

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Monday 18 December 2017
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Butler, Ells (Vice-Chairman), Fort, Hastie,
Mrs Hinder, Lewins, Pickett (Chairman) and Mrs Wilson

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PUBLIC SPEAKING

In order to book a slot to speak at this meeting of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee, please contact 01622 602272 or by email on committeeservices@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. 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.

Issued on Friday 8 December 2017

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2017

Present: Councillor Pickett (Chairman) and Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Butler, Ells, Fort, Hastie, Lewins, Perry and Mrs Wilson

Also Present: Councillor Naghi

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies had been received from Councillor Mrs Hinder.

68. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Perry was present as a Substitute for Councillor Mrs Hinder.

69. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

70. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Naghi was present as a Visiting Member and indicated that he wished to speak on Agenda Item 12 – Reference from Policy and Resources Committee – Budget Monitoring – Parks and Open Spaces, Agenda Item 13 – Second Quarter Budget Monitoring 2017/18 and Agenda Item 14 – Key Performance Indicator Update Quarter 2 HCL.

71. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

72. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

73. EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

74. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2017

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

75. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

76. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

77. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the work programme for 2017/18.

It was noted that the Museum Future Governance Options Report would be presented to this Committee in January 2018 and not in December 2017.

RESOLVED: That the Committee work programme be noted.

78. REFERENCE FROM POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - BUDGET MONITORING - PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

The Committee agreed to take the reference in conjunction with Agenda Item 13 – Second Quarter Budget Monitoring 2017/18, as the items were related. Therefore, the discussion of the reference can be found in Agenda Item 13.

RESOLVED: That the reference be noted.

79. SECOND QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING 2017/18

The Head of Finance gave a presentation to the Committee relating to capital and revenue budgets and outturn within the Committee's remit for the second quarter of 2017/18. The Committee used the debate to consider the reference from Policy and Resources Committee (Agenda Item 12).

Councillor Naghi addressed the Committee on this item.

It was noted that:

- As of 30 September 2017, the budget for this Committee was reporting an overall under spend of £237,447 and the year-end position was forecasted to decrease to an under spend of £143,000.
- The slippage on Parks and Open Spaces capital schemes in the first quarter of the year was reported to Policy and Resources Committee on 20 September 2017. This Committee was asked to consider the slippage in relation to Mote Park and other parks.
- The Market had an adverse variance of £21,400 for the second quarter which had arisen from unachieved income in this area. The

most notable shortfall arose from the Tuesday market and this was a continuation of the trend noted in previous years and was reflective of the national picture.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development stated that:

- The slippage on Parks and Open Spaces capital schemes related only to non-urgent work to resurface the entry and exit roads into Mote Park and that this would be completed by the end of 2021 and within the 5 year capital programme.
- As the Market was currently operating under an unachievable income target it would be reassessed at the upcoming budget setting at Council.
- The private contractor had not yet taken over the operation of Mote Park Café due to the delay in exchanging contracts. The Officer was not concerned because the cafes were performing well and it was expected that the contracts would be exchanged soon.

The Committee raised concerns that parking machines were coming out of this Committee's budget but that the income from parking services was being placed under the remit of Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee. It was noted that it appeared that this Committee was paying a capital sum for a service for which it was not receiving a benefit. The Officer agreed to investigate the query and inform the Committee of the findings by email following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

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

80. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR UPDATE QUARTER 2 HCL

The Information and Corporate Policy Officer presented the Key Performance Indicator Update to the Committee and it was noted that, for this quarter:

- 20% (1) of targeted Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) achieved their target.
- For 50% of indicators, where previous data was available for comparison, performance improved compared to the same quarter last year.
- The reason that the three KPIs which related to the Museum and Visitor Information Centre had not reached their target was because

major refurbishment had taken place to install a new lift and the Ancient Lives Gallery at the Museum, which meant the closure of two of the Museum's galleries. The Officer advised the Committee that performance should therefore improve in the next quarter.

