: Fees & Charges</p>	<p>Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>Budget Strategy 2015 16 Fees & Charges</p>