

# AGENDA

## HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING



Date: Tuesday 1 November 2016

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,  
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Ells (Vice-Chairman), Fort, Mrs Hinder,  
Lewins, Naghi, Pickett (Chairman),  
Revell, Mrs Stockell and Mrs Wilson

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Page No.

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

**Continued Over/:**

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**Issued on Monday 24 October 2016**

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 Collier on 01622 602242**. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)

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

6.	Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2016	1 - 4
7.	Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
8.	Questions and answer session for members of the public	
9.	To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information	
10.	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee Work Programme 2016-17	5 - 7
11.	Report of the Head of Policy and Communications - Strategic Plan Performance Update Quarter 2 for Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee	8 - 27
12.	Report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement - Second Quarter Budget Monitoring 2016/17	28 - 34
13.	Report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development - Public Realm Design Guide and Public Art Policy	35 - 77

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

In order to book a slot to speak at this meeting of the Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee, please contact Poppy Collier on 01622 602242 or by email on [poppycollier@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:poppycollier@maidstone.gov.uk) by 5 pm one clear working day before the meeting. If asking a question, you will need to provide the full text in writing. If making a statement, you will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on. Please note that slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2016**

**Present:** Councillor Pickett (Chairman), and  
Councillors Ells, Harvey, Mrs Hinder, Lewins, Naghi,  
Pickett and Revell

**Also Present:** Councillors Newton and Perry

56. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Fort and Wilson.

57. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillor Harvey was substituting for Councillor Wilson.

58. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

59. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor Newton was in attendance and indicated a wish to speak on item 13 – Disposal of Land North of Gore Court Road.

Councillor Perry was in attendance and indicated a wish to speak on item 14 – Land at Surrenden Field, Staplehurst.

60. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Ells be elected Vice-Chairman of the committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2016-17.

61. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

62. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

63. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

64. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

65. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

66. 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.

67. HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2016 - 17

Review of MCL Festivals and Events 2016 - A Member inquired whether the Committee would be making decisions regarding the future of specific events as part of this item. It was explained that it was currently too early to confirm what the recommendations of the report would be.

**RESOLVED:** That the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee Work Programme 2016-17 be noted.

68. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - DISPOSAL OF LAND NORTH OF GORE COURT ROAD

The Parks and Leisure Manager introduced the report setting out the request from Bellway Homes to purchase an area of open space on the eastern side of Senacre Recreation Ground, in order to widen Gore Court Road and facilitate a housing development. The committee viewed a presentation depicting the area in question.

Councillor Newton addressed the committee as a Visiting Member.

The Development Control Manager advised the committee that:

- Hedgerow regulations referred to protected hedgerows such as those on agricultural land. The arbrocultural officer had been consulted and was of the view that the hedges on the land for consideration did not fall within the definition.
- Declaring the land surplus would instigate notice of a statutory six week review. Officers could confirm the exact status of the hedgerows during this time.
- Alternative ways to widen Gore Court Road had been considered but would involve the loss of protected ancient woodland and TPO trees. Loss of ancient woodland (which has a high protection in the NPPF) would take priority over the loss of hedgerows.

- The widening of Gore Court Road had been included in the regulation 18 stage of the Local Plan allocations.

During discussion Members raised the following points:

- The hedgerow was well-established. Loss of the hedgerow would impact on the view and could open the field up to development.
- The land for consideration was used by members of the public for activities such as dog walking.
- Gore Court Road could currently accommodate two adjacent vehicles and so widening was not required.
- Disposal of the land could set a precedent for the sale of publically owned countryside land for development.

It was moved and seconded:

1. That the open space strip of land with a total area of 414 square metres to the west of Gore Court Road, outlined in red on Appendix A to the report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development be declared surplus to requirements.
2. That the placing of a Public Notice pursuant of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 be authorised.

For – 2                  Against – 4                  Abstain – 1

The motion was lost.

It was moved, seconded and:

**RESOLVED:** That the open space strip of land with a total area of 414 square metres to the west of Gore Court Road, outlined in red on Appendix A to the report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development, not be declared surplus to requirement, and that no further action be taken.

For – 6                  Against – 0                  Abstain – 1

69. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - LAND AT SURRENDEN FIELD, STAPLEHURST

The Parks and Leisure Manager presented the report detailing a request from Staplehurst Parish Council (PC) for a longer tenure on the land at Surrenden Field. It was noted that Staplehurst PC would be willing to take on the maintenance for Nicholson Walk if the freehold for both this and land at Surrenden Field was transferred to them.

The committee was told that legal advice had confirmed that the land at Surrenden Field was protected by a restrictive covenant, and a transfer of

the freehold to Staplehurst PC could include a positive obligation to continue to comply with the covenant. Nicholson Walk was protected by the Physical Training and Recreation Act 1937.

Councillor Perry addressed the meeting as a Visiting Member and left the meeting at 7.17 p.m.

The Head of Commercial and Economic Development explained that a long leasehold such as the report's suggested term of 125 years was consistent with previous decisions made within the asset management plan.

During discussion the committee heard that:

The decision before the committee was to declare the land surplus to the Council's requirements. Policy and Resources Committee would then be asked to decide whether to dispose of the land and the form any disposal would take. The land could not be disposed of unless it was declared surplus.

A Member proposed the recommendations as per the report with an additional strong recommendation to Policy and Resources Committee that a condition be placed on the disposal of the land to ensure that, if the land was placed on the market in the future, ownership of that land would revert back to Maidstone Borough Council. At the proposers agreement this was amended to include a recommendation to Policy and Resources Committee that the freehold for the land be transferred to Staplehurst PC.

The proposal was seconded.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the land known as Surrenden Field, outlined in red on Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development, be declared surplus to requirement.
2. That the placing of a Public Notice pursuant to Section 123 of the local Government Act 1972 be authorised.
3. That the Policy and Resources Committee be strongly recommended to grant the freehold of the land to Staplehurst Parish Council with the condition that, if the land is placed onto the market in the future, ownership of the land would revert to Maidstone Borough Council.

For – 7                  Against – 0                  Abstain – 0

70. DURATION OF MEETING

6.31 p.m. to 7.34 p.m.

24/10/16

**Consolidated Service Committees Work Programme Schedule**

Theme	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee	All Member Report Specific Development/Briefing Sessions
<b>Housing</b>		
Homelessness Performance Quarter Three (inc. number registered this quarter)		
Homelessness Performance Quarter Four (inc. number registered this quarter)		
<b>Town Centre Regeneration</b>		
Brunswick Street Redevelopment		
Union Street Redevelopment		
Maidstone East Redevelopment		
Public Realm Design Guide and Public Art Policy	1 November 2016	
Town Centre Investment & Development Plan 2015/2020 Update		
Development of the Mall including Bus Station		
<b>Completing the Local Plan</b>		
Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan – results of Referendum for referral to Council to adopt on 7 December		
Local Plan Examination Update		
Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan Examination Update		
Response to Regulation 18 Consultation on the Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan		
Finance, Resources and Review of Planning		
Developing Master Plans for Key Local Plan Sites		
Examination of the Local Plan – Inspector’s modifications		
CIL Governance Arrangements		
5 Year Housing Land Supply		
Neighbourhood Planning Update		
Local Development Updates		
Planning Department Review		
<b>Parks &amp; Open Spaces</b>		
Disposal of Land at Unicomes Lane, Fant		
Gore Court Road decision referral		
Disposal of Surrenden Field		
Mote Park Adventure Zone and Mote Park Car Park Charging review	29 November 2016	
Mote Park – A New Café/Visitor Centre	3 January 2017	
Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan	31 January 2017	
Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Built Facilities Strategy		

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Theme	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee	All Member Report Specific Development/Briefing Sessions
<b>Medium Term Financial Plan</b>		
Council Tax Tax Base 2017/18		
Council Tax 2017/18 – collection fund adjustments		
Projected Collection Fund Adjustment Account		
MTFS - Fees and Charges	29 November 2016	
Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals 2017/18	3 January 2017	
Medium Term Financial Strategy Update		
Medium Term Financial Strategy – Capital Programme		
<b>Other Finance Issues</b>		
Irrecoverable Business Rates		
Council Tax Support Scheme		
<b>Monitoring Reports</b>		
Risk Management Update		
Second Quarter Budget Monitoring	1 November 2016	
Strategic Plan Performance Update Quarter 2	1 November 2016	
Tourism Destination Management Plan – Progress Update	29 November 2016, May/June 2017	
Crime and Disorder – Safer Maidstone Partnership – Mid-Year Update		
Business Terrace – operation and financial update		
CCTV Partnership		
Strategic Plan Performance Update Quarter 3	31 January 2017	
Third Quarter Budget Monitoring	31 January 2017	
Parking Services Annual Report		
Crime and Disorder – Safer Maidstone Partnership – Update		
Fourth Quarter Budget Monitoring	TBA	
Review of Waste Strategy 2014-19		
Equality Objectives Annual Report		
Environmental Health Enforcement Policy Update		
Strategic Plan Performance Update Quarter 4	TBA	
Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016-20 Update		
Economic Development Strategy Update		
Licensing Partnership Update		
<b>Museums and Heritage</b>		
Maidstone Museums Sustainability Options Paper	3 January 2017	
Plaques and People Protocol	31 January 2017	

Theme	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee	All Member Report Specific Development/Briefing Sessions
<b>New/Updates to Strategic and Plans</b>		
Communication and Engagement Strategy Action Plan 2016-17		
Taxi Rank Policy		
Low Emissions Strategy		
Air Quality Management Areas		
Disabled Facilities Grant Review		
Strategic Plan 2015-20 Refresh	3 January 2017	
Workforce Strategy		
Health and Safety Strategy		
Unauthorised Encampment Policy	TBA	
<b>Other</b>		
Bi-annual risk register		
Service Level Agreement Review		
Single Employing Authority for Mid Kent Environmental Health		
Temporary Accommodation Strategy		
Review of MCL Festivals and Events 2016	29 November 2016	
Review of the Fraud Investigation Team		
Planning Support Service Options		
Renewal of Park and Ride contract		
<b>Income Generation</b>		
Commercial Waste Feasibility Report		
Property Acquisition - Commercial		
Commercialisation Strategy Update		
Pet Crematorium Business Case	TBA	
<b>Member Development and Training (not report specific)</b>		<b>Date</b>
Enforcement training for Planning Committee Members		25 October 2016
Special (CPD) training for Planning Committee Members		10 November 2016
Transport and Heritage training for Planning Committee Members		22 November 2016
Questioning Skills workshop		5 December 2016 (provisional)
Masterplans for Lenham and Invicta Barracks - workshop		Early 2017
Enforcement (All) Workshop		24 January 2017

# Agenda Item 11

## Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee

1 November 2016

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

No

### Strategic Plan Performance Update Quarter 2 2016/17

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy & Communications
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Anna Collier, Policy & Information Manager. Alex Munden, Performance and Business Information Officer
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

#### This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. Note the summary of performance for Quarter 2 of 2016/17 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and corporate strategies and plans.
2. Note the progress of strategic plan action plan at appendix II
3. Note where complete data is not currently available.
4. Note the performance of Key Performance Indicators from Quarter 1 of 2016/17 for which data was not available at Policy & Resources on 26 July 2016

#### This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

Key Performance Indicators monitor the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan 2015-20. The Performance Plan provides progress against the Council's key strategies which deliver the Council's corporate priorities.

#### Timetable

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Wider Leadership Team	17 October 2016
Heritage Culture & Leisure Committee	1 November 2016
Policy & Resources Committee	23 November 2016

# Strategic Plan Performance Update Quarter 2 2016/17

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Heritage, Culture, & Leisure Committee is asked to review the progress of key strategies, plans, and performance indicators that support the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Having a comprehensive set of actions and performance indicators ensures that the Council delivers against the priorities and actions set in the Strategic Plan.
  - 2.2 A midyear update has been provided for any objectives in the Strategic Plan Action Plan that were due between 1 April and 30 September 2016. Updates for these objectives can be found in Appendix II. These are progress updates against specific milestones through the last two quarters.
  - 2.3 The Strategic Plan now has 33 Key Performance Indicators that were agreed by Committee in April 2016. This is in addition to the existing 14 plan and strategy updates.
  - 2.4 Performance indicators are judged in two ways; firstly on whether performance has improved, sustained or declined, compared to the same period in the previous year. This is known as direction. Where there is no previous data, no assessment of direction can be made.
  - 2.5 The second way is to look at whether an indicator has achieved the target set and is known as PI status. If an indicator has achieved or exceeded the annual target they are rated green. If the target has been missed but is within 10% of the target it will be rated amber and if the target has been missed by more than 10% it will be rated red.
  - 2.6 Some indicators will show an asterisk (\*) after the figure, these are provisional values that are awaiting confirmation. Data for some of the indicators were not available at the time of reporting in these cases a date has been provided of when the information is expected.
  - 2.7 Contextual indicators are not targeted but are given a direction. Indicators that are not due for reporting or where there is delay in data collection are not rated against targets or given a direction.
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### 3. Quarter 2 Performance Summary

- 3.1 There are 33 key performance indicators (KPIs) which were developed with Heads of Service and unit managers, and agreed by Policy & Resources Committee for 2016/17. Five of these relate to the Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee
- 3.2 Overall, 50% (2) of KPIs reported this quarter achieved their annual target for quarter 2. For 67% of indicators, performance improved compared to the same quarter last year.

RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A	Total
KPIs	2	0	2	1	5
Strategic Actions	3	0	0		3
Direction	Up	Across	Down	N/A	Total
KPIs	2	0	1	2	5

### 4. Performance by Priority

#### Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all

- 4.1 User satisfaction with the Leisure Centre has shown a slight improvement on quarter 1, but satisfaction remains below the 82% target. Historically, quarter 2 is the worst performing quarter of the year, which may be due to increased footfall over the summer. It is expected that quarter 3 will see an improvement on this quarters result. The café brought the satisfaction down more than any other section, and we are looking at ways to improve the café satisfaction score. This is a relatively small sample and users with a complaint are more likely to complete the forms. The operators are looking at a new system for collecting responses, which could potentially increase the sample size.
- 4.2 The percentage of parishes satisfied with the level of communication and engagement with Maidstone Borough Council is 38.3%. A total of 62 responses were received from Parish Councillors and Clerks. Almost a third (32%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with engagement. Comments for this question and others from the survey as a whole are being reviewed and will help shape future communication and engagement.

#### Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for all & Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

- 4.3 Footfall at the Museum and Visitor Information Centre was 16,610 against a target of 19,625. This is comparable the footfall for quarter 1 but almost 20,000 down on the same quarter last year. This may be due to the unprecedented success of the Lego Exhibition during the same quarter in 2015. The drop in visitors may also be explained by a late period of hot weather, and the lingering effect of Monday closure. Steps are being taken to improve the visual appeal, exhibitions, and activities available in an attempt to increase footfall. We are working with schools that traditionally

visited on a Monday to come on an alternative day of the week, and we are increasing our outreach programme on a Monday.

- 4.4 The number of children taking part in formal educational activities at the museum was 1598. This is a reduction on quarter 1, and the target of 2085 has been missed for quarter 2. This quarter was comparable with the same quarter last year. The reduction quarter-on-quarter was due to the Summer School Holidays. Schools sessions and Arts Award continue to be popular and highly regarded by schools. The Learning Service works with schools across Kent with reduced fees for schools in the Maidstone Borough.
- 4.5 Footfall in the High Street has exceeded its target of 2,058,735 for quarter 2. Footfall was slightly higher in comparison to the same quarter of 2015/16, and we are pleased to see that the Bridge Gyrotory works have not had an impact.

## 5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The Strategic Plan Performance Update will be reported quarterly to the service committees; Communities Housing and Environment Committee, Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee, and Heritage, Culture, and Leisure Committee. The report will then go to Policy & Resources Committee following these meetings, with any feedback from the Committees.