It was noted that the Committee were keen that any galleries or areas of the Museum which were closed for refurbishment in future should be managed to minimise the impact on performance.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development advised that:

- The target value for the percentage of all available tickets sold at the Hazlitt Theatre was what was included in the contract with Parkwood Leisure. The reason that the target for this KPI seemed low was because Parkwood Leisure had to ensure a varied programme of events and new and challenging shows.
- The performance indicator measure for the number of users at the Leisure Centre was targeted as a 5% increase on the value that was measured the year before. This was a contractual target.
- The Leisure Centre was diversifying the activities that were run in order to engage with new markets and to ensure that they were not losing out to the private sector.
- The contacts to the Visitor Information Centre included telephone enquiries, personal enquiries and email enquiries.
- The system which recorded the number of calls to the Visitor Information Centre had been out of order since July and there was a possibility of retrieving the missing data since the system had first been out of order. The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development agreed to inform Members why the system had been out of order following the meeting.
- A dedicated electronic visitor counting system had now been purchased for the three external entrances of Maidstone Museum. This would provide a more accurate record of footfall because it would count individuals in groups and would not miss people at busier times.

The Committee were concerned with the low values of KPIs which related to the Museum and Visitor Information Centre. The Committee requested that, as there was no meeting of this Committee in February, the summary of performance for Quarter 3 of 2017/18 be circulated to the Committee by email by the end of January 2018, before being reported to the Committee in March 2018. This would ensure that any trends found in the performance of KPIs would be detected before budget setting at Council took place.

RESOLVED:

1. That the summary of performance for Quarter 2 of 2017/18 for Key Performance Indicators be noted.
2. That the summary of performance for Quarter 3 of 2017/18 for Key Performance Indicators be circulated to the Committee by email by the end of January 2018.

81. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.31 p.m.

HCL Committee Work Programme 2017/18

Report Title	Work Stream	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Biodiversity Action Plan	New/Updates to Strategies & Policies	HCL	30/01/18	Jennifer Shepherd	
Museum Future Governance Options	Changes to Services & Commissioning	HCL	30/01/18	External	Victoria Barlow
Fees & Charges	Corporate Finance and Budgets	HCL	30/01/18	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Medium Term Financial Strategy & Budget Proposals 2018/19	Corporate Finance and Budgets	HCL	30/01/18	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Strategic Plan Action Plan 2018/19	Corporate Planning	HCL	30/01/18	Angela Woodhouse	Angela Woodhouse
Tourism Destination Management Plan - Progress Update	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	HCL	06/03/18	Dawn Hudd	Laura Dickson
Setting new Key Performance Indicators (please note that there will be workshops with each committee prior to the report in January/February)	Corporate Planning	HCL	06/03/18	Angela Woodhouse	Anna Collier
Q3 Performance Report 2017/18	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	HCL	06/03/18	Angela Woodhouse	Anna Collier
Third Quarter Budget Monitoring Report	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	HCL	06/03/18	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

18 DECEMBER 2017

Festival and Events Strategy Update

Final Decision-Maker	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	Dawn Hudd, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Laura Dickson, MCL Marketing & Sales Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

A reduction in council funding for Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) run events of £30k was agreed in 2016-17 as a budget saving over three years. Shemomedjamo has a three year plan for the event to become self-financing. If Proms in Park is to continue, an alternative funding model is required from 2018-19. The report sets out recommendations for this funding and provides a review of both council run events. The report also provides a review of other large events held on council land for information only.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That Proms in the Park becomes a paid for event through ticket sales and other commercial activities.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Heritage, Leisure and Culture Committee	18 December 2017

Festival and Events Strategy Update

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 MBC currently supports two events per year both financially and with officer time: Proms in the Park and the multi-cultural Food Festival, Shemomedjamo. Core funding for events is being reduced by £10,000 per year for 3 years from 2017-18. By 2020-21 the MBC funding of these events will be zero.
- 1.2 On 29 November 2016 Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee agreed to outsource a new 2-3 day multicultural event and food festival to an external provider with a reducing subsidy over 3 years so it becomes self-financing. The contract was awarded to Event Umbrella and the new event is branded as Shemomedjamo.
- 1.3 Also, on 29 November 2016 Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee agreed to continue supporting Proms in the Park but to look for alternative funding to reduce the Council's contribution and to delay the decision on the introduction of ticketing for 12 months. Should Proms in the Park continue in 2018 and beyond, a new funding model must be introduced.

