

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 26 November 2019
Time: 6.30 p.m.
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Bartlett, Mrs Blackmore (Vice-Chairman), Cox, Fort, Mrs Gooch, Harper (Chairman), B Hinder, Lewins and Webb

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

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Notification of Substitute Members	
3. Urgent Items	
4. Notification of Visiting Members	
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
6. Disclosures of Lobbying	
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.	
8. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2019	1 - 4
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
10. Question and Answer Session for Members of the Public	
11. Committee Work Programme	5
12. Presentation by Mr Ken Scott (Maidstone Area Arts Partnership)	
13. Arts and Culture Strategy	6 - 51
14. Amendment to the Festivals and Events Policy	52 - 77

Issued on Monday 18 November 2019

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

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In order to speak at this meeting, please contact Democratic Services using the contact details above, by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. Friday 22 November 2019). 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.

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

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to the Policy and Resources Committee, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by three Councillors, to the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance by: 12 November 2019.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER 2019

Present: Councillors Bartlett, Mrs Blackmore, Cox, Fissenden, Fort, Mrs Gooch, Harper (Chairman), Hinder and Mortimer

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from:

- Councillor Webb
- Councillor Lewins

54. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:

- Councillor Mortimer for Councillor Webb
- Councillor Fissenden for Councillor Lewins

55. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

56. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

57. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

58. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Councillors stated that they had been lobbied on Item 12. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21-2024/25.

59. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

60. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

61. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

62. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

63. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development informed the Committee that the Draft Arts and Cultural Strategy was to be considered on 26 November 2019. Further information had become available, which was expected to enrich the work. Therefore, additional time was needed to incorporate the new data into the strategy.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

64. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020/21-2024/25

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement explained that the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had not changed significantly. It had instead been adjusted to reflect recent shifts in strategic priorities, arising from the Council resolution on 10 April 2019 which recognised climate change and biodiversity emergencies. It was stated that central government funding arrangements were to be maintained for the next year. Therefore, if council tax was increased to reflect inflation and current savings targets were delivered, it was possible for Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to continue to deliver all current services. The possibility of expanding the capital programme, providing that the cost of borrowing money was acceptable, was highlighted.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement replied that:

- MBC continued to explore commercial property investment opportunities. As all investments carried risk, capital investments were required to meet strict criteria prior to implementation.
- MBC had historically invested in the Borough, as this provided additional benefits to the local economy.
- The remaining funding for the Bridges Gyrotory System was allocated to a flood defence barrier.
- The introduction of 75% business rates retention was likely to be accompanied by additional responsibilities for local authorities.

Therefore, it was not anticipated that this would result in additional funding for the Council.

The Committee considered the merits of allocating funds to facilitate the relocation of the Maidstone Mela to Mote Park. It was stated that alternative approaches to funding the Maidstone Mela, such as external sponsorship and devolved Member budgets, were to be considered. The Committee requested that the event organiser, Cohesion Plus, be invited to present a business case on 26 November 2019.

RESOLVED: That the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 – 2024/25 be noted.

65. 2ND QUARTER BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 2019/20

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement explained that the Committee was expected to remain within its overall net revenue expenditure budget for the year, while there was a £2.29m slippage in the capital budget. This slippage related to projects undertaken at Mote Park. The Data Intelligence Officer stated that five of eight Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had achieved the quarterly target.

In response to questions from the Committee, Officers said that:

- Alternative ways of funding the Maidstone Museum were being explored, as there was uncertainty regarding the funding that had been provided by the Arts Council.
- A footfall counter was in operation at Week Street between HSBC and the Metro Bank. Although it only accounted for one area, this provided a good indication of the general footfall in the high street.

The Committee commented that:

- The football attraction at Maidstone Museum had been a success.
- Consideration could be given to how data collected by third parties could be used to inform the measurement of KPIs.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 2 for 2019/20, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted.
2. The Capital position at the end of Quarter 2 be noted; and
3. The Performance position as at Quarter 2 for 2019/20, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted.

66. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.41 p.m.

2019/20 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Presentation by Cohesion Plus (Maidstone Mela)	ERL	17-Dec-19	Cohesion Plus	Cohesion Plus
Town Centre Opportunity Sites Delivery Strategies	ERL	28-Jan-20	William Cornall	John Foster
Draft Budget Proposals 2020/21	ERL	28-Jan-20	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove
Economic Development Strategy Review	ERL	03-Mar-20	John Foster	John Foster
Q3 Budget and Performance Monitoring	ERL	03-Mar-20	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove/ Anna Collier
Annual Reports of Outside Bodies and Consideration of Outside Bodies for the Next Municipal Year	ERL	03-Mar-20	Angela Woodhouse	TBC
Maidstone East (incl. recommendation to P&R)	ERL	TBC	William Cornall	John Foster
Mote Park Visitor Centre and Estates Service Building	ERL	TBC	William Cornall	John Foster

Agenda Item 13

Economic Regeneration & Leisure

26 November 2019

Arts & Culture Strategy

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

Executive Summary

Following the appointment of an Arts & Culture Officer in February 2019, an audit of active arts and cultural organisations has been carried out to better understand the cultural ecology of the borough.

The results of this audit have been combined with previous research to produce a new Arts & Culture Strategy and action plan for the borough.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Arts & Culture Strategy and Action Plan be adopted

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration and Leisure	26 November 2019

Arts and Culture Strategy

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p>Impact on Corporate Priorities</p>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendation will materially improve the Council’s ability to achieve ‘A Thriving Place’ through supporting high quality arts and cultural venues and events that are accessible by all; and through cultural place-making to increase pride in our communities.</p> <p>Accepting the recommendation will materially improve the Council’s ability to achieve ‘Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure’ by developing skills, knowledge and academic achievement, providing a highly skilled workforce for local businesses.</p> <p>Accepting the recommendation will materially improve the Council’s ability to achieve ‘Safe, Clean and Green’ by providing opportunities for inter-cultural and inter-generational learning, fostering greater understanding and more tolerant communities.</p> <p>Accepting the recommendation will materially improve the Council’s ability to achieve ‘Homes and communities’ by providing opportunities for people to try new things and learn new skills, co-creating activities that address specific local needs.</p>	<p>John Foster, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development</p>
<p>Cross Cutting Objectives</p>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and 	<p>John Foster, Head of Regeneration and Economic</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;">Reduced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendation supports the achievement of the 'Heritage is Respected' cross-cutting objective by raising awareness of the town's history and heritage and a programme of cultural place-making.</p> <p>The report recommendation supports the achievement of the 'Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced' cross-cutting objective by helping to reduce social isolation and delivering improvements in physical and mental health for target groups.</p> <p>The report recommendation supports the achievement of the 'Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved' cross-cutting objective by promoting activities designed to address barriers to participation and providing opportunities for people to develop their skills, knowledge and academic achievement.</p> <p>The report recommendation supports the achievement of the 'Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected' cross-cutting objective by supporting events and activities that encourage greater understanding of the natural environment and how to protect it.</p>	Development
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to paragraph 5 of this report 	John Foster, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting the recommendation will require additional funding in order to deliver certain items within the action plan. We plan to fund that spending as set out in the Action Plan (Appendix 1). • To extend the role of Arts and Culture Officer to deliver the action plan will require £37,750 in salary and on-costs for a further 12 months, or £56,625 for a 	Section 151 Officer & Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager

	further 18 months. This will be paid for out of the Kent Business Rates Pool.	
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will deliver the recommendation with our current staffing. 	John Foster, Head of Regeneration & Economic Development
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations in the report and the Arts and Culture Strategy align with the Council's general duty, under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 as a best value authority, to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. It is a function of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee to take the lead within the Council for ensuring that the Council delivers its strategic objectives with respect to Maidstone as a decent place to live by providing opportunities for engagement in cultural and leisure pursuits and, therefore, it falls to this Committee to consider the Arts and Culture Strategy report. 	Keith Trowell, Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Privacy and Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting the recommendation will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules. 	Anna Collier, Policy and Information Manager
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise the recommendation may have varying impacts on different communities within Maidstone. Therefore we have completed a separate equalities impact assessment at Appendix 2 	Orla Sweeney, Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that the recommendation will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. 	Paul Clarke, Senior Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendation of this report has no impact on Crime and Disorder 	John Foster, Head of Regeneration

		& Economic Development
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On accepting the recommendation, the Council will then follow procurement exercises for procurement of materials and services where necessary to deliver specific objectives within the action plan. We will complete these exercises in line with financial procedure rules. 	John Foster, Head of Regeneration & Economic Development

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In October 2015, the Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee agreed to support further work on culture and heritage in the borough following a consultation carried out by Nick Ewbank Associates. The Museum’s new 20-Year Plan addresses much of the heritage, but the arts and culture have not been equally considered.
- 2.2 In 2018 the Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee proposed that funding be allocated to support a 12-month fixed term Arts & Culture Officer. An officer was subsequently appointed and in post from February 2019.
- 2.3 In order to understand the current arts and cultural offer in the borough, an audit was carried out to identify as many existing arts and cultural organisations as possible. These included commercial enterprises as well as community groups and voluntary organisations. Meetings were also held with various cultural organisations, collectives, individual artists and freelance creatives to ascertain their views.
- 2.4 It is clear that our arts and cultural assets have an important role to play in the borough’s ambitions. They are strong drivers for economic growth and regeneration, offering wide-ranging benefits to our society and the health and wellbeing of residents, as well as contributing to a sense of place.
- 2.5 There are strong links with the Council’s Strategic Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Destination Management Plan, Festivals and Events Policy and the Museum Transformation Plan.
- 2.6 To ensure we maximise the potential benefits that arts and culture can bring, it is recommended that the formal Arts and Culture strategy set out at Appendix 1 be adopted, along with the action plan for delivery.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee may choose to keep the status quo. This is **not recommended** as it will result in missed opportunities to celebrate our history and culture, and to capitalise on the many other potential benefits arts and culture can bring to the borough.

- Lack of access to high quality arts and cultural experiences, particularly in early years, can restrict people's life chances. Research from Arts Council England (ACE) shows that children from low income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree. Those who engage at secondary school are twice as likely to volunteer in the community and 20% more likely to vote as young adults.
- Opportunities to attract inward investment will diminish without a vibrant arts and cultural offer.
- Our ability to attract and retain creative talent will be restricted, particularly as surrounding areas, such as Medway and Canterbury, continue to strengthen their creative hubs.
- Opportunities to improve health outcomes and reduce social isolation will be limited without access to high quality arts and cultural activities.

3.2 The Committee may choose to adopt the strategy and action plan.

Arts and culture have the potential to deliver wide-ranging benefits to our economy, our society and the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Economic benefits

- The Creative Industries is the fastest growing sector of the UK economy, with arts and culture contributing £10.6 billion.
- Culture brings around £850m to the UK, through tourism, each year.
- Maidstone attracts over 4.5m visits per year with over £284m spent in the local economy.
- Tourism accounts for around 8% of total employment in the borough.
- A thriving arts and cultural scene can also attract inward investment.

Social benefits

Participating in arts and culture can:

- promote community cohesion by developing a shared sense of local identity and pride in communities
- help develop skills, knowledge and academic achievement, creating a skilled workforce for local businesses
- increase an individual's confidence and self-esteem, helping them reach their full potential
- encourage inter-generational and inter-cultural learning, fostering greater understanding and more tolerant communities
- break down barriers between ethnic, religious and other minority groups
- help to reduce crime/fear of crime by providing meaningful activity and strengthening community networks

Health and wellbeing benefits

A lot of health benefits are only just beginning to be recognised and understood, but there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that access to, and participation in arts and culture can have a positive influence on both our physical and mental wellbeing. For example:

- Almost 60% of people are more likely to report good health if they've attended a cultural place or event in the last 12 months (ACE research)
- Singing, dance and drama can improve physical health through increased exercise, better breathing techniques and posture

- Dancing can help with falls prevention in the elderly
- Singing has been shown to have positive effects on those living with dementia, Parkinson's and depression
- Participation in arts and cultural activities can reduce social isolation

The Action Plan sets out a number of actions that have no cost implication other than officer time. Where existing budget has been set aside for specific items, these are indicated in the Action Plan.

There are some items that will require external funding, for which an application may or may not be successful. To avoid any potential reputational damage, no new events/activities will be promoted until sufficient funding has been secured.

It may be necessary to work with potential partners prior to securing funding in order to support the application, but this will be addressed on a case by case basis.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Option 3.2 is the preferred option as this will provide a clear vision and strategy for arts and culture in the borough, and allow officers to implement the action plan.

5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. That consideration is shown in this report at paragraph 3. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 In October 2015, a Culture & Heritage positioning report was presented to the Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee. Further development of the proposed work streams was recommended and supported by the Committee.
- 6.2 In July 2017, the Museum's new 20-Year Plan was approved by the HCL Committee and addresses most of the 'heritage' work streams.
- 6.3 An audit of all active arts and cultural organisations based within the borough was undertaken in Feb/March 2019, the results of which are set out in the Arts & Culture Strategy.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The next steps will be for the Arts & Culture Officer to implement the action plan.

7.2 The strategy will be added to the Maidstone Borough Council website.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Arts & Culture Strategy
 - Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY



ARTS & CULTURE STRATEGY 2019 – 2024

Foreword

I have great pleasure in writing this foreword to Maidstone's Arts and Cultural Strategy 2019-2024.

I have always been passionate and an advocate for the power of the Arts to bring people and communities together, and to provide a platform where everyone's life experiences can be enriched by meeting with other people's culture and art forms.

I first came to Maidstone when I worked for the now University of the Arts at their Maidstone Campus.

This Strategy represents the realisation by Maidstone Borough Council that revitalising arts and culture across our town and borough can help us all achieve a sense of place and pride in Maidstone.

The Arts is also a well proven sector which can lead to not only cultural revival but also economic regeneration, and as the Chair of Maidstone Borough Council's Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee, I look forward to the implementation of our action plan and to a brighter future for the Arts in Maidstone, so we can rightfully aspire over time to become the arts and cultural capital of Kent.



