

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 28 January 2020
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Bartlett, Mrs Blackmore (Vice-Chairman), Cox, Fort, Mrs Gooch, Harper (Chairman), 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.

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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.	
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Issued on Monday 20 January 2020

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk.

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. 24th of January by 5 p.m. 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: 10 December 2019

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2019

Present: Councillor Harper (Chairman) and
Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Cox, Fort, Mrs Gooch,
B Hinder and Lewins

Also Present: Councillor M Rose and Mr Ken Scott (Kent Arts and
Wellbeing)

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Webb and that Councillor Mrs Blackmore would be late in arriving at the meeting.

68. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

69. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

70. VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor M Rose indicated her wish to speak on item 12 (Presentation by Mr Ken Scott on behalf of Kent Arts and Wellbeing) and item 13 (Arts and Culture Strategy).

71. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Harper said that as Chairman of the Committee he was automatically appointed as one of the Council's representatives on the Maidstone Area Arts Partnership and had attended its Annual General Meeting the previous week.

Councillor Mrs Gooch said that she was a member of the Maidstone Museums' Foundation. She was also a supporter of the work of Kent Arts and Wellbeing particularly in relation to people living with dementia.

72. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

73. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

74. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 OCTOBER 2019

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

75. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

76. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

77. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman said that he intended to make a change to the order of business and that the presentation by Mr Ken Scott on behalf of Kent Arts and Wellbeing would be taken as the next item.

78. PRESENTATION BY MR KEN SCOTT ON BEHALF OF KENT ARTS AND WELLBEING

The Chairman invited Mr Ken Scott to make his presentation entitled "Using Creative Activities to Improve Wellbeing".

In making his presentation, Mr Scott explained that:

- He was a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Chairman of the Maidstone Area Arts Partnership and a founding director of Kent Arts and Wellbeing, and whilst his presentation primarily related to Kent Arts and Wellbeing, it was relevant to both other bodies.
- He wanted to talk about the importance of art and creative activity to wellbeing. He wanted to make Members aware of areas of activity and persuade them to offer support on a non-financial basis.
- Kent Arts and Wellbeing, which was founded about two years ago, was a not for profit organisation. Its aims were to improve the wellbeing of individuals and communities through the use of creative activities. The initial focus had been on older people.
- The Kent Arts and Wellbeing Network, which was currently supported by about forty different organisations, was focusing on a strategic programme to establish and promote the recognition of the benefits of creative activity on wellbeing. The ambition was for the programme to be well-promoted and to cover a range of creative practices. It was proposed to have four major localities based on the Integrated Care

Partnership areas with Maidstone as the hub for the activity in West Kent.

- There would be a focus on local communities, especially those with high levels of deprivation, and communities of interest (people living with dementia, homeless people etc.). There would be an inter-generational approach and an emphasis on volunteers.
- The Strategic Programme would cost somewhere between £500k and £600k over four years with the expectation that about £100k would be spent in each of the four areas and other money in terms of the co-ordination of the whole area.
- Maidstone had been identified as a hub as it was recognised not only as the most typical area in Kent but also because it was statistically the closest to a typical town in the country. It was the largest area in West Kent and had high levels of relative deprivation. It had substantial arts activity to provide volunteer support and a supportive voluntary sector, but there were big gaps in the provision of arts and cultural activities.
- Consideration was being given to a project involving singing for people who are homeless or who have chaotic lifestyles. It was relevant to Maidstone and there was a proven model ("The Choir with No Name"). The key features of the model were weekly rehearsals to provide a constant level of activity and support; a hot meal after the rehearsal; and performances (a clear statement of the value of the activity) to raise money to become more self-sufficient. An appropriate venue had been identified and a musical director/deputy musical director and/or an accompanist were required together with a project manager to support clients.
- These activities could integrate well with the proposed Arts and Culture Strategy. Kent Arts and Wellbeing was not looking to the Council for funding, but it would be appreciated. Instead, Kent Arts and Wellbeing was looking for a commitment to support it in its funding applications, get involved in selecting areas of activity and to support those areas of activity on a non-financial basis.

In response to questions, Mr Scott explained that:

- The Choir project was not just for homeless people; it was also for people with chaotic lifestyles who would also benefit from this sort of activity.
- To move the project forward, Kent Arts and Wellbeing would work with a number of voluntary organisations in Maidstone and with the Council. It was his expectation that people for the singing group would be found through organisations that exist already.
- To run a series of activities around Maidstone would cost approximately £25k a year (£100k over four years). However, the

Choir for people who are homeless or have chaotic lifestyles would not be a cheap option. With two music directors, hire charges and a project manager, it would cost more than that.

- To fund the Strategic Programme, an application would be made initially to Reaching Communities and other grant making bodies such as the Esme Fairburn Foundation had been identified. A progressive approach was being looked at rolling forward over the three to four years.

During the discussion it was suggested that consideration could be given to securing developer contributions and external sponsorship and using Members' devolved budgets towards the cost of these activities.

Councillor M Rose addressed the Committee in support of the proposed Choir for people who are homeless or have chaotic lifestyles.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Mr Scott for the presentation. He indicated that a report would be submitted to the meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held on 28 January 2020 looking at the proposals outlined in the presentation, research into how creative activity benefits individuals and disadvantaged groups and how the Council might work with Kent Arts and Wellbeing on Maidstone based projects.

Note: Councillor Mrs Blackmore entered the meeting during the discussion on this item (7.10 p.m.).

79. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2019/20.

The Chairman said that only one item was listed for consideration at the meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held on 17 December 2019 so it was proposed to cancel the meeting and have a series of short briefings instead as follows:

- Cohesion Plus (Maidstone Mela);
- Mote Park Café New Build Project and Estate Services Building;
- Refurbishment of the Bus Station Project;
- Update on the Opportunity Sites Work; and
- Maidstone Museum Redevelopment Plans and Bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

RESOLVED:

1. That the meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held on 17 December 2019 be cancelled and replaced by a series of short briefings as outlined above instead.
2. That the Committee Work Programme as amended be noted.

80. ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

The Arts and Culture Officer presented her report setting out an Arts and Culture Strategy for 2019-2024 and an Action Plan for its delivery. She explained that:

- In October 2015, the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee agreed to support further work on culture and heritage in the Borough following a consultation carried out by Nick Ewbank Associates. Heritage had largely been addressed by the Museum's new 20 year Transformation Plan but arts and culture had not been equally considered.
- In order to change that, and to understand the current arts and culture offer in the Borough, extensive research had been carried out, including a full SWOT analysis, an audit of all existing arts and cultural organisations in the Borough and conversations with local artists, arts organisations and collectives. Combining this with the results of previous research and looking at the wider regional and national context, a new Arts and Culture Strategy had been developed which would help the Council to establish its aims and priorities for arts and culture in the Borough and ensure that it capitalises on all the benefits they can bring to society, the economy and the health and well-being of local residents.

The Chairman thanked the Arts and Culture Officer for her work on the development of the Arts and Culture Strategy and advised Members that if they were to approve the Strategy, Arts Council Officers would be invited for a discussion to find out how they might assist with applications for additional resources.

Councillor M Rose (Visiting Member and one of the Council's representatives on the Maidstone Area Arts Partnership) addressed the Committee in support of the new Strategy.

During the discussion:

- It was suggested that, with regard to the SWOT analysis, Cobtree Manor Park should be added to the list of Strengths as a key visitor attraction together with the aim, possibly in connection with the Business Terrace, for Maidstone to be the Business Capital of Kent. In terms of Weaknesses, there was a need for an up to date, managed, data base to enable people to access information on arts and cultural groups/activities Kent-wide. In terms of Opportunities, there was a possible need to mention the Business Improvement District either coupled with One Maidstone or separately.
- Reference was made to the lack of information relating to arts and cultural activities taking place in the rural areas and it was pointed out that information could be obtained from Parish magazines and Parish Council websites. It was also suggested that the potential to work

with churches, community halls and local charities and to obtain sponsorship from local businesses should be examined.

In response to these comments and further questions:

- The Officers explained that:

A data base had been developed and was now live on the Maidstone Borough Council website listing about sixty local arts and cultural organisations divided by category with a brief description of what they do, when and where they meet, membership fees and contact details. It was a directory for arts and culture in the Borough, not an events calendar. Discussions would take place with the IT team about promoting the directory through Google.

One of the actions in the Action Plan was to carry out a public consultation to identify the main barriers to participation in arts and cultural activities and if the Council was putting on events and activities people would be consulted on what they would want to do and what would benefit them most. This would involve working in partnership with other Council departments and outside agencies.

More work needed to be done to identify all of the different arts and cultural groups actively operating in the Borough and areas where events are taking place and to add them to the data base.

- The Chairman said that he would be working with the Officers to ensure that the action plan is delivered without putting unreasonable pressure on members of staff. This would involve partnership working and engagement with the Arts Council. Additional support and resources might be available once a comprehensive action plan is agreed.

RESOLVED: That subject to the suggested amendments to the SWOT analysis set out above, the Arts and Culture Strategy and the Action Plan for its delivery, attached as Appendices to the report of the Arts and Culture Officer, be adopted.

81. AMENDMENTS TO THE FESTIVALS AND EVENTS POLICY

The Visitor Economy and Events Development Manager presented her report proposing amendments to the Festival and Events Policy relating to noise levels and the frequency of events and also providing an overview of events in the Council's parks in 2019. It was noted that:

- Maidstone was now recognised as a key destination for large events and festivals comparing favourably with other major towns and cities around the UK. In 2019 Mote Park was booked almost every weekend during the events season. It was calculated that the three largest events in the Park had a combined economic impact of over £3.1m for the Borough.

- It was proposed to amend the Festival and Events Policy to increase the number of category A events in Mote Park from up to 2 to up to 5 per annum and the maximum number of days from 6 to 12 of which a maximum of 8 days can be music events.
- The proposed amendment would allow more flexibility with events. The Ramblin Man Fair was currently a category A event that takes place over 3 days. The second category A event was the Revival and Big Top Live weekend. All other events were category B or C.
- According to the Policy non-music events that had a significant impact on the parks or the surrounding area were classed as category A. The increase in the size and scale of many charity runs and walks required them to be re-classified as category A. They could have a major impact on the roads and the park use. It was now necessary to increase the number of category A events to accommodate the growth of these events.
- One day category A events might lessen the impact to residents rather than two events of up to three days. Ramblin Man was established as a three-day event but the remaining 3 days could be spread out over a longer period rather than another weekend event. A current enquiry for a high-profile one-day music event could not be confirmed as the limit had 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.
- The proposed amendment would provide enough flexibility to allow the natural growth of events whilst still placing limitations on the number of noisier music events. It was not anticipated 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. Without the amendment, should any significant opportunities arise, the Council would not be able to respond quickly enough.
- Whatman Park was not suitable for a Category A event and had never been used for an event of that size. It was proposed that the Policy be amended to limit events in Whatman Park to Category B.

In response to questions, the Officers explained that:

- Most event promoters had event insurance as a matter of course.
- The income targets for events were challenging and the proposed amendments to the Policy would help in achieving them.

During the discussion, concerns were expressed that the Festival and Events Policy was out of date and needed to be amended to reflect the current situation and changes to legislation. It was suggested that in the longer term, a Festival and Events Policy was required for the use of the Council's parks and open spaces for events and an Events Strategy that

would sit more comfortably with the Arts and Culture Strategy and the Destination Management Plan.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposed amendments to the Festivals and Events Policy set out in the report of the Visitor Economy and Events Development Manager be agreed.
2. That the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development be given delegated powers in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee to update the Festival and Events Policy to reflect the current situation and changes to legislation.
3. That the draft version of the updated Festival and Events Policy should be circulated to all Members of the Committee so that any comments they may have can be taken into account when the delegation is exercised.

82. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.25 p.m.

2019/20 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Relocation of the Mela event to Mote Park	ERL	28-Jan-20	John Foster	John Foster
Fees & Charges Report 2020/21	ERL	28-Jan-20	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove
Draft Budget Proposals 2020/21	ERL	28-Jan-20	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove
To look at the Proposals outlined in Mr Ken Scott's Presentation, researching how creative activity benefits individuals and disadvantaged groups and how the Council might work with Kent Arts and Wellbeing	ERL	03-Mar-20	John Foster	AnneMarie Langley
Town Centre Opportunity Sites Delivery Strategies	ERL	03-Mar-20	William Cornall	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
Economic Development Strategy Review	ERL	31-Mar-20	John Foster	John Foster
Update on Lottery Bid for Museum	ERL	31-Mar-20	John Foster	John Foster
Maidstone East (incl. recommendation to P&R)	ERL	31-Mar-20	William Cornall	John Foster
Tour of the Business Terrace	ERL	TBC	John Foster	John Foster
Mote Park Visitor Centre and Estates Service Building	ERL	TBC	William Cornall	John Foster

3rd Quarter Budget & Performance Monitoring Report 2019/20

Final Decision-Maker	Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	Mark Green, Director of Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Authors	Chris Hartgrove, Interim Head of Finance Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client) Claire Harvey, Data Intelligence Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the 2019/20 financial and performance position for the services reporting into the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee (ERL) as at 31st December 2019 (Quarter 3). The primary focus is on:

- The 2019/20 Revenue and Capital budgets; and
- The 2019/20 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that relate to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045.

The combined reporting of the financial and performance position enables the Committee to consider and comment on the issues raised and actions being taken to address both budget pressures and performance issues in their proper context, reflecting the fact that the financial and performance-related fortunes of the Council are inextricably linked.

Budget Monitoring

With regard to revenue, at the Quarter 3 stage, net expenditure of £1.019 million has been incurred against a profiled budget of £1.094 million, representing an under spend of £75,000. The Committee is also expected to remain within its overall net revenue expenditure budget for the year.