Proms in the Park

- 1.4 Proms in the Park is funded by MBC. Parkwood Leisure who run the Hazlitt Theatre, provide the event management as part of their contract. MBC provide Parkwood Leisure with £14,000 for delivery of the event as well as MBC staff resource in planning and marketing for the event.
- 1.5 This year the event took place on the Saturday 27th May 2017, the bank holiday weekend, with Maidstone Wind Symphony providing the headline performance. In addition to Maidstone Wind Symphony, Invicta Jazz, Hazlitt Choir and Youth Theatre performed. Following demand for more family entertainment Boogie Monsters entertained younger family members. Approximately 1,800-2,000 people attended the event.
- 1.6 There has been no increase to the Proms budget in recent years to cover a rise in costs. The current budget covers costs of the event excluding marketing.
- 1.7 It is not financially viable to run Proms on the existing model in 2018. Additional income is required to support the event and by 2020 it will require to be completely self-financing. Investigations into future sponsorship of the event have not been successful. The event is regarded as too short in length with a small and unguaranteed audience and is therefore not considered to be a viable proposition for potential sponsors. MBC also does not have the staff resource to pursue sponsorship further.

1.8 The value of the event to the local economy has been calculated using the eventIMPACTS¹ model. As a non-ticketed event there is less information to input. However it has been possible to estimate the value using the information on the audience demographic from the 2016 survey of the event, and using the average day visitor spend figure from the Economic Impact of Tourism in Maidstone 2015 report. The value to the local economy is estimated at £24,080.

Shemomedjamo

1.9 Shemomedjamo, the new multicultural food festival was held in Mote Park from the 1-3rd September. Around 9,000 visitors attended the event over the 3 days.

1.10 Event Umbrella is the appointed event management company for the 3 year contract. They have considerable knowledge in event delivery that includes the management of multiple traders and food fairs, delivering events on behalf of local government and delivering large scale events across the South East. The festival included a quality programme of music and entertainment from across the globe, both traditional and current.

1.11 Although the event took place during the school holidays Friday was rather quiet, so a change of the dates for 2018 is planned. It will now take place on the August bank holiday weekend therefore avoiding conflict with the Faversham Hop and Beer Festival which has the same target audience and was on the same weekend in 2017.

1.12 In year one there have been lessons learned and a number of operational changes were discussed with the Event Umbrella during the debrief of the event. A number of improvements will be put in place for year two including amended layout, signage and marketing. Many community groups declined the invitation to take part, although it is hoped that they will re-consider in year two.

1.13 In essence year one of the contract has been successful and the funding model is anticipated to be achieved by the end of year three.

1.14 The value of the event to the local economy has been calculated using the eventIMPACTS model. However as a non-ticketed event there is less information to input although accurate attendance figures were recorded. However it has been possible to estimate the value by using the average day visitor spend figure from the Economic Impact of Tourism in Maidstone 2015 report and the organisers spend figures. The value to the local economy is estimated at £298,000.

Large Events in MBC Venues

1.15 Festivals and events directly support tourism and the economic impact of events benefits the borough as outlined in the council's Economic Development Strategy. The Tourism Destination Management Plan identifies

¹ eventIMPACTS is the result of a collaboration between Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Discover Northern Ireland, EventScotland, London & Partners, UK Sport and Welsh Government.

events as one of the key growth areas that will drive more visitors to the borough.

Big Day Out

- 1.16 The Big Day Out, run by Social Events Worldwide was held on Saturday 1st July in Mote Park. It was reduced from a two day event in 2016 to one day in 2017. It is a family focussed music festival with entertainment including Diversity and X factor winner Louisa Johnson
- 1.17 Over 11,500 people enjoyed the event, the adults to children ratio 50:50. There was a wide range of children's entertainment, dance and music acts.
- 1.18 Four noise complaints were received by the council regarding the event. No complaints were received by the event organiser during the event. The noise monitoring report shows that the noise levels were not breached at any time and were in fact considerably lower than the limits of the licence.
- 1.19 Using the full EventIMPACTs Model with data provided by the event organiser, the economic impact of this event on the local economy is estimated at £697,000.

Community Mela

- 1.20 The Community Mela was organised by Cohesion Plus following the committee's decision to adopt the new multi-cultural festival model. Although invited to tender for the new event and subsequently invited to take part by the Event Umbrella, the previous Mela committee, through Cohesion Plus, decided to organise an independent event and apply for Arts Council funding. MBC accepted and supported their decision through a free let of Whatman Park and substantial marketing. Many of the community groups are loyal to the Mela organiser although it is hoped that they will participate in more than one event in future and engage with Shemomedjamo.