Cllr Paul Harper

Introduction

What are arts and culture?

Arts and culture mean different things to different people, making them hard to define. They can include but are not limited to: museums and historic buildings, libraries, galleries, theatres, cinemas, music, dance, drama, visual arts, crafts, digital media, photography, literature and festivals.

For the purposes of this strategy, we have adopted a broad definition that encompasses the professional, community and voluntary creative sectors.

Why do we need arts and culture?

Arts and culture have the potential to deliver wide-ranging benefits to our economy, our society and the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Our economy

According to research carried out by Arts Council England (ACE), the Creative Industries is the fastest growing sector of the UK economy, with art and culture contributing £10.6 billion.

Culture brings around £850m to the UK, through tourism, each year. Maidstone attracts over 4.5 million visits per year, with over £284 million spent in the local economy.

In 2017, within the Maidstone borough, there were an estimated 4,319 full-time equivalent jobs created by the tourism sector, or 5,909 including those jobs indirectly supported by tourism - around 8% of total employment.

A thriving arts and cultural offer enhances the image of an area, helping to attract inward-investment.

Our society

Participating in arts and culture can:

- help develop skills, knowledge and academic achievement, enhancing employment prospects and offering a highly skilled workforce for local businesses
- increase a person's confidence and self-esteem, helping them realise their potential
- help promote cultural cohesion by developing a shared sense of local identity and pride in communities
- encourage inter-generational and inter-cultural learning by acting as a window to other people's lives, fostering greater understanding and more tolerant communities, helping to reduce racism and unintended discrimination
- break down barriers between ethnic, religious and other minority groups
- help to reduce crime/fear of crime by providing meaningful activity and strengthening community networks

Secondary school pupils engaged in arts and culture are twice as likely to volunteer in the community and are 20% more likely to vote as young adults (ACE research).

Children from low income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree (ACE research).

Health and wellbeing:

A lot of health and well-being benefits are only just beginning to be recognised and understood, but there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that access to, and participation in arts and culture can have a positive influence on both our physical and mental wellbeing.

- Almost 60% of people are more likely to report good health if they've attended a cultural place or event in the last 12 months (ACE research)
- Singing, dance and drama can improve physical health through increased exercise, better breathing techniques and posture
- Dancing can help with falls prevention in the elderly

- Singing has been shown to have positive effects on those living with dementia, Parkinson's and depression
- Participation in arts and cultural activities can reduce social isolation
- Social prescribing is becoming established as an acceptable alternative to medical interventions for some conditions, with more GPs now choosing to prescribe participation in arts and culture for certain patients

Why do we need a strategy?

This is a working document which outlines our aims and priorities for arts and culture in the Maidstone borough over the next five years.

We need this plan to:

- set priorities and timeframes for developing arts and culture in a clear, strategic way
- identify and challenge the main barriers to local people taking part in the arts
- build new partnerships that will help us reach more people
- ensure that provision of arts and cultural activities is sustainable in a future with less public funding
- ensure that arts and culture support the delivery of Maidstone's Strategic Plan
- highlight and promote arts and culture as valuable tools for social, economic and health benefits

Scope of Strategy

This strategy focuses on the delivery of cultural and arts activities and events in our borough over the next five years.

Maidstone Museum is the subject of a separate Transformation Plan and is therefore not included in the scope of this strategy. But there are clear synergies between the development of the museum and arts and culture in the borough.

Maidstone Borough Council has responsibility for the operation/management of a small number of facilities and venues in the borough, including the Hazlitt Theatre, Kent Life, Mote Hall and certain community centres. However, most venues are independent, and we will therefore need to develop strong partnerships with all providers of arts and culture. We will also need to work with colleagues across the Council to deliver the action plan. Other key partners will include the NHS, Kent County Council and our parish councils.

This strategy sits within a wider national and regional framework, as well as the Council's own Strategic Plan.

It is also informed through an audit of cultural and arts organisations that are currently active across the borough, carried out in February/March 2019 (Appendices 2 & 3).

National context

In December 2019, Arts Council England (ACE) will publish its next 10-year strategy, covering 2020-30, which will come into effect in April 2020. The current draft highlights three key outcomes:

Creative people - *Every person can develop and express creativity throughout their lives.*

ACE will work to help communities design and develop more opportunities for creativity, and better signpost those that already exist. They will encourage more museums, libraries and arts organisations to use their collections, knowledge, skills and resources in their work with communities to provide more activities that allow people to develop their creative potential.

This outcome includes a particular focus on young people, and specifically early years. Therefore, ACE will support libraries and cultural organisations, community partners and the public to co-design and deliver an improved programme of creative activity for young children and their families.

Cultural communities - *A collaborative approach to culture helps villages, towns and cities across the country to thrive.*

Over the next decade ACE will work with a wide range of partners, including local government, business, further and higher education and schools, healthcare providers, the criminal justice system, the commercial and voluntary sector and other funders, to ensure that culture continues to help build thriving communities. They want to see communities that are more socially cohesive and economically robust, and in which residents experience improved physical and mental wellbeing as a result of investment in culture.

A creative and cultural country - *England's cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international.*

The cultural sector already acts as an incubator for the commercial creative industries: spotting and growing talent and undertaking early development of new content and services. ACE intends to deepen those connections, supporting the creative industries to build our international reputation for creativity and act as an ever-more-important engine for our country's economy.

ACE wants to work in partnership with further and higher education and the commercial sector to strengthen training opportunities so that more people working in the cultural sector become ready adopters and developers of new technologies. They believe this will increase the adaptability of people coming into creative careers, supporting them to move back and forth between the publicly funded cultural sector and the commercial creative industries, circulating knowledge and skills as they do so.

Regional context

Kent County Council's cultural strategy *'Inspirational creativity: transforming lives every day – our cultural ambition for Kent'* sets a regional context and Maidstone Borough Council will contribute to its three intentions:

Create – *supporting and enabling the presentation of excellent work and the growth of world class creative productivity.*

"The creation of excellent cultural product is at the heart of everything we do. Bold and experimental art encourages people to take part and helps us to build a reputation as a dynamic county that provides rich cultural experiences for every person as part of their everyday lives.

"A strong cultural infrastructure is vital to the production and presentation of excellent work and has a number of essential elements, which go beyond our networks of venues, heritage locations, natural environment and technology. It includes people, collaboration, creativity and networks, which collectively form an ecology that supports delivery of high quality arts and cultural experiences.

Creating the right kind of workspace is also critical – from artists' studios to large-scale production hubs."

Innovate – *developing original and creative ideas, encouraging creative leadership and supporting skills and learning*

"Success is dependent upon initiating and embracing innovation and creating the space for experimentation. With the growth of new communities and creative clusters throughout Kent, it is vital that we encourage and nurture creative ideas.

"Facilitating experimentation and linking with Kent's world class research institutions and universities will support growth and skills development. Leadership and learning are key to innovation and we will nurture new talent, new ideas and a highly skilled workforce."

Sustain – *delivering access to finance, support for businesses, smarter ways of working, and empowering entrepreneurship*

"We know that a substantial proportion of the creative sector in Kent is freelance. We will review established business models and explore ways of working together to shape the sector to become more resilient. It will be a journey that realises potential, encourages collaboration, supports development, enables growth and works towards financial stability to support a mixed economy of skilled freelancers, micro-businesses and larger companies."

Other regional stakeholders have also produced plans that will inform and influence our own strategy, including the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), the South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN), Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP), the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission and the Thames Estuary Production Corridor.

Local context

Maidstone Borough Council's Strategic Plan (2019 – 45) provides a clear vision for the borough:

"Maidstone: a vibrant, prosperous, urban and rural community at the heart of Kent where everyone can realise their potential."

It also sets out the Council's priorities for the coming years and the table below demonstrates how arts and culture can contribute to each of these.

Priority	Outcomes	Role of arts and culture:
Homes and communities	A diverse range of community activities is encouraged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for people to try new things and learn new skills • Co-create activities and events that address specific local needs
Homes and communities	Community facilities and services in the right place at the right time to support communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative use of cultural and community venues to engage different audiences • Identify new types of community infrastructure to support the arts
Embracing growth & enabling infrastructure	Key employment sites are delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop skills, knowledge and academic achievement, providing a highly skilled workforce for local businesses • The arts and cultural sector can contribute to economic regeneration
Safe, clean & green	People feel safe and are safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote inter-cultural learning to foster greater understanding and more tolerant communities • Provide opportunities to learn and be enriched by other cultures • Engage people in meaningful activities
Safe, clean and green	An environmentally attractive and sustainable borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural place-making increases local pride and gives people a sense of place. The environment is respected, and anti-social behaviour is reduced (e.g. littering) • Public artworks can enhance public spaces

Priority	Outcomes	Role of arts and culture:
A thriving place	A vibrant leisure and culture offer, enjoyed by residents and attractive to visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain/develop high quality arts /cultural venues, accessible by all • High quality events to attract diverse audiences • Wide range of community arts events
A thriving place	Skills level and earning potential of our residents are raised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop skills, knowledge and academic achievement, enhancing employment prospects
A thriving place	Local commercial and inward investment is increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong arts and cultural offer enhances the image of an area, encouraging inward investment
This strategy will also contribute to the four cross-cutting objectives:		
Heritage is respected		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural place-making • Raise awareness of history/heritage
Health inequalities are addressed and reduced		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce social isolation • Deliver improvements in physical and mental health for target groups
Deprivation is reduced and social mobility is improved		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote events/projects designed to address barriers to participation • Develop skills, knowledge and academic achievement
Biodiversity and environmental sustainability are respected		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote events/activities that encourage greater understanding of the natural environment and how to protect it

Other Maidstone Borough Council strategies and plans that impact on arts and culture include:

- Economic Development Strategy
- Town Centre Development Programme
- Festivals & Events Strategy
- Destination Management Plan
- Community Development Strategy
- Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy
- Biodiversity Strategy

Local Analysis

In drawing up this strategy we undertook desk research including a full SWOT analysis (Appendix 1); an audit of local arts and cultural organisations (Appendices 2 & 3); and a number of interviews with arts groups, individual artists and creatives (Appendix 2).

Maidstone is the County Town of Kent. It is the seat of local government and has a strong and growing economy, with a wide range of shopping and leisure facilities on offer. It has a rich history and impressive heritage assets; there is a substantial number of active arts and cultural groups, and a thriving music scene.

Despite this, public perception of the town is quite negative, with comments such as 'it lacks identity' and 'it doesn't feel like the county town' being commonplace, particularly in discussions with arts groups and creatives.

In the 2017 Residents Survey, respondents were asked about their local neighbourhood and whether people treat each other with respect and consideration. The most common response was 'tend to agree' with 47%. The BME groups had the greatest level of disagreement at 31.4%.

In terms of overall satisfaction with their local area as a place to live, 70.5% of respondents were fairly or very satisfied. However, there were higher levels of dissatisfaction amongst the 18 – 24 years group.

If we are to build stronger, more inclusive, communities and make the borough a place where people want to live, then we need to increase overall levels of pride and satisfaction, and challenge negative perceptions. We aim to do this by creating a more distinct identity, particularly for urban areas, and developing a sense of place for the people within them. The arts are also a known method for breaking down cultural barriers.

We want the borough to be a place where everyone can take an active part in their community and reach their full potential. Ensuring a diverse range of community activities are available and fully accessible is key to this.

In order to better understand the current arts and cultural offer in the borough, an audit was carried out to identify as many existing arts and cultural organisations as possible. The full results of the audit are given at Appendix 3.

118 culture and arts organisations were contacted, including commercial enterprises, community groups and voluntary organisations (full list at Appendix 1). Respondents were asked to complete an online questionnaire, and 56 meaningful responses were received (47% response rate, which is a statistically high response).

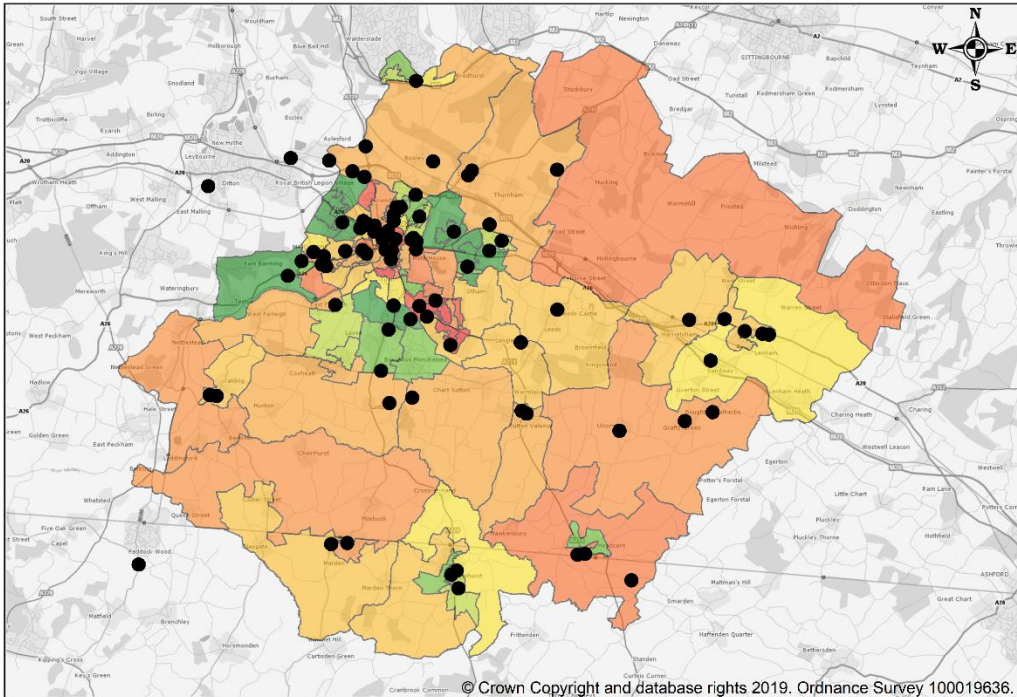
The results can be summarised as follows:

- There is a slightly higher concentration of arts/cultural groups within the town itself, but a variety of activities are also available across the wider borough, with particular strengths in music and dance.
- Numbers of members/regular attendees vary from several hundreds (e.g. Kent Archaeological Society, certain dance schools) while others are made up of just a dozen or so people. On average, dance and theatre groups have the highest participation rates.
- The age range of participants varies depending on the activity with children and young people (aged 18 and under) tending to dominate in the theatre (performing arts) and dance categories (60% and 77% respectively). There are significantly higher proportions of older people (aged 50+) in the music (53%) and arts and crafts (82%) categories.
- Females dominate across all categories, but especially in dance and arts and crafts.
- A limited number of respondents provided information on ethnicity, with the results indicating the majority of participants are white. According to the 2011 Census, this is the largest ethnic group in the Maidstone borough at 94.1% of residents. This comprises 89.3% British and 4.8% non-British (predominantly European). The remaining 5.9% of residents are from a Black Minority Ethnic (BME) group.
- It was not possible to obtain accurate data on the number of participants living with a disability (physical or mental health) as the majority of groups do not keep detailed membership records or do not collect this type of information about their members.