With regard to capital, at the Quarter 3 stage, expenditure of £532,000 has been incurred against a total *revised* budget allocation of £460,000. This includes an overspend of £380,000 on the Mote Park Adventure Zone project due to additional costs incurred as a result of the sewage leak in the Park.

Performance Monitoring

For the strategic priority "A Thriving Place", 43% (3 out of 7) of Key Performance Indicators, reportable to the Committee, achieved their Quarter 3 targets.

Purpose of Report

The report enables the Committee to consider and comment on the issues raised and actions being taken to address both budget pressures and performance issues as at 31st December 2019.

This report makes the following Recommendations to the Committee:

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

Timetable

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee	28th January 2020

3rd Quarter Budget & Performance Monitoring Report 2019/20

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>This report monitors actual activity against the revenue budget and other financial matters set by Council for the financial year. The budget is set in accordance with the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy which is linked to the Strategic Plan and corporate priorities.</p> <p>The Key Performance Indicators and strategic actions are part of the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2019-45 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. They also cover a wide range of services and priority areas.</p>	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Cross Cutting Objectives	This report enables any links between performance and financial matters to be identified and addressed at an early stage, thereby reducing the risk of compromising the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045, including its cross-cutting objectives.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Risk Management	This is addressed in Section 5 of this report.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Financial	<p>Financial implications are the focus of this report through high level budget monitoring. Budget monitoring ensures that services can react quickly enough to potential resource problems. The process ensures that the Council is not faced by corporate financial problems that may prejudice the delivery of strategic priorities.</p> <p>Performance indicators and targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and determining good value for money. The financial implications of any proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and associated annual budget setting process. Performance issues are highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.</p>	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Staffing	<p>The budget for staffing represents a significant proportion of the direct spend of the Council and is carefully monitored. Any issues in relation to employee costs will be raised in this and future monitoring reports.</p> <p>Having a clear set of performance targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place.</p>	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Legal	<p>The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget and the monitoring process enables the Committee to remain aware of issues and the process to be taken to maintain a balanced budget.</p> <p>There is no statutory duty to report regularly on the Council's performance. However, under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) a best value authority has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. One of the purposes of the Key Performance Indicators is to facilitate the improvement of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of Council services. Regular reports on Council performance help to demonstrate best value and compliance with the statutory duty.</p>	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Privacy and Data Protection	The performance data is held and processed in accordance with the data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 2018 and in line with the Data Quality Policy, which sets out the requirement for ensuring data quality. There is a program for undertaking data quality audits of performance indicators.	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Equalities	There is no impact on Equalities as a result of the recommendations in this report. An EIA would be carried out as part of a policy or service change should one be identified.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	The performance recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no specific issues arising.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Procurement	Performance Indicators and Strategic Milestones monitor any procurement needed to achieve the outcomes of the Strategic Plan.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)

2. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2019/20 to 2023/24 - including the budget for 2019/20 - was approved by full Council on 27th February 2019. This report updates the Committee on how its services have performed in the first nine months of the financial year with regard to revenue and capital expenditure against approved budgets.
- 2.2 This report also includes an update to the Committee on progress against its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- 2.3 Attached at **Appendix 1**, is a report setting out the revenue and capital spending position at the Quarter 3 stage. Attached at **Appendix 2**, is a report setting out the position for the KPIs for the corresponding period.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 There are no matters for decision in this report. The Committee is asked to note the contents but may choose to take further action depending on the matters reported here.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 In considering the current position on the Revenue budget, the Capital Programme and KPIs at the end of December 2019, the Committee can choose to note this information or could choose to take further action.
- 4.2 The Committee is requested to note the content of the report and agree on any necessary action to be taken in relation to the budget position and/or the KPIs position.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 This report is presented for information only and has no direct risk management implications.
- 5.2 The Council has produced a balanced budget for both revenue and capital income and expenditure for 2019/20. The budget is set against a backdrop of limited resources and a difficult economic climate. Regular and comprehensive monitoring of the type included in this report ensures early warning of significant issues that may place the Council at financial risk. This gives the Committee the best opportunity to take actions to mitigate such risks.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The KPIs update ("Performance Monitoring") is reported to service committees quarterly: Communities, Housing & Environment Committee; Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee; and the Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee. Each committee will receive a report on the relevant priority action areas. The report is also presented to the Policy & Resources Committee, reporting on the priority areas of "A Thriving Place", "Safe, Clean and Green", "Homes and Communities" and "Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure".
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The Quarter 3 Budget & Performance Monitoring reports are being considered by the relevant Service Committees during January and February 2020, including a full report to the Policy & Resources Committee on 12th February 2020.

- 7.2 Details of the discussions which take place at Service Committees regarding financial and performance management will be reported to Policy and Resources Committee where appropriate.
- 7.3 The Council could choose not to monitor its budget and/or the Strategic Plan and/or make alternative performance management arrangements, such as the frequency of reporting. This is not recommended as it could lead to action not being taken against financial and/or other performance during the year, and the Council failing to deliver its priorities.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

- **Appendix 1:** Third Quarter Budget Monitoring 2019/20
 - **Appendix 2:** Third Quarter Performance Monitoring 2019/20
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Third Quarter Budget Monitoring 2019/20

Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee

28th January 2020

Lead Officer: Mark Green

17 Report Authors: Chris Hartgrove/Paul Holland

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Part B: Third Quarter Capital Budget 2019/20

B1) Capital Budget: Council **Page 8**

B2) Capital Budget: Economic Regeneration & Leisure **Page 8**

Executive Summary

This report provides Members with an overview of progress against the 2019/20 revenue and capital budgets as at 31st December 2019 (i.e. the Quarter 3 cumulative position) for the services falling within the remit of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee (ERL). The analysis also includes both revenue and capital year-end projections (to 31st March 2020) for ERL services, as well as some important context, with consideration given to the Council's overall position.

The headlines for Quarter 3 are as follows:

Part A: Third Quarter Revenue Budget 2019/20

- Overall net expenditure for the services reporting to ERL is £1.019 million, compared to the profiled budget of £1.094 million, representing an under spend of £75,000. ERL is also expected to remain within its overall net revenue expenditure budget for the year, recording a small under spend of £4,000 against its *revised* budget of £1.312 million.
- Overall net expenditure for the Council is £12.10 million, compared to the profiled budget of £12.211 million, representing an under spend of £0.111 million. The Council is also expected to remain within its overall net revenue expenditure budget of £20.561 million for the year.

Part B: Third Quarter Capital Budget 2019/20

- Capital expenditure for the services reporting to ERL of £532,000 has been incurred against the *revised* annual budget of £460,000. At this stage, it is anticipated that there will be slippage of £2,000.
- Capital expenditure for the Council overall of £28.754 million has been incurred against an annual *revised* budget of £42.647 million.

Part A

Third Quarter Revenue Budget 2019/20

A1) Revenue Budget: Council

A1.1 At the Quarter 3 stage, overall net expenditure for the Council is £12.10 million, compared to a profiled budget of £12.211 million, representing an under spend of £0.111 million. Based on forward projections, the Council is expected to remain within its overall net revenue expenditure budget of £20.561 million for the year.

A1.2 The two charts below show the income and expenditure position for each service committee.

Chart 1: MBC Revenue Budget: INCOME BY SERVICE COMMITTEE

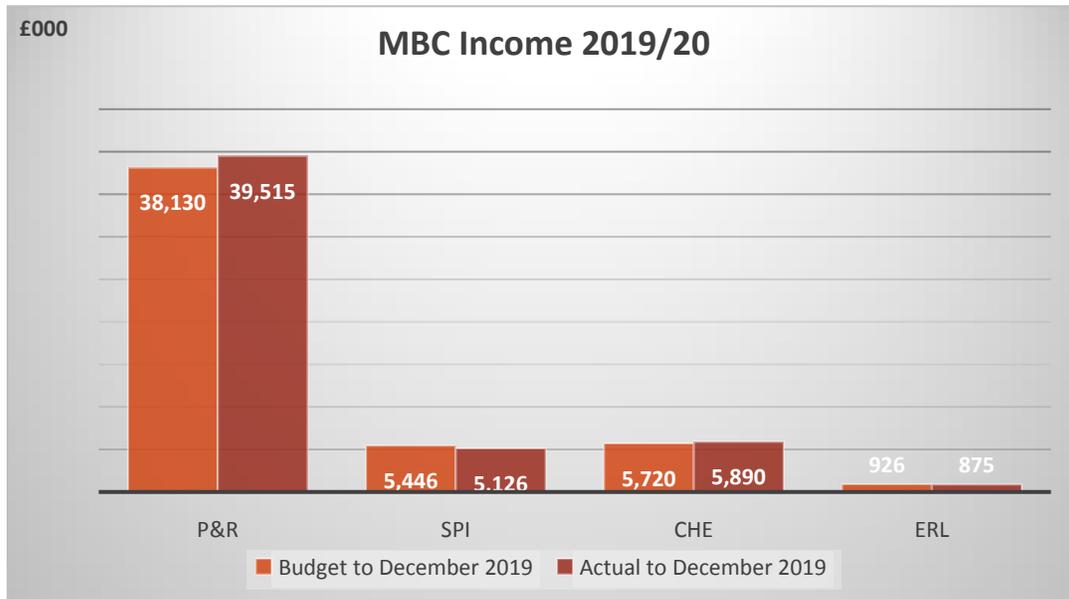
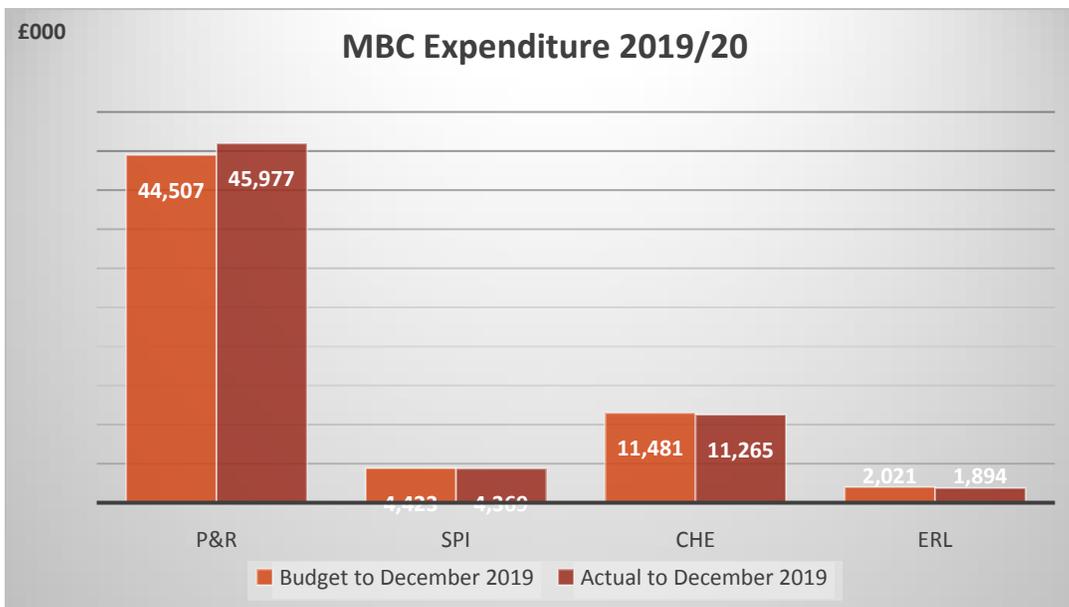


Chart 2: MBC Revenue Budget: EXPENDITURE BY SERVICE COMMITTEE



A2) Revenue Budget: Economic Regeneration & Leisure (ERL)

A2.1 Table 1 below provides a detailed summary on the net expenditure position against the *revised* budgets for ERL services at the end of Quarter 3. The financial figures are presented on an 'accruals' basis (e.g. expenditure for goods and services received, but not yet paid for, is included).

Table 1: ERL Revenue Budget: NET EXPENDITURE

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Cost Centre	Revised Budget for Year £000	Budget to 31 December 2019 £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Forecast 31 March 2020 £000	Forecast Variance 31 March 2020 £000
Cultural Development Arts	15	11	7	4	15	0
Museum	13	8	-20	28	-5	18
Carriage Museum	3	2	2	0	3	0
Museum-Grant Funded Activities	2	1	-22	23	2	0
Museum Cafe	-4	-4	1	-5	-4	0
Hazlitt Arts Centre	277	213	210	3	277	0
Festivals and Events	-26	-24	-35	11	-26	0
Lettable Halls	-4	-3	-8	6	-4	0
Community Halls	73	56	31	25	43	30
Leisure Centre	-148	-136	-148	12	-148	0
Mote Park Adventure Zone	-107	-80	-23	-56	-54	-53
Cobtree Golf Course	-35	0	0	0	-35	0
Mote Park Cafe	-52	-32	-53	21	-72	20
Tourism	31	25	19	6	31	0
Museum Shop	-19	-14	-11	-4	-19	0
Maintenance of Closed Churchyards	3	2	0	2	3	0
Sandling Road Site	23	17	17	-0	23	0
Business Support & Enterprise	18	18	18	0	18	0
Town Centre Management Sponsorship	7	7	7	0	7	0
Business Terrace	74	84	88	-4	74	0
Business Terrace Expansion (Phase 3)	29	21	15	7	29	0
Market	-56	-38	-2	-36	-13	-43
Economic Dev - Promotion & Marketing	103	103	99	4	103	0
Leisure Services Section	64	78	53	25	39	25
Cultural Services Section	507	377	386	-9	507	0
Visitor Economy Section	113	85	84	1	113	0
Economic Development Section	271	214	178	37	238	33
Market Section	77	58	65	-7	77	0
Head of Economic and Commercial Development	86	66	62	3	86	0
Salary Slippage 4ERL	-26	-20	0	-20	-0	-26
	1,312	1,094	1,019	75	1,308	4

A2.2 The table shows that, at the Quarter 3 stage, overall net expenditure for the services reporting to ERL is £1.019 million, compared to the profiled budget of £1.094 million, representing an under spend of £75,000. Based on forward projections, ERL is expected to remain within its overall net revenue expenditure budget for the year, recording a small under spend of £4,000 against its *revised* budget of £1.312 million.