## 6. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 That Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee review the performance data presented and request further information to understand previous, current and future performance where relevant.

## 7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The key performance indicators and strategic actions are part of the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2015-20 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. They also cover a wide range of services and priority areas, for example waste and recycling.	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy & Communications
<b>Risk Management</b>	The production of robust performance reports ensures that the view of the Council's approach to the management	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy &

	of risk and use of resources is not undermined and allows early action to be taken in order to mitigate the risk of not achieving targets and outcomes.	Communications
<b>Financial</b>	Performance indicators and targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and determining good value for money. The financial implications of any proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and associated annual budget setting process. Performance issues are highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.	Section 151 Officer
<b>Staffing</b>	Having a clear set of targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place.	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy and Communications
<b>Legal</b>	None identified.	Legal Team
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	The Performance Indicators reported on in this quarterly update measure the ongoing performance of the strategies in place. If there has been a change to the way in which a service delivers a strategy, i.e. a policy change, an Equalities Impact Assessment is undertaken to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on individuals with a protected characteristic.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	A number of performance indicators relate to our performance in environmental services. This has a significant effect on our ability to monitor the Environment in Maidstone. This is also important as one of our key priorities is to provide a clean and safe	Policy and Information Manager

	environment.	
<b>Community Safety</b>	We have Key Performance Indicators that relate to important areas of community safety. These ensure that the work being done by the Community Safety Unit is relevant, and that key areas such as safeguarding are being developed.	Policy and Information Manager
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	None identified.	Policy and Information Manager
<b>Procurement</b>	Performance Indicators and Strategic Milestones monitor any procurement needed to achieve the outcomes of the Strategic Plan.	Policy and Information Manager
<b>Asset Management</b>	Performance Indicators that measure our commercial activities monitor our use of our assets. Good performance shows good management of our assets, or can highlight where assets can be utilised more efficiently.	Policy and Information Manager

**8. REPORT APPENDICES**

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

- Appendix I: Strategic Plan Performance Update Q2 2016/17
- Appendix II: Strategic Plan Action Plan 6 Monthly Update

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

2016/17

# Quarter 2 Performance Update



For further information about Performance Management at Maidstone Council, please contact Alex Munden, Performance and Business Information Officer.

**OUR VISION**

That our residents live in decent homes, enjoy good health and a pleasant environment, with a successful economy that is supported by reliable transport networks.

**OUR MISSION**

Putting People First.

**OUR PRIORITIES**

Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all

Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough



**ACTION AREAS**

Providing a clean and safe environment

Encouraging good health and wellbeing

Respecting the character and heritage of our Borough

Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions

Enhancing the appeal of the town centre for everyone

Securing improvements to the transport infrastructure of our Borough

Promoting a range of employment opportunities and skills required across our Borough

Planning for sufficient homes to meet our Borough's needs

**OUR VALUES**

**Service**



Everything we do impacts on our customers, both internal and external. We will listen to and understand their needs, then take action to provide the right service in a positive and professional manner.

**Teamwork**



Working together to achieve our objectives and goals in a way that utilises the talents and creativity of everyone in our organisation.

**Responsibility**



We work in an environment that encourages us to take ownership for our actions. Making the right choices and decisions that lead to a satisfactory outcome for all.

**Integrity**



We have the courage to act on our convictions to build trust and honesty. We work with our partners and customers to create a feeling of openness and transparency in everything we do.

**Value**



Taking care and weighing up our options, aiming to get the maximum effect for every penny of public money we spend.

**Equality**



Valuing our differences and understanding how they can contribute to a better working environment and services that are fair and easy to access.

# Understanding Performance

## Key to performance ratings

Performance indicators are judged in two ways; firstly on whether performance has improved, been sustained or declined, compared to the same period in the previous year. For example, 2016/17 annual performance will be compared against 2015/16 annual performance. This is known as direction. Where there is no previous data, no assessment of direction can be made.

The second way in which performance is assessed looks at whether an indicator has achieved the target set and is known as PI status. Some indicators may show an asterisk (\*) after the figure, these are provisional figures that are awaiting confirmation.

Data Only indicators are not targeted but are given a direction. Indicators that are not due to be reported or where there is a delay in data collection are not rated against targets or given a direction.

RAG Rating	
	Target not achieved
	Target missed (within 10%)
	Target met
	No target to measure performance against
	Data Only

Direction	
	Performance has improved
	Performance has not changed / been sustained
	Performance has declined
	No previous performance to judge against

Strategic Actions have also been rated using the RAG Status (Red, Amber or Green). The ratings are there to provide an assessment of how well the strategy or plan is progressing.

## Performance Summary

This is the annual update on Maidstone Borough Council’s Strategic Plan 2015-20. It sets out how we are performing against the Key Performance Indicators and Strategic actions that directly contribute to the achievement of our priorities: Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for all and securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough.

Outlined below is a summary of the ratings and direction that have been given for the annual results.

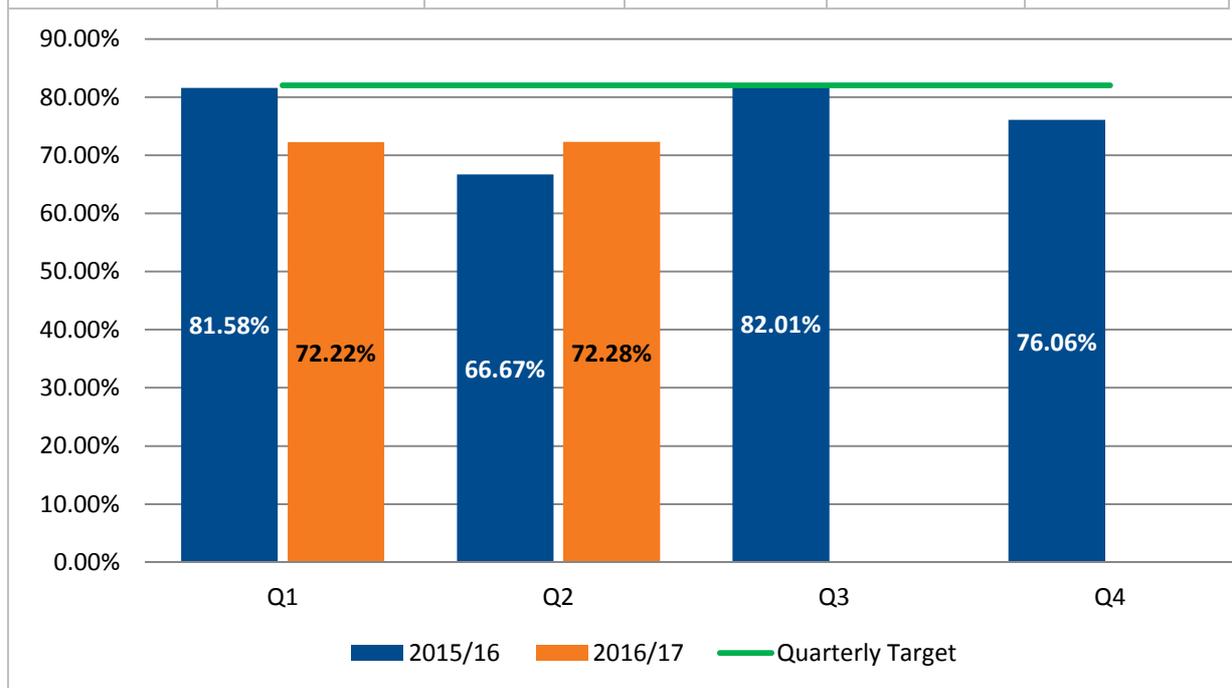
RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A	Total
KPIs	2	0	2	1	5
Strategic Actions	3	0	0		3
Direction	Up	Across	Down	N/A	Total
KPIs	2	0	1	2	5

## Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for all

### Encouraging Good Health and Wellbeing

Deprivation in the borough is lower than average, however 15% (4,300) of children (under 16 years old) in Maidstone live in poverty. There is a larger difference in life expectancy of men and women; 7 years lower for men and 4 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Maidstone than in the least deprived.

User Satisfaction with the Leisure Centre					
The Council recognises that access to leisure services plays an important role making somewhere a good place to live. This indicator measures customer satisfaction with the Leisure Centre.					
Current Performance	Q2 Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
72.28%	82.00%	-9.78%	↑	●	Target will be slightly missed



**Performance Comment:** Although there has been a slight improvement from Q1, satisfaction remains below the set target of 82%. Historically Q2 is the worst performing quarter each year linked to increased usage over the summer holidays. Historically Q3 sees an improvement on Q2.

15% of users showed a degree of dissatisfaction, whilst 13 % of users were neither satisfied or dissatisfied. Key comments regarding dissatisfaction were in relation to the customer service in the Cafe, which brought the score down more than any other area. We are working with the Leisure Trust to discuss ways of improving performance within this area. Although the operator is meeting their requirements in terms of the number of surveys collected it is a relatively small sample and users with a complaint are more likely to

### User Satisfaction with the Leisure Centre

complete the forms. The operators are looking at a new system for collecting the data which potentially could increase the sample size.

## Respecting the Character of our Borough

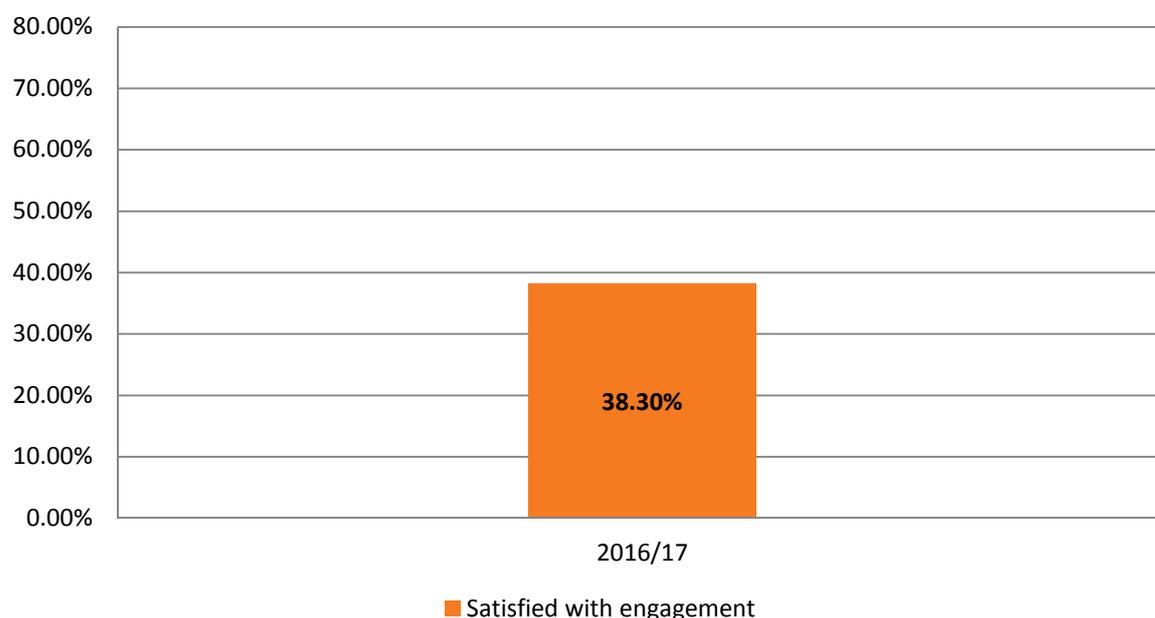
Maidstone is the County town of Kent. In terms of its geography, it is largely rural and the countryside offers high quality landscape and biodiversity. Approximately 50% of the borough population live in a parished area. We are focused on achieving economic prosperity, whilst at the same time balancing protecting the environment and landscape that makes the borough of Maidstone a great place to live, work in and visit.

NB: Parish charter developed in consultation with parishes and KALC

### Percentage of parishes satisfied with the level of communication and engagement they have with Maidstone Borough Council (Parish Survey)

The parish council survey was open from 18th July until 24th October.

Current Performance	Q2 Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
38.3%					



**Performance Comment:** A total of 62 responses were received from Parish Councillors and Clerks. While the greatest proportion of respondents were satisfied with the level of communication and engagement from MBC, almost a third (32%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Comments around this question concerned queries to Officers going unanswered, however there were several positive comments about the Parish Liaison Officer role.

## Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for all & Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

### Ensuring there are good Leisure and Cultural Attractions

There is always something to see or do in Maidstone with the river, two museums and a theatre in the town centre, four green flag parks, a well-used Leisure Centre, a castle, various markets and a variety of festivals and events held across the Borough and throughout the year.

#### Festivals & Events Strategy Update

The summer events programme has now concluded with The Proms and the Street Mela delivered successfully and consultation carried out around both events. An open air cinema event was also held in Whatman Park. Mote Park was also hired out for the Big Day Out family event and the second year of the Ramblin' Man Festival which alone generated over £1m into the local economy.

Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee will receive a report on 29 November 16 which will review the programme and set out the options for the future of council funded/delivered events.

#### Destination Management Plan Update

The Tourism Destination Management Plan Board met at the beginning of September 16 for an update and to review the progress made in year one. We will be holding a TDMP Update – One Year On, on the 29 November 16 and will be inviting stakeholders to share their progress in delivering the actions. An update report will be presented to the Heritage, Leisure and Culture Committee on the 29th November.

After the initial meetings were held with four working groups, they only meet now if it is essential to complete a task and in most cases this communication is done by email by those physically carrying out the work.

The new Maidstone River Park group is a direct action of the TDMP and includes volunteers as well as public and private sector supporters.

<http://www.maidstoneriverpark.co.uk/maidstone-river-park-group/>

#### Cultural Strategy Update

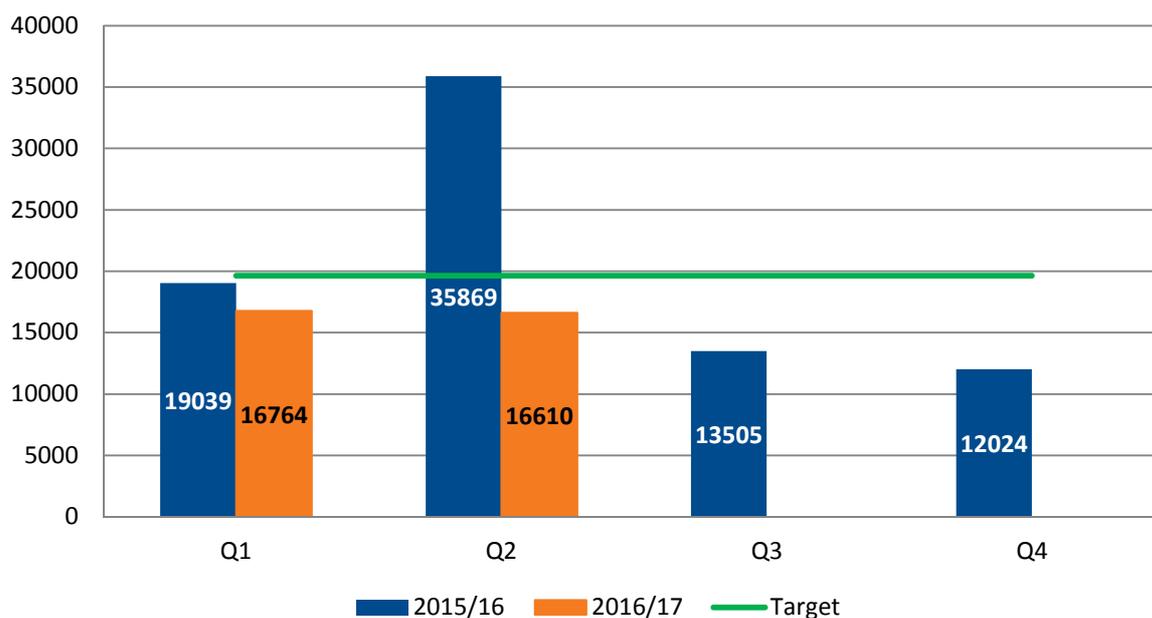
The new Public Realm Design Guide and Public Art Policy will go to the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee on 1 November 2016 for adoption, following extensive consultation on their development.

