

AGENDA

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING



Date: Tuesday 1 September 2015

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Ash (Vice-Chairman), Ells, Fissenden,
Fort, Hemsley, Mrs Hinder, Newton
(Chairman), Paterson and Pickett

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Urgent Items
4. Notification of Visiting Members
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers
6. Disclosures of Lobbying

Continued Over/:

Issued on 21 August 2015

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact Poppy Brewer on 01622 602242**. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk

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

7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information
8. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2015 1 - 2
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)
10. Questions and answer session for members of the public
11. Play Area Capital Improvement Programme 2015/16-2017/18 - Update 3 - 8
12. River Festival 9 - 20

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 10 AUGUST 2015

Present: Councillor Newton (Chairman), and
Councillors Ash, Ells, Fissenden, Fort, Hemsley,
Mrs Hinder, Newton, Paterson and Pickett

Also Present: Councillors Naghi, Round and
Sargeant

20. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

21. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no Substitute Members.

22. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

23. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillors Naghi, Round and Sargeant were in attendance as observers, and reserved the right to speak on item 11 – Disposal of Land at Parkwood Parade.

24. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

25. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

The Chairman advised the Committee that he had been lobbied with regard to item 11 – Disposal of Land at Parkwood Parade.

26. **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.

27. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2015**

The Democratic Services Officer explained that the duration of meeting had not been included on the draft minutes. The Chairman agreed for this to be added.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 13 July 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed.

28. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no Petitions.

29. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the Public.

30. DISPOSAL OF LAND AT PARKWOOD PARADE

The Parks and Open Spaces Manager, Jason Taylor, introduced the report on the disposal of land at Parkwood Parade, and informed the Committee that if the grass verges marked on the plan were declared surplus, this decision would be advertised for two weeks, and residents would have four weeks to respond.

Members were in agreement that the trees situated on the grass verges should be retained and protected.

RESOLVED:

1. That the open space land outlined in red on the plan attached as appendix I to the agenda dated 10 August 2015 be declared surplus;
2. That the placing of a Public Notice pursuant of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 be authorised;
3. That the matter be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for a final decision concerning disposal of the land; and
4. That the report to Policy and Resources Committee include a recommendation to retain the trees on the grass verges.

For: 9 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

31. DURATION OF MEETING

6.33 p.m. to 6.48 p.m.

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

1st September 2015

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

No

Play Area Capital Improvement Programme 2015/16-2017/18 - Update

Final Decision-Maker	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	Dawn Hudd – Head of Commercial and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Jason Taylor – Parks and Leisure Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. The committee note the update provided on the Play Area Capital Improvement Programme.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – by providing improved play facilities

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee	1 st September 2015

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is to provide an update to the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee on progress with the Play Area Capital Improvement Programme 2015/16-2017/18
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Work on this project began in 2011 and has been progressed via a number of different Cabinet Members and Overview and Scrutiny Committees. This document is to provide members of the newly formed Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee with the background to the project and how it is progressing.
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3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 There are 120 play areas across Maidstone Borough, 73 of which are owned by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). Other play areas are owned by other organisations including Parish Councils, Kent County Council and Housing Associations.
- 3.2 The last major capital investment in play was as part of the Green Spaces Strategy in 2005.
- 3.3 In 2009 it was agreed to introduce a formal system for allocating capital resources for play areas. All play areas in the borough were assessed to establish their condition. The information was then used to direct the available capital to the MBC play areas most in need of replacement.
- 3.4 In 2012 the Parks and Leisure Team carried out a further play area review which looked in more detail at the current condition and their distribution across the borough. This then led to looking at future options for play areas across the borough and the most effective use of available resources to support all residents' needs.
- 3.5 The three options that were reviewed at that time were:
- 3.5.1 No change in policy – maintain MBC play areas to current level which would cost in the region of £250k per year.
 - 3.5.2 Prioritise 5 main play areas only.
 - 3.5.3 Agree a borough wide strategic play provision standard - based on the majority of residents being a maximum of 12 minutes walk from an amber or green play area.