Ramblin' Man Fair

- 1.21 Ramblin' Man run by Spirit of Rock Ltd was held on the 27th–30th July. This was the second year that this promoter has run the event since taking over the brand. This year there were additional performances on Friday night to provide entertainment predominately for the campers and glampers on site.
- 1.22 Glamping was offered on site and live in vehicle camping were able to book pitches. There was additional camping on the Mote Cricket Club and the Rugby Club fields. All the hotels in the borough and beyond were fully booked. Day parking was available at the grammar school, keeping the parking at Mote Park free for park users.
- 1.23 There were 21,000 attendees over the 3 days coming from all over the world including Chile, Japan and Australia. 27% of the audience were from Kent. There were 3,000 people on the Friday night, 7,500 on Saturday and 10,500 on Sunday for the headline act ZZ Top. 75% of attendees purchased

a weekend ticket staying in accommodation in and around Maidstone for at least 2 nights.

- 1.24 The value of the event to the local economy has been calculated using the full eventIMPACTS model and inputting the data provided by the event organiser. The value to the local economy is estimated at over £2.8m
- 1.25 The council received 26 Stage 1 complaints compared to 45 in 2016. All complaints were about noise. The event line which was active during the event was well publicised, the event organisers received 56 complaints some repeat, and 5 of which were anonymous. There had 31 noise complaints on Friday, 11 before the festival started, and 5 of those before the sound check took place. There were 8 complainants from Audley Homes, some of whom contacted the event line more than once. The organisers responded by sending the noise monitoring company to these locations. The noise monitoring report shows that the music noise levels were compliant.
- 1.26 One of the noise complaints wasn't in fact a complaint but a resident saying they could hear ZZ Top and were thinking about coming next year. Another Mote Park resident talked to the noise monitoring officer on site to say he had been to look at the event, thought it was great and to make sure it was clear that not all residents were against it.
- 1.27 There is a perception by most people that if they can hear any sound from an event then it is noisy. Sound is subjective and in many cases it is unwanted at the point of reception but that does not necessarily make it too loud.
- 1.28 Councillor English undertook a survey of his ward along with other High Street Ward councillors. 53 responses were received and of those responses 49 favoured continuing the Ramblin Man Event at Mote Park, 1 did not offer a view and 3 were opposed.

Oktoberfest

- 1.29 Oktoberfest, a German beer festival took place on 14th and 15th October. There were three sessions, Friday evening, Saturday afternoon and Saturday evening. Entertainment was based on an Oomph band and DJ playing singalong songs. In total 9,000 people enjoyed the event. The audience consisted of over 18s only and included family groups with parents and grandparents especially on the Friday night and Saturday afternoon. There were large groups of friends, many getting into the spirit of the event by wearing lederhosen and other costumes. The ticketholder average age was 35.
- 1.30 The council received 10 noise complaints. This event was a Category B event with lower noise limits set. Although the organiser did not breach the noise limits the event did appear to some to be louder than expected on the Friday night. MBC did request that they re-check the background noise levels in the evening. An MBC event officer was on site during the event and liaised with the noise monitoring company. The sound that carried

outside the park was mainly the hearty singing and cheering of the audience.

- 1.31 The economic impact of this event using the EventIMPACTs model and data provided by the event organiser is estimated at £793,000.
- 1.32 Councillor English and the other High Street Ward councillors undertook a survey of residents following a small number of complaints made directly to them. The overall public view is that the event should continue, is positive for Maidstone, and is useful in bringing in visitors.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Proms in the Park will become a paid for event through ticket sales and other commercial activities.
- 2.2 Proms in the Park will no longer supported by MBC.

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Proms in the Park will become a paid for event through ticket sales and other commercial activities.

Proms Survey

In the 2016 report the results of a survey of the Proms audience were provided to gauge views on a number of issues. This was not a full consultation but a simple survey of attendees.

One of the questions was to get their view on future ticketing prices to attend the event. Over 60 questionnaires were completed.

The key results were:

- 28% were not Maidstone residents.
- 54% would be prepared to pay £5 or less for a ticket, 7% would pay up to £10, 16% would not pay. Another 11% would pay if there were fireworks.
- 13% had a friend or family member taking part.

The number of attendees is modest in comparison to the cost to run the event which is calculated at £7-£10 per person. The survey also suggests that a third of the audience were not Maidstone residents, although they are benefiting from an MBC funded event. However it is recognised the economic benefit visitors bring to the town.