A3) ERL Revenue Budget: Significant Variances (>£30,000)

A3.1 Within the headline figures, there are a number of both adverse and favourable net expenditure variances for individual cost centres. It is important that the implications of variances are considered at an early stage, so that contingency plans can be put in place and, if necessary, be used to inform future financial planning.

A3.2 Table 2 below highlights and provides further detail on the most significant variances i.e. those meeting or exceeding £30,000, either at the end of Quarter 3, or expected to do so by year-end.

Table 2: ERL Variances >£30,000 (@ Quarter 3)

	Positive Variance Q3	Adverse Variance Q3	Year End Forecast Variance
Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee	£000s		
Community Halls – a range of small underspends have been recorded on controlled running costs, including utilities, and repairs and maintenance.	+25		+30
Mote Park Adventure Zone - the facility is now open. However, the contract awarded allows for an initial rent free period for the first three months and the final contract value was less than forecast.		-56	-53
Market - the variance represents the combined impact of the Tuesday and Saturday markets not achieving the income target (£24K) and an overspend on refuse collection (£14k)		-36	-43
Economic Development Section - the variance predominantly relates to salary savings due to two vacant posts.	+37		+34

Part B

Third Quarter Capital Budget 2019/20



B1) Capital Budget: Council

B1.1 The overall five-year Capital Programme for 2019/20 to 2023/24 was approved by the Council on 27th February 2019. Some capital funding will now come from prudential borrowing as other sources of funding are not sufficient to cover the costs of the Programme, although funding does continue to be available from the New Homes Bonus (NHB). Total borrowing at the Quarter 3 stage is £7.0 million.

B1.2 The *revised* 2019/20 element of the Capital Programme has a total budget of £42.647 million. At the Quarter 3 stage, capital expenditure of £28.754 million has been incurred.

B2) Capital Budget: Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee (ERL)

B2.1 Progress towards the delivery of the 2019/20 ERL element of the Capital Programme at the Quarter 3 stage is presented in Table 3 below. The budget for 2019/20 includes resources brought forward from 2018/19.

B2.2 At the Quarter 3 stage, expenditure of £532,000 has been incurred against a *revised* budget of £460,000. At this stage, it is anticipated that there will be slippage of £2,000.

Table 3: ERL Capital Programme 2019/20 (@ Quarter 3)

Capital Programme Heading	Adjusted Estimate 2019/20 £000	Actual to December 2019 £000	Budget Remaining £000	Q4 Profile £000	Projected Total Expenditure £000	Projected Slippage to 2020/21 £000
Economic Regeneration & Leisure						
Commercial Projects - Mote Park Adventure Zone		380	-380		380	
Mote Park Centre & Estate Services Building	156	50	106	106	156	-0
Mote Park Lake - Dam Works	267	63	204	204	267	-0
Museum Development Plan	36	38	-1		38	-1
Total	460	532	-72	310	842	-2

B2.3 As part of the established financial management process, the MBC Capital Programme is reviewed and re-profiled at the Quarter 3 stage, with some budgets transferred into the following financial year (2020/21 in this case), where capital expenditure is expected to be incurred later than originally forecast. It should be noted that the Committee will be asked to approve/note the carry forward of resources into the next financial year at year end.

B2.4 The most significant re-profiling adjustment to note is:

- *Mote Park & Estates Services Building* – The budgets have now been combined as the construction of this facility will be let as a single contract. At this stage, the timing of the building works has not been determined; the forecast assumes they will not begin until April 2020. The combined budget for the overall scheme was originally £2.496 million; £2.340 million of this has been rolled forward into 2020/21.

B2.5 In addition, with regard to Mote Park Adventure Zone, as previously reported to ERL, there was an over spend relating to the additional costs incurred as a result of the sewage leak in the Park that significantly delayed project completion. At the time of reporting, the additional costs are still the subject of an ongoing legal claim, so the over spend continues to be temporarily funded until the outcome of the claim is known.

**Third Quarter Performance Monitoring
2019/20**

Performance Summary

RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A ¹	Total
KPIs	3	1	3	1	8
Direction	Up	No Change	Down	N/A	Total
Last Year	3	0	5	0	8
Last Quarter	2	0	6	0	8

The Q3 headlines are as follows

- 42.9% (3 out of 7) targetable quarterly Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), reportable to the Economic Regeneration & Leisure (ERL) Committee achieved the Quarter 3 (Q3) target
- For 37.5% (3 out of 8) KPIs, performance has improved compared to Q3 last year (2018/19); and
- 25% (2 out of 8) KPIs are showing improved performance compared to Quarter 2 (Q2) this year (2019/20).

A Thriving Place

Performance Indicator	Q3 2019/20				
	Value	Target	Status	Long Trend	Short Trend
Percentage of all available tickets sold at the Hazlitt	77.63%	50%			
Number of visits per month to Visit-Maidstone.com	70,136	80,858			
Footfall in the Town Centre	2,840,806	3,314,196			
Number of students benefiting from the Museum's educational service	2,640	2,060			
Footfall at the Museum and Visitor Information Centre	17,127	13,000			
Number of attendees to informal events	540				
Contacts to the Visitor Information Centre	467	829			
Number of users at the Leisure Centre	172,004	185,209			

Key to performance ratings

RAG Rating	
	Target not achieved
	Target slightly missed (within 10%)
	Target met
	Data Only

Direction	
	Performance has improved
	Performance has been sustained
	Performance has declined
N/A	No previous data to compare

A Thriving Place: Performance Summary

Overall, there has been mixed performance across the performance indicators (PIs) relating to 'A Thriving Place'. Out of 7 reportable PIs:

- Three PIs achieved the target
- One slightly missed (within 10%) its target; and
- Three PIs did not achieve the quarterly target.

One of the PIs that did not achieve its target for Q3 2019/20 was 'Number of visits per month to "Visit-Maidstone.com"'. Here, 86.7% of the target was achieved. The Q3 out-turn represents a 40.5% (117,804) decrease compared to Q2. Compared to Q3 last year (2018/19), there has been a 15.1% decline in performance. There have been 20% fewer referrals from the Visit Kent website this quarter; similar figures can be seen from comparable sites across the country. The drop in visits to the website, overall, reflects the current drop in visits to attractions and destinations on a national level.

'Footfall in the Town Centre' did not achieve its target for Q3, with 85.7% of the target being achieved. Since the last quarter, the figure has decreased by 2.3%, and since last year (Q3 2018/19) there has been a 10.2% fall. Research undertaken by the Economic Development team has shown that the decreasing figures can be linked to national trends demonstrating that high street shopping has become less popular over time; however, relative to other areas, Maidstone has been affected less by these trends.

'Contacts to the Visitor Information Centre' did not achieve its target for Q3 2019/20. 56.3% of the target was achieved. During Q3, there has been a 56.0% decline in visitors, although compared with last year (Q3 2018/19), there has been a 2.6% rise. The target set for Q3 was profiled to take into account seasonality which can affect the number of visitors to the Visitor Information Centre. However, reports from the Visitors Information Centre highlight that this autumn/winter season has been particularly quiet.

The 'Number of users at the Leisure Centre' PI missed its target by less than 10% in Q3. Since Q2, there has been a 15.6% decrease in users, and a 6.7% decline

¹ PIs rated N/A are not included in the summary calculations

* Indicates data that has not been authorised

compared to Q3 last year (2018/19). Between 21/10/2019 and 18/12/2019 several sections of the gym were closed for refurbishment.

Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee

28 January 2020

Fees and Charges 2020/21

Final Decision-Maker	Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	Mark Green, Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Chris Hartgrove, Interim Head of Finance
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

The report sets out the proposed fees and charges for 2020/21 for the services within the remit of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure (ERL) Committee.

The estimated overall value of fees and charges within the remit of the ERL Committee is £477,140 in 2019/20 as follows:

- Discretionary Fees and Charges (Table 1, Section 3) (£477,140) – the budget proposals for 2020/21 entail an average price increase of 1.07%, which will yield estimated additional income of £5,108 compared to 2019/20. Further income of £20,000 is also anticipated from the Business Terrace (re Phase 4 expansion).

Full details on proposed fees and charges for 2020/21 are set out in Appendix 1.

Purpose of Report

This report requires a decision from the Committee.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the proposed discretionary fees and charges set out in Appendix 1 to this report are agreed.

Timetable	
<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	28 January 2020
Policy & Resources Committee	22 January 2020

Fees and Charges 2020/21

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	An updated Charging Policy was adopted in November 2017. It is a key document that underpins the Council's Strategic Plan 2019 – 2045, recognising that fees and charges are an important source of income to support the delivery of corporate priorities.	Interim Head of Finance
Cross Cutting Objectives	As noted above, the recommendations will help underpin the achievement of corporate priorities; this includes the cross-cutting objectives contained therein.	Interim Head of Finance
Risk Management	Refer to Section 5 below.	Interim Head of Finance
Financial	The financial implications are set out in the report at Section 3. If the fees and charges proposals are agreed, the forecast income yield will be incorporated into the budget for 2020/21 and beyond as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.	Interim Head of Finance
Staffing	There are no staffing issues to note.	Interim Head of Finance

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Legal	<p>Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 permits best value authorities to charge for discretionary services provided the authority has the power to provide that service and the recipient agrees to take it up on those terms. The authority has a duty to ensure that taking one financial year with another, income does not exceed the costs of providing the service.</p> <p>A number of fees and charges for Council services are set on a cost recovery basis only, with trading accounts used to ensure that the cost of service is clearly related to the charge made. In other cases, the fee is set by statute and the Council must charge the statutory fee.</p> <p>In both cases the proposals in this report meet the Council's legal obligations.</p> <p>Where a customer defaults on the fee or charge for a service, the fee or charge must be defensible, in order to recover it through legal action. Adherence to the MBC Charging Policy on setting fees and charges provides some assurance that appropriate factors have been considered in setting such fees and charges.</p>	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no Privacy and Data Protection issues to note.	Equalities & Corporate Policy Officer
Equalities	The fees and charges proposals in the report do not represent a change in service. Consequently and Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required.	Interim Head of Finance
Public Health	There are no Public Health issues to note.	Interim Head of Finance
Crime and Disorder	There are no Crime and Disorder issues to note.	Interim Head of Finance
Procurement	There are no Procurement issues to note.	Interim Head of Finance

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The purpose of the MBC Charging Policy is to establish a framework within which fees and charges levied by the Council are agreed and reviewed and unless there is a conflict with strategic priorities, other policies, contracts or the law then the Council should aim to maximise net income from fees and charges.
- 2.2 The Policy aims to ensure that:
- Fees and charges are reviewed regularly, and reviews cover both existing charges and services for which there is potential to charge in future
 - Budget managers are equipped with guidance on the factors which should be considered when reviewing charges
 - Charges are fair, transparent and understandable, and a consistent and sensible approach is taken to setting the criteria for applying concessions or discounted charges; and
 - Decisions regarding fees and charges are based on relevant and accurate information regarding the service, and the impact of any proposed changes to the charge is fully understood.
- 2.3 The Charging Policy covers fees and charges set at the discretion of the Council and does not apply to services where charging is prohibited (e.g. household waste collection). Charges set by Government (e.g. planning application fees) are also excluded.
- 2.4 Managers are asked to consider a range of factors when reviewing fees and charges, including:
- a) The Council's strategic plan and values, and how charge supports these
 - b) The use of subsidies and concessions targeted at certain user groups or to facilitate access to a service
 - c) The actual or potential impact of competition in terms of price or quality
 - d) Trends in user demand, including an estimate of the effect of price changes on customers
 - e) Customer survey results
 - f) Impact on users, both directly and on delivering Council objectives
 - g) Financial constraints, including inflationary pressure and service budgets
 - h) The implications of developments such as service investment
 - i) The corporate impact on other service areas of Council-wide pressure to increase fees and charges
 - j) Alternative charging structures that could be more effective; and
 - k) Proposals for targeting promotions during the year, and the evaluation of any that took place in previous periods.

3. DISCRETIONARY FEES AND CHARGES 2020/21

3.1 Discretionary fees and charges falling within the remit of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure (ERL) Committee have been reviewed by budget managers in line with the Charging Policy, as part of the developing the 2020/21 Budget and MTFS (2020/21 to 2024/25). The results of the review are presented in Appendix 1 and Committee approval is sought for the proposed 2020/21 fees and charges contained therein.

3.2 The table below summarises the 2018/19 outturn and 2019/20 estimate for income from the discretionary fees and charges which fall within the remit of the ERL Committee.