The bid to Heritage Lottery Townscape Initiative Fund for Gabriel's Hill for £2m 'War, Peace and Trade' was submitted and a decision will be made in January 2017. The Urban Panel visit has been postponed until later in the year to allow the work to be finished on the Public Realm Design Guide.

### Footfall at the Museum and Visitor Information Centre

This indicator reflects the investment the Council has made to ensure that an important cultural provision and a major draw to the Town Centre is maintained.

Current Performance	Q2 Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
16,610	19,625	-3015	↓	●	Target will be slightly missed

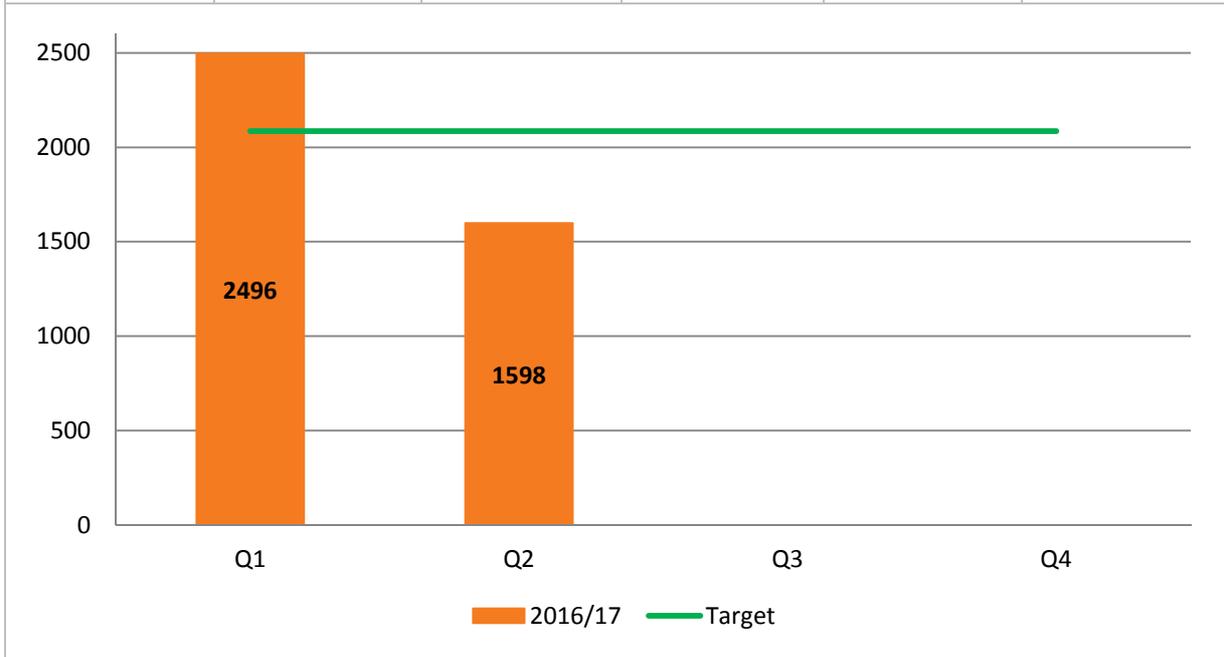


**Performance Comment:** This quarter, whilst similar to quarter 1, was almost 20,000 down on the same quarter last year. However, this is due to the unprecedented success of the Lego exhibition in 2016 which saw an increase of 15,000 in visitor numbers. If we compare 2016-17 with the more usual 2014-15 figures, we can see that the visits were around 5,000 down. This can be explained by a late but very hot period of summer and the lingering effects of Monday closure in Q1 of 2016. Steps to improve visitor footfall are being taken with the improvement of the visual appeal of the museum exterior, improvements to museum exhibitions and more events and activities. We are also working with the schools that traditionally visited on a Monday to come on an alternative day and are increasing our learning outreach programme on a Monday.

**Number of children taking part in formal educational activities on and off site.**

This indicator reflects the investment the Council has made to ensuring that an important cultural provision and a major draw to the Town Centre is maintained.

Current Performance	Q2 Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
1598	2,085	-487			Target will be achieved



**Performance Comment:** This quarter was comparable with the same quarter last year. The reduction quarter-on-quarter was due to the Summer School Holidays. Schools sessions and Arts Award continue to be popular and highly regarded by schools. The Learning Service works with schools across Kent with reduced fees for schools in the Maidstone Borough.

## Enhancing the Appeal of the Town Centre

Maidstone has had a historically thriving town centre however, we need to ensure that we keep pace with the changing economic environment and continue to meet the demands of businesses and consumers. Investment in Maidstone town centre is needed if it is to continue to be a popular place for leisure, to live, shop and work.



2016/17

# Quarter 2 Strategic Plan Action Plan Update



For further information about Performance Management at Maidstone Council, please contact Alex Munden, Performance and Business Information Officer.

**OUR VISION**

That our residents live in decent homes, enjoy good health and a pleasant environment, with a successful economy that is supported by reliable transport networks.

**OUR MISSION**

Putting People First.

**OUR PRIORITIES**

Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all

Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough



**ACTION AREAS**

Providing a clean and safe environment

Encouraging good health and wellbeing

Respecting the character and heritage of our Borough

Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions

Enhancing the appeal of the town centre for everyone

Securing improvements to the transport infrastructure of our Borough

Promoting a range of employment opportunities and skills required across our Borough

Planning for sufficient homes to meet our Borough's needs

**OUR VALUES**

**Service**



Everything we do impacts on our customers, both internal and external. We will listen to and understand their needs, then take action to provide the right service in a positive and professional manner.

**Teamwork**



Working together to achieve our objectives and goals in a way that utilises the talents and creativity of everyone in our organisation.

**Responsibility**



We work in an environment that encourages us to take ownership for our actions. Making the right choices and decisions that lead to a satisfactory outcome for all.

**Integrity**



We have the courage to act on our convictions to build trust and honesty. We work with our partners and customers to create a feeling of openness and transparency in everything we do.

**Value**



Taking care and weighing up our options, aiming to get the maximum effect for every penny of public money we spend.

**Equality**



Valuing our differences and understanding how they can contribute to a better working environment and services that are fair and easy to access.

## Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for all

### Respecting the Character of our Borough

Maidstone is the County town of Kent. In terms of its geography, it is largely rural and the countryside offers high quality landscape and biodiversity. Approximately 50% of the borough population live in a parished area. We are focused on achieving economic prosperity, whilst at the same time balancing protecting the environment and landscape that makes the borough of Maidstone a great place to live, work in and visit.

#### Culture and Heritage

The project with the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) did not progress as resources were diverted into the preparation and submission of a bid for £2m to the Heritage Lottery Town Scape Initiative Fund for Gabriel's Hill. We have also been accepted to receive a visit from the Urban Panel via Historic England. The RSA remain supportive of the ambition for Maidstone.

## Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for all & Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

### Ensuring there are good Leisure and Cultural Attractions

There is always something to see or do in Maidstone with the river, two museums and a theatre in the town centre, four green flag parks, a well-used Leisure Centre, a castle, various markets and a variety of festivals and events held across the Borough and throughout the year.

### A sustainable future for Mote Park

#### Planning permission obtained for the adventure zone

Planning application submitted 19th August 2016.  
Planning permission expected by 15th December 2016

#### Procurement undertaken and contract awarded for the Adventure Zone

Invitation to tender posted on Kent Portal 12th August 2016. Tenders were received by 7th October 2016 and are currently being evaluated. We are looking to award contract in December 2016 in line with receiving planning permission.

#### **Business case produced for a new Café/Visitor/Education Centre for Mote Park**

Draft business case has been produced and reviewed by Head of Commercial and Economic Development. Revisions to be made in anticipation of the meeting with Corporate Leadership Team in December 2016. The business case will be used as part of the committee report to be submitted to Heritage Culture and Leisure Committee January 2017.

#### **Funding bid submitted to Heritage Lottery Fund and/or other bodies**

The Mote Park Centre is fully funded by the council to the value of £2.5m and will be progressed using project management toolkit with an opening date of summer 2018. Any additional funding will be secured from a range of sources subject to justifiable need.

### **Play Area Improvements Programme**

#### **Complete year one programme of works**

Year one, phase one completed successfully. Phase two will commence after summer.

#### **Assess performance of contractor on year one programme**

Performance has been assessed and the current contractor will continue to phase 2.

#### **Retender or Award phase 2 contract**

Phase 2 contract was awarded in September 2016 after the phase 1 review. The terms of the contract are currently being agreed.

### **Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Development Plan**

#### **Develop Draft Plan**

Draft plan to go to Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee January 2017.

#### **Consultation with key stakeholders**

This will be arranged following feedback from Heritage, Culture, and Leisure Committee.

#### **Adoption of Plan**

Adoption will follow once the draft has been to Heritage, Culture, and Leisure Committee.

## Museum Development Plan

### Capital works completed in East Wing reception

This project was successfully completed in April 2016. The reception desk was successfully relocated and adjustments made to the retail and Visitor Information areas to improve their layout and impact.

### Draft Museums 20 year development plan produced with the Museums strategic development board

The Museum Strategic Board is now established and has had its first meeting at which members of the Board were given an overview of the museum's current position, the risks and opportunities and the current vision for forward movement in the next 20 years. 3 areas were identified as priority for the museum's sustainability - Museum governance, funding and audiences. The panel is made up of the Leader of the Council, the Chair of HCL committee, Chair of Maidstone Museums Foundation, Partnership Manager Arts Council England, Museums Development Officer Kent and Medway and 2 Kent Ambassadors each with a background of senior management in industry or 3rd sector organisations. The Board will next meet in November. A consultant has been selected and is about to be appointed to carry out a review of museum governance which will inform the 20 year Development Plan and work outlined in the museum's Capital Works programme has begun.

# Agenda Item 12

## HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

**1 November 2016**

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

**Yes**

### Second Quarter Budget Monitoring 2016/17

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Ellie Dunnet Chief Accountant
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

#### **This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

That the committee:

1. Notes the revenue position at the end of the second quarter and the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position where significant variances have been identified.

#### **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

The budget is a statement, in financial terms, of the priorities set out in the strategic plan. It reflects the Council's decisions on the allocation of resources to all objectives of the strategic plan. The issues raised in this report identify areas where financial performance is at variance with priority outcomes.

#### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee	1 November 2016
Policy & Resources Committee	23 November 2016

## Second Quarter Budget Monitoring 2016/17

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides the committee with an overview of the revenue budget and outturn for the second quarter of 2016/17, and highlights financial matters which may have a material impact on the medium term financial strategy or the balance sheet.
  - 1.2 As at the 30 September 2016, this committee is projected to show an overall adverse variance for the financial year of £25,000. The individual variances for each service area are detailed within **Appendix I**.
  - 1.3 The position for the council as a whole at the end of the second quarter shows an increase in the overspend forecast at the end of the first quarter. Additional controls over spending introduced to address this are detailed at paragraph 2.8 of this report.
- 

### 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Director of Finance & Business Improvement is the Responsible Financial Officer, and has overall responsibility for budgetary control and financial management. However in practice, day to day budgetary control is delegated to service managers, with assistance and advice from their director and the finance section.
- 2.2 The medium term financial strategy for 2016/17 onwards was agreed by full Council on 2 March 2016. This report advises and updates the committee on the current position with regards to revenue expenditure against the approved budgets.
- 2.3 Attached at **Appendix I** is a table detailing the current budget and expenditure position for this Committee's services in relation to the second quarter of 2016/17, to September 2016. The appendix details the net budget per cost centre for this Committee. Actual expenditure is shown to the end of September 2016 and includes accruals for goods and services received but not yet paid for.
- 2.4 The columns of the table in the Appendix show the following detail:
  - a) The cost centre description;
  - b) The value of the total budget for the year;
  - c) The amount of the budget expected to be spent by the end of September 2016;
  - d) The actual spend to that date;
  - e) The variance between expected and actual spend;
  - f) The forecast spend to year end; and
  - g) The expected significant variances at 31 March 2017.

- 2.5 **Appendix I** shows that of a net annual expenditure budget of £4,802,777 it was expected that £2,033,154 would be spent during the first half of the year. These totals include internal recharges. At this point in time the budget is reporting an under spend of £11,625, although the current forecast indicates that the current underspend will not be sustained through to the year end.
- 2.6 Currently the outturn position for this committee is a forecast net overspend of £25,000. The major variances within this total relate to the overspend within Mote Park Café and the projected underspend for the crematorium. Further detail relating to these items is provided in **Appendix I**.
- 2.7 Explanations for variances within individual cost centres which exceed or are expected to exceed £30,000 have been provided in accordance with the council's constitution.
- 2.8 The overall forecast for the council at the end of the second quarter is an increase in the overspend projected at the end of the first quarter, despite planned actions to address this. Increased control in the following areas of spending have therefore been introduced across the council with immediate effect in order to improve the current position:
1. Recruitment;
  2. Temporary staff;
  3. Discretionary spending; and
  4. Contractual commitments.

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### **3 AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 In considering the current position on the revenue budget at the end of September 2016 the committee can choose to note those actions and reconsider the outcomes at the end of the third quarter or it could choose to take further action.

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### **4 PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The committee is requested to note the content of the report and agree on any necessary action to be taken in relation to the budget position.

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### **5 CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 This report is not expected to lead to any consultation.

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### **6 NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 6.1 The second quarter budget monitoring reports will be considered by the

service committees in November 2016, culminating in a full report to Policy and Resources committee on 23 November.

- 6.2 Details of the actions taken by service committees to manage the pressures in their budgets will be reported to Policy and Resources committee at this meeting.