Royal Wedding Opportunity

In 2018 Proms will take place on the same day as the royal wedding. This could be an opportunity to provide additional bolt-on events in Whatman Park that day. This could be achieved for instance by adding a big screen in the park with a live stream of the wedding, or to show a children's open air cinema in the afternoon. A night time open air cinema could take place after the proms. Using an LED screen would allow the proceeding to be viewed in daylight. By extending the event, or breaking it into component parts, there

is potential to attract commercial vendors who will pay for a pitch at the event.

4. RISK

- 4.1 Introducing ticketing may reduce the number of attendees. As this is an outdoor event, attendees may wish to wait for weather reports before the decision to purchase tickets. Ticket sales may be very last minute which could be risky.
- 4.2 There is a reputational risk to the council should Proms be cancelled.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 In 2016 Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee agreed that alternative funding for Proms in the Park be sought but to delay the decision on the introduction of ticketing for 12 months.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 If this Committee agreed to the introduction of ticketing, then an event plan incorporating ticket sales will be put into place
- 6.2 A marketing communications plan will be developed to support the decision.
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7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	MBC run events contribute to Priority 1 of the Strategic Plan – Keeping Maidstone and attractive place for all: Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.
Risk Management	The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council’s Risk Management Framework. [That consideration is shown in this report at 4]. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.

	Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.	
Financial	The Festivals and Events budget has already been agreed as a saving therefore continuing with the current arrangements are not an option.	[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]
Staffing	None	
Legal	None	[Legal Team]
Privacy and Data Protection	None	[Legal Team]
Equalities	None	[Policy & Information Manager]
Crime and Disorder	None	[Head of Service or Manager]
Procurement	None	[Head of Service & Section 151 Officer]

8. REPORT APPENDICES

None.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

**HERITAGE, CULTURE AND
LEISURE COMMITTEE**

**18 DECEMBER
2017**

Commemorative Plaques Scheme

Final Decision-Maker	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Dawn Hudd, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Councillor Pickett, Chairman of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

To consider introducing a Commemorative Plaques Scheme, unique to Maidstone, as a means of celebrating local heritage and the historic environment.

This report makes the following recommendations to the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee:

1. That the introduction of the Commemorative Plaques Scheme be agreed.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee	18 December 2017

Commemorative Plaques Scheme

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 There are a number of commemorative plaque schemes in place across the country. Most notable is London's 'Blue Plaque' Scheme, administered by English Heritage. It is seen as a prestigious accolade, which is part of the scheme's success.
- 1.2 Plaques are an effective and visible means of celebrating local heritage and the historic environment. They tangibly connect the past and present, increasing pride among local communities and giving a sense of place to residents and visitors.
- 1.3 Plaques can also play an important conservation role, helping to highlight buildings with historic associations and support their preservation.
- 1.4 Maidstone already has a number of plaques and monuments of historical and cultural significance (see figure 1).



Figure 1

- 1.5 Past and current members of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee are advocates of implementing a local scheme in Maidstone.
- 1.6 Members of the Committee are also keen to ensure that there is a mechanism for larger scale memorials to be considered along with proposals for names to be added on the roll of honour in the Town Hall chamber.
- 1.7 Research into schemes across the country has been undertaken and consideration given to English Heritage's guidance.
- 1.8 The draft guidance for Maidstone's Commemorative Plaque Scheme and application form (Appendix A) have been designed around the criteria set out by English Heritage and best practice.
- 1.9 The guidance and application form takes into consideration the following findings:
 - Local commemorative plaque schemes should have a sense of distinctiveness and unity. This will help ensure that appropriate levels of funding are sought.
 - The scheme must be funded by the person or group proposing the plaque.
 - Local authorities have statutory responsibilities to fulfil as part of the process.