- 3.6 The initial findings of the play review were presented to the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22nd April 2013 which resulted in further work being undertaken on the third option.
- 3.7 The results of the further work, including a draft Play Area Strategy, were presented to the Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26th July 2013 and 14th January 2014.
- 3.8 A 6 week public consultation was then undertaken to seek views on the proposed strategy. In total 195 individual responses and two petitions were received. The majority of responses focused on individual play areas.
- 3.9 The council's capital programme for the period commencing 2015/16 approved by Full Council on 25 February 2015 includes approximately £1.8 million for play areas improvements over a 3 year period.
- 3.10 On 6th May 2015 the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services agreed to the list of play areas that would be improved over the 3 year period and this can be seen below:

YEAR 1		YEAR 2	Adisham Drive	YEAR 3	Braunstone Drive
	Stratford Drive		St Francis Close		Groewood Drive
	Ashurst Close		Gallants Lane		Corben Close
	Foxden Drive		Albert Reed Gardens		Senacre Square
	Gatland Lane		Mallards Way		Dicken's Road
	Timber Tops		Pested Bars		Brookbank
	Nettlestead		Lime Trees		Clare Park
	Whatman Infant	Cornwallis Park			
	Whatman Junior	Midley Close			
	Queen Elizabeth Sq	Upper Fulling Pits			
	Barming Heath	South Park			
		Penenden Heath			
		Bridge Mill Way			

- 3.11 Also in May 2015, it was recognised that the original draft play area strategy, which had been consulted on, was limited in its scope and should have been more explicitly linked to the council's priorities, in particular improving health and wellbeing.
- 3.12 It was considered more appropriate to develop a strategy for play that covers more than just the play areas and also addresses the needs of adults and older people, as well as children and young people.
- 3.13 It was acknowledged that time to develop the strategy further was required. It was proposed that a more comprehensive strategy would be produced, but so that this did not delay the improvements required to the play areas, it was agreed by the cabinet member that the play area improvement programme should be given the go ahead and that work on this project

would begin in June 2015.

- 3.14 The updated play strategy document will now be incorporated in the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, which it has been agreed that the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee will receive an update on at the November meeting.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 A project board has been set up and a project manager appointed. A specification has been prepared and a tender package for all of the equipment required is currently being put together. This will be sent out to play equipment suppliers on the ESBO procurement framework. They will have six weeks to prepare their tender submissions and following this a submissions will be scored, and a play supplier will be selected.
- 4.2 The procurement will be based on supply and installation over three financial years as this is how the capital funding is allocated. This will ensure that the procurement process only has to be carried out in the first year, and in years two and three work can begin once the money becomes available.
- 4.3 It is likely that the first equipment will start to be installed in early 2016.
- 4.4 All previous reports, recommendations and decisions are enclosed with this report

5. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 5.1 This report is as an update for committee

6. PREFERRED OPTION

It is recommended that members of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee note the contents of this report.

7. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 7.1 Between 24 Jan 2014 to 7 March 2014 a 6 week public consultation was carried out to allow ward members, parish councils, community groups, residents and other parties the opportunity to review the draft strategy and make their representations about the options being taken forward. The results of this can be seen in previous Cabinet Member reports on this subject.

8. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

8.1 This report is to update the committee and includes information on how the project is progressing.

9. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – by providing improved play facilities	Jason Taylor – Parks and Leisure Manager
Risk Management	A risk register has been produced and will be monitored by the chairman of the project board	Head of Commercial & Economic Development 21 August 15
Financial	The estimated capital resources required to complete this project have been set aside in the capital programme. Revenue resources required for continued management and maintenance of the play areas must be found within the current Parks and Open Spaces' budgets.	Head of Finance & Resources
Staffing	A project Manager has been appointed. Other staffing resources will be met existing MBC staff.	Jason Taylor – Parks and Leisure Manager
Legal	All contracts will be provided by Mid Kent Legal Partnership	Head of Legal
Procurement	All procurement is being overseen by MBC Procurement Team	Property & Procurement Manager

10. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- No Appendices
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11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Play Area Strategic Standard Draft Report July 2013
Appendix A 2012-13 Play Area Scoring Table
Appendix A Non Strategic Play Areas

Draft Play Strategy Document 2014-24
Play Area Review SCRAIP April 22nd 2013
Play Areas Review SCRAIP July 26th 2014
Draft Report for adoption of Maidstone Play Strategy 2014-24 (as presented
to Scrutiny Committee)
Adoption of Maidstone Play Strategy 2014-24 Report July 2014
3 Year Improvement Plan April 2015

Heritage Culture & Leisure Committee	1 September 2015
Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?	No

River Festival review

Final Decision-Maker	Heritage, Culture & Leisure
Lead Head of Service	Head of Commercial & Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Dawn Hudd
Classification	Public
Wards affected	N/A