Discretionary Fees and Charges (ERL Committee)				
Service Area	2018-19 Outturn £'s	2019-20 Estimate £'s	Proposed Income Change £'s	2020-21 Estimate £'s
Business Terrace	68,013	84,980	0	84,980
Business Terrace (Expansion)	109,811	184,220	21,108*	205,328
Economic Development (Jubilee Square)	4,340	3,500	0	3,500
Market	135,671	139,840	4,000	143,840
Museum	62,795	64,600	0	64,600
Total Discretionary Fees and Charges	380,630	477,140	25,108	502,248

*Note – £20,000 of additional yield will meet savings target in MTFS adopted in February 2019

3.3 The overall increase in income from discretionary fees and charges for 2020/21 compared to 2019/20 – if the proposals are adopted – is expected to be £25,108 (5.26%). This includes £5,108 (1.07%) attributable to price increases

3.4 The detailed fees and charges position for each the service area is presented in Appendix 1. In summary:

- Business Terrace – a 20% rent increase was introduced in 2016. No increases are therefore proposed for 2020/21 to support local start-ups and reflect the local market. However, where businesses wish to stay beyond the two-year "incubation" period, increases would be applied
- Business Terrace (Expansion) – inflationary increases have been applied to offices in accordance with rent review arrangements. Additional income of £20,000 is also assumed following the completion of the Phase 4 expansion (an adopted savings target within the MTFS)
- Economic Development (Jubilee Square) – based on an updated market assessment, there are no proposals to increase event hire fees for 2020/21
- Market – an increase in Boot Fair charges is proposed and, if accepted, is expected to yield additional income of £4,000; and

- Museum – there are no proposals to amend Museum-related fees and charges based on an assessment of price sensitivity and wider market factors.

4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 (recommended) – the Committee could choose to approve the report recommendation, thus adopting the fees and charges presented in Appendix 1. The proposals have been developed in line with the Council’s adopted Charging Policy and are balanced in terms of maximising revenue and their impact on service delivery.
- 4.2 Option 2 (not recommended) – the Committee could choose to increase the fees and charges presented in Appendix 1. However, there is a risk that such an approach could contravene the Charging Policy. Additional increases would also place an additional burden on service users and could fail to deliver the income levels assumed within the 2020/21 balanced budget proposals through creating a negative impact on service demand.
- 4.3 Option 3 (not recommended) – the Committee could choose to decrease the fees and charges presented in Appendix 1. However, this would fail to deliver the income levels assumed within the 2020/21 balanced budget proposals and could have a negative impact on the Council’s ability to achieve its corporate priorities.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is Option 1. The proposed fees and charges:
- Are consistent with the Council’s Charging Policy
 - Can be managed at a service level
 - Maximise revenue and are therefore expected to deliver the income levels assumed within the 2020/21 balanced budget proposals; and in so doing
 - Maximise the Council’s ability to deliver its corporate priorities.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 A range of risks have been considered by service managers in developing the fees and charges proposals in this report including the impacts on service users and delivery and, importantly, the potential risk of increased fees and charges having a detrimental impact on demand (e.g. leading to a net reduction in income).
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The Council is committed to consulting with residents and other stakeholders to help inform the budget setting process, including the fees and charges proposals contained therein. It is an iterative process, with a variety of techniques and approaches used.
- 6.2 The consultation process for 2019/20 asked consultees to rank their preferred approach to achieving a balanced budget; raising fees and charges was the second most popular choice amongst respondents (providing fewer discretionary services was the most popular choice). The 2020/21 consultation further confirmed a general reluctance to Council Tax increases; with 59.9% of respondents opposed to a Council Tax increase in 2020/21. Increasing fees and charges helps to reduce the pressure on Council Tax, thus enabling increases to be minimised.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Fees and charges proposals for 2020/21 are being considered by the three service committees during January 2020, with an overarching report to the Policy & Resources Committee on 22 January 2020.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- 8.1 The following document is to be published with this report and forms part of the report:
- Appendix 1: Proposed Fees and Charges 2020/21 (Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee)
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 The Council's adopted Charging Policy can be viewed via the following link <http://aluminum:9080/documents/g2805/Public%20reports%20pack%2022ndnov2017%2019.00%20Policy%20and%20Resources%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

ERL Proposed Fees and Charges 2020-21

Appendix 1

Fees and Charges	* Includes VAT	Discretionary Fee	Statutory Fee	2018-2019	2019 -2020	Current	Proposed	%	2020-	2020-2021
				Actuals	Current Estimate	Charges 2019-2020	Charges 2020-2021	Change	2021 + / - Income	Estimate
				£	£	£	£		£	£
Museum										
School visits		X		22,185	24,300					24,300
First Hour		X				85.00	85.00	0.00%		
Each Subsequent Hour		X				40.00	40.00	0.00%		
Craft Sessions		X				85.00	85.00	0.00%		
Object Inspired		X				30.00	30.00	0.00%		
Lunch room hire		X				15.00	15.00	0.00%		
Outreach to schools										
Children's holiday activities		X								
Out with 1 staff member										
1 workshop		X				175.00	175.00	0.00%		
2 workshops		X				250.00	250.00	0.00%		
3 workshops		X				325.00	325.00	0.00%		
3 workshops + Giant craft		X				475.00	475.00	0.00%		
4 workshops		X				400.00	400.00	0.00%		
Out with 2 CLA										
Loan Boxes to schools per half term		X				50.00	50.00	0.00%		
Room hire	*	X		8,212	14,000					14,000
Glass Room - Per day	*	X				135.00	135.00	0.00%		
Library - Per day	*	X				300.00	220.00	-26.67%		
Museum out of hours (based on 4 hours))	*	X				600.00	600.00	0.00%		
Events				17,954	9,200					9,200
Per Child minimum charge depending on activity		X				3.00	3.00	0.00%		
Children's Parties	*			12,639	15,000					15,000
Per Child minimum charge depending on activity		X				12.50	12.50	0.00%		
Museum Talks or Tours -										
Minimum charge depending on length and location of talk		X								
External talks	*	X		0		100.00	100.00	0.00%		
Internal	*	X				100.00	100.00	0.00%		0
Carriage Museum Admission				1,242	1,600					1,600
Adult		X				2.50	2.50	0.00%		
Senior Citizen		X				1.00	1.00	0.00%		
Child over 5		X				1.00	1.00	0.00%		
Family Ticket		X				5.00	5.00	0.00%		
Collections enquiries										
QORWK - enquiries		X		563	500					500
Museum Total				62,795	64,600				0	64,600

ERL Proposed Fees and Charges 2020-21

Appendix 1

Fees and Charges	* Includes VAT	Discretionary Fee	Statutory Fee	2018-2019 Actuals	2019 -2020 Current Estimate	Current Charges 2019-2020	Proposed Charges 2020-2021	% Change	2020-2021 + / - Income	2020-2021 Estimate
				£	£	£	£		£	£
Market										
Office Rent C250										
Mon/Tue/Fri charge per month 1st April - 31st March		x		4,956	4,360	460.00	460.00	0.00%	0	4,360
Tuesday & Saturday Market Pitches C223/C226				48,254	66,040				0	66,040
Open Market										
Regular Rate Market Square										
Up to 10 feet - 1 April - 31 Dec		x				25.00	25.00	0.00%		
Up to 10 feet - 1 Jan - 31 Mar		x				18.00	18.00	0.00%		
Undercroft Rate - 1 April - 31 Dec		x				26.00	26.00	0.00%		
Undercroft Rate - 1 Jan - 31 Mar		x				19.00	19.00	0.00%		
Saturday Rate for 2 day Traders										
Up to 10 feet (2 day Trader) - 1 April - 31 Dec		x				24.00	24.00	0.00%		
Up to 10 feet (2 day Trader) - 1 Jan - 31 Mar		x				17.00	17.00	0.00%		
Lettings-General C251/D358/C227				78,957	65,940				4,000	69,940
Hire of Agricultural Hall										
Standard Hire - per day - regular hire		x				400.00	400.00	0.00%		
Standard Hire - per day - casual hire		x				495.00	495.00	0.00%		
Standard Hire minimum 3 hours		x				35.00	35.00	0.00%		
Auctioneers - per hour							30.00			
Local Community & U16 Events										
Per Day		x				150.00	150.00	0.00%		
Per hour - minimum 3 hours		x				35.00	35.00	0.00%		
Boot Fair -When in undercroft										
10' - pitch (£10 per each additional 10' pitch)		x				10.00	15.00	50.00%		
Commercial Hire										
Per half day (maximum 8 hours)		x				545.00	545.00	0.00%		
Per day (over 8 hours)		x				1,030.00	1,030.00	0.00%		
Hire of chairs for events - per 100		x				47.00	47.00	0.00%		
Farmers Market C253				3,504	3,500	25.00	25.00	0.00%	0	3,500
Every other Friday - daily rate										
April - March										
Market Total				135,671	139,840				4,000	143,840

ERL Proposed Fees and Charges 2020-21

Appendix 1

Fees and Charges	* Includes VAT	Discretionary Fee	Statutory Fee	2018-2019 Actuals	2019 -2020 Current Estimate	Current Charges 2019-2020	Proposed Charges 2020-2021	% Change	2020-2021 + / - Income	2020-2021 Estimate
				£	£	£	£		£	£
Business Terrace										
Offices (month)				50,733	57,140					57,140
Office 1		X				600.00	600.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 2		X				250.00	250.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 3		X				250.00	250.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 4		X				250.00	250.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 5		X				360.00	360.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 6		X				360.00	360.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 7		X				525.00	525.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 8		X				375.00	375.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 9		X				500.00	500.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 10		X				375.00	375.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 11		X				250.00	250.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 12		X				250.00	250.00	0.00%	0.00	
Hot desks and meeting space				17,280	27,840					27,840
Hot desk day pass		X				12.00	12.00	0.00%		
Hot desk package 30 (month)		X				48.00	48.00	0.00%		
Hot desk package 50 (month)		X				75.00	75.00	0.00%		
Hot desk package 100 (month)		X				144.00	144.00	0.00%		
Hot desk unlimited (month)		X				195.00	195.00	0.00%		
Meeting room (hour)		X				6.00	6.00	0.00%		
Seminar Room (half day)		X				70.00	70.00	0.00%		
Seminar Room (full day)		X				150.00	150.00	0.00%		
Business Terrace Total				68,013	84,980				0	84,980
Business Terrace Expansion										
Offices (month)				109,811	184,220					205,328
Office 13		X				845.00	861.90	2.00%	202.80	
Office 14		X				496.00	505.92	2.00%	119.04	
Office 15		X				1,457.00	1,486.14	2.00%	349.68	
Office 16		X				1,165.00	1,165.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 17		X				1,078.00	1,078.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 18		X				1,665.00	1,665.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 19		X				3,177.00	3,177.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 20		X				849.00	849.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 21		X				848.00	848.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 22		X				1,978.00	1,978.00	0.00%	0.00	
Office 23		X				1,820.00	1,856.40	2.00%	436.80	
Business Terrace Expansion Total				109,811	184,220				21,108	205,328

ERL Proposed Fees and Charges 2020-21

Appendix 1

Fees and Charges	* Includes VAT	Discretionary Fee	Statutory Fee	2018-2019 Actuals	2019 -2020 Current Estimate	Current Charges 2019-2020	Proposed Charges 2020-2021	% Change	2020-2021 + / - Income	2020-2021 Estimate
				£	£	£	£		£	£
Economic Development-Jubilee Square										
Jubilee Square (EN40 B724)				4,340	3,500					3,500
Use of premises licence		x				70.00	70.00	0.00%		
Use of electricity - 3 phase (incl Openreach call out)		x				80.00	80.00	0.00%		
Use of Electricity (Without Openreach call out)		x				20.00	20.00	0.00%		
Promotional/Comercial use inc admin fee		x				250.00	250.00	0.00%		
Events/Educational Promotion (min) charity / public sector admin fee		x				50.00	50.00	0.00%		
Economic Development Total				4,340	3,500				0	3,500

Agenda Item 15

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

28 January 2020

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report forms part of the process of agreeing a budget for 2020/21 and setting next year's Council Tax. Following agreement by Council of an updated Medium Term Finance Strategy at its meeting on 18 December 2019, this report sets out budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee. These proposals will then be considered by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 12 February 2020, with a view to determining a budget for submission to Council.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the revenue budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee, as set out in Appendix A, be agreed for submission to Policy and Resources Committee.
2. That the capital budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee, as set out in Appendix B, be agreed for submission to Policy and Resources Committee.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	28 January 2020
Policy and Resources Committee	12 February 2020
Council	26 February 2020

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Medium Term Financial Strategy and the budget are a re-statement in financial terms of the priorities set out in the strategic plan. They reflect the Council's decisions on the allocation of resources to all objectives of the strategic plan.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Cross Cutting Objectives	The MTFS supports the cross-cutting objectives in the same way that it supports the Council's other strategic priorities.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Risk Management	This has been addressed in section 5 of the report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Financial	The budget strategy and the MTFS impact upon all activities of the Council. The future availability of resources to address specific issues is planned through this process. It is important that the committee gives consideration to the strategic financial consequences of the recommendations in this report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	The process of developing the budget strategy will identify the level of resources available for staffing over the medium term.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Legal	<p>Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) the Section 151 Officer has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the authority, including securing effective arrangements for treasury management. The Medium Term Financial Strategy demonstrates the Council's commitment to fulfilling its duties under the Act.</p> <p>The Council is required to set a council tax by the 11 March in any year and has a statutory obligation to set a balanced budget. The budget requirements and basic amount of Council Tax must be calculated in accordance with the requirements of sections 31A and 31B to the Local Government Finance Act</p>	Mid Kent Legal Services

	<p>1992 (as amended by sections 73-79 of the Localism Act 2011).</p> <p>The Council is required to determine whether the basic amount of council tax is excessive as prescribed in regulations - section 52ZB of the 1992 Act as inserted under Schedule 5 to the Localism Act 2011. The Council is required to hold a referendum of all registered electors in the borough if the prescribed requirements regarding whether the increase is excessive are met.</p> <p>Approval of the budget is a matter reserved for full Council upon recommendation by Policy and Resources Committee on budget and policy matters.</p>	
Privacy and Data Protection	<p>Privacy and Data Protection is considered as part of the development of new budget proposals. There are no specific implications arising from this report.</p>	<p>Policy and Information Team</p>
Equalities	<p>The MFTS report scopes the possible impact of the Council's future financial position on service delivery. When a policy, service or function is developed, changed or reviewed, an evidence based equalities impact assessment will be undertaken. Should an impact be identified appropriate mitigations will be identified.</p>	<p>Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer</p>
Public Health	<p>The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p>Public Health Officer</p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer & Finance Team</p>
Procurement	<p>The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer & Finance Team</p>

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 2.1 At its meeting on 18 December 2019, Council agreed an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the next five years. The MTFS sets out in financial terms how the Strategic Plan will be delivered, given the resources available.
- 2.2 The MTFS builds on the previous year's MTFS, which was developed in parallel with the Council's new Strategic Plan. There were relatively few new developments to be incorporated in the updated MTFS, given the recent adoption of a Strategic Plan and the delay in the introduction of a new local government funding regime from 2020/21 to 2021/22. This means that, broadly speaking, a real terms 'stand-still' budget could be set for 2020/21. Members have agreed that the principle of maintaining the level of Council Tax in real terms be adopted.
- 2.3 The financial projections underlying the MTFS were prepared under three different scenarios – adverse, neutral and favourable. All three scenarios assumed that budget proposals for future years which have already been agreed by Council will be delivered, and that Council Tax is increased by 2% in 2020/21. Existing budget savings proposals are shown in Appendix A for this Committee and total £3.4 million for all Committees over the MTFS period.
- 2.4 The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2020/21 was announced on 20 December 2019. This confirmed the key assumptions incorporated in the MTFS:
- Retained business rates income will be £3.260 million (the MTFS projection was £3.269 million)
 - New Homes Bonus has been retained for another year, giving £4.472 million to help fund our capital programme
 - The Council Tax referendum limit will be 2%
 - There will be no negative Revenue Support Grant.
- 2.5 The outcomes for the Council's budget gap, before allowing for any further growth or savings, are set out below.