- Part of the success of the scheme is a well-publicised unveiling ceremony – which is something the council can assist with.
- 1.10 The alternative to a local commemorative plaque scheme is to allow plaques to be placed in and around the borough without the council's input.
 - 1.11 In June 2017 a 'blue plaque' was unveiled in the Royal Star arcade, one of three commemorations to David Bowie as part of BBC Music Day. An organisation called the British Plaque Trust, also known as 'Open Plaques', was responsible for this.
 - 1.12 The unveiling ceremony attracted a lot of positive publicity in the [local](#)ⁱ and [national](#)ⁱⁱ press. It served to raise the profile of Maidstone as well as the building, the Royal Star Arcade. The articles highlighted Bowie's historical association with the building which in turn served to emphasise the history of the building. It is now more widely known, for example, that the Royal Star Arcade was once known as the Star Hotel. This 16th Century hotel was given the royal seal of approval and the royal prefix following a visit from a young Queen Victoria in the 19th Century. It was also where Benjamin Disraeli made his parliamentary acceptance speech after being elected MP for Maidstone.
 - 1.13 There are a number of national schemes already in place that interested parties could link into. Blue plaques, although synonymous with London, are seen across the county and can be used to create local memorials.
 - 1.14 Open Plaques provides the necessary resources on its website to enable proposals to be taken forward. The Council could simply signpost residents, via the website, to this organisation rather than administrate its own scheme.
 - 1.15 In this scenario, the Council would have no involvement other than through its statutory responsibilities which would involve matters including planning and listed building consent which is the extent of its current role and commitment but it would be enabling interested parties through its signposting of national websites.
 - 1.16 However, successful, local schemes require a strong, individual identity. An assortment of memorials without unity can be detrimental to the architectural landscape and detract from, rather than enhance, individual commemorations.
 - 1.17 The plaque installed as part of BBC Music Day illustrates the positive impact a Commemorative Plaque Scheme can have but it also demonstrates the need for continuity.
 - 1.18 Current strategies do not include a commemorative plaque scheme; therefore there is no funding or resources allocation available to deliver one.
 - 1.19 A local commemorative plaque 'protocol' could be achieved by the proposed scheme, detailed at Appendix A. It would have a minimal impact on resources and therefore would require no additional funding. Its impact

however, would be significant in terms of the council and primarily members of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee becoming public advocates of a scheme and an expected standard.

2 AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Committee could decide to not progress a plaque scheme.
 - 2.2 The Committee could agree that sign posting interested parties to existing organisations like English Heritage and Open Plaques where they can find information and resources to commission a commemorative plaque, namely a blue style plaque, would be a sufficient.
 - 2.3 Implement a local Commemorative Plaque Scheme that is unique to Maidstone to celebrate and preserve Maidstone's history.
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3 PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council adopts its own commemorative plaque scheme.
 - 3.2 Maidstone has a rich history and has a high profile as the historic County town of Kent. A Commemorative Plaque Scheme would help raise the cultural and historical profile of Maidstone and Kent locally and nationally. The proposed scheme could be administrated within existing resources and with the advocacy of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee could achieve successful outcomes.
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4 RISK

- 4.1 There is currently no scheme or guidance in place for Commorative Plaques in Maidstone.
 - 4.2 Whilst the Commemorative Plaque installed as part of BBC Music Day illustrates the positive impact a Commemorative Plaque Scheme can have, it also demonstrates the need for continuity.
 - 4.3 Successful schemes have a strong, individual identity. The risk of not having a scheme in place is that an assortment of memorials could be installed. This could be detrimental to the architectural landscape and detract, rather than enhance, individual commemorations.
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5 CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 This report has been brought forward with the backing of past and present members of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee who feel that local Councillors have an important role to play in preserving and celebrating Maidstone's many historical attributes.
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6 NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 If the preferred option is agreed, the Museums team will take the scheme forward on behalf of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee, putting the appropriate processes in place with the Democratic Services team and the Digital team.
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7 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Accepting the recommendations will improve the Council's ability to deliver on its priority to 'keep Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all' and fulfil its objective, set out in the Strategic Plan to respect the character and heritage of our Borough.	Dawn Hudd, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Risk Management	The proposed Commemorative Plaque Scheme will provide guidance on commemoration and will help ensure that Maidstone's future commemorations are an enhancement to the architectural and cultural landscape.	Dawn Hudd, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Financial	The recommended option will be met within existing resources but should committee consider administering the scheme in another way there will be funding implications	[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing	Dawn Hudd, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Legal	None identified. The applicant will have a legal duty to fulfil as stated in the application form and the Council will fulfil its statutory obligations	Dawn Hudd, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development

Privacy and Data Protection	The processes implemented to deal with the administrative functions of this scheme will be compliant with privacy and data protection legislation. This will aid organisational compliance.	Dawn Hudd, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Equalities	The guidance and application form will be provided in alternative formats, on request. There is no detrimental impact identified.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Crime and Disorder	No impact identified.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Procurement	There is no requirement for procurement for any of the options proposed.	Dawn Hudd, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development

8 REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix A: Commemorative Plaques Scheme and Application form

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Newspaper articles (links as below).