While the audit results indicate there are a lot of arts and cultural activities for residents to engage with, based on the number of members reported by respondents and weighting for non-respondents, it would appear that only around 4% of the total population of the borough is currently participating with an arts/cultural group.

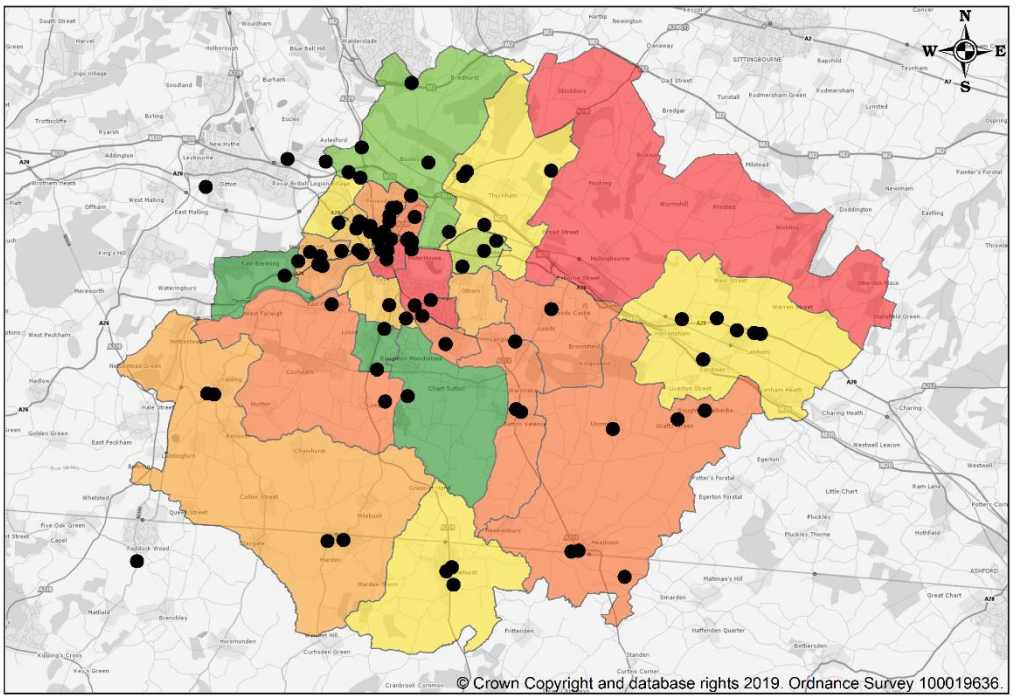
We are fortunate that the borough as a whole is relatively prosperous, but there are areas that are less affluent, where there are higher levels of unemployment, a higher proportion of low-income households, and health inequalities.

Map 1 below highlights areas in the borough which are classed as being in the most deprived, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), overlaid with the locations of existing arts/cultural organisations. The areas in red have the highest levels of deprivation.



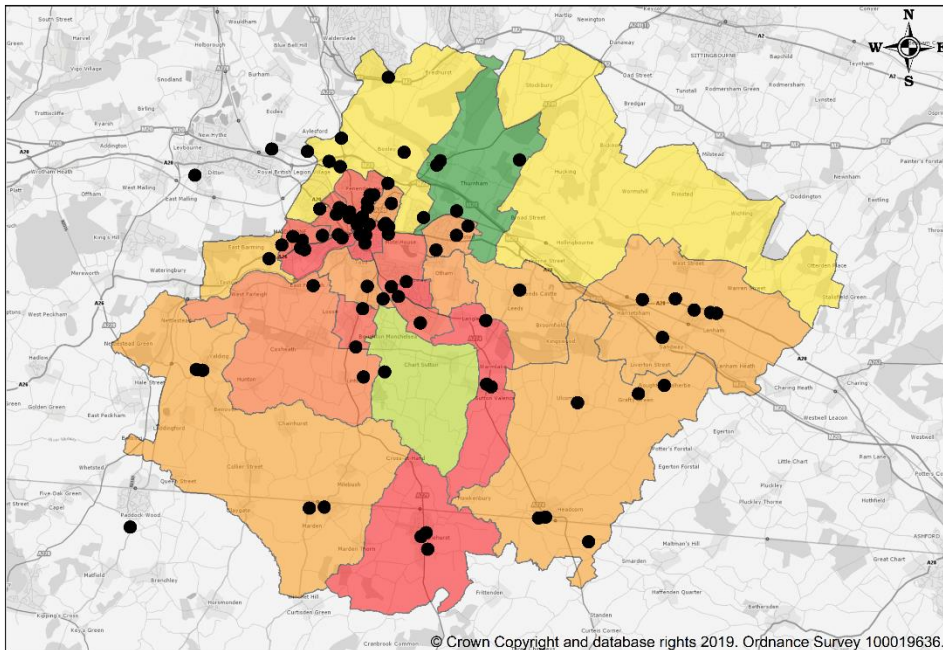
Map 1: Areas of highest deprivation in Maidstone borough

There are a number of wards within the borough which have significant health inequalities. Rates of childhood obesity are particularly high in Shepway North, Shepway South, East, High Street, Heath and North Downs. Map 2 below highlights these areas (in red) against the locations of existing arts/cultural organisations.



Map 2: Levels of childhood obesity (Year 6)

There are also discrepancies in life expectancy across the borough. These are indicated in Map 3 below, with the red areas having a lower average life expectancy rate.



Map 3: Average life expectancy

These maps indicate that some opportunities for participation in arts and culture are available within or very near to the highlighted areas, but it would seem residents are not engaging. There are likely to be a variety of barriers, both real and perceived, that limit the accessibility of these activities.

A wider public consultation will help to provide a more detailed picture of individual levels of engagement, including attendance at festivals and events and other forms of activity not covered in the audit (e.g. visits to art galleries, attending gigs/music events, trips to the cinema, etc). It will also help us to identify what the main barriers to participation are for our residents, so we can work on overcoming them.

Arts and culture have a role to play in the economic success of the borough. The creative industries is the fastest growing sector of the UK economy and Maidstone is currently home to 625 creative industry enterprises, the 4th highest percentage in Kent (excluding Medway)*. However, this figure is down by 10 since 2017, and Kent overall has a slightly lower percentage of creative industry enterprises than the national average.

In order to capitalise on the potential of this sector, and to compete with the creative hubs in Medway, Canterbury and Folkestone, we need to support our existing businesses and arts/cultural groups, while continuing to attract and retain new talent. We have a strong base with the Maidstone Studios and an opportunity to benefit from the Thames Estuary Production Corridor.

*ONS data compiled by Kent County Council

Respondents to the audit were asked to rank their top priorities for the future. The number one priority for each category is as follows:

Arts and crafts groups – finding suitable exhibition space
Music – growing/keeping your audience
Theatre – marketing events and accessing funding
Dance – attracting new members
Heritage – attracting new members

Facilitating training workshops and networking opportunities that address these issues will help groups to grow and develop, ensuring our arts and culture offer is sustainable.

Arts and culture are also significant drivers for tourism. The borough is home to several high profile attractions, such as Leeds Castle and Kent Life, and hosts a number of annual music festivals and large-scale events, including Ramblin’ Man and the Kent County Show. These help to draw in over 4.5 million visitors each year, who spend over £284 million in the local economy.

The tourism sector supports a substantial number of jobs, both directly and indirectly, accounting for around 8% of total employment in the borough in 2017.

The Destination Management Plan (DMP) sets out the Council’s ambitions for developing and promoting the borough as a tourist destination. It recognises that arts and culture can contribute to improving the visitor experience and provide additional reasons to visit.

This strategy is therefore closely aligned to the work of the DMP, but its primary focus is on engaging residents and encouraging their participation in cultural and arts activities.

The above national and regional context, together with the local analysis, has provided the evidence to propose the following vision, priorities and action plan.

Vision:

This arts and culture strategy contributes to achieving Maidstone Borough Council's overall Strategic Plan Vision:

"Maidstone: a vibrant, prosperous, urban and rural community at the heart of Kent where everyone can realise their potential."

The vision for arts and culture is:

'To make the borough of Maidstone a vibrant multi-cultural hub where everyone can experience great arts and culture, and to enrich all residents lives.'

How can we deliver the vision?

Maidstone has a rich history, with impressive heritage assets and a good cultural offer. But we believe there is potential to achieve much more; to make a real difference to the lives of those who live, work and visit here.

To help us realise this vision, we have identified three key priorities:

1. Cultural place-making – *increase pride in our communities and change negative perceptions of the town*

We will achieve this by:

- 1.1. commissioning a 'Sense of Place' project which will help us to celebrate and expand Maidstone's identity, recognising the diversity of its people, the quality of place and its role as the County Town of Kent
- 1.2. working with One Maidstone and other stakeholders to challenge and change the negative image and perceptions of the town
- 1.3. promoting, developing and protecting the borough's existing cultural strengths and heritage assets (linked to the Museum Transformation Plan)

2. Accessible by all – *ensure arts and heritage are culturally inclusive, being accessed and valued by everyone in the community, and are a major asset for tourism.*

We will achieve this by:

- 2.1. increasing opportunities for people to experience great arts by reducing local barriers and widening participation by under-represented groups
- 2.2. working with local communities to co-create affordable and inclusive arts opportunities that address local needs, with a particular focus on areas of higher deprivation and health inequalities
- 2.3. supporting artists and organisations to inform, inspire and enable delivery of arts activities and events that celebrate Maidstone's identity, diversity and cultural heritage

3. Sustainable – *support new and existing creative talent and cultural organisations; raise awareness of the benefits arts and culture can bring to our society, economy, health and wellbeing*

We will achieve this by:

- 3.1. developing the provision of affordable workspace for creative businesses, artists and makers
- 3.2. supporting existing creative businesses, arts freelancers and community organisations
- 3.3. raising awareness of the impact of arts and culture, highlighting how they contribute to health and wellbeing, society and the economy
- 3.4. maximising the use of digital technology to:
 - 3.4.1. promote work and opportunities (including volunteering);
 - 3.4.2. reach new audiences;
 - 3.4.3. deliver innovative new arts and cultural experiences

The action plan at Appendix 4 outlines how we will work to realise these ambitions, setting out specific actions and timescales for implementation, as well as clear targets to measure our performance.

APPENDIX 1: SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Town of Kent • Seat of local government • Strong and growing economy • Good transport links to London and channel ports (roads better than rail) • Rich history and heritage assets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ nationally significant complex of Grade I listed buildings – All Saints Church, Archbishops’ Palace, Tithe Barn, College of All Saints ○ Len House - Grade II listed Art Deco showroom ○ 2,000+ listed buildings in borough ○ Maidstone Museum - internationally significant collections, over 600,000 artefacts ○ Kent History & Library Centre - 14km of historic material • Over 100 active arts/cultural groups • Key visitor attractions: Leeds Castle; Kent Life; Kent Showground; Mote Park • Thriving music scene: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kent Music; community choirs; choral societies; orchestras ○ regular music festivals - Proms; Mela; Ramblin’ Man; Leeds Castle Classical Concert; Fringe; Vicar’s Picnic; Music on the Green etc. ○ strong folk/rock scene - regular gigs in many pubs; jazz at Pizza Express ○ nightclubs host international DJs • Active night-time economy • Hazlitt Theatre: platform for local amateur dramatics, dance/drama schools • Business Terrace: growing number of creative businesses • Maidstone Studios: hosts UCA courses in TV production • Maidstone Area Arts Partnership • Cohesion Plus: links to minority groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cohesive strategy for arts and culture in the borough • Maidstone lacks identity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ no unique offer ○ history not celebrated • Lack of cultural diversity in arts provision • Key heritage assets are under-utilised: Archbishops Palace complex, Town Hall, Gabriel’s Hill • Riverside under-utilised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ poor pedestrian links from town ○ not well sign-posted ○ little to engage visitors once there • Amphitheatre under-utilised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ problems with anti-social behaviour ○ public footpaths limit use for ticketed events ○ not well-known or promoted • No central database to access information on arts and cultural groups/activities in the borough • Creative people and businesses are very isolated – no forum for artists/makers and creatives • Lack of exhibition space for artists, makers and community groups within town centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ costs of exhibiting at Maidstone Museum can be prohibitive to up-and-coming artists and smaller community groups ○ Hazlitt Arts Centre has closed down • Lack of studio/workspace for ‘messy’ artists and makers • No dedicated large-scale indoor venue for live music and other performances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hazlitt Theatre only seats 350 people ○ All Saints Church has good acoustics but uncomfortable seating, poor sight lines and lacks toilets; ○ Mote Hall at Maidstone Leisure Centre has the wrong ambience

OPPORTUNITIES

- Maidstone Museum Transformation Plan
- River Medway:
 - utilise riverside and amphitheatre
 - River Group seeking CIC status
 - Old Boat Café – hub for activities
- Cobtree Manor Park, parks and open spaces: utilise for smaller events
- One Maidstone: partnered projects
- Lease of Archbishops' Palace expires in 2020 - rethink use and access.
- Potential to create a cultural hub around Archbishops' Palace, Stables, All Saints Church and Len House
- Powerhub/Granada House/Len House: options for redevelopment - messy workshops, exhibitions, rehearsal/performance space
- Increasing awareness of importance of arts and culture:
 - on health and wellbeing (particularly mental health and dementia)
 - for an ageing population – reducing social isolation
 - aiding learning and educational achievement
- Social prescribing:
 - Maidstone already has a network of link workers in place
 - Involve are actively engaging arts and cultural providers to deliver activities
- Medway Council bid to become UK City of Culture in 2025
- Thames Estuary Production Corridor
- Population growth: potential new audiences/participants for arts/cultural venues and events
- Digital technology:
 - reach new audiences through digital platforms and distribution channels
 - create new forms of art and cultural experiences
- Climate change: increased awareness of environmental issues, recycling, etc. - potential to engage new audiences

THREATS

- Brexit:
 - access to EU funding
 - reduction in in-bound tourism
 - damage to social cohesion
- Medway Council bid to become UK City of Culture in 2025
- University for Creative Arts has relocated – centres at Rochester and Canterbury draw students away from Maidstone
- Lack of central funding to support ambitious arts and cultural plans
- Shifting levels of political support for arts and culture, and local will to deliver
- Lack of understanding of importance of arts and culture
- Growth in housing development:
 - increased demand on existing facilities and providers
 - new communities may feel disconnected
 - resentment from existing communities
- Climate change:
 - greater risk of severe weather events (flooding, heatwaves, unseasonal storms)
 - impact on festivals and events, local infrastructure, housing, heritage, etc.