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000

Scenario 1 – Favourable					
Budget gap / (surplus)	-179	774	1,121	1,385	1,177

Scenario 2 – Neutral					
Budget gap / (surplus)	-96	946	1,568	2,119	2,212

Scenario 3 – Adverse					
Budget gap / (surplus)	400	1,923	3,276	4,604	5,525

- 2.6 It can be seen that next year's budget showed a small surplus in the neutral scenario, given the various assumptions underlying the projections. However, in 2021/22 the budget gap will be significant under all three scenarios. It is essential that the Council starts planning now for 2021/22, taking account of announcements from central government about the likely shape of future local government funding.

Revenue Budget Proposals

- 2.7 As the MTFS 'neutral' revenue projections indicate a broadly balanced position for 2020/21, no specific targets were set for savings or increased income generation in this year. Service pressures, or new initiatives with revenue expenditure implications, will have to be funded from within the overall budget envelope, meaning savings or additional income growth to offset the expenditure growth.
- 2.8 In subsequent years, the projections indicate a likely requirement either to make savings or generate increased income. The MTFS strategic revenue projections include a contingency for future pressures of £1.6 million that can potentially be released in 2021/22 to avoid a cliff-edge where savings need to be made at short notice.
- 2.9 Amended and new budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee are set out in Appendix A. As indicated above, they are confined to changes required to address new initiatives or budget pressures that cannot be accommodated.

Delays in existing savings

- A review of the existing savings for 2020/21 indicates that two of them will not be delivered until the following year. Additional income from a new café at Mote Park cannot be delivered until the building is complete. The business rates at the museum have been appealed, but the outcome is not yet known.
 - Proceeds from the Kent Business Rates pool are allocated to form a reserve that may be used by the Economic Development and Regeneration service. Accordingly, it is proposed that a contribution from this reserve is made to cover the shortfall arising from the delayed savings. This will be a one-off contribution, so it is shown in Appendix A as a saving in 2020/21 and as growth the following year.
- 2.10 Budget amendments have been developed, following the same principles, for services within the remit of the other Service Committees. Taken in total, the savings proposals will allow a balanced budget to be set for 2020/21.

Capital Budget Proposals

- 2.11 Capital investment helps the Council to deliver its strategic priorities. Accordingly, the capital programme includes a number of projects that support the 'Thriving Place' priority that is of particular concern to this Committee. The capital budget proposals are as follows:

Mote Park Visitor Centre - £2.7 million

Planning permission has recently been obtained for the new Visitor Centre at Mote Park and work is expected to get under way in 2020/21. The scope of the work has been expanded to include toilet facilities that meet 'Changing Places' standards.

Mote Park Dam Works - £1.8 million

Mote Park Lake is effectively a reservoir retained by a dam at its western end. A review of dam safety under the Reservoirs Act 1975 included a mandatory recommendation that the spillway capacity be increased to reduce the risk of dam failure due to overtopping. This work therefore comes under the first heading set out in paragraph 2.6, 'required for statutory reasons'. Consultants have designed a suitable scheme and planning permission has been obtained. Preliminary work is currently under way, with most of the work taking place in Summer 2020.

Museum Development Plan - £389,000

This amount represents the balance of funding set aside for development projects at Maidstone Museum. It will be used to complement funding sought via a Heritage Lottery Fund bid which was submitted in November 2019.

Capital budget proposals are set out in Appendix B.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Agree the budget proposals relating to this Committee as set out in Appendix A and B for onward submission to the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 3.2 Propose changes to the budget proposals.
- 3.3 Make no comment on the budget proposals.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Policy and Resources Committee must recommend to Council at its meeting on 12 February 2020 a balanced budget and a proposed level of Council Tax for the coming year. The budget proposals included in this report will allow the Policy and Resources Committee to do this. Accordingly, the preferred option is that this Committee agrees the budget proposals at Appendix A.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The Council's MTFS is subject to a high degree of risk and uncertainty. In order to address this in a structured way and to ensure that appropriate mitigations are developed, the Council has developed a budget risk register. This seeks to capture all known budget risks and to present them in a readily comprehensible way. The budget risk register is updated regularly and is reviewed by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee at each of its meetings.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Policy and Resources Committee received an initial report on the MTFS at its meeting on 23 July 2019 and it agreed the approach set out in that report to development of an MTFS for 2020/21 - 2024/25 and a budget for 2020/21.
- 6.2 Service Committees and Policy and Resources Committee then considered a draft MTFS at their meetings in November 2018, and this was agreed for submission to Council. Council agreed the MTFS at its meeting on 18 December 2019.
- 6.3 Public consultation on the budget has been carried out. Details are set out in Appendix C. It can be seen that slightly more residents agreed that the Council's budget provides value for money than disagreed.
- 6.4 There was resistance to the idea of Council Tax increases; this is an understandable stance to take, but if applied in practice would risk cuts to services, given that Council input costs continue to increase in line with inflation. The Council's position is that we will maintain a constant level of Council Tax in real terms, in other words it will increase by no more than the projected rate of inflation.
- 6.5 The most popular area for new investment was infrastructure. This is addressed as part of the updated capital programme.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The timetable for developing the budget for 2020/21 is set out below.

Date	Meeting	Action
January 2020	All Service Committees	Consider 20/21 budget proposals
12 February 2020	Policy and Resources Committee	Agree 20/21 budget proposals for recommendation to Council

26 February 2020	Council	Approve 20/21 budget
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix A: Revenue Budget Proposals 2020/21 – 2024/25
 - Appendix B: Capital Budget Proposals 2020/21 – 2024/25
 - Appendix C: Residents' Survey
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers.

Revenue Budget Proposals 2020/21 - 2024/25

Service	Proposal	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total
		£000					
Festivals & Events	Cease direct delivery of festivals and events	-10					-10
Mote Park Centre	Income from new Café	-40					-40
Economic Development	Business Terrace Phase 4	-20					-20
Museum	Reprofile NNDR saving	-119					-119
Total Existing Savings		-189	0	0	0	0	-189

Service	Proposal	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total
		£000					
Mote Park Centre	New Café construction deferred	40	-40				0
Museum	NNDR saving currently subject to appeal	119	-119				0
	Shortfall funded from service reserves	-159	159				0
Total Amendments and New Savings		0	0	0	0	0	0

OVERALL CHANGE IN BUDGET (£000)	-189	0	0	0	0	0	-189
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Negative figures shown above represent a reduction in expenditure budgets, or increased income targets. Positive figures indicate increased expenditure, or a reduction in the income budget.

Capital Budget Proposals 2020/21 - 2024/25

	19/20	Five Year Plan					Total
	Projected	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Mote Park Visitor Centre and Estate Services Building	156	2,000	740				2,740
Mote Park Dam Works	267	1,650	100				1,750
Improvements to Play Areas	422						
Other Parks Improvements	100						
Museum Development Plan	11	125	225	39			389
	957	3,775	1,065	39			4,879

Budget Survey

2019



Policy & Information Team
CONSULTATION@MAIDSTONE.GOV.UK

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Methodology

The survey was open between 6th September and 3rd November 2019. It was promoted online through the Council's website and our social media channels. Residents who have signed up for consultation reminders were notified and sent an invitation to participate in the consultation. An incentive of entering a prize draw for £50 of shopping vouchers was offered to encourage responses.

There was a total of 1,465 responses to the survey, including 431 partial responses (this is where the respondent has abandoned the survey part way through).

As an online survey is a self-selection methodology, with residents free to choose whether to participate or not, it was anticipated that returned responses would not necessarily be fully representative of the wider adult population. This report discusses the weighted results to overall responses by demographic questions and by geographical area to ensure that it more accurately matches the known profile of Maidstone Boroughs population by these characteristics.

The results have been weighted by age and gender based on the population in the ONS mid-year population estimates 2018. However, the under-representation of 18 to 34 year olds means that high weights have been applied to responses in this group, therefore results for this group should be treated with caution. It should also be noted that respondents from BME backgrounds are under-represented at 3.1% compared 5.9% in the local area. The results for this group should also be treated with caution.

There was a total of 999 weighted responses to the survey based on Maidstone's population aged 18 years and over this means overall results are accurate to $\pm 2.59\%$ at the 90% confidence level. This means that if we repeated the same survey 100 times, 90 times out of 100 the results would be between $\pm 2.59\%$ of the calculated response, so the 'true' response could be 2.59% above or below the figures reported (i.e. a 50% agreement rate could in reality lie within the range of 47.41% to 52.59%).

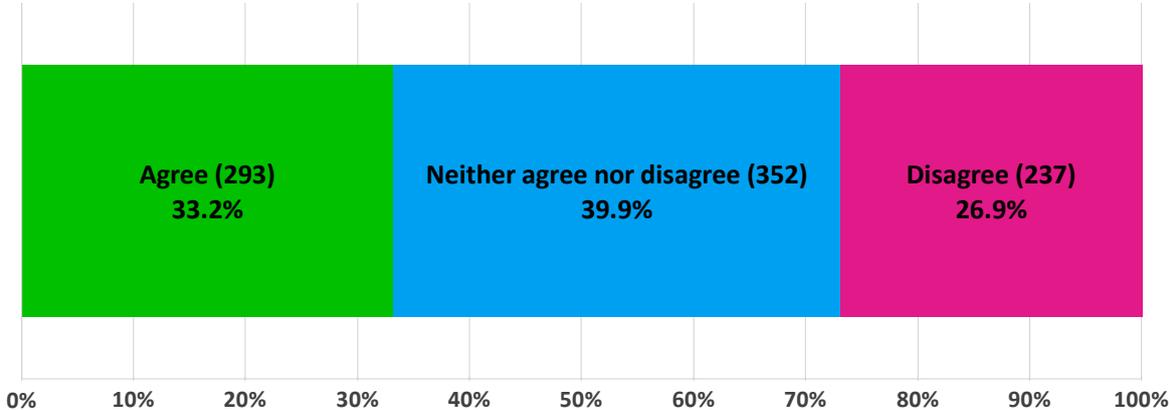
Please note not every respondent answered every question, therefore the total number of respondents refers to the number of respondents for the question being discussed not to the survey overall.

Findings

- Over time the proportion of respondents agreeing the Council provides good value for money has remained consistent and the proportion of people responding negatively has declined.
- 60% of respondents didn't agree that the Council should increase Council Tax for 2020/21.
- Infrastructure including flood preventions and street scene was rated as being the most important investment programme with more than half of all respondents placing this programme as their top priority. All demographic groups placed new homes as their lowest priority.

Value for Money

The survey asked respondents 'to what extent do you agree or disagree that Maidstone Council provides value for money?' and gave the five options for response ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A total of 881 people responded to this this question.

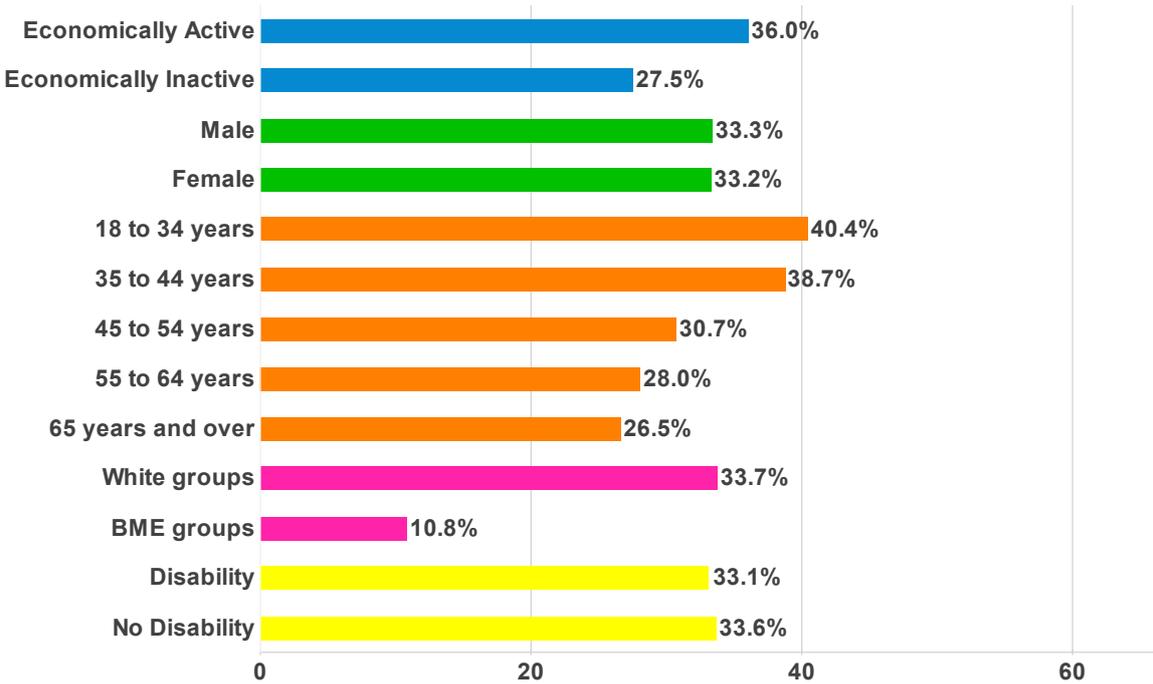


Overall, 33.2% responded strongly agree or agree. Across the range of responses, the most common was Neutral with 39.9% responding this way.