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. The Committee note the contents of the report and uses it to inform their discussions on the potential reinstatement of a Maidstone River Festival Committee.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough
 - Ensuring that there are good leisure and cultural attractions
 - Enhancing the appeal of the town centre for everyone

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Heritage Culture and Leisure Committee	1 st September 2015

River Festival Review

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee has requested a paper on the history of the Maidstone River Festival together with information on other events that the Council currently funds, and or organises, in order to consider whether the River Festival should be reintroduced.
 - 1.2 This report sets out the history of the River Festival from a Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) perspective, other events that MBC currently supports and references to the Council's newly adopted Destination Management Plan. It should be noted that this has never been a MBC event and has always had an independent organising committee.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Maidstone River Festival first took place in 1980 and was organised by the Medway River Users Association, MBC and Maidstone Lions Club. The festival has developed over the years but has remained a free, non-profit event organised by volunteers and funded by sponsorship and donations from local businesses until 2008. The event has generally taken place over one day, but on occasion was a two day event.
- 2.2 The Maidstone River Festival Committee (MRFC) exists to provide planning and event management for the river festival. The committee varied in size but usually consisted of around six permanent members with varying levels of involvement.
- 2.3 With the introduction of Police charging for events MBC agreed funding in addition to that raised by the MRFC for a 3 year period 2009-2012. MBC agreed to provide a grant to MRFC of £8,500 and a 50% contribution towards the clean-up costs of approximately £3,000 = £1,500 each, so effectively the grant became £10,000. Anecdotal information puts the cost of staging the river festival until 2007, when police charging was introduced, at around £25,000.
- 2.4 To 2007
 - Up to and including 2007 the MRFC organised all aspects of the event from programming to marshalling. The MBC Tourism Manager (TM) liaised with the committee, attending meetings, and organised concurrent additional events such as a continental market in the High Street and Bank Street.
 - The TM also co-ordinated the paperwork for the use of the council's entertainment license for those areas of the town covered by it.
 - TM also sent out letter to residents around College Road area advising them of festival and funfair at Lockmeadow and providing event contact details.

- The Chairman of MRFC was David Knight who liaised with the police over the event. There were no Security Industry Authority (SIA) stewards.
- The event plan was very basic, for the use of the committee only.
- MBC had costs that were not recovered from MRFC such as barriers provided for road closures, managing barriered access to river, clean up and installation of taps at toilets for River users, additional cleaning all provided by Environmental Services.
- No MBC staff time was charged and all Environmental Services' costs were absorbed into departmental budgets.

2.5 2008

- 2008 saw the introduction of Police charging. The MRFC chairman agreed a fee direct with the Police. A condition of this was the introduction of SIA stewards for security and safety and to reduce police presence. The committee were advised as to the level of SIA stewards required. Unfortunately the use of Lockmeadow SIA stewards (who were employed there and could not leave the area) meant that the level of stewarding was too low and not within the agreed number.
- A low key Friday night event in 2008 had no SIA Stewards as this was 'omitted' from event plan.
- Funding from MBC required adequate safety and security, hence introduction of SIA stewards to comply with Police requirements.

2.6 2009

- The introduction of the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) required a more robust event management plan which had to be signed off by SAG. This only happened in last week before the festival. The contract for the use of MBC's entertainment license was on condition of SAG's approval of the event plan. There were also issues over MRFC not being a legal entity which made it difficult for them to obtain public liability insurance directly. This was ultimately taken out by Chairman's company.
- Again there were issues over adequate SIA stewarding. Not as many were contracted as stated on Event Plan, which also did not clarify that 5 were Lockmeadow stewards not paid for, nor able to leave their area of employment.
- The cost of Policing increased, and again was agreed directly with the Chairman.
- MBC Environmental Services again provided additional support, staff, cleaning, clearing of pathways etc.

2.7 2010

- Martin Cox became the new MRFC Chairman.
- MBC took over safety and security, employing the security company, providing SIA stewards directly and creating the stewarding plan. Funding no longer paid directly to MRFC but paid to suppliers directly. 50% of Police charge (£6,000) paid by MBC plus all the security costs. MBC also produced the event plan and traffic management plan.
- Expenditure exceeded £10k budget at £12,551 and did not include the significant amount of staff time taken up by the event as the Council was now directly involved.