Appendix 2: Arts and cultural groups contacted for audit

The Arts Society (Mid Kent Branch)
Maidstone Area Arts Partnership
Maidstone Wind Symphony
Maidstone Symphony Orchestra
Maidstone Choral Union
Maidstone Singers
Headcorn Bell Ringers
Sutton Valence Music Society
Sutton Valence Choral Society
Kent Music School
Kent County Junior Choir
Kent County Junior Singers
Society of Recorder Players (Kent)
Bearsted Choral Society
Detling & Boxley Church Choirs
Energize Community Choir
Friends in Harmony
Harmony Variety Group
Old Barn Orchestral Society
Thomas Clark Quire
Maidstone Tuneless Choir
Maidstone Rock Choir (Morning)
Maidstone Rock Choir (Evening)
Invicta Jazz Orchestra
Kent Police Band
Staplehurst Music Centre Community Orchestra
Headcorn Ukulele Group
Marmite Ukulele Club
Pop Choir Voiceful
Changeling Theatre
Hop Shed Theatre Company
Detling Players
Willington Players
Chandeliers Drama Group
Maidstone Amateur Operatic Society
Maidstone Film Society
Headcorn Film Society
Razzamatazz
East Sutton Community Youth Theatre
Airbrush Productions

Contrafusion
Kent Artistic Roller Dance Club
Kettle Bridge Clogs
Maidstone Baton Twirlers
Lynwood Dance Academy
Stardust Studios
Margaret Preedy Dance Studio
Mandy Ellen Performing Arts
Space 2 Be Me (Dance Stars)
Maidstone Dance Studios
Amelia Appleby School of Performing Arts
Cobtree Scottish Country Dance Group
Jack Davidson Dance (Children's Classes)
Lucy Robins School of Dance
JAG Dance Academy
Sharon Kennard School of Dance
GDC School of Dancing
Lenham Ballet School
Cascade Dance (Lenham Youth)
Hilton Hall Dance Academy
AACTS Dance
Dance Dynamics
Directions Performing Arts
Flair School of Dance
Dance Mode
Loose Women Morris Dancing

Weald School of Dance
Maidstone Embroiderers' Guild
Kent Wildlife Trust
Yalding Art Group
Invicta Photographic Club
Kent Potters Association
Kent Woodturners
Maidstone Flower Club
Staplehurst Photographic Society
Headcorn Flower Arrangers
Headcorn Art Group
The Hop Yard
Blooming Green
The Seasons Art Class

Marden Theatre Group
Theatre 2000 Maidstone
Hollingbourne Pantomime Group
Lenham Players
Pauline Quirke Academy (Maidstone)
Shining Stars Musical Theatre Class
Detling Watercolour Group
Maidstone Historical Society
Maidstone Area Archaeological Group
Medway Valley Countryside Partnership
Barming History Society
Kent Archaeological Society
Kent Family History Society
Loose Area History Society
Maidstone & Mid Kent Philatelic Society
The Staplehurst Society

Maidstone Art Society
Brenda Burgess Arts
Into the Drift (Artful Codgers)
Harrietsham Craft & Chat
The Art Class
Vanguard Contemporary Design Group
Bearsted & District Local History Society
Detling Local History Society
Marden History Society
Teston History Society
Kent Geologists' Group
Boughton Malherbe History Society
Harrietsham History Society
Hazlitt Youth Theatre
Hazlitt Choir
Headcorn Local History Society

Artists/Creatives consulted:

Maidstone Area Arts Partnership
Maidstone Youth Music Society
Maidstone Visual Arts Network (now officially disbanded but still meet as an informal collective)
Rob Forknall, Changling Theatre
Laura Thomas, Art Moves
Lucy Farrell, Bower House (live music venue and art studio)
Síle Joyce, theatre workshops
Nicola Barker, artist

Appendix 3: Arts & Culture Audit Summary

118 culture and arts organisations were contacted and asked to complete an online questionnaire (full list at Appendix 2).

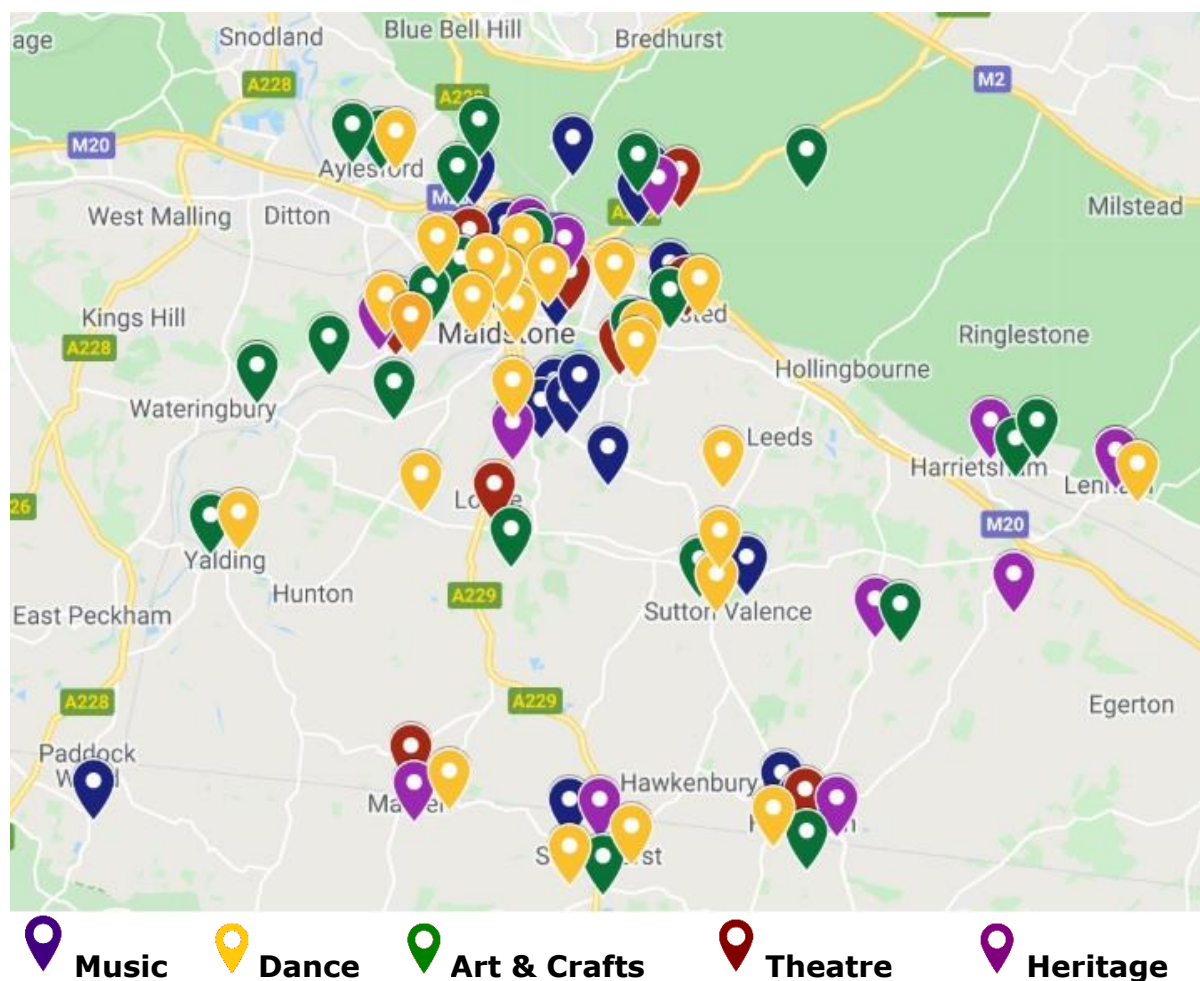
56 meaningful responses were received (47% response rate).

Key Findings

Geographical spread

There is a higher concentration of activities within Maidstone town centre, as expected, but there is a reasonable mix of activities across the wider borough too.

It should be noted that not all groups marked on the following maps responded to the survey. Where a group did not respond, the location has been taken from other sources (e.g. website/ Facebook).

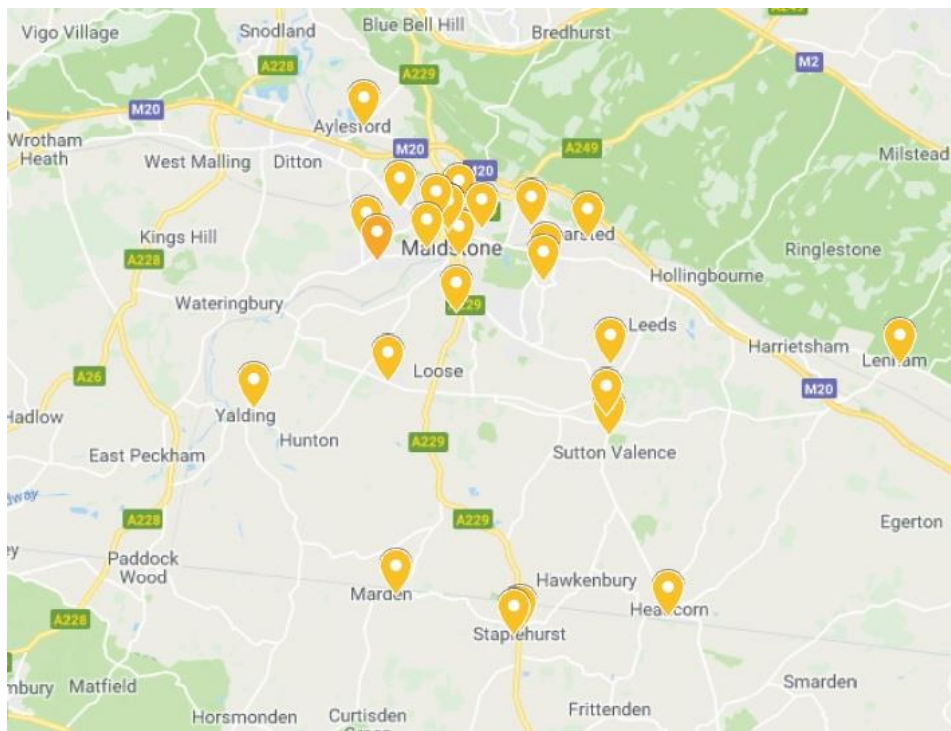


Geographical spread by category:

Music Groups



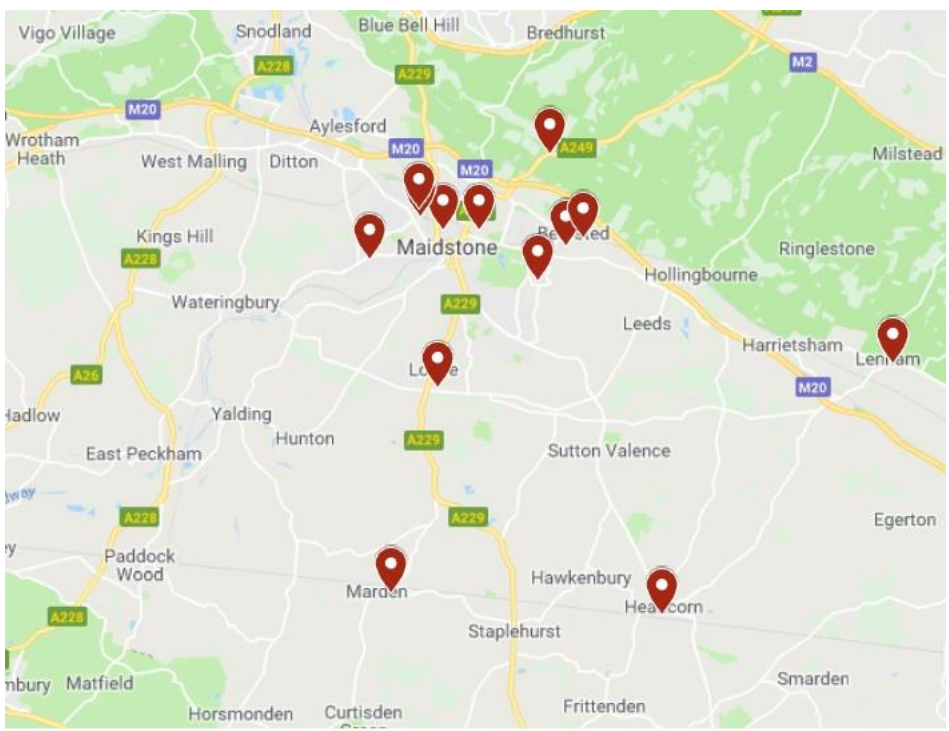
Dance Groups



Arts & Crafts Groups



Theatre Groups



Heritage Groups



Number of members/participants per organisation/ group:

Some groups numbered their members in the hundreds (such as Kent Archaeology Society and several dance schools). These figures show the *average* membership for each category:

Overall = 101

Music = 54

Theatre = 86

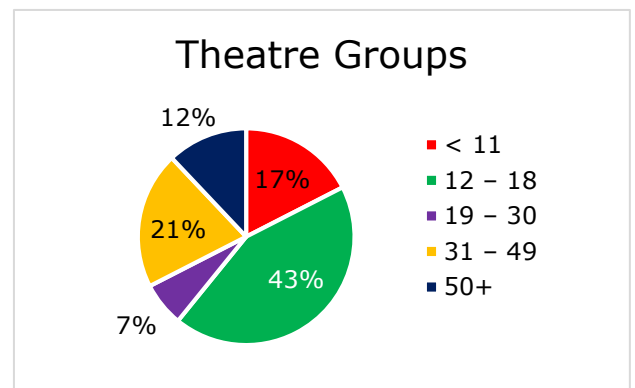
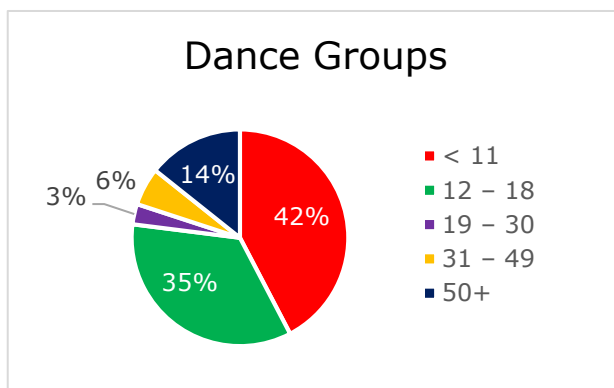
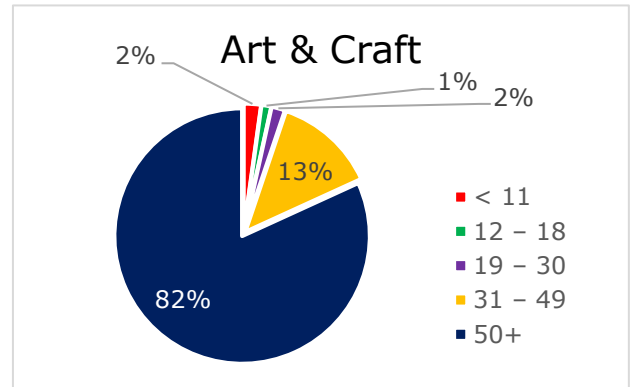
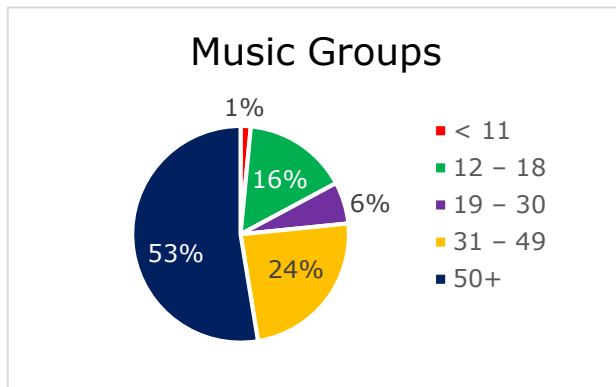
Dance = 104

Art & Craft = 76

Heritage = n/a (lack of data)

Age Range of participants

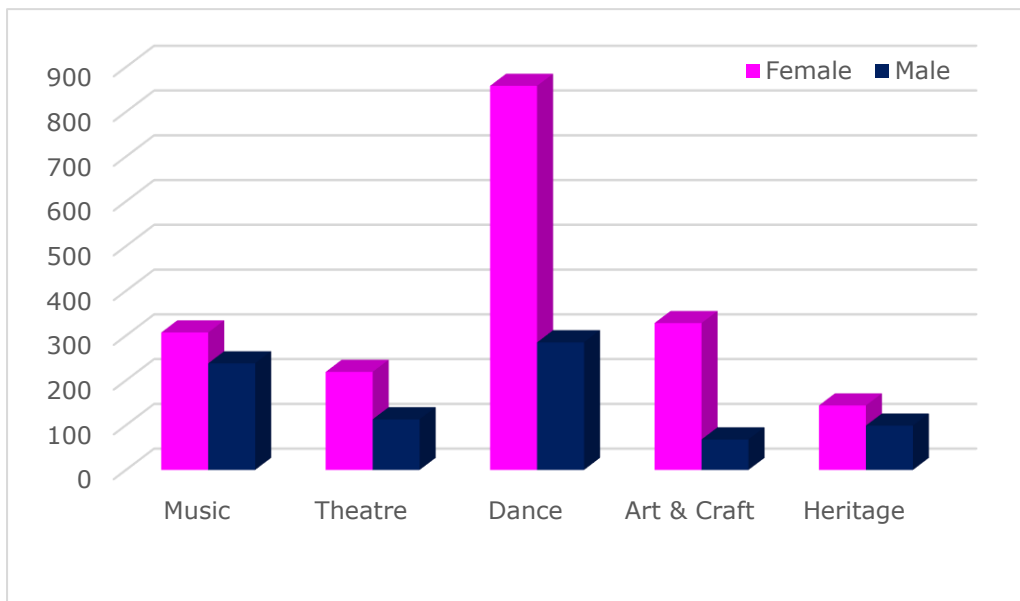
Children and young people tend to dominate the theatre (performing arts) and dance categories while there are significantly higher proportions of older people in the music and arts & crafts categories.



There was insufficient data from the Heritage groups to compile a chart but, of the results that were received, the older age ranges dominated.

Gender Diversity

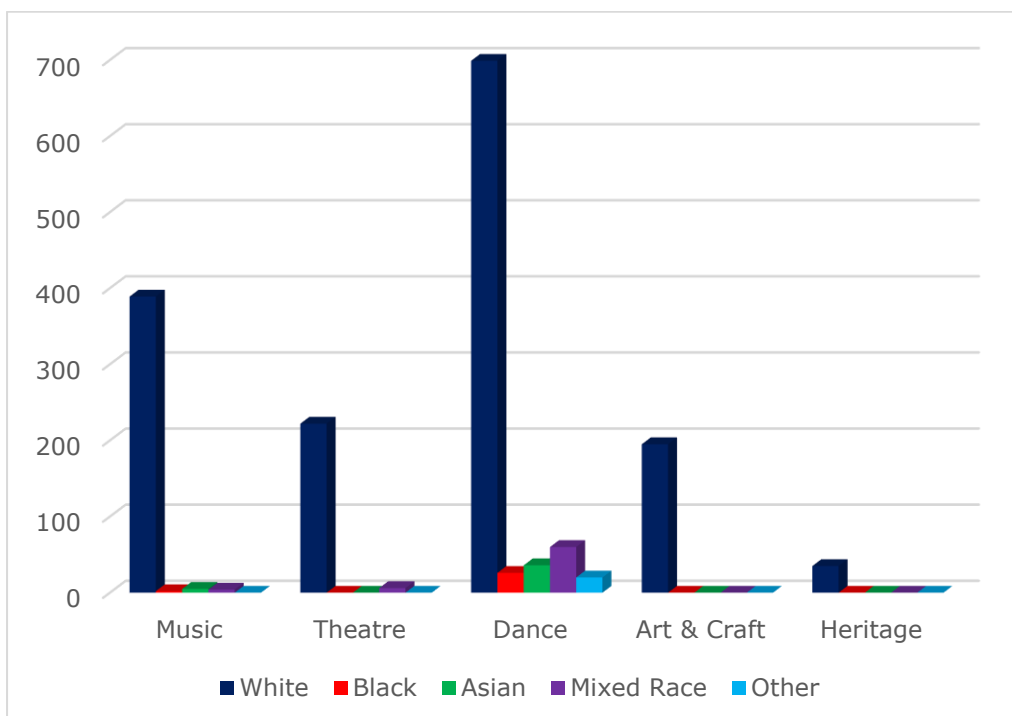
Females dominate across all categories, but especially in dance and arts & crafts.



Ethnic Diversity

According to the 2011 Census, the largest ethnic group in the Maidstone borough is white. 94.1% of residents belong to this ethnic group which comprises 89.3% British and 4.8% non-British. The remaining 5.9% of residents are from a Black Minority Ethnic (BME) group.

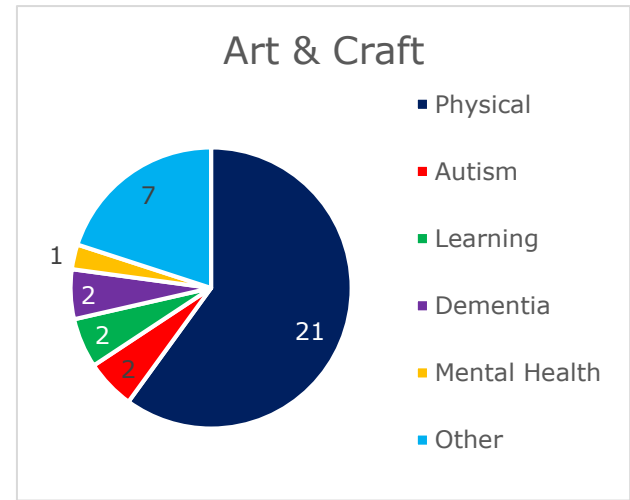
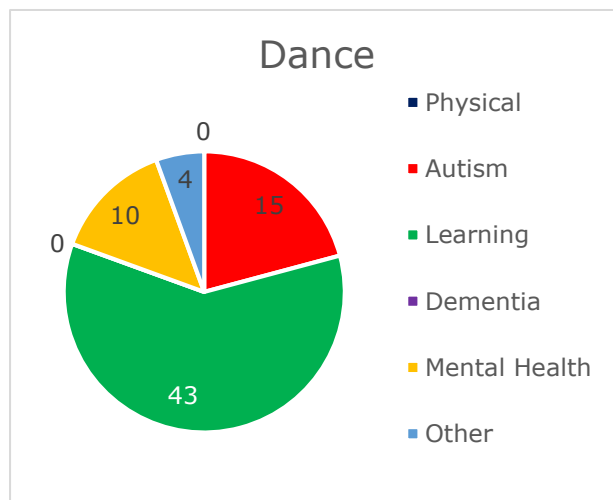
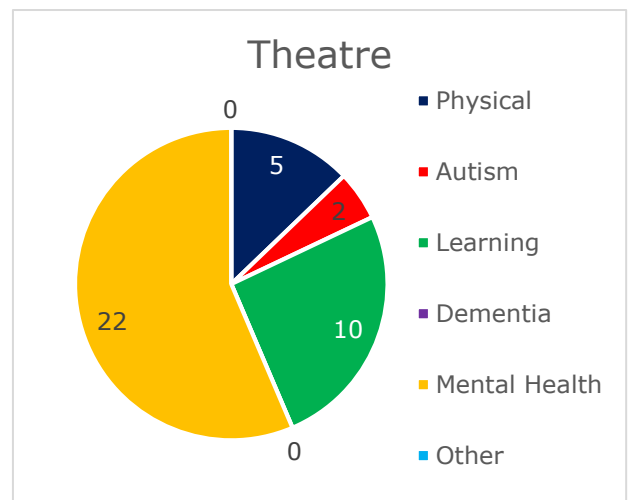
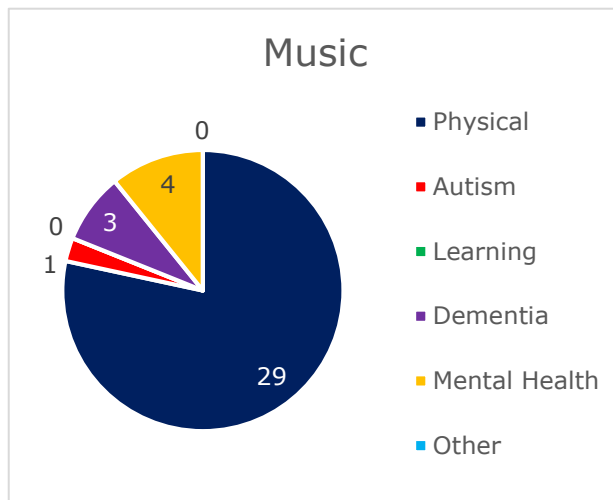
A limited number of respondents provided information on ethnicity which is reflected in the results shown here.



Participants with a disability

Very few of the respondents were able to give accurate data on this as the majority do not keep detailed membership records or do not collect this type of information about members.

These charts are based on the figures reported but should not be taken as a true picture of participation by those living with a disability.