We previously asked residents this question in the 2018 Budget Survey and 33.4% responded Strongly Agree or Agree. Prior to that this question was asked in the 2017 resident survey and 30.2% of respondents agreed. Although over this time the proportion of respondents agreeing as remained broadly consistent, the proportion of people responding negatively to this question has declined from 28.6% in 2017 to 26.9%.

Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the proportion of people responding 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' to the question across the different demographic groups.



The data shows a significant difference between the way respondents that are economically active and those that are economically inactive have answered this question. The most common response for those that are economically active was 'Agree', while the most common response for those economically inactive was 'Neither agree nor disagree' with 50.4% of this group responding this way.

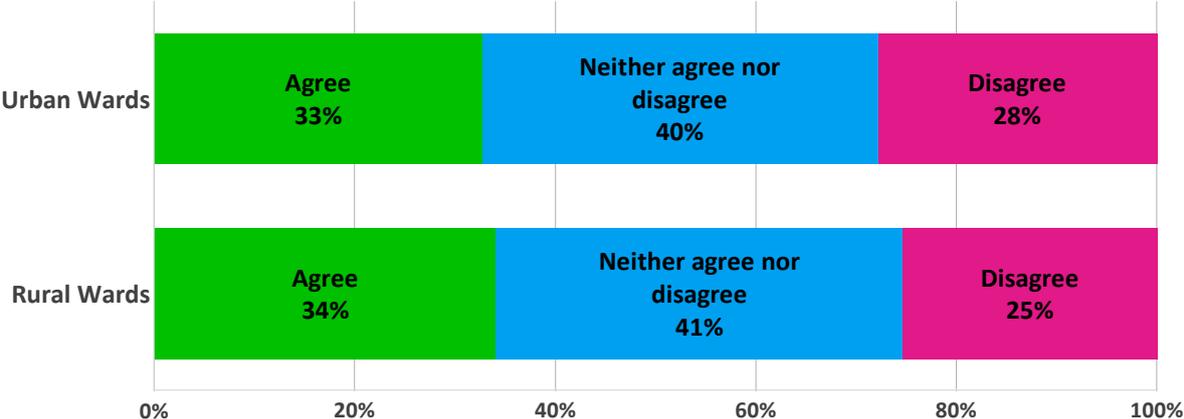
There was no significant difference in the proportion of male and female respondents agreeing with the question.

Looking at the age groups the data suggests that as age increases the proportion of respondents agreeing that the Council provides value for money decreases.

Geographical Differences

There was a total of 729 responding to this question and also providing their postcode.

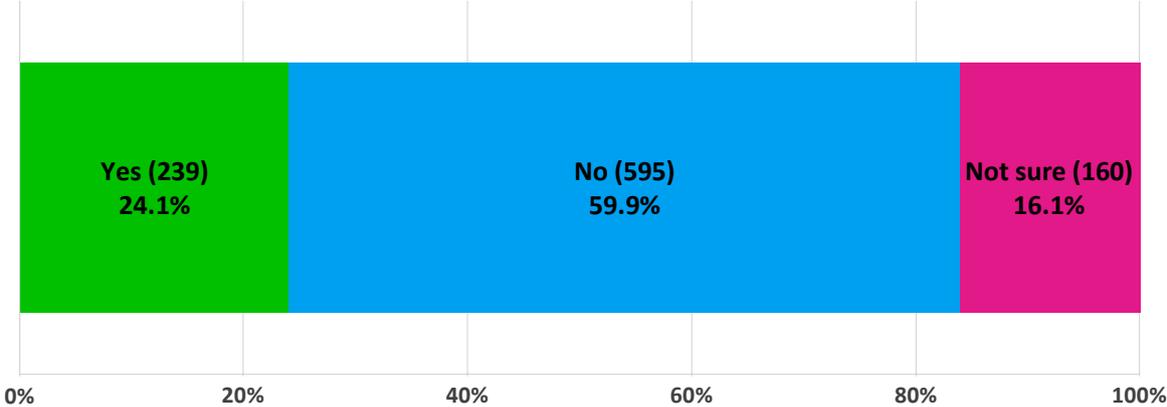
There were no significant differences between Urban and Rural wards in response to the question 'to what extent do you agree or disagree that Maidstone Council provides value for money?'



Council Tax

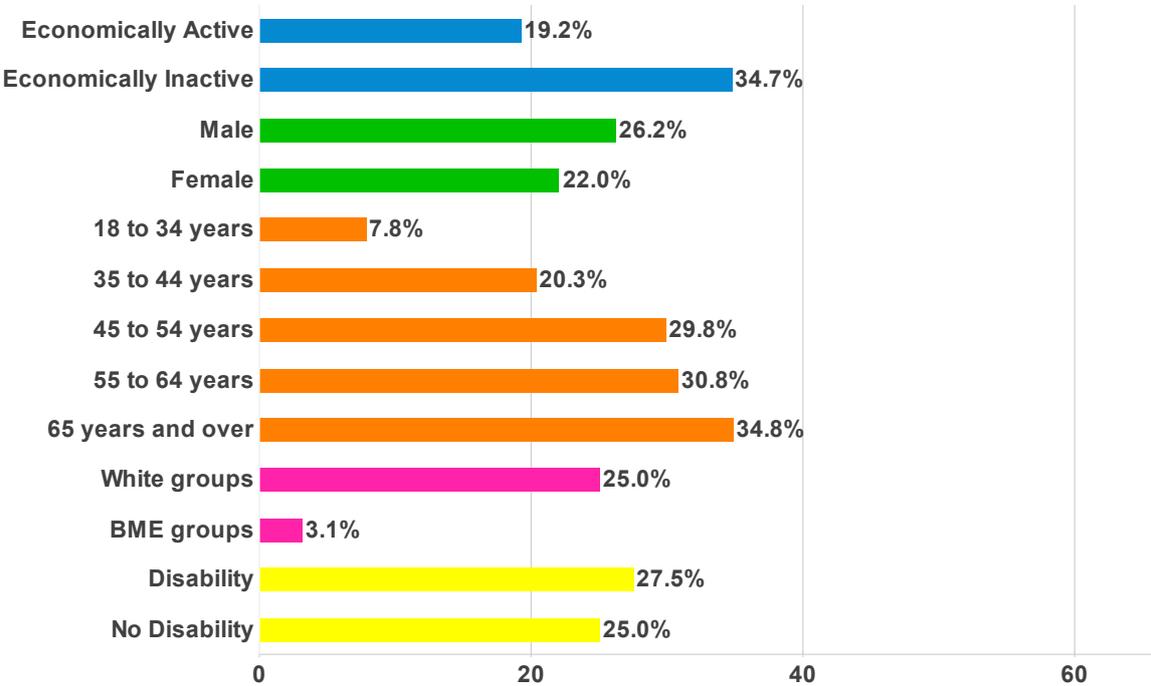
Council Tax Increases

Respondents were asked 'Do you agree that the Council should increase Council Tax for 2020/21?'. A total of 994 respondents answered this question. The majority of respondents said No.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the proportion of people responding 'yes' to the question across the different demographic groups.



Economically inactive respondents had the greatest proportion across all demographic groups who said they were in favour of a council tax increase, at 34.7% ($\pm 4.4\%$). This is significantly different from the response from people who are economically active where just 19.2% ($\pm 2.5\%$) answered the same way.

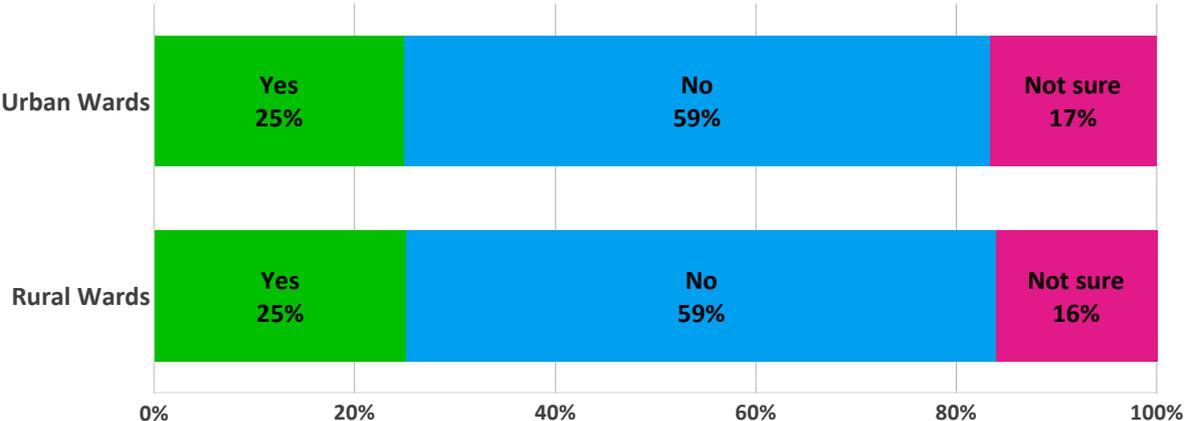
The proportion of respondents answering 'Yes' increases with age, and the proportion responding 'No' decreases with age. The proportion of respondents answering 'Not sure' is broadly consistent across the age groups.

The difference in the proportion of people from BME and White backgrounds responding 'Yes' is significant, but should be treated with caution due to the low number of responses from people with BME backgrounds.

Geographical Differences

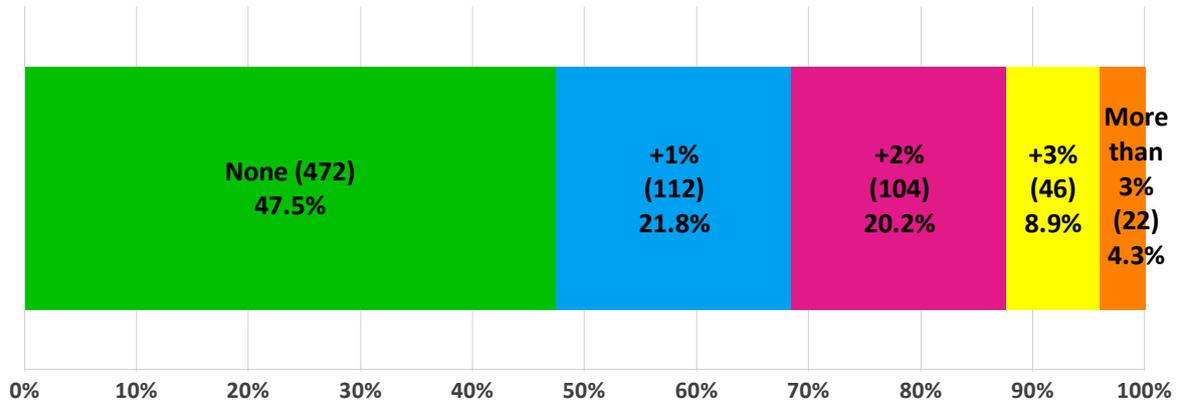
There was a total of 814 respondents who gave a response to this question and also provided their postcode.

There were no significant differences between Urban and Rural wards in response to the question 'Do you agree that the Council should increase Council Tax for 2020/21'?