## 7 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	This report monitors actual activity against the revenue budget and other financial matters set by Council for the financial year. The budget is set in accordance with the Council's medium term financial strategy which is linked to the strategic plan and corporate priorities.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Risk Management</b>	The Council has produced a balanced budget for both capital and revenue expenditure and income for 2016/17 This budget is set against a backdrop of limited resources and an difficult economic climate. Regular and comprehensive monitoring of the type included in this report ensures early warning of significant issues that may place the Council at financial risk. This gives this committee the best opportunity to take actions to mitigate such risks. The issues set out in this report do not exhibit the level of potential risk identified in previous years.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Financial</b>	Financial implications are the focus of this report through high level budget monitoring. The process of budget monitoring ensures that services can react quickly to potential resource problems.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement

	The process ensures that the Council is not faced by corporate financial problems that may prejudice the delivery of strategic priorities.	
<b>Staffing</b>	The budget for staffing represents approximately 50% of the direct spend of the council and is carefully monitored. Any issues in relation to employee costs will be raised in this and future monitoring reports.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Legal</b>	The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget this monitoring process enables the committee to remain aware of issues and the process to be taken to maintain a balanced budget for the year.	Legal Team
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	The budget ensures the focus of resources into areas of need as identified in the Council's strategic priorities. This monitoring report ensures that the budget is delivering services to meet those needs.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	No specific issues arise.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Community Safety</b>	No specific issues arise.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	No specific issues arise.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Procurement</b>	No specific issues arise.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Asset Management</b>	Resources available for asset management are contained within both revenue and capital budgets and do not represent a significant problem at this time.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement

## **8 REPORT APPENDICES**

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

- Appendix I: Second Quarter 2016/17 Revenue Monitoring – Heritage, Culture & Leisure
- 

## **9 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee**  
**Second Quarter Budget Monitoring - Full Summary to September 2016**

Cost Centre	Budget for Year	To September	Actual	Variance	Forecast	Year end Variance	Explanation
Cultural Development Arts	£33,240	£16,620	£7,631	£8,989	£33,240	£0	
Museum	£1,048,960	£430,836	£441,090	-£10,254	£1,048,960	£0	
Carriage Museum	£59,980	£28,830	£26,701	£2,129	£59,980	£0	
Museum-Grant Funded Activities	£49,580	£26,346	-£36,181	£62,527	£49,580	£0	The variance relates to grant funding received during quarter 2 which is ring fenced for education programmes at the museum. It is currently anticipated that this will be spent by the end of the financial year.
Hazlitt Arts Centre	£363,270	£144,718	£139,727	£4,991	£363,270	£0	
Whatman's Arena	£7,050	£3,751	£4,839	-£1,088	£7,050	£0	
Heritage Millennium Amphitheatre	£3,190	£1,646	£1,848	-£203	£3,190	£0	
Festivals and Events	£102,220	£59,390	£55,806	£3,584	£102,220	£0	
Lettable Halls	£15,800	£3,775	£1,730	£2,045	£15,800	£0	
Community Halls	£208,660	£35,601	£30,647	£4,955	£208,660	£0	
Cultural Development Sports	£47,300	£27,050	£3,781	£23,269	£47,300	£0	
Leisure Centre	£435,260	£226,030	£244,530	-£18,500	£435,260	£0	
Cobtree Golf Course	-£32,010	-£105,628	-£97,898	-£7,730	-£32,010	£0	
Parks & Open Spaces	£1,086,470	£588,823	£596,132	-£7,309	£1,086,470	£0	
River Park	£483,890	£166,922	£148,262	£18,660	£483,890	£0	
Playground Improvements	£276,980	£26,100	£19,750	£6,350	£276,980	£0	
Parks Pavilions	£55,730	£20,735	£20,287	£448	£55,730	£0	
Mote Park	£439,040	£224,745	£260,919	-£36,174	£439,040	£0	Timing differences re: ground maintenance
Mote Park Cafe	-£88,950	-£63,900	£23,274	-£87,174	£36,050	-£125,000	This variance has arisen due to higher than budgeted agency costs and lower than expected income. The staffing structure has now been finalised, which will see reduced reliance on agency staff for the remainder of the year. Finance staff are working closely with the budget holders to monitor income and expenditure for the remaining part of the year.
Cobtree Manor Park	£0	£68,506	£58,909	£9,597	£0	£0	
Tourism	£167,840	£80,820	£82,164	-£1,344	£167,840	£0	
Museum Shop	£54,960	£27,403	£29,604	-£2,201	£54,960	£0	
Leisure Services Other Activities	£36,500	£1,575	£1,568	£7	£36,500	£0	
Cemetery	£188,997	£106,416	£126,532	-£20,116	£188,997	£0	
National Assistance Act	£990	£495	£402	£93	£990	£0	
Crematorium	-£338,860	-£119,245	-£191,999	£72,754	-£438,860	£100,000	This service is currently generating income above budget due to increased memorial sales.
Maintenance of Closed Churchyards	£33,910	£18,197	£19,803	-£1,606	£33,910	£0	
Market	£8,000	-£39,641	-£19,868	-£19,773	£8,000	£0	
Parks & Leisure Services Section	£44,950	£23,025	£10,482	£12,543	£44,950	£0	
Cultural Services Section	-£11,920	-£7,960	-£8,372	£412	-£11,920	£0	
Maidstone Culture & Leisure Section	£1,960	£980	£17,193	-£16,213	£1,960	£0	
Bereavement Services Section	£18,940	£9,970	£1,880	£8,090	£18,940	£0	
Market Section	£850	£225	£359	-£134	£850	£0	
	<b>£4,802,777</b>	<b>£2,033,154</b>	<b>£2,021,529</b>	<b>£11,625</b>	<b>£4,827,777</b>	<b>-£25,000</b>	

## Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee

**1<sup>st</sup> Nov 2016**

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

**Yes**

### Public Realm Design Guide and Public Art Policy

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Fran Wallis, Local Economy Project Officer
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. To adopt the Public Realm Design Guide, attached as Appendix 1 of this report
2. To adopt the Public Art Policy, attached as Appendix 2 of this report
3. To adopt the Street Furniture Guidelines, attached as Appendix 3 of this report
4. To agree that the Public Art Policy should be presented to Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transport committee to adopt the Policy as a Material Consideration for Planning purposes.

**This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – by creating a more coherent way of dealing with art and public realm
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough - by creating a more attractive place

**Timetable**

<i><b>Meeting</b></i>	<i><b>Date</b></i>
Heritage Culture and Leisure	1 <sup>st</sup> Nov 2016

# Public Realm Design Guide and Public Art Policy

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This purpose of this report is to present members with the Public Realm Design Guide which is specifically for the town centre (which also includes guidance on street furniture), and a Public Art Policy which is borough-wide. Both documents have been created, following extensive consultation from a variety of stakeholders.
  - 1.2 The purpose of the Public Realm Design Guide is to ensure that all future public realm works in the town are more coherent with the rest of the town, and reflect the rich character and history to ensure that the town centre has a unique look and feel to it.
  - 1.3 The purpose of the Public Art Policy is to ensure that public art can be incorporated into any new large developments at an early opportunity, to ensure that opportunities are not missed regarding integrating art into a development to create a sense of place, and character.
- 

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 During early discussions on Phase 3 of the Maidstone Town Centre Public Realm project, it became clear that a piece of work was required, prior to Phase 3 itself, to establish a set of principles regarding the public realm in Maidstone town centre. Phases 1 and 2 were completed several years ago, and other developments have taken place in the town centre (e.g. Fremlin Walk) but each development has had its own style. Consequently as each new phase of Public Realm comes about, there will potentially be a mismatch of styles and character.
- 2.2 FrancisKnight consultants were therefore appointed to develop a Design Guide for public realm in the town centre. Their work has brought together other reviews of public realm and town centre visioning which have gone before, to create a document which developers of the public realm can refer to. For each further phase of public realm which the council carry out, the set of principles will be adhered to by designers to ensure some consistency. The document is also available to external stakeholders and developers to encourage them to adopt the same principles.
- 2.3 During production of the Public Realm Design Guide, FrancisKnight have consulted extensively with a range of stakeholders, including MBC officers, particularly from the Environmental Services Section, Borough Council Members, and external partners from Town Centre Strategic Advisory Board and One Maidstone. A workshop was also arranged, which helped to bring out some of the key themes.
- 2.4 Through the consultation work, four zones emerged in the town – Shopping, River & Green Spaces, Leisure & Culture, and Historic & Heritage Zone. The Design Guide maps out the zones and highlights their key features,

opportunities and any negative aspects they may have. A recurring theme within all the zones was the issue of connectivity and how visitors to the town negotiate their way around.

- 2.5 FrancisKnight were also appointed to develop a Public Art Policy, which is intended to be borough-wide. This document is intended to create more clarity on defining what public art is, and how the Council can use it to enhance an area, by incorporating art into public realm at an early stage, but also to encourage public art to be included particularly for large developments (e.g. housing developments).
- 

### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Option 1: Heritage Culture and Leisure Committee agree to the recommendations made in this report, specifically:
    - 3.1.1 Adopt the Public Realm Design Guide (as Appendix 1), to ensure that future public realm projects within the town centre will follow the guide, to ensure consistency and coherence.
    - 3.1.2 Adopt the To adopt the Public Art Policy, attached as Appendix 2 of this report
    - 3.1.3 To adopt the Street Furniture Guidelines, attached as Appendix 3 of this report
    - 3.1.4 To agree that the Public Art Policy should be presented to Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transport committee to adopt the Policy as a Material Consideration for Planning purposes.
  - 3.2 Option 2: Heritage Culture and Leisure Committee could choose not to adopt the Public Realm Design Guide, Street Furniture Guidance, and the Public Art Policy. This would mean that there would be no guidance or consistency on any future public realm developments, from either MBC or private developers. There would continue to be a mismatch of materials, and missed opportunities to incorporate art and interpretation of Maidstone's rich heritage and history.
- 

### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the committee agree to Option 1 – to agree to the recommendations set out in this report, and adopt the Public Realm Design Guide, Street Furniture Guidance, and Public Art Policy, and to refer the Public Art Policy to SPST committee with the recommendation that it is adopted to become a Material Consideration for planning purposes.
  - 4.2 This will ensure that all future works to the public realm are carried out in a consistent manner, with clear guidance on themes, zones and ensuring the rich history and culture of Maidstone is incorporated. The Public Art Policy will ensure that new developments are encouraged to incorporate art within the scheme, to add to the character of the place.
- 

### **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

5.1 As mentioned previously, this piece of work has been the result of a great deal of consultation. Initially the consultants reviewed the various current documents which have been produced in the past, to bring all the information together. They have then consulted with council officers, HCL Committee members and Ward Members. They have presented to external stakeholders including the Town Centre Strategic Advisory Board, and One Maidstone. In addition, a workshop was held, to which all Members were invited. This allowed a great deal of constructive feedback to be incorporated into the document. A members briefing was then held, to which all Members were invited, to give members the opportunity to see the final draft, prior to it being presented to HCL committee, to capture any 'last minute tweaks' or other minor comments.

## **6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

6.1 The Public Realm Design Guide, and Street Furniture Guidance will be published and made available to all developers working on public realm projects. In particular, the consultants who are currently working on Phase 3 of the public realm will be using the document to ensure that their proposals tie in to what has been approved.

6.2 The Public Art Policy can be presented to SPST Committee, following HCL Committee's approval, to ensure that Public Art can be included as a material consideration for Planning purposes.

## **7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – by creating a more coherent way of dealing with art and public realm Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough - by creating a more attractive place	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Risk Management</b>	No risks identified	
<b>Financial</b>	The three documents attached to this report help to support the Council's overall strategy of making Maidstone an attractive place. The cost of preparing these documents has been met from Maidstone's share of the Kent Business Rates Pool, which has been earmarked for economic development	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	initiatives.	
<b>Staffing</b>	No staffing issues identified	
<b>Legal</b>		[Legal Team]
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	An EQIA is not required at this stage. Individual public realm projects would be subject to assessment at the detail stage.	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	The guide identifies the parks and river as an under-utilised asset of the town and encourages improvement.	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Community Safety</b>	Community Safety aspects of public realm would be dealt with at the detailed design stage of individual projects.	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	None identified	
<b>Procurement</b>	None identified	
<b>Asset Management</b>	The aim of the guide and in particular the street furniture guidance is to ensure future consistency of materials and styles	Head of Commercial and Economic Development

**8. REPORT APPENDICES**

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

- Appendix I: Public Realm Design Guide
- Appendix II: Public Art Policy
- Appendix III: Street Furniture Guidance

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

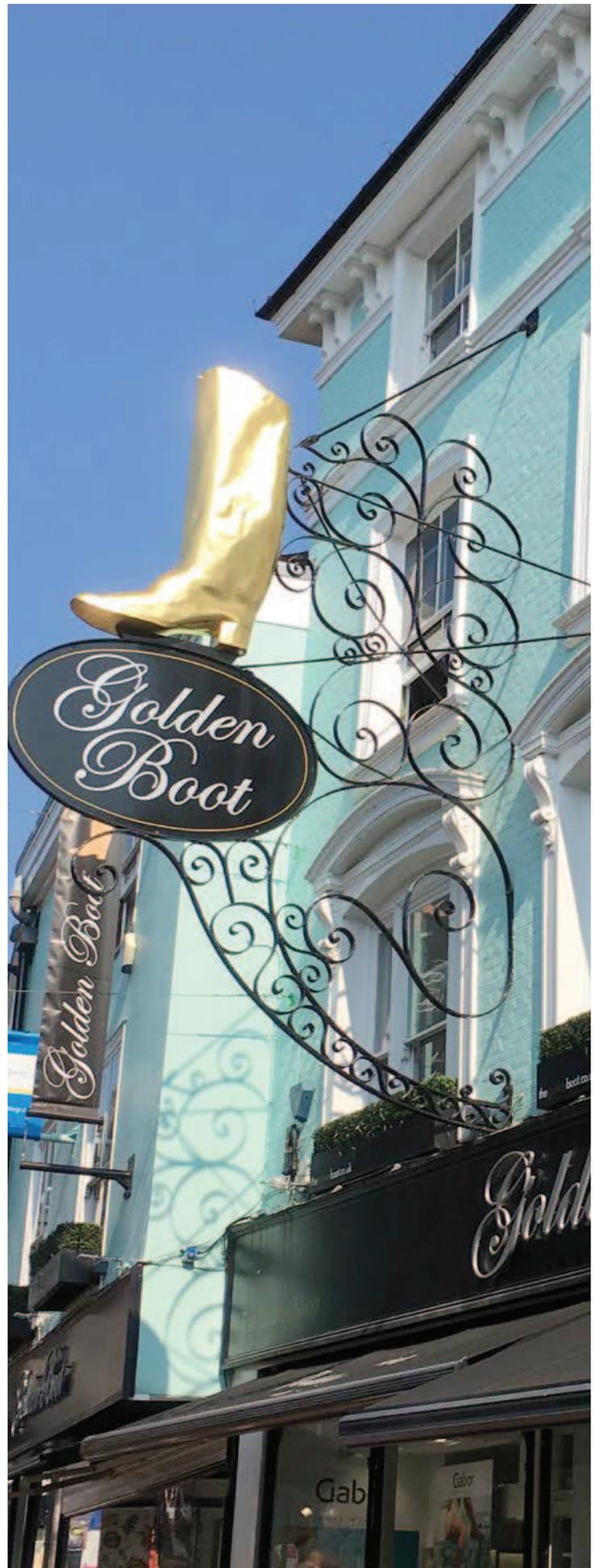
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# Public Realm Design Guide



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## *Executive Summary*

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Maidstone Borough Council is ambitious in its aspirations for the borough, its people and the town centre. It recognises that the public realm plays a vital role in creating a sense of place with connections to local historic and cultural elements as well as providing a safe and attractive environment for the public who visit, live and work in Maidstone.

The Public Realm Design Guide sets out the council's intention to create a cohesive town centre with an integrated approach to achieving high quality public realm. It complements and builds on the improvements to date, such as Jubilee Square

and the High Street, as well as the forthcoming programme of improvements and redevelopments of major sites due to be delivered between now and 2031.

It recognises that Maidstone town centre has many urban characteristics and works as a set of interconnecting zones. The guide focuses on connectivity and upgrading the environment and takes a common sense approach to materials as well as advocating that embedded public art is a key strategy in highlighting local distinctiveness.



# Introduction

## Background

Maidstone Town Centre is undergoing a programme of public realm improvements and redevelopments of major sites between now and 2031. This guide was commissioned by Maidstone Borough Council and it supports the Economic Development Strategy, the Destination Management Plan and the Culture and Heritage Positioning Statement.

### The emerging Local Plan for Maidstone Borough provides the following vision:

By 2031 a regenerated and sustainable Maidstone town centre will be a first class traditional town centre at the heart of the 21st Century County Town that has maintained its place as one of the premier town centres in Kent by creating a distinctive, safe and high quality place.

### Maidstone Borough Council's Corporate Priorities are:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all.
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough.

### Both priorities have clear links to the public realm, by:

- Creating a more coherent way of dealing with art and public realm.
- Creating a more attractive place.

### Scope of the Guide

The scope of this guide relates to the public realm located within the town centre boundary of Maidstone, as defined in Policy SP4 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2031.

The Local Plan sets the framework for development in the Borough, outlines the Council's vision for the town centre and establishes strategic policies to deliver this vision.