Priorities for the future





Respondents were asked to rank the following in order of priority for their organisation/group (1=most important; 10=least important)







- Attracting new members
- Attracting a more diverse membership (*older/younger, disabled, hard-to-reach groups, etc.*)
- Growing/keeping your audience (for your events, exhibitions)
- Marketing your events (maximising web and social media)
- Accessing funding
- Finding suitable meeting/exhibition/performance space
- Connecting with other arts/cultural groups in the area
- Financial planning and management
- Strategic planning
- Partnering with the commercial sector



Type of group/organisation	Attracting new members	Attracting a more diverse membership	Growing/keeping your audience	Marketing your events	Accessing funding	Finding suitable meeting /exhibition/performance space	Connecting with other arts/cultural groups in the area	Financial planning and management	Strategic planning	Partnering with the commercial sector
Music	3	2	1	4						
Theatre				1	2			3	3	3
Dance	1	2	4	3						
Arts & Crafts	4	3		2		1				
Heritage	1		3				2	3	3	
Overall	1	2	3	4						

APPENDIX 4: ACTION PLAN - 2020-2022








Cross-cutting objectives key:



-  Heritage is respected
-  Health inequalities are addressed and reduced
-  Deprivation is reduced and social mobility improved
-  Biodiversity and environmental sustainability are respected

Priority: Cultural Place-making						
Objective	Action	Target	Timescale	MBC Strategic Plan priority	Cross-cutting objective	Approx. costs
1.1	Arrange meeting with 'Thinkingplace' to discuss options for a 'Sense of Place' project	Initial meeting with Thinkingplace	Feb-20	Thriving Place; Homes & Communities		Travel costs
42 1.1	Subject to initial meeting – commission 'Thinkingplace' to deliver a 'Sense of Place' project	Increase in positive responses to residents' survey question on pride in the borough	Feb-21	Thriving Place; Homes & Communities		£22,000 - funding from 'Financial Sustainability Fund'
1.2	In conjunction with One Maidstone, work with local artists and youth groups to install murals in empty shopfronts (street art and photography)	At least 2 empty shops fitted with murals	Mar-20	Thriving Place; Safe, Clean & Green		MBC contribution £1,500
1.3	Develop a new 'historic plaques' walking trail for digital download	New trail is available for digital download	Nov-19	Thriving Place		Officer time
1.3	Work with the tourism team to support and promote venues taking part in Heritage Open Days	At least 6 venues take part in HODs.	Annual (Sept)	Thriving Place		Officer time
1.3	Support the museum team in the establishment and running of a 'Local Cultural Education Partnership'	Partnership established and board appointed	Mar-20	Thriving Place		Officer time
1.3	Commission a piece of public art for the redevelopment of Maidstone East station to sit in the new concourse	New artwork created and installed	Jul-21	Thriving Place		£23,400 – funding from M&S s106 monies


1.3	Commission a piece of public art for the lower end of Gabriel's Hill as part of the Public Realm Phase 3	New artwork created and installed	Jul-21	Thriving Place		<£20,000 - Funding from Public Realm Phase 3
1.3	Work with Economic Development team and One Maidstone on a shop front enhancement programme focusing on Gabriel's Hill	Refurbishments carried out on identified shop fronts	Dec-21	Thriving Place; Safe, Clean & Green		£276,600 – funding from M&S s106 monies






Priority: Accessible by all

Objective	Action	Target	Timescale	MBC Strategic Plan priority	Cross-cutting objective	Approx. costs
2.1	Carry out an online public consultation to identify the main barriers to participation in arts and culture	Consultation completed	Mar-20	Thriving Place; Homes & Communities		Officer time
2.1	Work with events team to develop a checklist for new events/projects to identify target audiences and address potential barriers, based on consultation results	Produce checklist and apply on all new events	May-20	Thriving Place; Homes & Communities		Officer time
2.1 43	Work with Heart of Kent Hospice to encourage wide/diverse participation in 'Elmer's Big Heart of Kent Parade' and their linked events	>100,000 participants in trail and linked events	Aug-20	Thriving Place; Homes & Communities		Officer time
2.1	Support museum team and environmental services team to deliver an arts event in Brenchley Gardens as part of 'Elmer's Big Heart of Kent Parade' to promote recycling and environmental awareness	>250 people take part in the event. Photo/video footage of the event	Aug-20	Thriving Place; Safe, Clean & Green	 	Officer time Funding from Env. Services
2.1	Work with Kent County Council on delivery of a 'Heritage and health' project in Mote Park, including geophysical survey of the old Mote House. Primary focus on improvements to physical health - active outdoors, reducing social isolation, etc.	Completion of geophysical survey in Mote Park. Participants report improved health outcomes	Sep-20	Thriving Place; Homes & Communities		Officer time
2.2	Work with Fringe Festival organisers to encourage more venues/performers to take part, particularly in daytime (more family friendly)	At least 2 new venues and timeslots for 2021 Festival	May-21	Thriving Place		Officer time
2.3	Support Maidstone Area Arts Partnership (MAAP) to deliver an extended programme of summer concerts in Brenchley Gardens	6 concerts with a variety of music styles	Aug-20	Thriving Place; Homes & Communities		£8,000 – external funding required
2.3	Participate in the Diversity Arts Network as they look to establish a consortium (museum may join as a member venue)	Attendance at network meetings	Ongoing	Thriving Place		Officer time

2.3	Work with the River Group, local residents' association and local musicians, theatre schools and poets to improve usage of the amphitheatre through co-creating a programme of performances	At least 4 events held at amphitheatre	Sep-21	Thriving Place; Safe, Clean & Green		£4,000 – external funding required
2.3	Work with Cohesion Plus and the Maidstone Cultural Group to promote ethnic minority and black culture and provide support to widen participation in arts by these groups	Increased diversity in arts provision and participation	Ongoing	Thriving Place		Officer time

Priority: Sustainable

Objective	Action	Target	Timescale	MBC Strategic Plan priority	Cross-cutting objective	Approx. costs
3.1	Work with Economic Development team to assess the feasibility of providing affordable workspace, both clean and messy, with a view to providing at least 3 messy units for artists/makers plus additional office space for creative businesses	Feasibility report produced and potential site(s) identified	Sep-20	Embracing Growth & Enabling Infrastructure; Thriving Place		Officer time
3.2	Develop an online directory to promote existing arts and cultural clubs and organisations (commercial & voluntary), accessed via the MBC website	Online directory is live. At least 50 clubs/societies listed in 1st year	Dec-19	Thriving Place		Officer time
4 3.2	Explore potential opportunities for local creative businesses within the Thames Estuary Production Corridor (e.g. Maidstone Studios)	Regular contact with Production Corridor team	Ongoing	Embracing Growth & Enabling Infrastructure; Thriving Place		Officer time
3.2	Investigate options for establishing a forum/network for artists and creatives	Network established and meetings scheduled	Ongoing	Thriving Place		Officer time
3.2	Work with museum team to organise a 'local history day' for local history societies to network and showcase their work to a wider audience.	At least 6 clubs/societies to attend local history day	Mar-20	Thriving Place		Officer time
3.2	Facilitate a networking/training workshop for local arts/cultural groups - potential themes to cover are marketing & fundraising (assisted by Voluntary Arts/Involve) Further networking/training sessions to be developed based on feedback from initial event	Initial workshop held in Business Terrace Further workshops developed	Sep-20	Thriving Place		£750 per workshop
3.2	Investigate options for creating new exhibition/gallery space in town centre	Feasibility report produced	Sep-20	Embracing Growth & Enabling Infrastructure; Thriving Place		Officer time

3.3	Work with public health and museum teams on an engagement programme with Hazlitt Youth Theatre investigating what makes a 'safe space'. Working with Canterbury Christchurch Uni and Aesop Institute to investigate links between arts and health	Results of research shared with arts organisations and venues	Dec-19	Thriving Place; Safe, Clean & Green		Officer time
3.3	Support Kent Arts & Wellbeing with their proposal to deliver an arts and health project in West Kent	Attendance at networking meetings	Ongoing	Thriving Place		Officer time
3.4.1	Support MAAP to expand membership and develop website to host details of events/activities and volunteering opportunities OR develop an arts micro-site on MBC website	MAAP or Arts Micro-Site is live and offers up-to-date info	Dec-20	Thriving Place		Officer time
3.4.2	Work with Comms and tourism teams to improve use of social media to promote civic and arts/cultural events (e.g. swan upping, museum events, etc.)	Increased engagement on social media and increased attendance at events	Ongoing	Thriving Place		Officer time
3.4.3	Investigate options for working with a local digital creative business to develop an urban arts orienteering app to appeal to teenagers	Feasibility report produced	Jul-20	Thriving Place; Homes & Communities	 	Officer time

Stage 1: Equality Impact Assessment

1. What are the main aims, purpose and outcomes of the Policy and how do these fit with the wider aims of the organisation?

We intend to implement a new Arts & Culture strategy that will deliver a range of benefits to our economy, our society and the health and wellbeing of our residents.

The core priorities are:

- Cultural place-making – increasing pride in our communities and challenging negative perceptions of the town
- Accessible by all – ensuring arts and heritage are culturally inclusive, being accessed and valued by everyone in the community, and are a major asset for tourism
- Sustainable – supporting new and existing creative talent and cultural organisations; raising awareness of the benefits arts and culture can bring to our society, economy and health and wellbeing

This work fulfils the strategic objective 'A Thriving Place' and its subsections 'A vibrant leisure and culture offer, enjoyed by residents and attractive to visitors'; 'Skills level and earning potential of our residents are raised'; and 'Local commercial and inward investment is increased'.

It also contributes to the strategic objective 'Homes and Communities' and its subsections 'A diverse range of community activities is encouraged' and 'Community Facilities and Services in the right place at the right time to support communities'. This work also contributes to the strategic objective 'Safe, Clean and Green' and its subsection 'People feel safe and are safe'.

In addition, it meets all four cross-cutting themes: Heritage is respected; Health inequalities are addressed and reduced; Deprivation is reduced, and social mobility is improved; and Biodiversity and environmental sustainability are respected.

2. How do these aims affect our duty to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the act.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a**

<p>protected characteristic and those who do not</p> <p>The strategy will seek to increase opportunities for people to experience great arts by reducing local barriers and widening participation by under-represented groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. <p>We will work with under-represented communities and those sharing a protected characteristic to co-create affordable and inclusive arts opportunities.</p> <p>We will support artists and organisations to deliver arts activities and events that celebrate the diversity of Maidstone’s population.</p>
<p>3. What aspects of the policy, including how it is delivered or accessed, could contribute to inequality?</p>
<p>Arts and culture are highly subjective. In creating any new arts events or activities, there is a risk that certain people may feel alienated or under-represented.</p>
<p>4. Will the policy have an impact (positive or negative) upon the lives of people, including particular communities and groups who have protected characteristics ? What evidence do you have for this?</p>
<p>One of the key priorities of the new strategy is ‘accessible by all’, setting out a clear intention to make arts and heritage culturally inclusive, being accessed and valued by everyone in the community, including those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>We will look to work with under-represented groups on new projects and events to address any specific barriers to their participation, and support existing arts and cultural groups/organisations to increase the diversity of their members.</p>

If the answer to the second question has identified potential impacts and you have answered yes to any of the remaining questions then you should carry out a full EQIA set out as stage 2 below.

Stage 2: Equality Impact Assessment

Name of Policy/Service/Function
Arts & Culture Strategy
Purpose
To set out a clear vision and priorities for arts and culture in the Maidstone borough. The strategy will help us identify and challenge the main barriers to people taking part in the arts. Through building new partnerships we will seek to reach wider audiences, and ensure that the provision of arts and cultural activities is sustainable in the future.
Who defines and manages it?
The Arts & Culture Officer has responsibility for defining and managing the strategy, but delivery of the action plan will be carried out in partnership with colleagues, members, stakeholders, community groups and individuals.
Who do you intend to benefit from it and how?
<p>We intend that residents of Maidstone and visitors to the area will benefit.</p> <p>We will seek to increase opportunities for people to experience great arts by reducing local barriers and widening participation by under-represented groups.</p> <p>We will work with local communities to co-create affordable and inclusive arts opportunities that address local needs.</p> <p>We will support artists and organisations to deliver arts activities and events that celebrate Maidstone's identity, diversity and cultural heritage.</p>
What could prevent people from getting the most out of the policy / service / function?
<p>Lack of opportunities to take part</p> <p>Events/activities that are chargeable may be too expensive for some people</p> <p>People may feel unrepresented in cultural place-making and become disengaged with projects/activities</p>
How will you get your customers involved in the analysis and how will you tell people about it?
To better understand the main barriers to participation in arts and culture,

<p>we will carry out a public consultation. The results of this will be used to guide the development of new events/activities and we will create a checklist for all projects that will help us identify target audiences and address any potential barriers.</p> <p>Event/project marketing will be focused on reaching target audiences, including the use of social media and websites where appropriate.</p>
<p>Evidence</p>
<p>How will you know if the policy delivers its intended outcome / benefits?</p>
<p>Each of the actions contained within the Action Plan have clearly defined outcomes and a timeframe for delivery. Success will be measured through achievement of these specific outcomes.</p>
<p>How satisfied are your customers and how do you know?</p>
<p>Information has only been received from arts and cultural groups (usually the chairperson or secretary) rather than individuals at this stage. As no specific services have yet been delivered under the new strategy there are no customer satisfaction results to report.</p>
<p>What existing data do you have on the people that use the service and the wider population?</p>
<p>An audit of existing arts and cultural organisations was carried out in Feb/March 2019. Each group was asked to provide basic data on their members including gender, ethnicity and disabilities (physical and mental health). The responses were mixed with some giving more detail than others, largely because some of the requested information was not collected by all of the clubs/groups.</p> <p>Information on the wider population has been taken from the latest census.</p>
<p>What other information would it be useful to have? How could you get this?</p>
<p>A wider snapshot of participation in arts and culture by residents of the borough is required to better understand current levels of participation. A public consultation will be carried out to ascertain the types of activities residents are taking part in and the frequency. We will also look to gather demographic information as part of this process.</p>
<p>Are you breaking down data by equality groups where relevant (such as by gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation,</p>

marital status, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity)?
Yes
Are you using partners, stakeholders, and councillors to get information and feedback?
Yes
Impact
Are some people benefiting more – or less - than others? If so, why might this be?
Different groups tend to dominate in different categories, such as females in dance classes and older people in music clubs and choirs. There are likely to be a number of wider social and economic reasons for this, but these results reflect the national picture and are not unique to the borough of Maidstone.
Actions
If the evidence suggests that the policy / service / function benefits a particular group – or disadvantages another - is there a justifiable reason for this and if so, what is it?
N/A
Is it discriminatory in any way?
No. Developing and utilising a checklist will help to ensure each project is accessible to anyone who wants to get involved.
Is there a possible impact in relationships or perceptions between different parts of the community?
The aim of certain projects will be to actively promote cultural cohesion by developing a shared sense of local identity. We will support projects that encourage inter-generational and inter-cultural learning, fostering greater understanding and more tolerant communities. We will support projects that seek to break down barriers between ethnic, religious and other minority groups.
What measures can you put in place to reduce disadvantages?
Developing and implementing a checklist for new projects/events will help to ensure that target audiences are identified and any potential barriers to

their participation are addressed as far as possible.
Do you need to consult further?
Yes. It will be necessary to repeat the public consultation at regular intervals to monitor levels of participation (annual or bi-annual).
Have you identified any potential improvements to customer service?
The creation of an online directory of active arts and cultural organisations will benefit both the groups themselves in terms of attracting new members, and residents in accessing information about local opportunities.
Who should you tell about the outcomes of this analysis?
Members of the ERL committee
Have you built the actions into your Service Plan or Policy Implementation Plan with a clear timescale?
Each action contained within the Action Plan has a clearly defined outcome and a timescale for delivery.
When will this assessment need to be repeated?
The action plan sets out actions to be completed over the next two years. At that point, this assessment will be repeated.

