

## Recovery and Renewal Progress Update

A Vibrant Economy					
Action	Agreed funding	Target Start	Target End	Expected Success	Progress at January 2022
MidKent College Skills Hub	£60,000 Recovery Fund	Sep-21	TBC	Provision of a town centre venue to provide accessible training, careers advice, and employability support for all residents. Courses delivered to a range of participants including book-keeping and computerised accounting, skills development online courses, essential digital skills, certified work skills programmes, food hygiene and employability workshops and support. Courses delivered to a range of participants including bookkeeping and computerised accounting, skills development online courses, essential digital skills, certified work skills programmes, food hygiene and employability workshop and support. With space for ten participants to be physically present in the hub it is envisaged that 208 people would be able to take advantage of the hub for courses and support over 26 weeks.	An SLA is in place between MBC and Mid Kent College. A unit has been identified in the Mall. A budget and programme agreed and partners approached. The Unit will need fitting out and a plan is currently in development. Estimated opening date April 2022. With space for ten participants to be physically present in the hub it is envisaged that 416 people would be able to take advantage of the hub for courses and support over 52 weeks.
Invest in industrial and warehouse premises to help de risk new	Capital Programme funding	Sep-21	N/A	Projects are identified to invest in and Maidstone is seen and delivers its promise of being open for business, businesses can expand and locate to the Borough.	None identified to date

## Appendix 4

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employment sites coming forward					
Vibrant Visitor Economy	£32,000 Business Rates Pool	Jul-21	Jul-23	Maidstone has an enhanced arts and culture offer with increased visitors to key attractions and an increase in footfall in the town centre.	The job is currently being advertised.
Capacity to develop projects and bids to take advantage of new funding opportunities	£45,000 Recovery Fund	Sep-21	Sep-25	Successful bids and projects completed that meet our priorities.	Levelling Up and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund have yet to be announced by the Government. This is expected in Spring 2022.
Transform the Town Centre through the development and delivery of a town centre strategy.	£175,680 Recovery Fund	Sep-21	TBC	Town Centre Strategy in place by 1 March 2023, projects may begin prior to this. Maidstone town centre becomes a centre of excellence for urban sustainability with a strong focus around arts, culture, leisure and visitor economy creating a place where people want to live, feel safe and which prides itself upon being a town centre which is relevant to all of the Borough's residents and to which all of the borough's residents can relate.	Report taken to Service Committees for input to the strategy and scope of work during November 2021 cycle. Work underway the establishment of early projects and resource requirements. Further report to Policy & Resources Committee in March 2022 to seek final agreement to the scope of the Town Centre Strategy, priority/under-pinning workstreams/projects and key associated elements such as governance and engagement'.

Resilient Communities					
Action	Agreed funding	Target Start	Target End	Success	Progress at January 2022
Establish Community Compact	n/a	May-21	n/a	Partnership in place between the community and voluntary sector and the council. Joint projects completed and greater resilience	Joint meeting was held with Involve Kent and VCS in July 2021 to consider Community Compact, Originally envisaged as a document, the engagement with the VCS via forums, consultation and events, plus the publication of the Civil Society Consultation has moved this original concept forward and MBC's role is facilitatory and the compact is its commitment to the VCS. It is likely that this commitment will be formally developed and established through a market-place event with the VCS in Maidstone. MBC represented on KCC and District Council VCS Forum established in November 2021.
Support and Encourage Volunteering in the Borough.	£25,000 Recovery Fund	Jun-21	Oct-22	Increase in the number of volunteers, volunteering in the Borough and as a consequence more community initiatives delivered. Work with involve to develop an indicator	Website pages have been developed and updated with guidance on Volunteering. Research has been undertaken on our local offer which includes online platforms for advertising opportunities and Kent's Lord Lieutenant's Office is working in partnership with Kent Volunteers. A Joint Meeting was held with Involve Kent and VCS provided qualitative feedback on volunteering, there is ongoing work with Community Groups to help access the need. Work has recently begun work on benchmarking offer with CIPFA nearest neighbours, Evaluating internal policies and use of volunteers. Team have sought expert advice/training on best practice from APSE. The next steps – to complete the research to date and develop options ready to take 'to market'.