Policy SP4 Maidstone town centre sets out a number of policies directly relevant to the delivery of public realm improvements in the town centre, including:

1. The regeneration of Maidstone town centre is a priority. This will be achieved by:
  - i. Demonstrate a quality of design that responds positively to the townscape, including ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the town centre's historic fabric;
  - ii. Contribute to the priority public realm and accessibility improvement schemes for the town centre identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- vii. The retention of the best environmental features, including the riverside, and delivery of schemes to improve the

public realm and pedestrian environment as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan;

2. Development in the town centre should:

- i. Demonstrate a quality of design that responds positively to the townscape, including ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the town centre's historic fabric;
- ii. Contribute to the priority public realm and accessibility improvement schemes for the town centre identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies a number of specific schemes to improve the public realm and pedestrian environment in the town centre. A number of these schemes are already being delivered, and it is anticipated that the remainder will be delivered over the course of the Local Plan period. This document can therefore guide the design and delivery of these and other public realm projects located within the town centre.



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## Objectives of the Design Guide

- To direct the development of accessible, sustainable, high quality redevelopment and improvement schemes that upgrade the town centre environment and public realm.
- Highlight Maidstone's industrial and historical heritage into the public realm design as a priority.
- Use a common palette of high quality materials to avoid a fragmented approach to the town centre.
- Ensure the conservation and enhancement of the town centre's historic fabric.
- Create clear boundaries and functional spaces to assist with connectivity.
- Improve pedestrian and cycle access between the town centre and the river.
- Integrate public art, as a key strategy to help animate and enhance local distinctiveness.

## Research

This Guide draws upon many other reports and studies and is intended to be used in parallel with them. These include:

- The Kent County Council Design Guide.
- The Destination Management Plan.
- Town Centre Study 2010.
- Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2031.
- Economic Development Strategy 2015-2031.
- Maidstone's Culture and Heritage Positioning Statement 2015.
- Strategic Plan 2015-2020.
- Conservation Area Appraisals.
- The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.

## Status of the Guide

This Guide is recognised by Maidstone Borough Council and was approved by the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee in November 2016. It has been produced for council officers, developers, contractors and stakeholders.

## Developing the Guide

This guide has been developed by consulting with key stakeholders, including Maidstone Borough Council Officers, Town Centre Ward Councillors, Maidstone Borough Councillors, Heritage, Leisure and Culture Committee, One Maidstone<sup>1</sup> and the Town Centre Strategic Advisory Board<sup>2</sup>.



## Definition of Public Realm

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The public realm is defined as the public spaces between private buildings. These spaces will normally be usable by the public either explicitly or permissively and includes all exterior places that are accessible physically and visually including land in private ownership to which the public is afforded access. Other elements can include streets, pavements, squares, parks, bridges, waterfronts, landmarks and any public and civic building and facilities.

**'It is often in the spaces between buildings where human activity and social interaction take place. These spaces should be designed or adapted to respect or enhance a street's sense of place'** Publicrealm.org

The public realm plays a vital role in the social and economic value of communities. It can provide meeting places, contemplative and resting areas, create a sense of place with connections to local historic and cultural elements as well as a safe and attractive environment for the public who visit, live and work in the borough.

**'Visitors want to enjoy the public spaces in towns'**  
Maidstone Destination  
Management Plan 2015

This guide focuses on four aspects in the town centre: Streetscapes, Public Places, Parks & Gardens and the River.

**Streetscapes** definition: The visual elements of a street and open space that combine to form the street's character; buildings, roads, pathways, street furniture and planting.

**Public Places** definition: Visible areas within a community setting open to the public or for public gathering.

**Parks and Gardens** definition: Public open spaces within a community setting for recreational use.

**River** definition: All land areas along the water's edge.

**Street furniture and public art** are also included within the public realm and are covered in the Street Furniture Guidelines (Appendix 1) and Public Art Guidance (Appendix 2).

### Conservation Areas

Adopted Character Area Appraisals Supplementary Planning Documents detail the locally distinctive character of an area, and offer guidance on improving the quality of an area.

Several Conservation Areas have been designated within the town centre:

- All Saints Conservation Area.
- Maidstone Centre Conservation Area.
- Holy Trinity Conservation Area.
- Maidstone Chillington House Conservation Area.

Conservation area appraisals help preserve and enhance the conservation areas in Maidstone Town Centre.



## Maidstone's History

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Maidstone has a colourful history shaped by battles, revolts, witches, mad priests and later, industrialists, brewers and Victorian benefactors.

Understanding the story of Maidstone's industrial, cultural and historic heritage is an important aspect in defining the character of public realm in Maidstone town centre.

Historically, Maidstone grew up as a transport hub, where the Roman road linking Rochester with the port of Lympne crossed the confluence of the River Len and the River Medway, and where these important waterways could be forded or bridged.

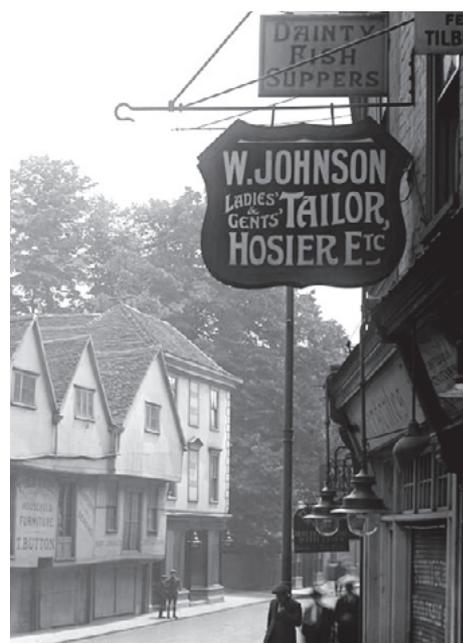
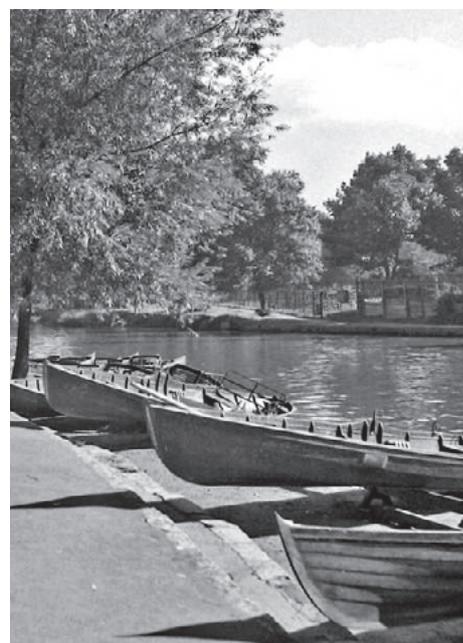
The rivers became both sources of power for milling and other industrial processes and transport conduits to London and further afield.

The Saxon village that grew up on the banks of the Medway became a prosperous medieval trading station and its historic wealth is reflected in the fine collection of heritage buildings that characterise Gabriel's Hill, Jubilee Square, Bank Street, Week Street, Earl Street and other parts of the town centre.

The cluster of Grade I listed religious buildings by the riverside is particularly notable, with the Archbishop's Palace, the Tithe Barn and All Saints Church. Completing this nationally significant complex of medieval architecture is The College of All Saints partly Grade I with the Master's House Grade II\* listed.

Chillington Manor, now the Maidstone Museum and Bently Art Gallery, sits at the heart of the town and is one of the finest museums in the south east, with internationally significant collections, especially Ethnography, Japanese Decorative Arts, Ancient Egypt, Archaeology and Costume. The museum boasts among more than half a million artefacts and specimens including the only human mummy in Kent.

Key industries that have thrived in the town include: thread making, paper making, barge making, milling, distilling and brewing, all of which made use of the river. A good deal of trade also passed through the town, including corn, hops, fodder, fruit, stone and timber. The quarrying of building stone around Maidstone has always been important and continues even today.



# Public Realm History

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Maidstone was a recognisable town by 1200 when the High Street and market place were possibly developed. By the early 14th Century it is thought that the population of Maidstone had reached about 2,000.

Occupations recorded for the population around this time include tailors, shoemakers, skimmers/tanners, barbers and masons. The range of tradesmen suggests a thriving town catering for many of the needs of its inhabitants and of the surrounding rural hinterland. It is probable that the first bridge over the Medway from the bottom of the High Street was built sometime during the 14th Century, replacing the old crossing near All Saints' Church.

By 1446 it is known that Middle Row had been developed, infilling the central market space of the High Street. Gabriel's Hill and Wren's Cross are also first recorded by their modern names during the 15th Century. Maidstone's charter was first confirmed in 1549.

The importance of Maidstone as a trading centre increased significantly during the 17th Century. Key industries included thread making, paper making and brewing, all of which made use of the river.

Maidstone experienced significant rebuilding and new building during the 18th Century, and as a result the importance of retailing to the town increased considerably.

The town has had a right to a gaol since 1614, and the present prison was completed in 1819 and is located in the north of the town centre.

By the late eighteenth century the dominance of the river for travel was beginning to be challenged. By the 19th century, Maidstone was served by frequent coach services to London and the Medway towns. The medieval bridge at the foot of the High Street was widened in 1808 to ease traffic congestion at the sole river crossing into the town.

Maidstone West Station was opened in 1844 and Maidstone East Station in 1874. There are two principal railway stations: Maidstone East which connects with London and Ashford; and Maidstone West which is on the Medway Valley Line.



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There has been a military presence in the town since 1797, when army barracks were first built. Maidstone Barracks railway station is located on the Medway Valley Line to the north of Maidstone West Station, and was opened in 1874.

The River Medway runs through the town centre, linking Maidstone to Rochester and the Thames Gateway. The river has historically been responsible for the growth and development of Maidstone, due to its capacity to transport goods both into and out of the town.

Economic activity along the River Medway greatly expanded in the 17th Century. Several riverside industries were particularly important to the historical development of the town, including brewing, milling, distilling, and barge building.

By the late nineteenth century, industrial development occurred along both sides of the river, including timber yards, gas works and breweries.

Development continued throughout the Victorian, inter-war and post war periods and a number of office and retail developments in the town centre were completed in the

1960/70/80s. Today, the western side of the River Medway is predominantly home to recent development consisting of large retail sheds and residential apartments. Developments in the town centre include Fremlin Walk and residential apartments adjacent to Brenchley Gardens.

Tourism panels installed in 2016 throughout the town centre by Maidstone Borough Council map out a historic route including references to the town centre's role in pivotal moments of English history such as Wat Tyler and The Peasants' Revolt 1381 and The English Civil War in 1648.



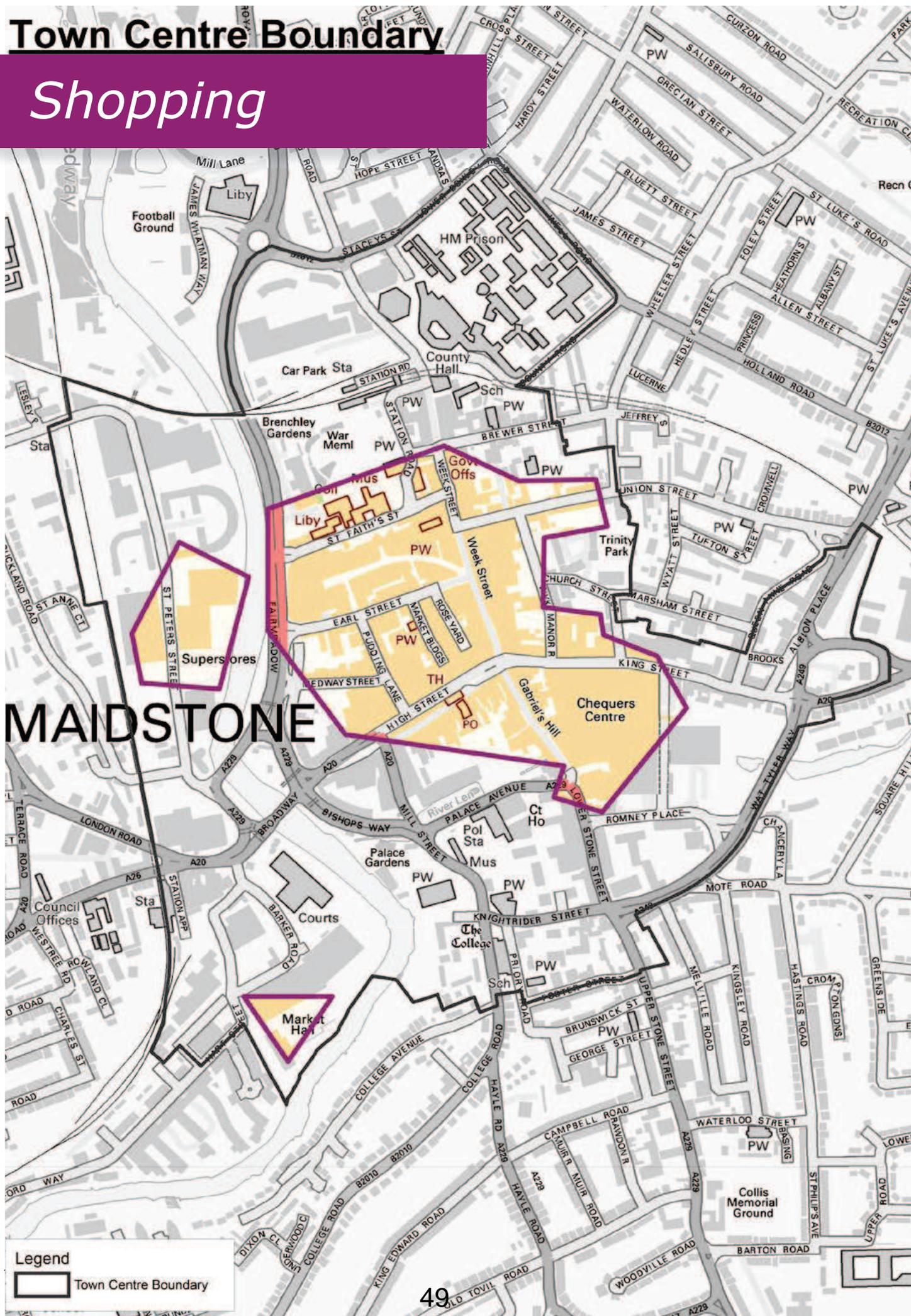
## Understanding Maidstone

Maidstone town centre has many urban characteristics, defined in this guidance by zones. Each zone is made up of layers of the area's cultural and industrial heritage, of which the current patterns of use are the most recent.

The characteristics, assets and features of the public realm within each zone are described with the objective of providing useful guidance within each character area, while giving design teams creative freedom based upon their own site analysis and guidance.

# Town Centre Boundary

## Shopping



# The Shopping Zone

Maidstone town centre is a significant shopping destination, offering a predominately outdoor, street-based shopping environment. The town centre has a good mix of retail with major, national retailers in Week Street, with a particularly concentrated offer in Fremlin Walk, the southern end of Week Street and The Mall, the town's main indoor shopping centre.

The local independent shops are principally found within the Royal Star Arcade and along Gabriel's Hill, Pudding Lane and Union Street. These shops add to the town centre's distinctiveness and complement the mainstream shopping offer.

A larger retail zone sits on the west side of the river. These units are close to the core of the town centre with routes across the river for walkers and cyclists. These routes are indirect and limit the potential for sustainable linked trips.

## Character Area Guidance

Parts of the shopping zone fall within the Maidstone Centre Conservation Area, as a large number of buildings are included on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. This defines local character and architectural interest of the area which covers Bank Street, Middle Row and the south side of the High Street between the top of Bank Street and the junction with Gabriel's Hill, Market Buildings/Earl Street area and Gabriel's Hill/Lower Stone Street.

For the purposes of this design guide the Conservation Area Appraisals for Maidstone Town Centre advise that new development will need to adhere to the established historic building lines and respects the



grain and rhythm of the existing townscape and that good quality building materials should be used, preferably those which are currently predominant. Further guidance on materials is detailed in the individual Conservation Area Appraisals.

