

## **Stage 1: Equality Impact Assessment**

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

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

The core priorities are:

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

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

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

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

### **2. How do these aims affect our duty to:**

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

- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a**

### **protected characteristic and those who do not**

The strategy will seek to increase opportunities for people to experience great arts by reducing local barriers and widening participation by under-represented groups.

- **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

We will work with under-represented communities and those sharing a protected characteristic to co-create affordable and inclusive arts opportunities.

We will support artists and organisations to deliver arts activities and events that celebrate the diversity of Maidstone's population.

#### **3. What aspects of the policy, including how it is delivered or accessed, could contribute to inequality?**

Arts and culture are highly subjective. In creating any new arts events or activities, there is a risk that certain people may feel alienated or under-represented.

#### **4. Will the policy have an impact (positive or negative) upon the lives of people, including particular communities and groups who have protected characteristics ? What evidence do you have for this?**

One of the key priorities of the new strategy is 'accessible by all', setting out a clear intention to make arts and heritage culturally inclusive, being accessed and valued by everyone in the community, including those with protected characteristics.

We will look to work with under-represented groups on new projects and events to address any specific barriers to their participation, and support existing arts and cultural groups/organisations to increase the diversity of their members.

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

**Stage 2: Equality Impact Assessment**

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

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

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

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