Agenda Item 14

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

26 November 2019

Amendment to the Festivals and Events Policy

Final Decision-Maker	Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	Head of Regeneration and economic Development – John Foster
Lead Officer and Report Author	Visitor Economy & Events Development Manager - Laura Dickson
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Maidstone is widely recognised for the quality of the events that take place and a desirable location for event organisers. Events and Festivals directly support tourism and the economic impact of events benefits the whole borough. In order to manage the existing events programme whilst encouraging the sustainability and growth of events, an amendment to the festival and Events Policy is proposed.

Purpose of Report

To recommend an amendment to the festival and events policy relating to the noise levels and frequency of events.

To provide an overview of events in our parks in 2019

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the amendments to the Festivals and Events policy set out in the report be agreed.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	26 November 2019

Amendment to the Festivals and Events Policy

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve A Thriving Place. We set out the reasons other choices will be less effective in section 2.	Head of Service or Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	The report has no impact on the achievement of the cross-cutting objectives.	Head of Service or Manager
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section – paragraph 5 of the report.	Head of Service or Manager
Financial	We expect accepting the recommendations may help to achieve existing income targets. This income is within amounts already accounted within the Council's financial planning.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Service
Legal	The recommendations in the report and the amendment to the Festivals and Events Policy align with the Council's general duty, under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 as a best value authority, to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". It is a function of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee to oversee the development, review and implementation of the Council's Festivals and Events Policy and, therefore, it falls to this Committee to consider the Amendment to the Festivals and Events Policy report.	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS

Privacy and Data Protection	The proposed recommendations do not include a potential for processing personal data therefore a data protection impact assessment would not be required.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation will have no impact on Crime and Disorder.	Head of Service or Manager
Procurement	There are no procurement implications at this stage	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Festivals and events directly support tourism and the economic impact of events benefits the borough. The Tourism Destination Management Plan identifies events as one of the key growth areas that will drive more visitors to the borough.
- 2.2 Well organised festivals and events are recognised for their ability to produce benefits for the local economy, bring life to an area, create interest in the area and reflect the place. Due to the broad dynamics of events and festivals, which cover sports, leisure, special interest, culture, heritage and the arts, they can each have a positive impact and make a significant contribution to the status and image of the Borough.
- 2.3 Maidstone Borough has an established history and tradition of hosting events and festivals. There is a comprehensive and diverse range of activities; from music events to community events that have a direct links to the well-being and cohesion of the local community.
- 2.4 In 2019, using the EventsImpact methodology, the three largest events in Mote Park, Ramblin Man Fair, Rock the Mote and Revival had a combined economic impact of over £3.1m to the borough.

Overview of 2019 Events

2.5 Proms in the Park

In October 2018 the Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee agreed to discontinue Proms. As a budget saving, the funding of council events has been reduced by £30000 over a three-year period from 2017-2019. The

remaining £5000 in 2019 for Proms was agreed by Committee to be used to provide a series of bandstand concerts in Brenchley Gardens.

- 2.6 However, the Leader of the Council was able to secure sponsorship of £20000 in 2019 from Weston Homes. They have indicated that they will sponsor Proms for a 5-year period. They have confirmed sponsorship of the 2020 Proms.
- 2.7 Proms took place in Whatman Park on Saturday 25th May 2019. Parkwood Leisure who run the Hazlitt Theatre provided the event management of Proms as part of their contract.
- 2.8 The event was free of charge this year after the introduction of ticketing in 2018 to part fund the event. It is estimated that the number of attendees doubled this year from 900 to over 1800 as the event was free to attend. Variations do happen each year due to several factors including weather or other events.

2.9 Brenchley Gardens Bandstand Concerts

Maidstone Area Arts Partnership (MAAP) agreed to put on 4 concerts on consecutive Sunday afternoons starting on 23rd June until the 14th July.

- 2.10 The concerts were provided by Maidstone Youth Music Society, Jon Hamilton Big Band, BAE Brass Band and Invicta Jazz orchestra. Audiences ranged from 80 to several hundred people lasting an hour and a half. The costs including the management and marketing were achieved well within the £5000 budget. There is no baseline budget to continue this in 2020 as the final £5000 of the budget will be cut.

2.11 Shemomedjamo - Multi-Cultural Food and Music Festival

In November 2016 Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee agreed to outsource a new three-day multicultural event and food festival to an external provider, with a reducing subsidy over three years so it could become self-financing. The contract was awarded to Event Umbrella and the new event is branded as Shemomedjamo.

In 2019, the final year of the contract, the Event Umbrella could no longer subsidise the event as they had been doing the previous year. It was not sustainable as a self-funded event as the cost of the entertainment programme required by the contract and rising event costs meant that it was unable to be covered by the income through the food festival.

2.12 Maidstone Community Mela

The Community Mela took place for the third year in Whatman Park. It is organised by Cohesion Plus who apply for Arts Council and other funding to support it each year. MBC agreed a contribution of £2500 in 2019 along with free use of the park, officer time and marketing support. As there is no baseline budget to support it, many members contributed from their allowance.

- 2.13 The Community Mela may move to Mote Park in 2020, and a date has been reserved. However, the additional costs that would be incurred by moving to a larger venue may prohibit the move.

2.14 There is no baseline budget in 2020 for MBC to support the Mela, but we can continue to provide free venue hire and additional marketing support. Event income would be affected by a free let of the park during the few weekend dates that are available for external hire.

2.15 Ramblin Man Fair

This is the fourth year that this promoter has run the event since taking over the brand. The event started on the afternoon of Friday 20th July until Sunday 22nd July.

2.16 Over 19,000 attendees came over the 3 days, from all over the world including Chile, Australia, Malaysia, Sweden. Around a third of attendees were from Kent and London. Over 60% of attendees stayed in accommodation in the area spilling throughout Kent as the serviced accommodation locally became fully booked. Many Ramblers were camping or glamping on site.

2.17 16 noise complaints were received, mainly on the Friday when the final sound checks were taking place. Although more than last year (3), it was still substantially less than previous years. The music noise levels did not breach the limits at any time. The music was audible but that did not make it too loud. The only difference to the event was that in 2018 there was a strong wind blowing westerly that carried the sound in the opposite direction. This was a category A event with the highest limits set.

2.18 All events that have operate category A or B events must contract a specialist noise monitoring company who measure the levels at noise sensitive locations and feed back to the production desk.

2.19 Rock the Mote, Revival and Oktoberfest

Rock the Mote was a new tribute band festival in August. There were 9000 attendees, with 1000 child tickets available. There were 4 complaints, 3 regarding music noise. This is Category B event with lower limits set.

2.20 Rock the Mote presents Big Top Live and Revival took place in September. The events had around 3000 attendees at each. There were 11 complaints about noise. Although the limits were never breached, the direction of the music was concentrated in one particular direction aided by the blustery conditions. Adjustments were made continuously to manage the noise levels and the organiser is looking at how to improve the sound levels for next year. This was a category A event with the higher limits set.

2.21 Oktoberfest is a Bavarian Beer festival where the music is secondary to the event. It is a category B event and there were no complaints.

2.22 Charity Runs and Other Events

The majority of events in Mote Park are for charities or for schools and are mainly sponsored walks and runs. The breakdown of all events is as follows:

Charity Walk/Runs – 12

Schools – 4

Food or drink events – 3

Music festivals – 3

Miscellaneous – (filming, boats, car, funfairs etc) - 6

2.23 The events season in Mote park is short from the end of May until the beginning of October. The parks will not be used for events outside this time unless restricted to pathways. Events all tend to take place at weekends, so the number of actual event days available is very limited. Large events may need 7 -10 days to build the infrastructure and 3-5 days for the de-rig after the event. It is necessary to build in recovery time after some events and limit the number of events taking place during the summer school holidays. There are only a few dates still available in 2020 for events.

2.24 Festivals and Events Policy

The Festival and Events Policy sets out the priorities, aims and objectives for the delivery of events in our parks and open spaces. (Appendix 1)

2.25 In 2016 it became necessary to differentiate type of events, particularly those that are noisier but not necessarily concerts. Three categories of events were created. They were added to the policy with limits on the number of events and total event days. Although the proposal was for up to three events and a total number of days as 6, committee decided to reduce that to two events up to 6 days in total.

2.26 The proposed amendment would allow more flexibility with events. Currently Ramblin Man Fair is a category A event that takes place over 3 days. The second category A event is the Revival and Big Top Live weekend. All other events were category B or C.

2.27 According to the policy non music events that have a significant impact on the parks or the surrounding area are classed as category A. The increase to the size and scale of many charity runs and walks requires them to be re-classified as category A. They can have a major impact on the roads and the park use. It is now necessary to increase the number of category A events to accommodate the growth of these events.

2.28 One day category A events might lessen the impact to residents rather than two events of up to three days. Ramblin Man is established as a three-day event but the the remaining 3 days could more spread out over a longer period rather than another weekend event. A current enquiry for a high-profile one-day music event cannot be confirmed as the limit has been reached on Category A events for 2020. This event could attract 10-15,000 people and provide an event for a mature target audience.

2.29 Whatman Park is not suitable for a Category A event and has never been used for an event of that size. It is also proposed that the policy be amended to limit events in Whatman Park to Category B.

2.30 Current Wording:

Large music events involving high powered amplification can cause disturbance to those living in the vicinity. These events we will categorise to ensure the impact of these events is minimised and spread out over the Festival and Event season. The category of events will be as follows:

- Category A events - amplified noise profile will extend beyond the boundary of the park and will be clearly audible at properties within and/or surrounding the parks and/ or significant:
 - increase in the number of visitors to the parks,
 - change to the normal use and operational matters in the parks,
 - impact on the surrounding area.

Examples- Music Concert, VIP Visit, high profile event

- Category B events - where the number of participants requires changes to normal use of the park and the surrounding infrastructure. Much lower noise profile but utilising amplified noise to communicate to audiences or with live / recorded music as part of the entertainment.

Example- Large scale charity run, cultural festival.

- Category C events - events with little or no impact on the surrounding area and no amplified noise.

Example- Nature talks and smaller community events.

In order to manage the impact of events, each park will be assigned limits based on the category types event and, where appropriate, the noise limits will also be set follows:

Mote Park

Category	No. Events	Maximum No. Days	Music Noise Level if appropriate
A	Up to 2	6	65dB LAEQ (15min)
B	Up to 8	12	Should not exceed 15dB LAEQ (15min) above the normal background levels
C	Unlimited	N/A	N/A

Whatman Park

Category	No. Events	Maximum No. Days	Music Noise Level if appropriate
A	1	2	65dB LAEQ (15min)
B	2	4	Should not exceed 15dB LAEQ (15min) above the normal background levels
C	Unlimited	N/A	N/A

2.31 New Wording:

Large music events involving high powered amplification can cause disturbance to those living in the vicinity. These events we will categorise to ensure the impact of these events is minimised and spread out over the Festival and Event season. The category of events will be as follows:

- Category A events - amplified noise profile will extend beyond the boundary of the park and will be clearly audible at properties within and/or surrounding the parks and/ or significant:
 - increase in the number of visitors to the parks,
 - change to the normal use and operational matters in the parks,
 - impact on the surrounding area.

Examples- Music Concert, VIP Visit, high profile event

- Category B events - where the number of participants requires changes to normal use of the park and the surrounding infrastructure. Much lower noise profile but utilising amplified noise to communicate to audiences or with live / recorded music as part of the entertainment.

Example- Large scale charity run, cultural festival.

- Category C events - events with little or no impact on the surrounding area and no amplified noise.

Example- Nature talks and smaller community events.

In order to manage the impact of events, each park will be assigned limits based on the category types event and, where appropriate, the noise limits will also be set follows:

Mote Park

Category	No. Events	Maximum No. Days	Music Noise Level if appropriate
A	Up to 5	12 of which a maximum of 8 days can be music events	65dB LAEQ (15min)
B	Up to 8	12	Should not exceed 15dB LAEQ (15min) above the normal background levels
C	Unlimited	N/A	N/A

Whatman Park

Category	No. Events	Maximum No. Days	Music Noise Level if appropriate
A	0	0	65dB LAEQ (15min)
B	2	4	Should not exceed 15dB LAEQ (15min) above the normal background levels
C	Unlimited	N/A	N/A

2.32 Members will need to consider whether the impact on residents is significant enough to reduce the availability of Mote Park as category A venue and compromise the delivery of the policy vision.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 That the proposed amendment to the Festival and Events Policy be approved. It provides enough flexibility to allow the natural growth of events whilst still placing limitations on the number of noisier music events. **RECOMMENDED**

3.2 That at the proposed amendment is not approved. This would effectively reduce the number of events in Mote Park as we would have to limit the natural growth of both charity and music events. **NOT RECOMMENDED**

3.3 That the Festival and Events policy is approved subject to changes requested by committee. The amendments have been developed through examination of existing and potential events, awareness of the limitations of the number of events day available in Mote Park, and consideration of the issues that may arise from residents as potential complaints. **NOT RECOMMENDED**

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The amendments to the policy enable the development of festivals and events that have a significant contribution to the status and the image of the Borough benefiting the local economy and creating a lively vibrant place to live, work and visit.