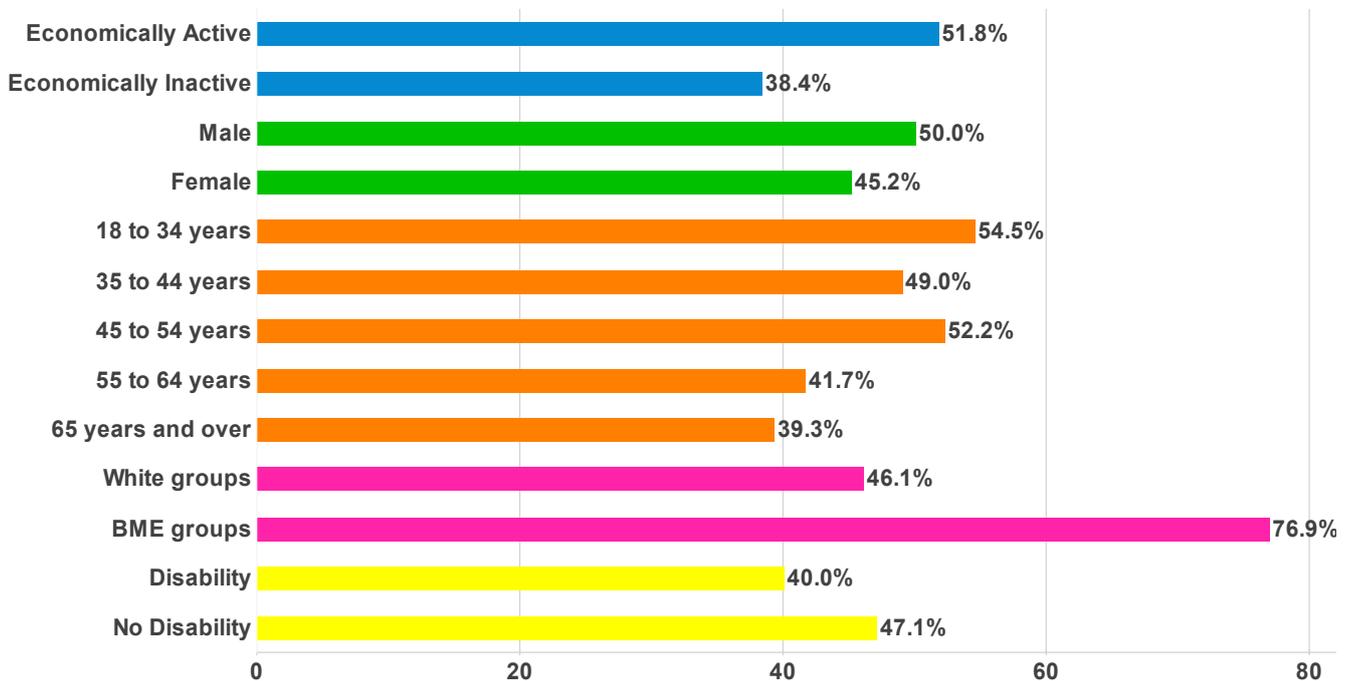
Council Tax Increase – How much?

Respondents were also asked 'How much more, if any, would you be willing to pay in council tax to protect services?'. There were 994 weighted responses to this question. The most common response was None.



Demographic Differences

The chart below shows the proportion of people responding 'None' to the question across the different demographic groups. This was the most common response for each demographic group.



The difference between the proportion of economically active and economically inactive respondents answering 'None' is significant, with a greater proportion of those that are economically active against a Council Tax increase. This aligns with the responses to the previous question.

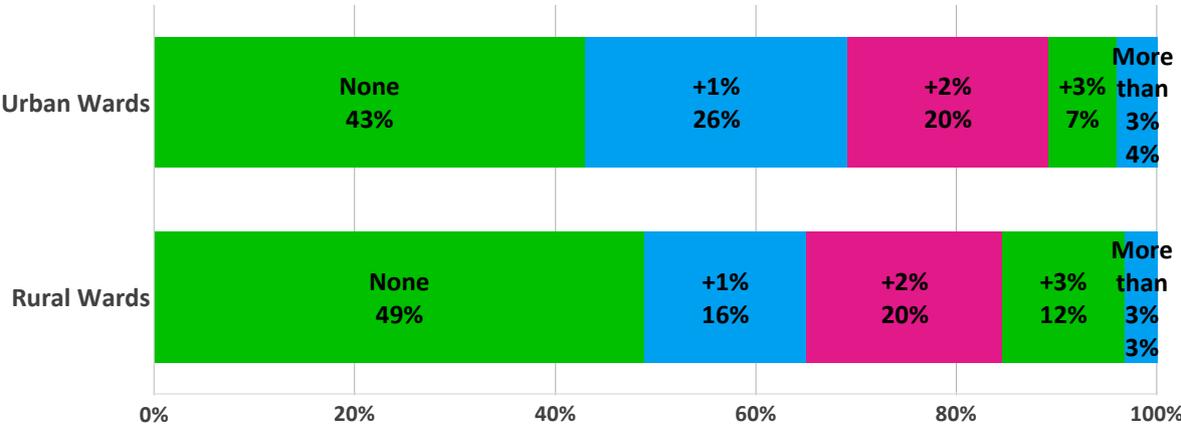
As with the previous question, it appears that willingness to pay more Council Tax increases with age.

The difference in the proportion of people from BME and White backgrounds responding 'None' is significant, but should be treated with caution due to the number of responses from people with BME backgrounds.

Geographical Differences

There was a total of 813 responses to this question where a postcode was also given.

There are significant differences between Urban and Rural wards in the proportions responding '+1%' and '+3%'. The Rural ward respondents had a greater proportion stating they would be willing to increase Council Tax by 3%. The difference between the proportions responding 'None' is not significant.

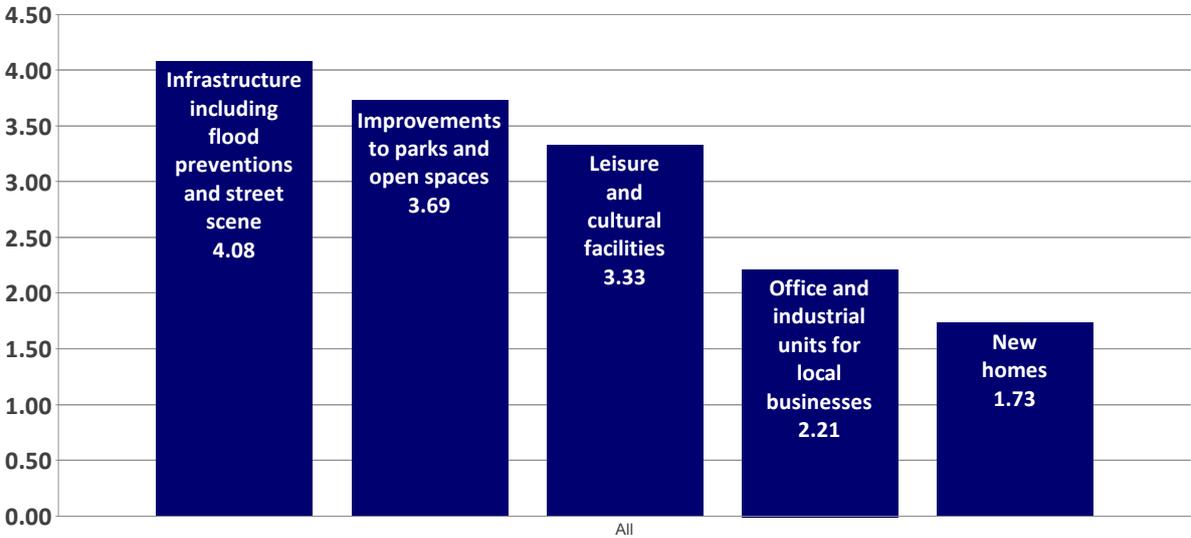


Investing in the future

The survey asked people to place five investment programmes in order of importance to them. A total of 937 respondents (weighted) provided an answer to this question.

In order to assess this data a weighted average has been used, with the programmes placed as first receiving five points and the programmes ranked last given one point. These are then added together and divided by the number of respondents to give a weighted average.

Overall, 52.2% placed Infrastructure, including flood prevention and street scene, as being the most important investment programme. 64.3% placed new homes as their least important investment programme.



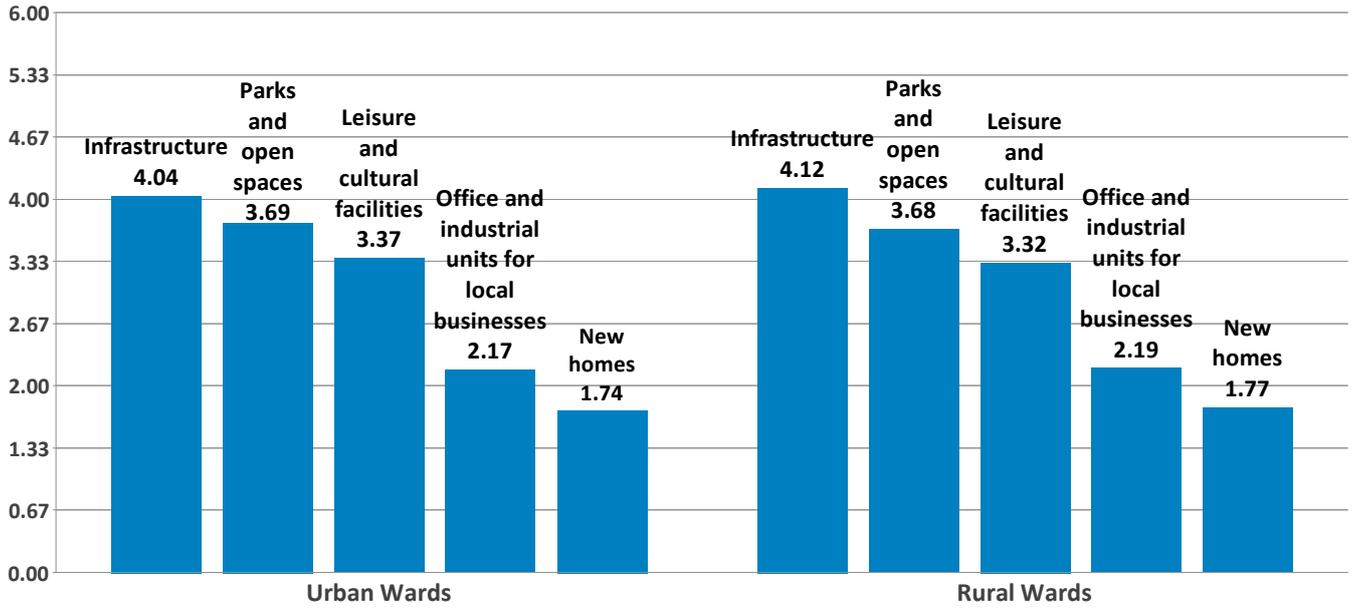
Demographic Differences

There were two groups that did not place Infrastructure as their top priority. These were the 18 to 34 years and the 35 to 44 years who placed Improvement to parks and open space as their top priority.

Every demographic group placed Leisure & cultural facilities as third, Office and industrial units for local businesses as fourth and New homes as fifth.

Geographical Differences

Residents from both Rural and Urban wards placed the investment programmes in the same order.



Narrative Comments

A total of 458 narrative comments were received. Respondents used these as an opportunity to comment on issues about council services generally, rather than simply budget issues.

A total of 222 comments mentioned house building, with 106 of these also mentioning issues with road infrastructure or congestion. The general feeling derived from these comments is that residents feel that there are too many new homes being built or that new homes are being built in the wrong locations. There were a few mentions of offices being turned into housing being inappropriate. Many of the comments on this theme stated they do not feel that the Council listens to them, with some believing some new developments that have been agreed are contrary to the Local Plan.

There were 136 comments relating to environmental services. There were 23 comments that mentioned waste collection services with several making comments about missed or late bin collections (during the survey period there were a number of roadworks being undertaken in the borough which impacted on the Council's ability to make some collections according to schedule). There were also several comments about the streets being in more of a mess after refuse collection than they were before collection, a few comments about returning to weekly waste collections and a couple of comments that were positive about this service. There were 66 comments that referenced street cleansing services with comments about streets being unclean or that cleaning standards are good enough with some stating that bins are overflowing or not emptied frequently enough. There were also several comments about the paving work in the town centre, with some saying that these are already stained and dirty or that they don't feel they are good value for money.

There were 25 comments that raised the issues about the environment. Here people were mostly concerned with pollution and the reducing amount of greenspaces and building on greenfield sites. There were also two comments on this theme that felt the council should be doing more for biodiversity. 21 people raised issues with grass verges and hedgerows being overgrown, with some mentioning the blocking of road signed due to overhanging vegetation. Also under environmental services theme several comments mentioned the need to bring back the freighter service. Several expressed annoyance over proposed charges at Tovil Tip (a KCC service) and there were a few requests for more tree planting.

Overall, there were 134 comments with mentions of traffic, parking or roads. As outlined above the majority of these related to traffic and road infrastructure with comments about the town being 'gridlocked' or having insufficient infrastructure for new housing. Several people commented that it seems that the Council are not doing anything about these issues and 12 people specifically mentioned the need for a bypass or relief road. There were 30 comments that related to parking. Here people were concerned with perceived high parking charges in the town centre, development being built without parking provision and abuse/unfairness/over subscription of residential permit schemes.