- The Funfair organiser submitted a separate event plan and provided their own stewarding.
- MBC met with Kent Police to get police costs limited to £8,000. (We were advised charges could be £25,000 in the future).
- Event Plan & Traffic Management Plan co-authored by MBC with event information provided by the Chairman.
- The issue of public liability insurance took to very end to resolve and contract for use of MBC licence in jeopardy until last minute.
- Issues arose regarding stalls holders paying trading licence fees.
- A Visitor survey was conducted to gauge the economic benefit to the businesses in the town centre. Surveys were carried out by 8 Surveyors between 2 pm and 5.30pm and 6pm and 9.30 pm on Saturday 31st July. The 2 teams were located in the town centre and 2 along the river. 687 surveys were filled out. The Police estimate that during the day approximately 20,000 people visited the event. This document is attached at Appendix I. It should be noted that anecdotal information from the businesses in the town centre disputes the value of the economic impact of the event with many of the retailers seeing a downturn in trade as shoppers avoided coming into the town.

2.8 2011

- Event now managed by team of people from MBC and MRFC with a formal chain of command.
- MBC Associate Director was overall Event Manager with MRFC Chairman as the Production Manager. This was because the safety of the event was dependent on licence requirements that any major incident that would be co-ordinated by MBC.
- MBC team set up event control and were on the ground during the event.
- Police costs of £8,000 agreed in meeting between Police and MBC. It was heavily suggested by the Police that this would be the last year at this level of charge before the full community rate would apply: circa £25,000.
- Direct cost to MBC £13,214 this again did not include any staff costs apart from Borough Services which were included in total event cost (absorbed by individual MBC budgets). Actual staff costs were much higher than previous years, covering a longer period and with the addition of event control staff on day. Real cost to MBC estimated at over £20,000 plus time impact on MBC staff and their ability to do other work.

2.9 2012

The event did not take place as this was Olympic year and many other events were held in the Borough.

2.10 2013

- MBC were not able to sustain the level of officer time to deliver event.
- Event Management company was employed by MBC.
- Costs: £10,100 for event company, MBC also paid Security Company but not police, MBS costs approximately £3,500. Total cost to MBC £25,972 not including staff time.

2.11 2014 & 2015

The MRFC disbanded and there have been no formal managed events. Approximately 50-60 boats turned up both years and congregated on the river in the normal area, there were no officially organised events or activities.

Financial Implications

- 2.12 The extent to which the Committee can afford to contribute towards the cost of the River Festival in future years is constrained by the level of resources available. Greater detail on the 2015/16 budget position and the early stage plans for the 2016/17 Medium Term Financial Strategy are set out elsewhere on this agenda.
- 2.13 Within the assumptions currently built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy, already approved by Policy and Resources Committee, is a need for an immediate saving of £1.6m across all council services and throughout the five years from 2016/17 to 2020/21 there is a need to identify savings of £3.7m.
- 2.14 Within the current resources provided to this Committee's service managers by Council there are services that cannot currently manage the expected level of service provision within the budget allocated. This is causing an immediate pressure on budgets. Good financial management would suggest that resolving these issues must be the Committee's primary focus.
- 2.15 Before consideration of plans that incorporate new expenditure, such as support for the River Festival, the Committee must be aware of the need for financial savings and as set out and the need to balance the budgetary pressures in the Parks and Open Spaces and the Museum Services.

3. FESTIVALS AND EVENTS STRATEGY AND EVENTS CURRENTLY FUNDED BY MBC

- 3.1 MBC's Festivals and Events Strategy has a vision to:

"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."

- 3.2 MBC currently funds two festivals each year; these are The Mela which takes place in September and Proms in the Park which is held on the Saturday of the May bank holiday weekend. Both of these remain free to attendees.
- 3.3 Proms in the Park is delivered on our behalf by Parkwood Leisure Ltd as part of their contract to manage the Hazlitt Theatre. The budget for this was reduced in 2015 to £14,000 from £19,400 per annum.

