

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**

**26 JANUARY 2021**

**REPORT OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2021**

**BUSKING GUIDELINES CONSULTATION RESULTS 2020**

**Issue for Decision**

The proposed draft Busking Guidelines were subject to a public consultation process between 9 September 2020 to 1 November 2020. The consultation results were presented to the Licensing Committee on 14 January 2021.

Whilst the Licensing Committee recommended that the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee approve the draft Busking Guidelines, it also requested the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee to comment on the use of the Bandstand in Brenchley Gardens, for Buskers.

**Recommendation Made**

That the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee be recommended to ask the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee to approve the draft Busking Guidelines, with comments on the use of the Bandstand to be provided as appropriate.

**Reasons for Recommendation**

The Council recognises the contribution that busking and street entertainment brings to the vibrancy and character of our town but there must be a balance with the needs and rights of local residents and workers so they are not adversely impacted by it, especially for those near to popular busking locations.

On 18 June 2020, the Licensing Committee heard the Council's proposal to adopt new Busking Guidelines which are intended to encourage good community practice in shared spaces for performers, business and residents alike. The draft Busking Guidelines were consulted on from 9 September to the 1 November 2020.

The consultation sought feedback on the whether they were in favour of the introduction of Busking Guidelines, out of a total 93 responses, 79 (84.9%) answered yes. They were also asked if the proposed Guidelines were proportionate, again out of 93 responses, 67 (72.0%) answered yes.

The Council does not take the introduction of regulating busking and street entertainment lightly, but considers it necessary due to complaints received about some buskers and the detrimental impact it can have on the daily lives of our residents and workers. Our current lack of licensing enforcement powers over buskers and not having a dedicated resource to respond to any impact effectively needs to be considered if we make the Guidelines too

prescriptive.

Currently there is nothing in place to regulate street entertainment in Maidstone and the Guidelines are considered the starting point and will be kept under review.

### **Alternatives Considered and Why Not Recommended**

None.

### **Background Documents**

None.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Consultation Response Summary

Appendix 2 – Draft Busking Guidelines