ⁱ <http://www.kentonline.co.uk/maidstone/news/david-bowies-legacy-commemorated-with-127328/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/jun/15/david-bowie-three-blue-plaques-bbc-music-day>

Maidstone already has a number of plaques and monuments of historical and cultural significance. Plaques are an effective and visible means of celebrating Maidstone's heritage and our historic environment, tangibly connecting past and present, increasing pride among local communities and giving a sense of place to residents and visitors. Plaques can also play an important conservation role, helping to highlight buildings with historic associations and support their preservation.



Nominate an individual

This scheme commemorates people and events who have contributed to the rich cultural heritage of Maidstone.

To be commemorated, a person should have lived or worked in Maidstone for at least five years, and at least 10 years should have passed since the anniversary of their death. An individual may not be commemorated on more than one plaque within this scheme. An event should have passed its 25th anniversary and have proven significance to the history of Maidstone.

This is a Maidstone scheme, so we can only consider proposals for plaques that are sited within the administrative boundaries of Maidstone Borough Council. Please read the additional assessment criteria below before completing the nomination form.

Assessment criteria

To commemorate a person

At least 10 years should have passed since their death.

They should be:

- Sufficiently famous to be familiar to the succeeding generation or be regarded as sufficiently significant within their field.
- Their achievements must have made a lasting and significant contribution.
- The building on which the plaque will be fixed must be directly related to the proposed person, and they must have lived or worked there for at least 5 years

In addition, please note that:

- Plaques will not normally be installed on hotels or public venues (e.g. concert halls) where connections with the building were transitory.
- A person cannot be commemorated on more than one plaque within the Council's scheme.

To commemorate an event

- The event should have happened at least 25 years ago.
- The event should be instantly recognisable to many of the general public.

- The event should be of special historical interest or significance in the history of Maidstone or the country as a whole.
- The building proposed for installation must be directly related to the event.

Additional considerations

- The proposal will be considered and approved by the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee.
- The Committee will only approve plaques that will be visible to passers-by.
- You will need the agreement of the building owner.
- Exceptional cases will be considered on their merits, subject to the submission of a thoroughly researched and justified case.

Funding

Unfortunately, there is no budget to pay for the costs of plaques, so proposals can only be taken forward if the proposer or supporting group is able to meet costs.

Costs could include

- The making of the plaque (usually around £500 each).
- The installation of the plaque (usually around £200 depending on the type of building).
- Any legal costs (e.g. indemnification of building owner).
- Research and validation (if required).
- Any special costs around listed building consent or other planning consents.
- The cost of an unveiling event (if required).
- Ongoing maintenance and repair.

In addition, please note that:

- The Council's preferred plaque design is smooth Grey slate 18" [460mm] x 18" [460mm] x 1.25" [30mm]. Inscription to be "v" cut in the stone in Times Roman style and letters enamelled in light grey. Prominent features such as a named person or event should be gilded using 23crt gold letters.
- The inscription should be clear, simple and accurate – do not create a false history, make sure all the information is correct.
- The inscription should be approximately 19 words.
- Where plaques are funded by specific bodies, the name may also be included in the design.

Applications will also be considered for larger scale memorials and additions to the roll of honour in the Town Hall Chamber.

The Council's jurisdiction

- The council will co-ordinate the scheme.
- All proposals will be considered by the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee as advocates of the scheme.
- The Council will fulfill its statutory duties as part of the scheme.
- It will provide complimentary PR at the unveiling ceremony.
- The council will promote the scheme via its website.

Organisations that can provide guidance and expertise

[English Heritage](#)

[Open Plaques](#)

Commemorative Plaque Nomination Form

Applicant details

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

Email:

Details of Plaque

What person or event is to be commemorated?

What is the significance of this person or event?

What links the building to the person or event? (Please include dates where possible),

What is the address of the building that has been identified for the plaque?

Who is the building owner?

Has consent been obtained by the owner? Yes No

If yes please provide written confirmation from the owner).

Suggested wording for the plaque

Are you willing to fund this proposal?

Please give details of secured funding and any commitment to raise funds.

Does your proposal have additional support form community or other groups?

Please return completed form to: The Museum's Director, Maidstone Museum, St Faith's Street, Maidstone ME14 1LH