- 3.4 The Mela has until this year been delivered in Partnership with Cohesion Plus. This year we have a specialist events consultant managing and delivering the event on our behalf with collaboration from Cohesion Plus, with the intention of commissioning the festival out from 2016. The net budget for this event is £15,500.
- 3.5 Income from other festivals and events organised by outside bodies, such as Ramblin' Man, is already accounted for in existing income targets in Parks and Open Spaces and Maidstone Culture & Leisure budgets.
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4. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 4.1 The Council's newly adopted Destination Management Plan (DMP), recognises that events have many positive impacts on local economies and communities. The DMP is focusing on ways to improve the impact of business and leisure events on the visitor economy – which in turn will support jobs and services for local people.
- 4.2 The DMP's actions will support the development of events with wider reach (actual or potential) – i.e. events that will draw visitors from further afield (from beyond Kent), and/or enhance the image of the area further afield as a vibrant place to visit.
- 4.3 The Shared Story says Maidstone is "Kent's capital for big events ... with tens of thousands at a time coming here for the South East's biggest pop concerts, classical extravaganzas, and business shows." This is a USP for Maidstone, so maintaining and strengthening the "capital for big events" status is a priority. It also means that there is significant events expertise in the Borough – in the big event venues as well as in the public agencies. The DMP should aim to tap into and make the most of this professional expertise.
- 4.4 Broadly, over the next three years, the aim is to achieve:
- **More partnership working** – between the big event venues themselves, between venues and the public agencies, and between venues and the tourism sector (especially accommodation providers)
 - **An "events-welcome" environment** – streamlining processes and provide toolkit to assist with traffic management and signing,
 - **Better event development** – a strategic, proactive approach to event development that supports the visitor economy, including attracting new events, nurturing/growing existing events, and clustering events for greater impact, in line with the Council's Festivals & Events Policy.
- 4.5 *The DMP action plan sets out six actions relating to events.*
- a) Create an Events Experts Group
 - b) Carry out an Audit & Gap Analysis
 - c) Develop an Events Organiser's Toolkit
 - d) Set up a 'No clash Diary)
 - e) Develop themed seasons/festivals inspired by the Shared Story and by major events
 - f) Develop a consumer facing 'Events for visitors Calendar'.

- 4.6 Under the County Town Theme of the DMP the river is recognised as an important asset.

Major investment plans have been identified for the river in the past. Realising some of these investments is critical to unlocking the full potential of the river for the visitor economy. Some of these investments are long term and unlikely to be completed within the lifetime of this plan but actions to move them forward need to begin now. The priorities are to make the river an attraction in its own right – a "must see" for visitors to Maidstone. To achieve that requires improving access, investing in visitor hubs along the river and enabling visitors to use the riverside as a pedestrian/ cycling green corridor to explore more of Maidstone and its countryside. This needs to be supported by events on the river and by marketing activity that profiles the river more strongly to target markets. One of the biggest challenges for improving the river is the very large number of single-interest groups. It is important to bring together all the interests and broker solutions to shared issues.

- 4.7 The DMP action plan sets out five actions relating to the river under the 'Improving the County Town's appeal to visitors' strand.
- a) Programme of enhancements and improvements to make the river more accessible and appealing to visitors.
 - b) Focus on strengthening visitor hubs on the river.
 - c) Create river-based events and activities.
 - d) Building up marketing activity over time linking to the countryside theme.
 - e) Prioritise river management.

5. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 5.1 If the Committee is minded to seek to re-establish the MRFC then consideration should be given to:

- How the organisation and management of the event will be resourced as the Council does not have any events officers and staff in the Maidstone Culture & Leisure Marketing & Sales Team are already fully committed delivering their service plan and achieving significant income targets.
- How the festival will be funded as this cannot be met from existing budgets. Officers' estimate for a new improved River Festival put the cost at £70 - £100k as many of the costs that were previously held internally will have to be outsourced for the reason set out above
- The pressure already evident on the committees budgeted resources from the services currently provided. MBC has already outsourced Proms in the Park and will be commissioning out The Mela from 2016 as we do not have the resources in-house to deliver these events.

6. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 In accordance with the aims and action plans from the new DMP the officer recommendation is that any proposal and decision to re-establish a MRFC should be taken to the DMP Steering Group which will now oversee the delivery of the DMP Action Plans. Any plan to deliver a new River Festival would require wide partner and stakeholder buy-in and engagement if a new River Festival were to become a reality.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 Committee to decide on the potential to reinstate a MRFC; the appropriate vehicle to do this; membership of such a committee; funding sources for a River Festival and MBC member and potential staff involvement.

8. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Festivals and events are a clear contributor to the Council's Strategic Plan Priorities 1 & 2 and the adopted Festivals & Events Strategy.	Dawn Hudd, Head of Commercial & Economic Development 14 Aug 15
Risk Management	None at this stage	
Financial	The financial implications are set out in paragraphs 2.12 to 2.15.	Paul Riley, Head of Finance 21 Aug 15
Staffing	Staffing implications will arise if the Committee is minded to reinstate the MRFC. Either budget will be required for additional staff or existing staff time will have to be diverted from other projects which will impact on delivery or existing service plan actions.	Dawn Hudd, Head of Commercial & Economic Development 14 Aug 15
Legal	It is imperative that the Borough Council's involvement in any festivals and events is appropriately documented so that risks, rewards and responsibilities are clearly allocated between the respective parties involved.	John Scarborough Head of Legal Partnership 21 Aug 2015
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	None at this stage	
Environmental/Sustainable Development	None	
Community Safety	None at this stage	