## Assets

The shopping zone is characterised by significant cultural & historic assets. These include:

- The Royal Star Arcade
- Gabriel's Hill
- The Town Hall
- Hazlitt Theatre
- Jubilee Square
- Fremlin Walk
- Market Buildings
- Rose Yard

## Features

The shopping zone features a mix of chain and independent shopping with two retail malls (Fremlin Walk & The Mall), a historic market at Lockmeadow and a monthly farmers market held in Jubilee Square.

Now an exclusive shopping arcade, The Royal Star was once Maidstone's leading hotel, frequented by the gentry during the town's Georgian heyday. Princess Victoria stayed here in 1836. In 1837 on winning his first seat in Parliament as the town's M.P, Benjamin Disraeli addressed the electors from its balcony overlooking the Town Hall on the High Street.

Week Street, the main shopping street provides some notable examples of pargetted houses (no's 55-57), which date back to 1680. Pargetting, a term describing the use of external lime plaster in a decorative manner with incised or moulded surfaces. It would be carried out on new buildings as well as when old plaster began to decay.

Fremlin Walk shopping centre itself was built on the site of Fremlin brewery, owned by Ralph Fremlin, who by 1861 was Kent's largest brewer. Fremlin's connections in East India were symbolised by his trademark elephants and weathervane, examples of which are on permanent display in the shopping centre.

# The Shopping Zone

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## Shopping Zone Opportunities

The following investment opportunities in the shopping zone can progress the aspirations of the Public Realm Design Guide.

Improvements around Maidstone East Station should help to create a new gateway and arrival/departure point for the town centre. Public realm improvements should ensure they retain and build upon Maidstone's cultural history and distinct identity. This should be reinforced through wayfinding and where possible commissioned public art which has a dual functionality. Examples include paving details, seating, drainage covers, and bollards. Street furniture should follow the Street Furniture Guidelines (Appendix 1).

Phase 3 Improvement Works to the north end of Week Street and Gabriel's Hill should contribute to the restoration of Gabriel's Hill and Lower Stone Street to its former position as one of the town's principal public areas.

Connectivity should activate and enhance the shopping zone with natural squares that form a linear

connection at junctions between: Week street and Earl Street; Union Street and Week Street; Brewer Street and Week Street.

Improvements and developments in the shopping zone should, where appropriate make visible or reference the streams and rivers on which the town centre has historically grown up.

Year round cultural and arts events should be developed within the public realm, which actively encourages opportunities for locally based artists and crafts people.

Family friendly environments that encourage people to spend more time in the town centre should be a consideration in the public realm overall.

## Negatives

The streetscape is generally in need of renewal across areas that have not been redeveloped. There is a patchwork of materials where repairs and maintenance dominate the floor plane particularly along Week Street. The newly completed Jubilee Square and Lower High Street improves this palette but lacks character and identity.

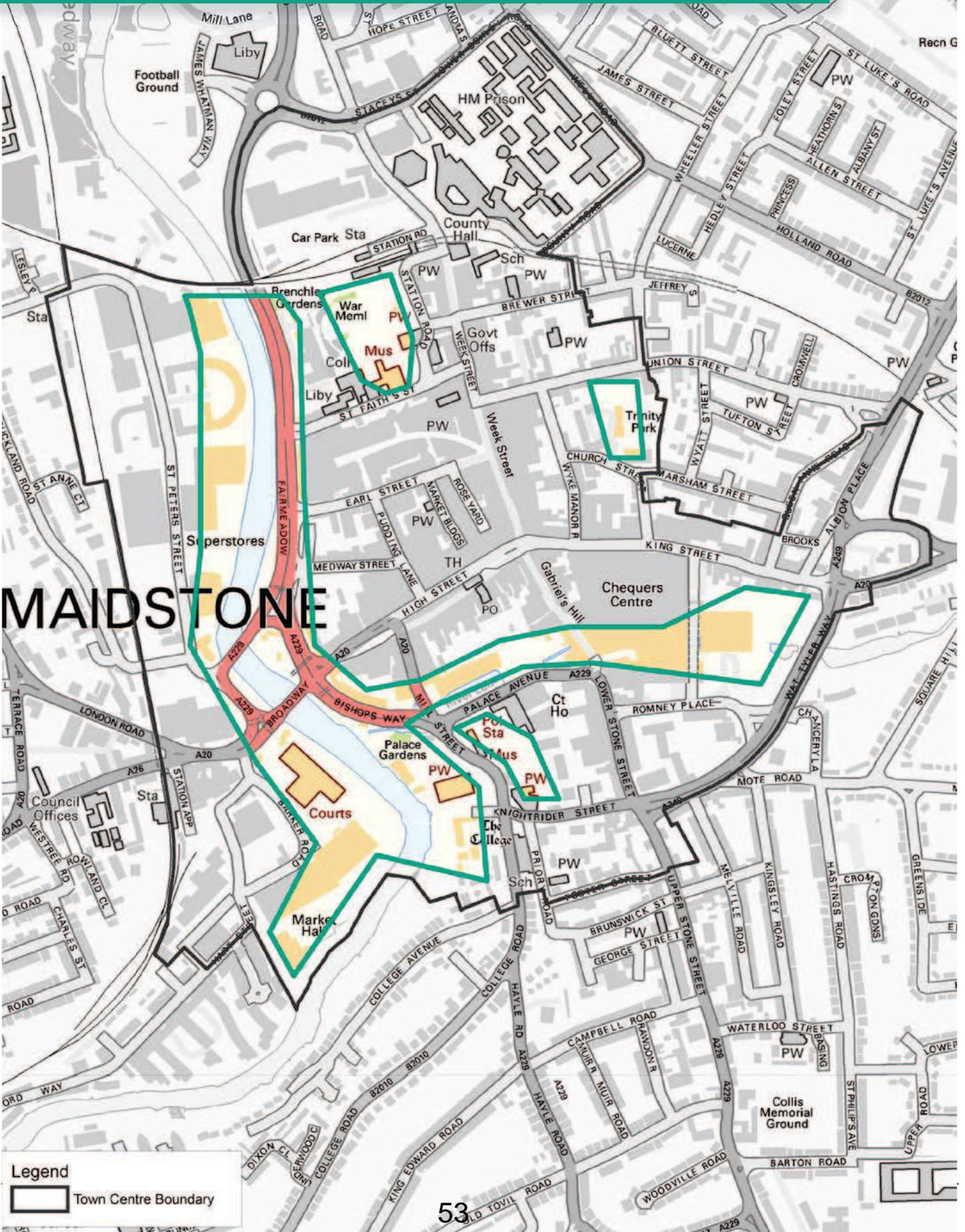
Shopping is one of the Top 3 factors influencing a visit to Maidstone (Visitor Profile, Destination Management Plan). The gyratory road system segregates the main shopping area in the town from the larger retail zone on the west side of the river. The Maidstone Bridges Improvement Scheme will help northbound traffic on the A229 to avoid the existing gyratory system. This should open up pedestrian access and help the regeneration of the western riverside.

Fremelin Walk is one of the Top 5 attractions (Destination Management Plan) for visitors to Maidstone, however the town centre is perceived as incoherent and disjointed, segregated from the river. The tourism agenda recognises the significant historic and cultural references to the town through strategically placed interpretation panels. Walking maps available at Maidstone Museum encourage people to move around the town centre.



# Town Centre Boundary

## River and Green Spaces



# River and Green Spaces Zone

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Maidstone town centre's key asset is the River Medway, a high quality green corridor that flows to the West of the historic core of the town. The River Len, a tributary of the Medway also enters from the East but is concealed below ground through most of town.

Maidstone town centre has a select number of attractive accessible green spaces. They are made up of the formal garden of Brenchley Gardens adjacent to Maidstone East Station, Trinity Gardens and a larger urban park located in the North West of the town centre, called Whatman Park. There is also a green area called the Maidstone River Park that fringes around the Archbishop's Palace and Gardens, All Saints Church, Fairmeadow and the Hermitage Millennium Amphitheatre. The River Park is a 10km walk along the River Medway from Teston Country Park through Maidstone's town centre, to Allington and Kent Life.

## Character Area Guidance

The River Medway is an area of peace and tranquility, where the river corridor acts as a contrast with the urban townscape, and serves as a wildlife corridor by linking urban habitats with the countryside beyond.

Historically the influence of the River Medway is very strong to Maidstone, with its position as a port of great importance. Records show the riverside crowded with wharves and industrial premises. Most trade was with London with sailing barges carrying hops, paper, fruit, cloth, corn, leather, and wool and ragstone.

The 'hidden' River Len was used to drive numerous watermills

and now forms a large mill pond on the corner of Mill Street and Palace Avenue, which is a prominent and integral feature of the landscape of Maidstone. The River Len continues to stream into the Medway via Mill Street connecting the riverside through Palace Gardens which features mature landscaping.

The Archbishop's Palace a 13th Century building was built on land owned by the Archbishops of Canterbury from the 8th Century and sits on the banks of the River Medway.

Fairmeadow was mainly used as a livestock market. Traditional fairs continued to be held on Fairmeadow into the early 20th Century until they moved to Lockmeadow. A bowling green was laid out on the King's Meadow in 1642, and in 1699 a tree-lined and railed public walk was laid out along the river.

Brenchley Gardens is a public park of 2 hectares, laid out to the 1871 plans of landscape designer Alexander McKenzie (1830-1893). It is made up of an ornate square of open lawns, flower gardens, paved paths and a Victorian bandstand. There are two prominent monuments in the gardens, one of which is a piece of the roof of the Houses of Parliament in London, and The Cenotaph War Memorial, designed by nationally renowned architect Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944).

## Assets

The river/green zone is characterised by its natural landscape features and an attractive towpath, with buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

- River Medway and River Len
- Baltic Wharf
- Whatman Park
- Brenchley Gardens
- Trinity Park
- Archbishop's Palace and Gardens
- Methodist Church, Brewer Street
- Mill Pond, Mill Street
- The Lamb Inn, Fairmeadow (renamed Cork and Cask House)

## Features

The River Medway is a prominent feature that attracts a diverse range of river based activity from canoeing and rowing, a unique floating restaurant next to the Archbishops' Palace to one-hour boat trips taking in the sights along the route.

Across the river Medway is the Maidstone Bridge first built around the 14th century to give more direct access to the commercial heart of the town in the High Street than the previous crossing by ford, adjacent to All Saints Church. The current bridge was built in 1877-79 to the designs of Sir Joseph Bazalgette, engineer of the Thames Embankment and the London Sewage System, and lies slightly to the north of the original bridge. The bridge had to be widened again in 1926.

The Hermitage Millennium Amphitheatre is an outdoor venue built of brick and Kentish ragstone that sits on the banks of the river close to the Lockmeadow Millennium Bridge and the Archbishops' Palace.

Whatman Park lies at the heart of the Millennium River Park just half a mile from the town centre. It is an 18 acre site and combines a natural landscape of

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woodland and wildflower meadow with adventure play areas, a treetop walk, skate park and river stage open-air performance arena. Pleasure boats can stop at Whatman Park Wharf. Artist David Annand was commissioned to produce a public art sculpture for the park. The Double Helix – the structure of DNA, is more than 60 yards long and 10 feet high.

## Opportunities

The opportunity to bring the under-utilised rivers back into the heart of the town can help to progress the aspirations of the Public Realm Design Guide through the following investment opportunities to the town Centre:

Phase 3 Improvement Works to Gabriel's Hill, these public realm improvement works should reference the River Len as it enters the town centre. This should be reflected through public art such as embedded text or pattern work into the surface plane and hard landscaping.

Re-imagining of the green corridor and improving access through pedestrian and cycle way routes should enhance connectivity and provide green links to the main shopping streets and Whatman Park. Entrance points such as a new pedestrian crossing should be considered to address the lack of pedestrian access to Fremlin Walk from the west and any further proposals for the town centre.

Current public realm works being completed as part of the Maidstone Bridges Improvement Scheme will create a more desirable route for pedestrians with better crossings, continuation of the materials palette with the use of granite (as seen in the public realm schemes phase 1 & 2) and new tree planting. New finger posts directing pedestrians to the river

will also be installed on Lower High Street and the riverside of Fairmeadow.

Enhancing cycle connectivity is an important part of the River Medway Cycle Path Scheme which is currently underway. The scheme will provide a new shared use towpath, encouraging cycling and walking with direct routes for cyclists and pedestrian to access the town centre. The route itself runs from Allington Lock to Barming Bridge, and is due to be constructed late Autumn 2016.

The public realm particularly along the waterfront should reflect on the riverside's historic era through heritage preservation, respecting iconic landmarks and developing more cultural functions and character such as riverside cafes. A venue for the arts and cultural events would enhance the area.

Where a continuous route alongside the river path is unobtainable, improvement and proposals should seek to provide a pleasant, green and accessible public realm. Lighting and an improved wayfinding strategy such as green/art themed trails, information points, signage would improve a more joined up experience and create linkages to the existing green spaces and the town centre.

With the Phase 3 Improvement Works to Week Street, the use of functional public art could reference green elements with features such as living walls, tree planting and use of high quality materials to enhance the natural squares and create connected green links.

Public realm improvements around Maidstone East Station should help to create a new gateway and support and improve connectivity. The newly developed public realm should ensure they retain and build upon Maidstone's cultural

history and distinct identity. This should be reinforced through wayfinding and where possible commissioned public art.

Landscape design and management should reflect Maidstone's heritage as a green town dominated by parks, gardens and street trees and with an intimate connection to the surrounding countryside. Fairmeadow was an important site where traditional fairs were held until the early 20th Century. Wildflower planting alongside the riverside and highway verges should be coordinated in the interests of helping to establish a distinct identity. Street trees should be increased to 'green' the town centre and help to adapt to, and mitigate against, poor air quality.

## Negatives

The relationship between the river Medway and the town is poor and fractured with the river often hidden or obscured. Recent developments fail to make the most of the riverside and provide an attractive setting with a number of buildings turning their back to it, creating inactive frontages.

Fairmeadow also creates a barrier between the river front and the town centre. Flooding from the River Medway has been a major issue for the lower High Street and subways have acted as conduits for the flood water to travel through, making public access prohibitive. However the gyratory public realm works will permanently fill two of the existing subways as they are no longer a desirable route for pedestrians and other non motorised users. The third subway will be fitted with a flood gate. The public realm works will provide new drainage and an improved pedestrian crossing including the continuation of granite used during Phase 1 & 2 improvement works.







## Leisure and Culture Zone



Maidstone town centre supports a wide range of leisure, cultural and tourist attractions. It has a high concentration of clubs and bars, restaurants and live music venues and has a reputation for a lively and safe night time economy.

The Hazlitt Theatre, the recently extended museum on St Faith's Street and the Archbishop's Palace and All Saints Church to the south, complements the offer.

Lockmeadow is the town's major leisure and entertainment complex and caters for family activities whilst Earl Street has become a particular focus for restaurants and cafés.



### Character Area Guidance

The majority of the cultural and tourist facilities are based around the historic core of the town centre. The public realm features wider pavements particularly along Earl Street, which encourages the restaurants to spill onto the pavements creating a buzz of outdoor activity. Some of the more established/chain restaurants have sympathetically converted historic buildings to bring them into contemporary use. Reasonably priced accommodation supports the mix along with sports facilities such as fitness clubs, gyms, 3G football ground, river based activity and a tennis centre.

### Assets

- The Hazlitt Theatre and Corn Exchange
- Bandstand & War Memorial - Brenchley Gardens
- Museums – Maidstone Museum & Bently Art Gallery and the Tyrwhitt Drake Museums of Carriages
- Kent History and Library Centre
- Gallagher Stadium (home to Maidstone United, and just outside town centre boundary)
- Lockmeadow Complex – cinema, bowling, restaurants and historic market

# Leisure and Culture Zone

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## Features

The Hazlitt Theatre, formally a concert hall, was erected in 1869 and is named after William Hazlitt, born in nearby Rose Yard, who found fame as an essayist, art critic and artist.