4.2 It is not expected that all the event days would be used for category A events, nor that all permitted to be a category A would reach the higher noise limits. There is already a diary limit to the number of events that can be scheduled in the park. Events may move away from the borough as they seek alternative venues if we cannot accommodate their growth.

4.3 Without the amendment, should any significant new opportunities arise, we would be unable to react quickly enough. If the issue had to come back to committee for a decision it probably would have already booked another destination. The amendment will provide the ability to react quickly to enquiries with potential event promoters if an opportunity for a top-class event arises.

5. RISK

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

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 There previous Heritage, culture and Leisure Committee agreed the former amendments.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Should the amendments to the policy be approved, the policy will be updated accordingly and implemented.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Festival and Events Policy v5 30.11.16
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE - minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2016](#)

APPENDIX 1

FESTIVAL AND EVENTS POLICY

**Maidstone Borough Council
Festivals & Events Policy
Revised November 2016**

**Version 6
30 November 2016**

INDEX

	Detail	Page
1.	The Vision	3
2.	Background	3
3.	Aims and Objectives	4
4.	Type and Frequency of Events	5
5.	Evaluation	8
6.	Venues	8
7.	Finance and Commissioning	10
8.	Marketing and PR	10
9.	Associated Policies and Strategies	11
10.	How to Apply	13

1. THE VISION

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

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

2. BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

Therefore, Festivals & Events constitute a fundamental element and vital component to the Borough; although all activities must be managed effectively and efficiently to maximise opportunities (e.g. by extending the season to create economic value), they should also minimise any negative impacts (i.e. on the environment).

The Borough's Festivals & Events are an integral part of delivering core elements of the Council's Strategic Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Destination Management Plan and our commitment to celebrating our rich culture and heritage.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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

3.1 Aims

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

- i. **Economy**
 - a) Generate income for the local economy.
 - b) Help to regenerate parts of the Borough.

- ii. **Community**
 - a) To develop, generate, facilitate and support cultural, economic, community and social events for the benefit of the Borough and its residents to improve quality of life.
 - b) Interest or involve the Boroughs diverse communities.
 - c) Prevent and divert anti-social behaviour.
 - d) Increase the number of volunteers at events.

- iii. **Destination Publicity**
 - a) Maximise promotional, publicity and marketing opportunities through the Festivals and Events programme
 - b) Promote Maidstone borough as a vibrant, successful place.
 - c) Encourage people and businesses to live in, invest in and visit Maidstone.

- iv. **Education and Employment**
 - a) Provide skills & learning opportunities for the community.
 - b) Interest or engage young learners.
 - c) Provide new temporary employment and work experience opportunities.

- v. **Income opportunities**
 - a) To create opportunities to maximise Income and sponsorship for the Council.

3.2 Objectives

- a) Maximise enjoyment for those persons participating at a Festival or Event.

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

3.3 Outcomes

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

4. TYPE AND FREQUENCY OF EVENTS

Events will differ depending on their purpose, scale, location, content, and target audience. Some events will have an increased impact both on the long term condition of the venue and on local residents within immediate vicinity of the venue.

Event classification is broken into two main considerations, size and purpose. Another factor to consider is noise from music events.

4.1 Size and Scale

The size classification for an event will be based around the expected audience

capacity. This is the maximum number of people expected to be at the event at one time, and not the total number of people who may experience the event throughout the day(s). The scale of an event will need to be considered where the event spans multiple days.

Type	Size	
Small	Less than 500 attending	Small events are classified as those with a potential attendee and staffing level of less than 499.
Medium	Less than 3,000 attending	Medium scale events are defined as those with a potential attendee and staffing levels of no less than 500 and no more than 2,999.
Large	Less than 9,000 attending	Large scale events are classified as those with a potential capacity in excess of 4,999 people but no more than 8,999
Special	More than 9,000 attending	Any event with attendance and staffing levels reaching 9,000 or more will be classified as a special event. If an event is considered to be particularly disruptive, it too might be labelled as a special event, even if its attendance numbers equal less than 9,000. Some special events may be small in scale but due to the quality of their programme may attract a large proportion of visitors from out with Maidstone; they therefore have a greater economic and cultural impact and national recognition than their size suggests.
Major (Strategic)	Various	May be large or small but require extensive planning and very high security. It can be large public spectacle and usually has national and/or international significance e.g. Royal visit, Tour de France, Olympic Torch Relay, G8 Summit.

4.2 Purpose of Event

What is the purpose of the event? Is it a community led project, a commercial venture, a private event or a corporate event?

a) Community Event

When the event is organised by the community for the community, it is free to enter/attend and is not for the purpose of selling or promoting a commercial product, it shall be deemed as a "Community Event". Community events are generally not-for-profit, but can be they for fundraising through charging entry to an event.

b) Charity / Fundraising Events – Local and National

This category includes events that are organised by not – for – profit organisations but can also include events run by commercial companies for charitable fund raising e.g. bike rides and charity runs.

c) Commercial Events

Commercial events provide a beneficial gain to a particular individual, group or company, be it financial or promotional. The following events are classed as commercial events; however the list is not exhaustive:

- Corporate events
- Commercial Music, Cultural, Theatre or Comedy Concerts or Festivals
- Marketing and promotional activities for profit making organisations (not charitable or fundraising)
- Funfairs and circuses
- Private events e.g. a wedding reception / private party / large picnic

An event can fall into more than one category e.g. events can be community led and be considered commercial.

4.3 Noise from Music events

Large music events involving high powered amplification can cause disturbance to those living in the vicinity. These events we will categorise to ensure the impact of these events is minimised and spread out over the Festival and Event season. The category of events will be as follows:

- Category A events - amplified noise profile will extend beyond the boundary of the park and will be clearly audible at properties within and/or surrounding the parks and/ or significant:
 - increase in the number of visitors to the parks,
 - change to the normal use and operational matters in the parks,
 - impact on the surrounding area.Examples- Music Concert, VIP Visit, high profile event
- Category B events - where the number of participants requires changes to normal use of the park and the surrounding infrastructure. Much lower noise profile but utilising amplified noise to communicate to audiences or with live / recorded music as part of the entertainment.
Example- Large scale charity run, cultural festival.
- Category C events - events with little or no impact on the surrounding area and no amplified noise.
Example- Nature talks and smaller community events.

In order to manage the impact of events, each park will be assigned limits based on the category types event and, where appropriate, the noise limits will also be set follows:

Mote Park

Category	No. Events	Maximum No. Days	Music Noise Level if appropriate
A	Up to 2	6	65dB LAEQ (15min)
B	Up to 8	12	Should not exceed 15dB LAEQ (15min) above the normal background levels
C	Unlimited	N/A	N/A

Whatman Park

Category	No. Events	Maximum No. Days	Music Noise Level if appropriate
A	1	2	65dB LAEQ (15min)
B	2	4	Should not exceed 15dB LAEQ (15min) above the normal background levels
C	Unlimited	N/A	N/A

Although setting the noise limits in terms of dB(A) is convenient it does not always take into account the intrusiveness of low frequency noise. It can be the frequency imbalance which causes disturbance. Therefore it can be more of a problem further away from the open air venue than in the immediate vicinity to it. Even if the dB(A) limits are being met it can seem to residents that the noise is loud. Therefore it may be necessary to set additional criterion in terms of low frequency noise or apply additional conditions.

5. EVALUATION

As well as balancing existing events with new ones, we want to support the expansion and development of the programme of events. Occasionally an event may arise which is exceptional and will be supported even if it doesn't meet the criteria outlined above. This will be managed via the application process.

In order to ensure that all major supported events and festivals continue to meet the above aims and objectives, the council has adopted the use of an Economic Impact Toolkit www.eitoolkit.org.uk and requests all event organisers evaluate their event by this method.

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

6. VENUES

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

6.1 Mote Park

Mote Park is within walking distance of Maidstone town centre. It is 460 acres parkland site and includes a large 30 acre lake, amenity grass areas, sports pitches as well as large areas of woodland and natural grassland which are managed for conservation. Over recent years the park has hosted a number of events ranging from: Radio 1 Big Weekend in 2008, an event attended by 30,000 music fans; the CBeebies Mr Blooms Roadshow in 2013 which attracted 18,000 people; the annual Mela which is a successful multi-cultural event, the Ramblin Man Fair held for the first time in 2015 and the Social Festival dance music event which started in 2013. In 2012 a series of Lottery funded improvements took place in the park, as part of this regeneration project a programme of smaller events put on in in a partnership between officers and the Mote Park Fellowship friends group was started. This partnership continues to put on events and education walks and in 2013 put on 22 walks and worked in partnership putting on a number of events attracting over 20,000 people.

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

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

6.2 Whatman Park

This 25 acre park was created as part of the Millennium River Park. The park has great potential for hosting festivals and events as it is located within walking distance of the town centre; it is surrounded by the railway line and the River Medway and has only three entrances which eliminates the need for fencing for an event; the River stage in the park provides a covered performance area as well as having a substantial electricity supply and is designed to host medium sized events. Currently the only event which has been regularly hosted in the park is Proms in the Park which has taken place every May. This has been a free event which attracts up to 1,000 people.

6.3 River Park Amphitheatre

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

6.4 Cobtree Manor Park

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

6.5 Brenchley Gardens

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

6.6 Jubilee Square and Lower High Street

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

6.7 Maidstone Museum and Bently Art Gallery

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. FINANCE AND COMMISSIONING

Event and festival organisers should undertake to self-finance activities through income and/or sponsorship opportunities. The Council may commission a number of festivals and events through a procurement process.

8. MARKETING AND PR

The Council will maintain the What's On section on the Visit Maidstone website and will encourage all events organisers to provide publicity information on their events. In addition an Event Planning Calendar (Clash Diary) has been created to help event organisers in the planning stages check the best dates for events by seeing what else is already planned and to help avoid diary clashes and overload on support services.

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

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

9. ASSOCIATED POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

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

9.1. Strategic Plan

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

The Strategic Plan is a five-year document produced by Maidstone Borough Council, written for residents, staff and partners. It sets out clear priorities and expected outcomes by 2020.

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

1. Keeping Maidstone as an attractive borough for all.
2. Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

The Council's Strategic Plan is available on our website.

9.2 Destination Management Plan (DMP)

The DMP process has identified three important "strands" where resources should be focused over the next three years, in order to deliver the promise of the Shared Story. These three strands are: Improving the County Town's appeal to visitors; Improving the impact of Events on the visitor economy; and Making more of the Countryside.

Events have many positive impacts on local economies and communities. The DMP is focusing on ways to improve the impact of business and leisure events on the visitor economy – which in turn will support jobs and services for local people. The DMP takes into account MBC's Festivals & Events Strategy, which is about events that take place in the Borough's parks and open spaces – but the thinking includes larger venues such as Leeds Castle, Kent Showground and Kent Life.

The DMP's actions will support the development of events with wider reach (actual or potential) – i.e. events that will draw visitors from further afield (from beyond Kent), and/or enhance the image of the area further afield as a vibrant place to visit.

The Shared Story says Maidstone is "Kent's capital for big events ... with tens of thousands at a time coming here for the South East's biggest pop concerts, classical extravaganzas, and business shows." This is a USP for Maidstone, so maintaining and strengthening the

“capital for big events” status is a priority. It also means that there is significant events expertise in the Borough – in the big event venues as well as in the public agencies. The DMP should aim to tap into and make the most of this professional expertise.

This does not mean that the DMP will ignore smaller events – but from a visitor economy perspective the focus for actions will only be on those smaller events that are either clustered into festivals or seasons to give them greater reach, or that have a strongly distinctive niche appeal that draws visitors and generates publicity from further afield.

9.3 Equalities Policy

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

We would expect all events and festivals organisers to:

Recognise their duties under legislation and be committed to meeting them.

Take action to combat direct and indirect discrimination in all areas in respect of disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, age, marriage, and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation as far as it is permitted by statute law and associated Codes of Practice.

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

9.4 Environmental Policy

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

9.5 Health and Safety

Event organisers are responsible for and have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the people attending their events, as well as that of the employees, contractors and sub-contractors working at the event. Please refer to the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

Event organisers will also be required to conform to:

- The Events Safety Guide, A guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at music and similar events HSG 1995
- RIDDOR 1995
- Fire precautions act 1975
- The Children’s Act 1989

- Health and Safety at work Act 1974
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Any specific conditions laid out, local byelaws or instructions from a Council Officer
- Any relevant legislation relating to public safety

The Council and its partners have a duty to ensure all relevant health & safety guidance is followed, including checking risk assessments, emergency evacuation plans and method statements. In many cases the Council or its partners (i.e. emergency services) may require changes to be made to plans to improve safety at the event. All health & safety paperwork must be submitted to the Council as per the application timetable requirement, although this may be reduced for smaller events if agreed in advance with the Council's nominated Events Representative.

For larger or more complex events the Council may take a more active role. We may wish to meet with event organisers to discuss plans in more detail, and it may be a condition of hire that event organisers attend Safety Advisory Group meetings.

It may also be a condition of approval that management plans are submitted in advance of the application timetable requirement due to their complexity. If this is the case sufficient notice will be given of any change in deadline.

10. HOW TO APPLY

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

- Event Classification
- Application Timescales
- Do I need to apply for any other licences?
- Legislation
- Pre Planning
- Detailed Planning
- Final Preparations
- Health & Safety
- Help with your Risk Assessment
- Road Closures
- Stewarding
- First Aid and Medical Cover
- Insurance
- Contingency Planning
- Counter Terrorism
- After the Event

- Event Notification Form
- Road Closure Notification Form
- Event Application form: Public Open spaces
- Event Risk Assessment Form