Human Rights Act	None	
Procurement	None at this stage	
Asset Management	None	

9. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix I: River Festival Survey 2010

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Destination Management Plan 2015
Festivals and Events Policy 2014

River Festival 2010 Visitor Survey

Introduction

A survey of visitors to the River Festival 2010 was carried out to estimate the economic value of the Festival to Maidstone. Surveys were carried out by 8 Surveyors between 2 pm and 5.30pm and 6pm and 9.30 pm on Saturday 31st July. The 2 teams were located in the town centre and 2 along the river.

687 surveys were filled out. The Police estimate that during the day approximately 20,000 people visited the event.

Summary of findings:

- Just under 70% of the people surveyed said that the River Festival was the main reason for coming to Maidstone. This suggested that the event attracted (approximately) an additional 10,000 people in to the town.
- The event generated over £500,000 of visitor expenditure in shops, pubs, restaurants and other leisure activity.
- Nearly half of all visitors came from outside of the Borough.
- 45% of people drove to the event and 30% walked. Lockmeadow was the most popular car park, particularly in the evening, followed by Fremlins and Chequers. 8% of people were dropped off.
- More than half of visitors spend over 4 hours at the Festival.
- Of the non-Maidstone residents a third of visitors stated that the Festival has encouraged them to revisit Maidstone on another occasion.

Visitors were asked how much they expected to spend in Maidstone on the day of the festival. Visitors were asked to choose a spending range which most closely represented how much they had or were intending to spend. The following spending pattern was recorded.

Under £10	22.00%
£11-20	19.50%
£21-40	25.00%
£41-60	11.60%
£61-80	6.50%
£81-100	5.70%
Over £100	9.70%

If this expenditure pattern was replicated by all visitors who stated that the River Festival was the main reason for visiting Maidstone i.e. 70% of all Visitors, it can be estimated that the River Festival generated £513,870 of additional expenditure in the town centre. N.B The mid point of each range was used for calculation purposes and for the range Over £100, exactly £100 was used to calculate total expenditure figure. On the day many people stated that they intended to spend much more than £100.

Full Results:

1. Which of the following best describes where you live?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Maidstone	56.6%	388
Elsewhere in Kent	33.7%	231
Elsewhere in the South East (including London)	5.4%	37
Elsewhere in the UK	2.9%	20
Outside the UK	1.6%	11
If not in Maidstone, in which town/city do you live?		50
<i>answered question</i>		685
<i>skipped question</i>		2

2. Is the river festival the main reason for you being here today?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	69.8%	477
No	30.2%	206
If no, please state what is the main reason		123
<i>answered question</i>		683
<i>skipped question</i>		4

3. Apart from the river festival where else in Maidstone do you plan to visit and spend money? (select more than one if necessary)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Restaurants and cafes	41.2%	278
Bar, pubs, clubs	25.8%	174
Shops	50.4%	340
Museum	1.9%	13
Theatre	0.9%	6
Cinema	4.9%	33
Other (please specify)	19.9%	134
<i>answered question</i>		674
<i>skipped question</i>		13

4. How much do you estimate you will spend in Maidstone today?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Under £10	22.0%	150
£11-20	19.5%	133
£21-40	25.0%	170
£41-60	11.6%	79
£61-80	6.5%	44
£81-100	5.7%	39

Over £100	9.7%	66
<i>answered question</i>		681
<i>skipped question</i>		6

5. How did you travel into Maidstone today?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Boat	3.4%	23
Train	5.9%	40
Walk	29.1%	199
Bus	11.4%	78
Taxi	1.3%	9
Cycle	0.4%	3
Park and Ride	3.7%	25
Car	44.8%	306
<i>answered question</i>		683
<i>skipped question</i>		4

6. How long are you planning to stay in Maidstone today?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
0-2 hours	9.8%	67
2-4 hours	34.0%	232
4-6 hours	20.7%	141
6+ hours	35.5%	242
<i>answered question</i>		682
<i>skipped question</i>		5

7. Has the river festival promoted you to consider visiting Maidstone again some other time?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	33.3%	222
No	16.8%	112
Resident	49.8%	332
<i>answered question</i>		666
<i>skipped question</i>		21