Earl Street features significant buildings, most notably no's 31/33, a double-fronted town house owned by Andrew Broughton, Mayor of Maidstone. Broughton was Clerk to the High Court and signed the death warrant of King Charles I in 1659. When the monarchy was restored in 1660, Broughton was charged with regicide. He fled and spent the rest of his life in exile in Geneva.

No 32 Earl Street, constructed in 1882 as the Conservative Club, features over its entrance a carved head of Benjamin Disraeli, once MP for Maidstone. In 1837, the year of the Queen Victoria's accession, Disraeli was first returned to Parliament for the Borough of Maidstone and lived, as Lord Beaconsfield, to be the Queen's trusted Prime Minister.

## Opportunities

Investment opportunities in the Leisure and Culture zone can progress the aspirations of the Public Realm Design Guide.

Improvement works for Phase 3 (Week Street and Gabriel's Hill) and Phase 4 (potentially

Earl Street) should activate and enhance the network of alleyways and corridors joining smaller streets to promote economic and cultural activity, improve footfall, quality of environment and connectivity. This should be in form of a pedestrian link towards the medieval complex around All Saints Church and the Rootes Building (Len House and Peugeot Garage).

Attention should also be given to Market buildings, High Street, Middle Row, Bank Street, Rose Yard and Gabriel's Hill their activation through commercial activity, public artworks and improved lighting.

The night-time economy concentrates activity on Earl Street, the north end of Week Street, High Street, and Gabriel's Hill. This zone attracts late night users leaving nightclubs and bars who use a series of quiet corridors and alleyways with reduced footfall making them more vulnerable to street crime. Public realm improvements should ensure good through visibility and activate routes with good passive surveillance.

A number of buildings in this area mark their importance with historic plaques. Further improvements in this zone should consider lighting as a way to highlight and reflect its distinct heritage and identity.

Year round cultural and arts events should make use of the improved Jubilee Square, to actively encourage leisure and culture opportunities for locally based artists and musicians.

Regeneration of the west side of the river should connect pedestrian and cycle routes back into the town centre. A new crossing should be considered to further develop the cultural offer and character. In particular a venue for the arts and cultural events would enhance the area.

## Negatives

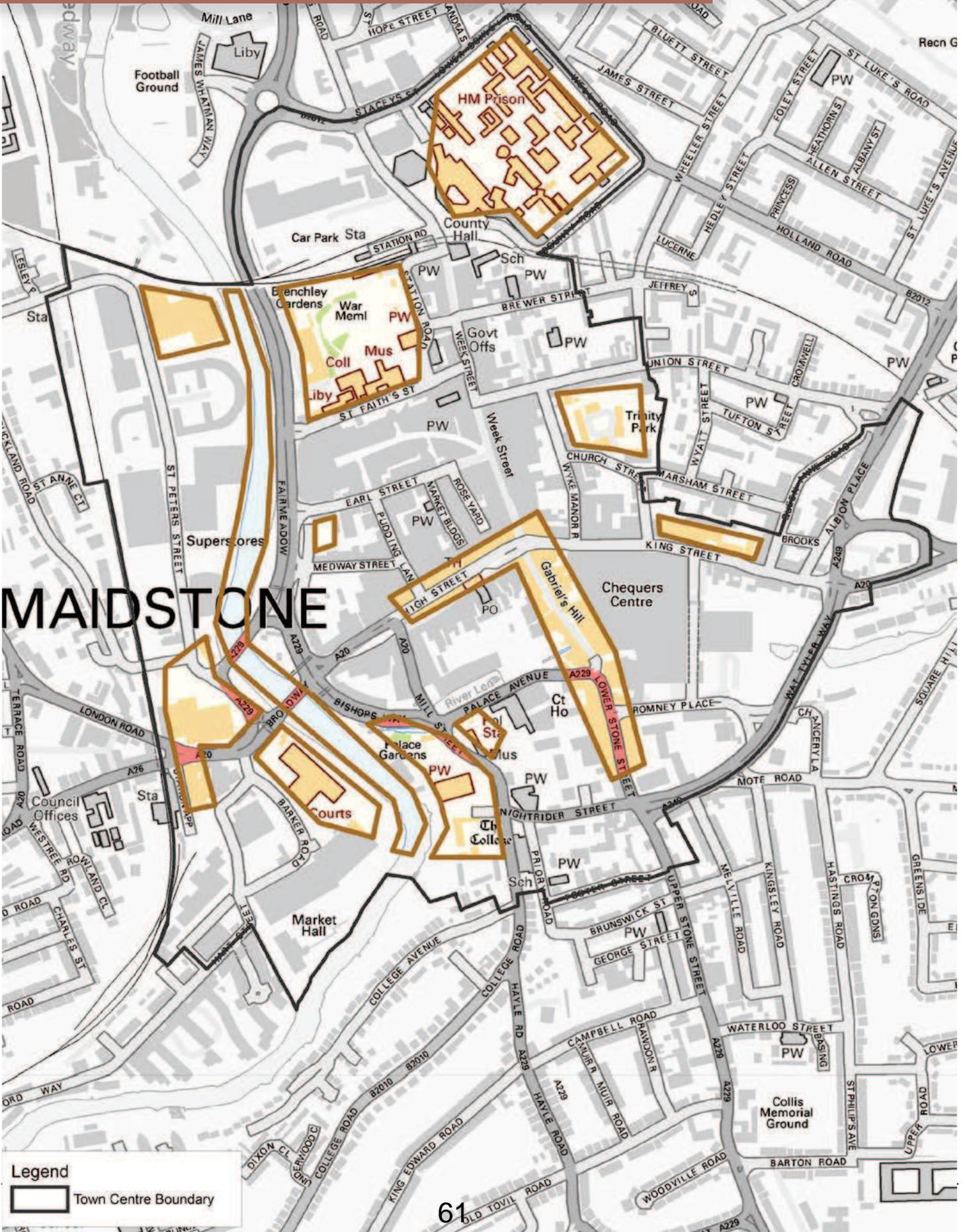
The streetscape here is generally in need of renewal, materials are fragmented with patchwork repairs and a low visual quality. Street furniture is tired and mismatched and in some places broken, there is a general need to declutter. This lack of investment is becoming noticeable in contrast to the re-landscaping of the completed areas of Jubilee Square and the High Street.

The Lockmeadow complex is located close to the core of the town centre, however routes across the river and gyratory system for walkers and cyclists are indirect and create a barrier.



# Town Centre Boundary

## *Historic and Heritage*



# Historic and Heritage Zone

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Maidstone's heritage and historic offer is found in its streetscapes, buildings and river corridor. It includes a collection of fine Grade II and Grade II\* heritage buildings found in Gabriel's Hill, Jubilee Square, Bank Street, Week Street, Earl Street and other parts of the town centre. The Medieval Complex of Grade I listed religious buildings can be found by the riverside, most notably, with the Archbishop's Palace, the Tithe Barn, All Saints Church and the College of All Saints. A handful of Grade II listed buildings, reflect Maidstone's industrial heritage and are prime for sympathetic conversion and re-use.

## Character Area Guidance

Much of the historic and heritage zone falls within the Maidstone Centre Conservation Area. Within the historic core the High Street has recently undergone regeneration (Phase 1 & 2 improvements) with Remembrance Square in the Lower High Street and Jubilee Square outside the Town Hall, in the Upper High Street. Reducing vehicle access has created a new public space that has a pedestrian-friendly environment, providing seating and tree planting and is now used for events and activities.

To the east of the town centre is Sessions Square, a large paved pedestrian friendly public space with seating and tree-lined areas. The area is dominated by County Hall a neo-Baroque Façade and home to Kent County Council head offices. Behind Sessions House is Maidstone Prison, designed by Daniel Alexander in 1810. The prison is surrounded by a large perimeter wall built from Kentish Ragstone.

The Medieval Complex consisting of the Archbishop's Palace and All Saints Church sits along the banks of the River Medway, with the Tithe Barn (Maidstone Carriage Museum)

## Assets

- All Saints Church
- Medieval Complex
- Gabriel's Hill
- Lower Stone Street
- Corpus Christi Building
- Drakes
- Fairmeadow
- Trinity Church
- Brenchley Gardens
- St Faiths Church
- Maidstone Museum
- County Hall
- Maidstone Prison
- The Town Hall
- High Street
- Law Courts
- The river, its bridges and banks
- St Peter's Church
- The Baltic Wharf
- War Memorials

## Features

The Nolan Statue is placed outside the former Ophthalmic Hospital, Wyke Manor Road, and honours Captain Lewis Edward Nolan, who was the first soldier killed in the Charge of the Light Brigade in 1854. Captain Nolan was Riding Master at Maidstone Cavalry Depot between 1841 and 1854 and he attended the former Holy Trinity Church.



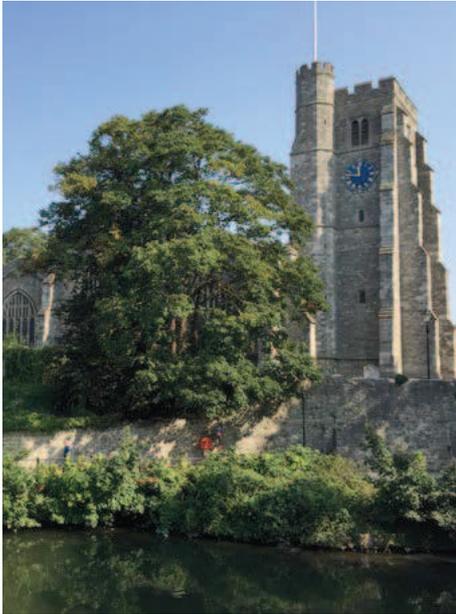
Maidstone Museum & Bentlif Art Gallery is largely housed in Chillington Manor, a fine example of the domestic architecture of the late Tudor period.

St Peter's Church, the oldest church in Maidstone established in the mid C13 as the chapel for a hospital for pilgrims travelling to Canterbury is a fine example of the treasured history that has shaped the town.

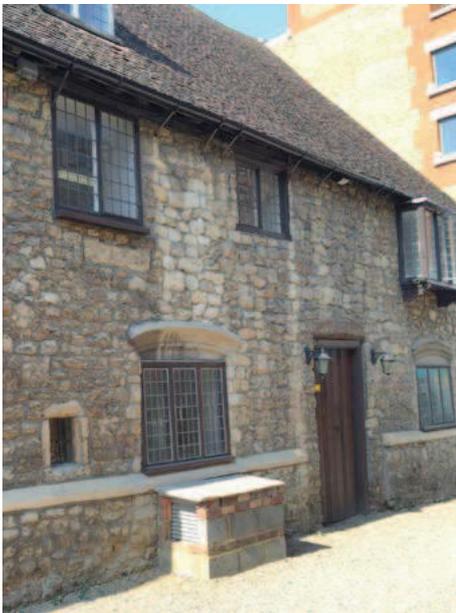
The Town Hall a fine Georgian building dating from 1763, served many purposes as market space, magistrate's court, council chambers and gaol. In Jubilee Square the statue of a young Queen Victoria dating from 1862, stands on the site of the ancient market cross.

The Corpus Christi, is a 14th century building originally owned by the Corpus Christi Fraternity, a society of local tradesmen who regulated business, observed certain religious services and provided for elderly and infirm members. The Fraternity lasted until 1547 when it was seized by the crown during the suppression of religious guilds. The town then bought the hall and it served as Maidstone Grammar School from 1549-1871.

The two notable Grade II listed buildings in this zone are: The Baltic Wharf, a former motor vehicle factory on the west side of the river bank, is a grade II listed building built in 1917 by Wallis, Gilbert and Partners, in collaboration with Truscon, for Tilling-Stevens Ltd. It is an example of a factory designed using the Kahn Daylight System and holds historic interest as the earliest surviving building by the practice, the foremost factory architects of the inter-war period.



Len House and the Peugeot Garage (previously The Rootes motorcar showroom and workshop) was built in 1937-38 for Rootes Ltd by Howard and Souster, an architectural firm who specialised in industrial and commercial buildings and who undertook a number of commissions for Rootes. The site, adjacent to a mill pond on the River Len, had formerly been occupied by a tannery. The tannery buildings were acquired by Rootes in 1917 and were later demolished to make way for the new complex of showroom, filling station, workshops and offices. At the time of its opening in April 1938, the showroom was considered the largest and most up to date in Kent; at night 700ft of neon tubing outlined the frontage and spelled out the name 'ROOTES' on the tower above the main entrance.



### Opportunities

There are the following investment opportunities in the Historic and Heritage Zone, which can progress the aspirations of the Public Realm Design Guide.

Public realm works in Gabriel's Hill as part of the Phase 3 improvement scheme should help to create attractive pedestrian links towards the medieval complex around All Saints Church and the impressive Rootes Building (Len House and Peugeot Garage) which has been listed at Grade II since 2009. Public realm improvements should ensure they retain and build upon Maidstone's cultural history and distinct identity.

Connectivity is key to improving the visitor experience and providing clear accessible pedestrian routes across the town linking the disjointed heritage offer. Commissioned public art, which has a dual functionality, should be considered. Examples include trails and themes incorporated



into paving details, seating, drainage covers, and bollards. Street furniture should follow the Maidstone colour palette of black and gold for the Heritage/Historic Zone.

Coherence of approach and design will be critical to the success of the public realm improvements at both the North end of Week Street and Maidstone East station improvement programme. This gateway into the town should establish a sense of arrival and entrance and incorporate a public art feature, seating, lighting and planting to further enhance the already pedestrian friendly environment around Sessions Square.

Public realm improvements should demonstrate a quality of design that responds positively to the townscape, including ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the town centre's historic fabric

The public realm particularly along the waterfront should reflect on the riverside's historic era through heritage preservation, respecting iconic landmarks and developing more cultural functions and character.

### Negatives

Although Maidstone offers a rich history much of this is dispersed across the town centre with disjointed pedestrian access and neglected street scene.

Much of the core of the town centre is prioritised for pedestrians but in places the quality of the surfaces and street furniture have begun to deteriorate and the connections between different locations within the centre are not always clear and legible.





# Overarching themes

## Connectivity across the zones

Strategically located wayfinding should be used to connect the zones and historic sites giving places a clearer identity.

Public art should be used to assist in wayfinding with an artwork embedded into the hard landscaping, seating, signage or lighting. (Please refer to Public Art Guidance Appendix 2)

Visual links should be made across the town through the use of greenspaces, planting, defining gateways or natural squares in the public realm.

Themed trails should assist in activating and enhancing the visitor experience.

Direct footpaths for pedestrian and cycle access should be created to connect the town centre with the existing green spaces and riverside environment.

Improved lighting should be used to highlight historic buildings as well as opening up the network of dark alleys and cut throughs between streets.

Events should be programmed in areas where people naturally gather such as Jubilee Square and Sessions Square to create interest and increase footfall.

## Responding to Maidstone's heritage

Highlighting and integrating Maidstone's industrial and historic heritage into improvements and new developments should be a priority in public realm design.

They may include references to:

- Eminent people who have resided in the town and have contributed to significant changes in the world
- Key events that have shaped Maidstone's history
- Industries that have thrived in the town and contributed to different stages of the town's development.

Maidstone's architectural and original features and assets should be respected and retained and enhanced.

Any new elements in the public realm should be bold, contemporary interventions.

Public realm proposals should reinforce emerging aspirations to connect the town centre to the

river and provide areas for more activities and animation that will encourage visitors to discover the town's heritage and culture.

Soft landscaping in the public realm should be encouraged allowing for low maintenance planting that reflects Maidstone's heritage, introducing wildflowers/meadow mixes and native trees.





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## Continuity and Coherence

Continuity and coherence is needed in the public realm to avoid a patchwork of approaches.