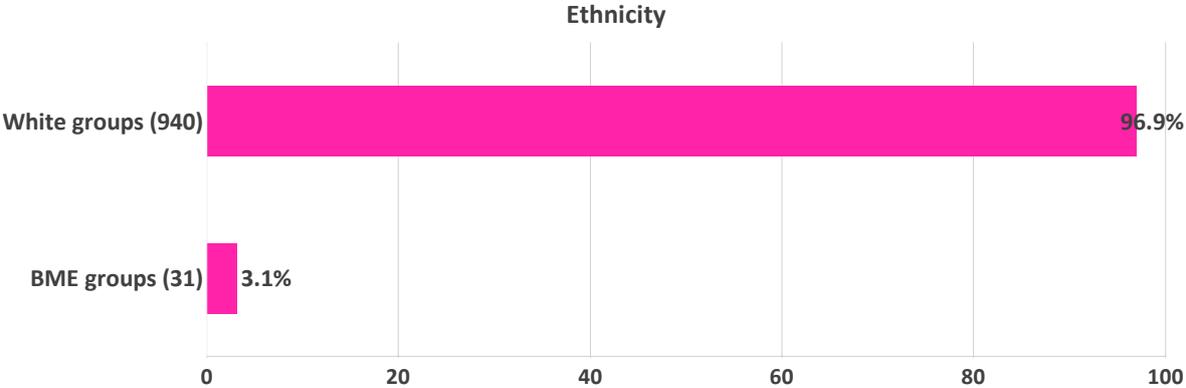
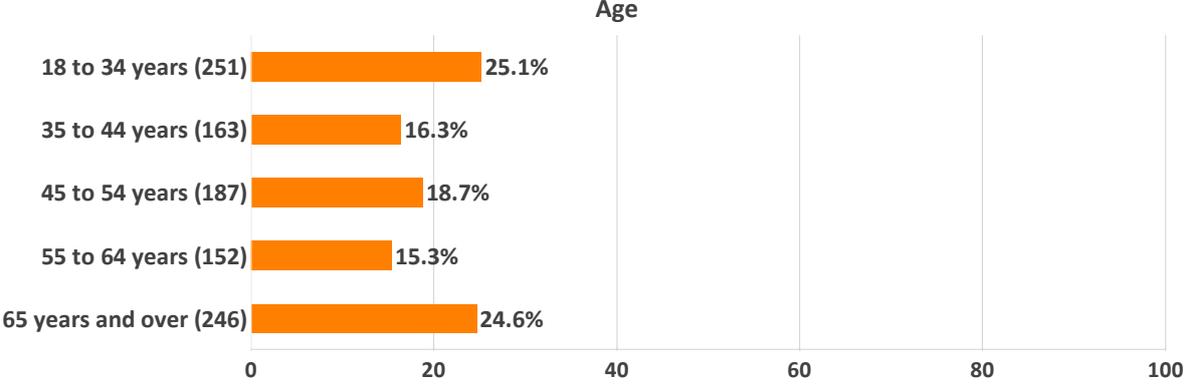
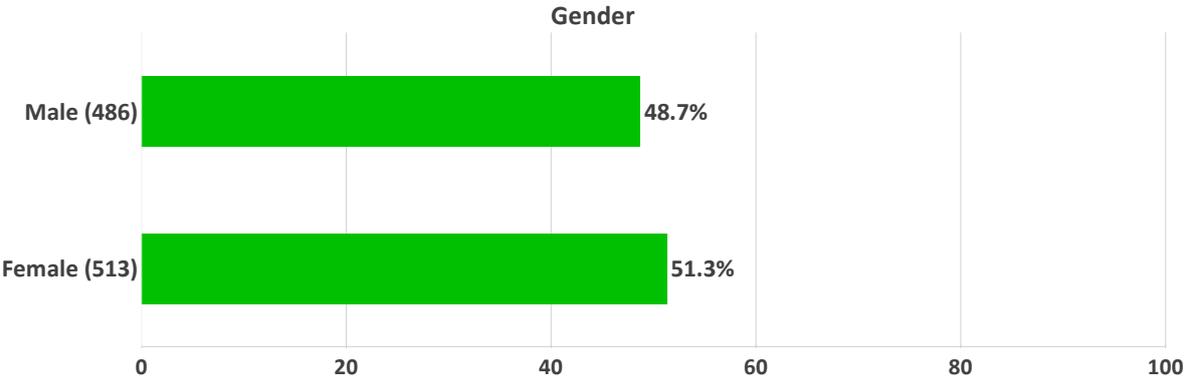
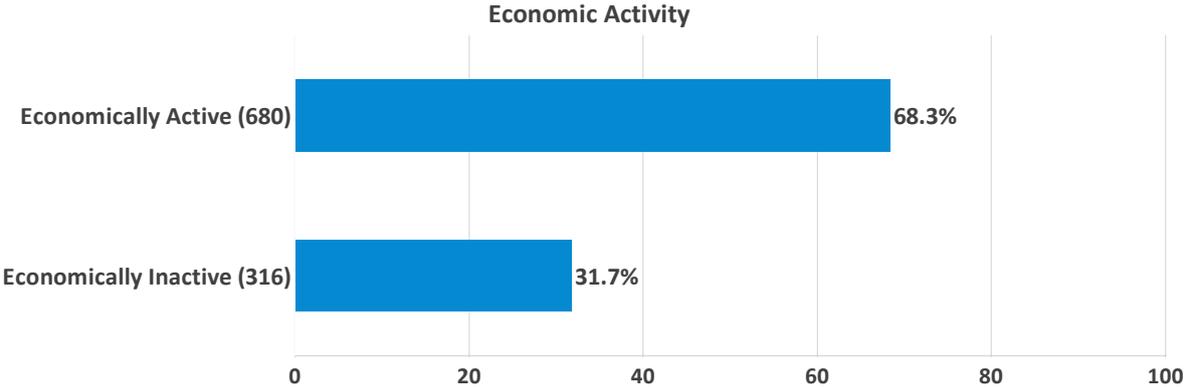
There were 90 comments that have been categorised as relating to Council Administration, Councillors or staff. 32 comments stated they do not feel the Council listens or cares or is too political, with several making allegations of corrupt behaviour and a couple urging for transparency and openness. The majority of these seem to relate to development in the borough. 19 people mentioned issues around contact and communication with several stating they have raised issues but never got a response. There were 15 comments about staff salaries and allowances with several stating that the number of officers on £50k or more should be reduced. Six mentioned the amount of funding Maidstone Council receives from the Council tax with some stating Maidstone's cut should be bigger. Other comments relating to Council administration mentioned wasting money and high council tax levels.

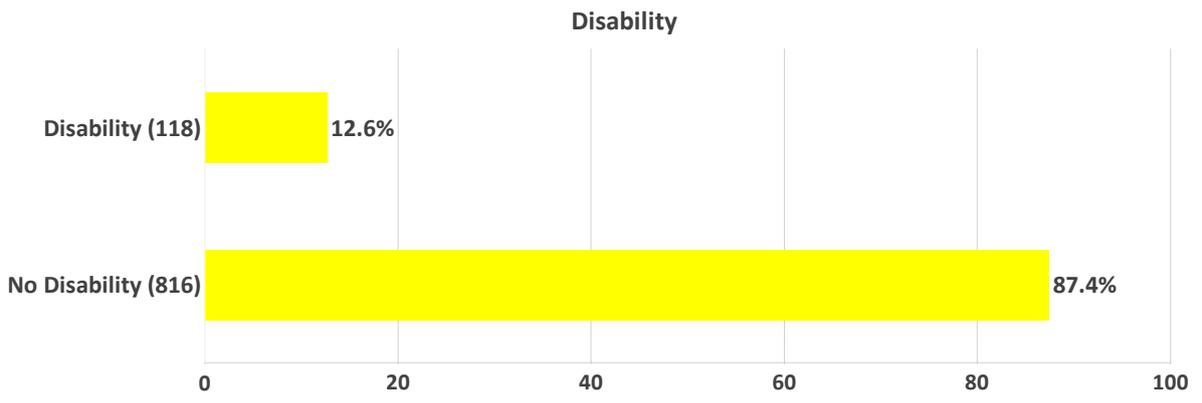
There were 50 comments that referred to crime or policing in the borough. Here people requested more police on the streets and there was some reference to a recent stabbing in the town centre with concerns raised over the licensing of the establishment concerned. A few people made comment on the night-time economy causing problematic behaviours and there were several comments about drug use and dealing happening in the borough with Shepway Park, Brenchley Gardens and outside KFC being mentioned specifically. There were also a few people that commented they do not feel safe and a couple of comments about youths and anti-social behaviour.

There were 40 comments that have been assigned to the theme Leisure Services & Parks. In terms of the leisure centre people mentioned the need for investment and refurbishment with the changing areas specifically mentioned as needing work. One person stated they may use the centre more but doesn't see information about what's on. For Mote Park there were some comments that expressed annoyance about parking charges but also comments about the improvements to the play area and café: stating it being in disrepair and that it is now too busy and is focused on income generation. There was also a request for an outdoor swimming pool at Mote Park. The Hazlitt was mentioned by several comments. Generally people were positive about the Hazlitt but recognise that it is too small to attract major touring shows, several people said that there should be another venue/theatre that is bigger. Other comments in this theme mentioned lack of public transport from villages to leisure facilities and requests for more investment in these areas.

There were 144 comments that referred to services that are not provided by Maidstone Council, the most common of these included requests for more investment into adult social care and complaints about road surfaces and potholes.

Survey Demographics





Agenda Item 16

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

28TH January 2020

The Relocation of the Mela Event to Mote Park

Final Decision-Maker	ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
Lead Head of Service	William Cornall
Lead Officer and Report Author	John Foster
Classification	Public
Wards affected	Shepway North

Executive Summary

The Mela organisers wish to relocate the event from Whatman Park to Mote Park where they can grow the event. In order to do so they have requested a grant of £5000 per year for three years from the Council, at the end of which they will be able to sustain the event from income generated by it. The report recommends support for the Mela to be funded from the Kent Business Rates Pool.

Purpose of Report

To consider whether to financially support the relocation of the Mela to Mote Park.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Mela relocates to Mote Park,
2. That a grant of £5,000 per year for three years, starting in 2020, is given to Kent Equality Cohesion Council to run the Mela in Mote Park.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	28 th January 2020

The Relocation of the Mela Event to Mote Park

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council’s ability to achieve the objectives set out in Thriving Place, and in particular support the 2019-2024 focus “Enabling events which assist people in increasing their pride in communities and our environment” 	John Foster
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report’ recommendation addresses health inequalities by improving access for all to this event and celebrates our cultural heritage through dance, food and music and the organisers work within schools. 	John Foster
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to section 4 of the report 	John Foster
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting the recommendations will demand new spending of £5,000 per year for the 	Mark Green

	<p>next three years. The report proposes that the spending be funded from the Kent Business Rates Pool. Funding arrangements for local government are due to change in 2021/22 and there is no guarantee that the current pooling arrangements will be retained. Accordingly, funding for 2021/22 and 2022/23 will need to be earmarked from the 2020/21 pool proceeds.</p>	
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. 	John Foster
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has a general power of competence pursuant to Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 which enables it to do anything that individuals generally may do. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has power to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions. The proposed grant to the Kent Equality Cohesion Council is in accordance with those powers and comes under the function of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee to promote Maidstone by providing opportunities for engagement in cultural and leisure pursuits. 	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Privacy and Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules. 	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment 	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer

Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals. 	Paul Clarke
Crime and Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Mela organisers will be required to submit an Event Plan for inspection and consideration of the Safety Advisory Group. 	John Foster
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	John Foster

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Maidstone Mela has been taking place in the Borough since 2003. It is led by Kent Equality Cohesion Council (KECC) which is a registered charity.
- 2.2 KECC specialise in community development, community outreach and community cohesion working across the County of Kent. The charity also provides free, confidential advice and support around a range of diversity issues relating to Race, Faith, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Gender and Age. KECC contract with Cohesion Plus Kent to deliver the Mela.
- 2.3 Between 2003 and 2015 the Mela was organised in partnership with MBC KECC and Cohesion Plus. It was funded through a combination of MBC, Arts Council England, stalls and sponsorship income. Following the withdrawal of MBC's financial support, KECC and Cohesion Plus, working in partnership with local community groups, re-established the event calling it the 'Maidstone Community Mela' which has taken place in Whatman Park since 2017 regularly attracting from 3,000 to 4,000 people each year.
- 2.4 The whole ethos of the event is to bring diverse communities together through music, food and dance.
- 2.5 The success of the Community Mela is underpinned by the strong partnership of local community groups, representing some of the diverse communities, who work hard through their networks both geographically and socially to promote the Mela in and around Maidstone. This includes contacting local schools, places of worship, community centres and community groups as well as supporting fundraising activities in the build-up.
- 2.6 Why relocate back to Mote Park?
- 2.7 KECC have stated that the main reason all partners would like to take the Community Mela back to Mote Park is due to the fact that Whatman Park is at capacity, there is a limit to what can be done on the site and there are still major issues around accessibility especially for the elderly and disabled due to a lack of onsite parking. A larger site will enable more stalls, larger audiences and therefore greater sponsorship potential.

- 2.8 By moving to Mote Park the organisers believe the Mela will become more accessible and allow them to be more ambitious artistically as there is more space to work with. KECC also argue that it will allow local residents, new and old, to participate in activities and learn new skills. In addition, there will be opportunities for them to help shape and create the Mela through providing feedback at the event and actively taking part as a member of the Mela Advisory Group.
- 2.9 KECC have submitted documents that show a £5,000 funding gap each year for three years. Funding from stalls and sponsorship is shown to grow over the course of the three years resulting in the event not requiring MBC financial support after the third year.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The alternative option would be not to provide financial support to this event. For the reasons set out in section 4 this is not recommended.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The report recommends providing support to the Mela for the reasons set out in paragraph 2.7 and 2.8 above. The Mela is an established festival in the Maidstone events' calendar. Most of the risks are associated with event management and their event plan will be scrutinised by the Safety Advisory Group (SAG). A date in the Mote Park calendar for 2020 has already been reserved for the event.
- 4.2 KECC has successfully organised and run the Mela in Mote Park for many years and recognises the additional resources and logistical management necessary to hold and grow the Mela in Mote Park. The main risk is that after 3 years the income forecast from sponsorship and stall holders does not grow in line with their business plan. KECC has successfully implemented the same approach in Tunbridge Wells where the Borough's funding tailed off over a number of years and other funding increased to enable the event to continue. KECC have stated that should other funding not increase over the three years they will, in this order:
1. Fund the short fall from their reserves which is a strong possibility
 2. Seek additional support from Arts Council England using sponsorship and stalls income as match income
 3. Secure additional funding from other grant schemes
 4. Make savings elsewhere in the budget without compromising health and safety
 5. Move the Community Mela to a smaller venue
- 4.3 Remaining in Whatman Park will not address the current accessibility challenges and potentially restrict audiences, particularly those with a disability.

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 in section 4. 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 On the 17th December a Member Briefing was organised at the Town Hall and Gurvinder Sandher the CEO of KECC presented the case to support the Mela to Members. Members at that meeting were generally supportive of the Mela and the advantages of relocating it back to Mote Park.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 If the Committee support the recommendation set out in this report, this will be communicated to KECC and a Funding Agreement will be put in place between KECC and MBC.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None