Each zone is not strictly defined through its own distinct palette of materials. Instead, new public realm must draw upon a common palette of materials to suit its locality and historic/cultural references.

Materials for all sites should be selected for their durability and functionality as well as their appearance.

Materials sourced should be readily available beyond the life of the scheme to enable maintenance, repair and replacement of damaged areas.

The Conservation Area Appraisals provides guidance on materials, which vary considerably. The zones have their own unique qualities that can be developed to help give a sense of place. Design teams should use this as a basis for their own research.

## Considerations

Whilst developing the guide, stakeholders have defined some common sense principles in making the most of the public realm:

**Tidy up** – remove or replace broken street furniture.

**Declutter** – survey every piece of street furniture and remove redundant items.

**Rationalise** – where possible merge functions for example look at seating as a way of hiding utility boxes or combine signage and lighting.

**Maintenance** – refresh tired looking street furniture. Repair and maintain existing signs.

**Monitoring** – work with Street Cleansing and One Maidstone to encourage reporting or undertaking minor repairs as part of their role in maintaining the public realm.

## Street Furniture

Maidstone town centre is identified by a palette of blue and gold as a standard colour for street furniture except in the heritage zone where black and gold is permitted.

Street furniture must be consistent in terms of materials, finish and style. Even where items are sourced from different manufacturers, they should appear to be of a similar style and look. See Street Furniture Guidelines (Appendix 1).

Street furniture can be seen as an artwork integrated into the public realm as well as being functional. Commissions should take reference to cultural and historic heritage where appropriate. Please see examples in Maidstone Borough Council's Public Art Guidance (Appendix 2).

# Overarching themes



## Shop frontages

Shop fronts across the town centre vary in the quality of their appearance. The appearance of shop fronts should fit into their general surroundings and adhere to the conservation areas and listed buildings legal requirements and guidelines as set out by Maidstone Borough Council Planning department.

As part of public realm improvements shop fronts should ensure a sensitive choice to design and permitted use of material and colours. In addition a standard of maintenance should be adhered to and features of architectural significance should be preserved. Lively and attractive shop window displays should be encouraged.

## Case Study: The Golden Boot History

The Golden Boot was founded in Maidstone in 1790. Today, seven generations on, it's still in the hands of the same family and run by father and son team Lawrence Martin, Chairman and Edward Martin, Managing Director. The original site was at Number 36 Gabriel's Hill, opposite where the present shop is now sited. In 1845 the shop moved to number 25 and then, 35 years later, following a disastrous fire at the premises of Mr Ralph's the grocers, the business was moved into the newly built premises

on the site now occupied by the present Ladies department.

In 1845 workshops in Palace Yard were opened, where some twenty craftsmen were employed making half of the stock sold in the shop. About this time, the famous 6 foot Wellington boot was mounted on the front of the building. Most shoe shops of this period had this type of sign outside, but few remain today.

## Public Art in the Public Realm

Maidstone Borough Council has Public Art Guidance, which supports the view that public art can contribute to, emphasise and enhance Maidstone's unique heritage, cultural and natural assets.

Artists should actively be included in the designing of the public realm so that their contributions are meaningfully and sustainably integrated within the physical infrastructure of any improvement, development or regeneration scheme in the town centre.

Please refer to the Public Art Guidance (Appendix 2) for guidance on definitions of public art, commissioning, themes and maintenance.

## Case Study: The Louis Nolan Memorial

A bronze statue depicting Louis Edward Nolan on horseback forms a memorial placed outside former Ophthalmic Hospital, church Street, Maidstone. This fine example of bronze statue, black granite plaques and obelisk memorial made of Kentish Ragstone and Clipsham stone complements the palette of public realm materials within the regenerated site and the grade II listed building.

Louis Edward Nolan (4 January 1818 – 25 October 1854) was a British Army officer and cavalry tactician best known for his role in the Charge of the Light Brigade during the Crimean War. Nolan was educated in Tullin, where he was noted as an enthusiastic horseman and military theorist. His British Army career divided between Bangalor and Madras in India and the Cavalry Depot in Maidstone where he trained as a riding master.

A trusted voice on cavalry matters, Nolan was dispatched to the Middle East in the early days of the Crimean War to hunt for suitable horses. After returning, he was attached to the staff of General Richard Airey, and in this role delivered the order that led to the Charge of the Light Brigade.



# Acknowledgements

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Further information:

## 1. One Maidstone<sup>1</sup>

One Maidstone is a Community Interest Company that is dedicated to improving the trading environment in Maidstone and in so doing enhancing the town centre for residents and visitors.

## 2. Maidstone Town Centre Strategic Advisory Board<sup>2</sup>

The Maidstone Town Centre Strategic Advisory Board is made up of representatives from the private and public sector. The board's role is to support partnership working, stimulate investment and bring forward development in Maidstone town centre.

Archive images by kind permission of Maidstone Museum.

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Maidstone Borough Council

# **Street Furniture Guidelines**

## Street Furniture

Street furniture, well chosen and appropriately sited can enhance and complement their location discreetly. Carefully considered street furniture and materials can help achieve this by strengthening character, improving the quality of the streetscape and providing people with the things they need to enjoy the town, whilst at the same time having a positive impact on maintenance requirements and sustainability. Without careful consideration, street furniture can have the opposite effect.

The Street Furniture Guidelines (SFG) aims to ensure a consistent, co-ordinated and high quality approach to street furniture in Maidstone town centre. The SFG is designed for everyone who specifies and/or installs street furniture in the town centre. This includes Council officers, developers and contractors.

With advise on general principles, guidance, siting, and installing street furniture, it supports efforts to enhance the character, quality and fitness for purpose of Maidstone town centre's streetscape.

The SFG is based on the general philosophy that the town's public spaces should enhance rather than restrict the ability of all residents to enjoy them to their maximum potential.

## Policy Context

The Street Furniture Guidelines contribute to delivery of the town's Public Realm vision as set out in the Public Realm Design Guide. Maidstone Borough Council's (MBC) Local Plan sets out the overarching planning policy for the public realm under Council Policy DM1 Principals of good Design. The aims of DM1 most relevant to Street Furniture are:

- Respond positively to and where possible enhance, the local, natural or historic character of the area. Particular regard will be paid to scale, height, materials, detailing, mass, bulk, articulation and site coverage - incorporating a high quality, modern design approach and making use of vernacular materials where appropriate
- Create high quality public realm and, where opportunities permit, provide improvements, particularly in town centre locations.
- Provide a high quality design, which responds to areas of heritage, townscape and landscape value or uplifts an area of poor environmental quality.
- Incorporate measures for the adequate storage of waste, including provision for increasing recyclable waste
- Provide adequate vehicular and cycle parking to meet adopted council standards.

In addition the regeneration of Maidstone town centre is a priority as supported by Policy SP4. The aims of SP4 most relevant to Street Furniture are:

1. Development in the town centre should demonstrate a quality of design that responds positively to the townscape, including ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the town centre's historic fabric.
2. Contributes to the priority public realm and accessibility improvement schemes for the town centre identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

## Street Furniture Guidelines (SFG)

The SFG set out standard design and installation specifications for the elements that make up the streetscape along with the issues that should be considered when choosing and implementing them.

The following guidelines provide quick and easy access to key information relating to street furniture. Each section is divided into four key areas:

1. General principles that should inform decisions on street furniture.
2. Guidance on which type of street furniture should be used in which location.
3. Siting - guidance on the best locations for items of street furniture
4. Installation - guidance on correct methods of installing the item of street furniture (Please refer to the Westminster Standard and the New Roads and Street Works act 1991 section 50 to cover all legal questions).

### Street Furniture

#### General Principles

Street furniture can facilitate or encourage positive activity within the streetscape; such as seating or cycle stands. It can also prevent behaviour from occurring such as guardrails and bollards. As a general rule, only essential street furniture shall be introduced into the streetscape.

Where an item of street furniture is used to prevent behaviour (for example a bollard preventing vehicles from driving on and damaging a footway), consider whether the problem can be resolved in a different, less intrusive way (such as by strengthening the footway).

If new street furniture is absolutely necessary, consider whether it is able to fulfill a dual function. For example, a bin could be located to also prevent vehicles from damaging a pavement so that a separate bollard is not required.

Avoid including street furniture in a scheme to pre-empt a potential problem that may not actually happen.

Wherever possible, remove redundant items of street furniture when undertaking a project in an area. Consider whether new items of street furniture be combined with existing street furniture to minimise additional clutter. This also applies to utility junction boxes.

#### Guidance

To ensure consistent quality and character the choice of street furniture for Maidstone town centre should reflect either the standard item for MBC or the agreed character type for the specific zone in which it will be located. Formal furniture can also be commissioned as part of public art but this should be appropriate to the context and identity of the location, and the item must be agreed in advance with MBC's Design and Conservation Team.

Consideration should be given to retaining historic/heritage street furniture. Existing historic street furniture such as lamp columns, monuments and railings may be an important part of Maidstone's heritage. If in any doubt, check with the Council's Design and Conservation Team.

If considering replicating historic designs, ensure details are accurate and authentic.

Consider tonal contrasts between the item of street furniture and wider street-scene so as not to create hazards for visually impaired people.

Ensure all new items of street furniture are recorded on MBC's Asset Database, managed by the Street Scene Manager, Environmental Services Section. The Asset Database requires the location, make, model and manufacturer to enable easier future maintenance or replacement.

Always consider future maintenance implications of street furniture, minimalist solutions are also simple to maintain. All street furniture should be guaranteed to an industry standard of 5 years, but consideration should also be given beyond this time frame – please liaise with the Street Scene Manager, Environmental Services Section.

When undertaking any streetscape works caution must be applied in regard to the protection of tree roots and other underground elements such as utilities.

Where possible, any surfacing material reinstated during the fixing or removal of an item of street furniture should be the same as that used in the surrounding street, in terms of both colour and specification. Where this is not possible the replacement material should complement the primary existing surface material as closely as possible.

If unsure regarding installation always seek advice of Kent County Council's (KCC) Highway Services team or the New Roads and Street Works act 1991 section 50 to cover all legal questions when installing any element of furniture to ensure there is no impact on drainage or water flows.

Damaged street furniture should be repaired, replaced or removed at the earliest opportunity and replaced with like for like.

## **Public Seating**

### **General Principles**

When installing new seating consider the existing offer including: public (e.g. a bench), private (e.g. café), formal (something designed specifically for seating) and informal (something people sit on that is not designed for seating alone; such as steps or a wall) seating opportunities.

Upgrade existing benches if they are unfit for purpose when undertaking a scheme in an area.

### **Guidance**

Both formal and informal seating and can be provided through either an artistic commission or the defined standard for each zone. Where seating is provided through an artistic commission, guidance from the Public Art Policy should be applied.

## **Siting**

Identify a place that people actually want to sit.  
Ensure there is sufficient room on the footway to prevent the seating causing an obstruction.

Select a specific location for new seating, considering how users may benefit from the surroundings and sensory experiences.

Protect from unpleasant experiences such as wind, rain and in some instances vehicular traffic.

## **Installation**

As per Westminster Standard. Westminster Standard is adhered to by Maidstone Borough Council Environmental Services Section, and relates to the industry standards for Street Furniture.

## **Cycle Stands**

### **General Principles**

When installing cycle stands explore the surrounding area to determine whether there is an unmet demand, such as cycles attached to other street furniture.

Consider future proofing the scheme by adding more stands than may currently be required. Cycle stands should be installed in banks of 5.

Whenever cycle stands are being considered, contact the MBC's Transport Planning team for advice.

### **Guidance**

Stainless steel Zenith stands should be used in all locations.  
Any departure from the prescribed standard will need prior agreement with MBC's Transport Planning and Street Scene teams.

### **Siting**

Cycle stands should be placed in a visible position. Cycle stands should also be placed on cycle desire lines, and is located as close to the user's destination as possible. Ideally, cycle parking should be located within 25 metres of significant destinations (such as a railway station).

Cycle stands should be placed in a position where users feel it is safe to leave their bike, and also in a position where users feel safe at all times of the day. Overlooked, lively locations work better than deserted spaces.

Cycle stands must not impede pedestrian movement.

### **Installation**

As per Westminster Standard (as above)

## **Litter Bins**

### **General Principles**

Ensure necessary and practical bin provision is included as an integral part of the scheme design.

## **Guidance**

All bins throughout the town should be provided with integrated ashtrays (see picture). Please refer to the Street furniture database. Any deviation from the standard bin should be agreed in advance with Streetscene, Waste, Commercialisation and Operations Department.

## **Siting**

Bins should be located as close as possible to sources of rubbish generation, such as bus stops, benches and shop entrances and in positions that enable easy servicing access.

Where possible, site bins close to other items of street furniture (such as lamp columns or bus shelters) to reduce the area taken up by the street furniture collectively.

Bins should not be located in positions that obstruct pedestrian flow.

## **Installation**

The installation of standard MBC bins are overseen by the Street Scene Operations Manager, Environmental Services Section.

## ***Bollards***

### **General principles**

In general, the use of bollards should be avoided wherever possible – footway strengthening is always the preferable option. As a secondary use, bollards can be used help to protect upper buildings that overhang onto the public highway.

Wherever possible consider the removal of redundant bollards.

## **Guidance**

Suitably chosen and located bollards can make a positive contribution to the character of a street or area. The borough's standard bollard is set out in the Street Furniture Database where details of the correct historic bollard for each area of the town can also be found.

Choices in relation to materials and deviation from the standard or historic bollard type must be agreed in advance with Council's Maintenance and Design and Conservation teams (and anyone else considered relevant by those teams).

## **Siting**

When bollards are required, their location should not obstruct pedestrian desire lines.

Only use the minimum number of bollards necessary to achieve your objective.

Where more than one bollard is installed, bollards should line up with each other and be regularly spaced.

## **Installation**

Installation of bollards involves removal of the existing footway surface, setting the bollard in concrete foundations, and re-instatement of the footway surface.

When a bollard is reinstated, or a new bollard is provided, surface materials should be carefully re-laid and as close as possible to the primary existing surface material.

## **Lamp columns**

### **General Principles**

Street lighting forms a highly visible and vital part of the streetscape. Lighting is provided to enable safe use of the highway for road users and pedestrians and also helps to promote strong and safe communities. Lighting can also be a key element in successful regeneration projects and can provide an area with a strong visual identity. For Maidstone town centre lighting columns should have fixings for Christmas decorations and a power point.

KCC has a Street Lighting Strategy in place, which outlines the basic principles and standards applying to street lighting in Kent. Some lighting columns that exist in the town centre belong to MBC.

### **Guidance**

The standard colour for lighting columns is light grey (as defined in BS 4800 colour code 00 A O1). Maidstone town centre has adopted different colours for street furniture depending on the zone and therefore the columns may require a different colour. Water based paint in steel blue RAL 5011 and gold should be used as a standard across the town centre with the exception of a standard black & gold for the heritage and historic zone.

This will be agreed with MBC's Conservation Team and KCC prior to installation.

### **Siting**

Siting of guardrail will be governed by the specific requirements of each location, seek guidance from KCC.

### **Installation**

New lighting columns and lanterns must comply with Kent Design Guide and the KCC Street Lighting Policy and Strategy.

## ***Pedestrian Guardrails***

### **General Principles**

Guardrails can be unsightly, create a hostile environment for pedestrians and encourage higher vehicle speeds. They can also be expensive to maintain.

Guardrails should be avoided unless there is a clear evidence of its need. KCC provides guidance on procedures to inform provisions and removal of guardrails through their Highways Team.

### **Siting**

Siting of guardrail will be governed by the specific requirements of each location, seek guidance from KCC.

### **Installation**

As per KCC guidelines.

**For further guidance and advice please contact:**

Street Scene Operations Manager

Environmental Services Section

Maidstone Borough Council Depot, Bircholt Road, Park Wood Trading Estate,  
Maidstone, Kent ME15 9XY

W [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)

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