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Online Community Participation	£15,000 Recovery Fund	Sep-21		Online tool in place and used to successfully engage with the public on projects and initiatives.	The team have evaluated several platforms, narrowing down to two which meet the needs of the wider Council, stakeholders from across the Council met to establish which provider would best meet the need. Feedback informed final choice. Purchase to be completed by end of the month
Community Resilience Fund	£150,000 Recovery Fund	Oct-21	Oct-24	30 projects delivered by a variety of community and voluntary sector groups and organisations.	To date we have had 14 applications, adding up to bids for £26,858. The first wave closes on 11 February. There have been a wide variety of applicants from Scout and gardening groups to charities supporting the homeless.
Equip Trinity Foyer to be a Community Hub	£30,000 Recovery Fund	Jun-21	Oct-21	New community hub delivered for all housing and related support services in Trinity Foyer	<p>The funding is being used to ensure digital inclusion and a multi-media training equipment are installed and embedded in the functions of our new Community Hub at Trinity. The specific digital aspects are being implemented by a local Audio-Visual contractor. We are currently working on developing our timetable of activities and learning support for those individuals most excluded from the job market and on the peripheral of societal activities. Our two new Homelessness Navigators have commenced in the role and working towards maximising digital inclusion.</p> <p>The handover of Trinity has been delayed due to unexpected refurbishment issues arising – handover now predicted to be in March. All the digital inclusion equipment will be in situation at the same time.</p>

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Financial Inclusion Strategy and Actions	£34,320 Recovery Fund			The number and value of unclaimed benefits that residents are supported to claim A reduction in the number of households in financial crisis or at risk of moving into crisis Increased take up of debt advice services by households with problem debt A reduction in the number of households identified as being in a repeated pattern of Council Tax debt The number of low-income households supported with energy efficiency measures The number of low-income households supported to access a more appropriate tariff	A dedicated welfare support officer has been recruited and started on the 17 <sup>th</sup> January. Immediate priority is to complete the campaign to increase the take up of Pension Credit among low-income households and develop stronger links within the advice sector.
Love Where You Live and Get Involved.	£35,000 Recovery Fund	Sep-21	Sep-22	8 community environmental projects delivered. Civic Pride increased as measured by the Resident’s Survey. Baseline the number of participants in the project.	Work has begun setting out the objectives and Criteria for the community environmental projects with a plan for launching the scheme with Ward Members, Community Groups and with the local Press next month.

The Way we Work					
Action	Agreed funding	Target Start	Target End	Success	Progress at January 2022
Increase HR capacity to facilitate agile working and new ways of working	£50,000 Recovery Fund	Oct-21	Oct-22	Better understanding from staff on impact of changes to organisation culture Actions taken to meet future workforce requirements.	To further support the work on culture change, consultants from RedQuadrant have been appointed and will be working with us on this project. In December, the project kick-off meeting for the Culture Change Project took place with RedQuadrant. The work will consist of three streams of activity. The first stream focuses on leading culture change with culture specialists working with our Wider Leadership Team. The outcomes of this work will result in our leader's role modelling the desired behaviours and ensuring symbols of culture reflect and enable the desired culture. The second stream brings together representation of the whole system to enable us to capture and share many of the changes that have already happened due to Covid which we want to encourage and sustain. The third stream, is focussed on identifying, recognising and building upon those people and interventions that are already positively impacting our culture and ensuring that we celebrate and encourage others to participate. Over the next six months we will be supported by RedQuadrant to ensure the positive impacts of this work which will set us up with new ways of working and interactions that will support our on-going cultural success.
Embedding new ways of working and ensuring the office is fit for purpose	£50,000 Recovery Fund £40,000 Capital Programme	Oct-23		Flexible office space that supports the new ways of working with the right technology and facilities.	There is currently work on culture currently being undertaken in HR which is being funded as part of this plan and reported on separately. The additional transformation resource will assist in delivering any changes required as a result of this work. Therefore, this funding will start to be spent until 2022/23. Some additional work is required for supporting 365, So funding is required for programme support in the IT team: £15k is a cost for each of the 3 partners for

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					consultancy support for the roll out of Microsoft 365. This will begin to be spent from April 2022.
Ensure staff have the right equipment (office and home) to enable new ways of working	Capital Programme	Oct-21		Staff able to effectively work anywhere	<p>The service has completed an audit of ICT provision within Maidstone House to ensure that every workstation has the necessary equipment and installed video conferencing equipment in 2 meeting rooms to support virtual meetings.</p> <p>The piloting of different equipment within the planning team has been conducted to promote and support wider mobile / paperless working.</p>

<b>Responding to Increased Demands arising from COVID-19</b>					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Agreed funding</b>	<b>Target Start</b>	<b>Target End</b>	<b>Success</b>	<b>Progress at January 2022</b>
Planning Development Control fixed term post	£35,000 Recovery Fund	ASAP		Backlog resolved and staff able to meet demands on the service	A contractor has in place since mid- October helping process both other and minor applications. This will continue until the end of the financial year when the expected the money allocated will be used up.
Planning Enforcement fixed term post	£35,000 Recovery Fund	ASAP	Mar-22	Backlog resolved and staff able to meet demands on the service	The fixed term post be changed to a consultant post given the difficulties in recruiting at a senior officer level. A consultant senior enforcement officer has been in post since mid-October-21 and funding is in place to continue this until the end of the financial year when the budget will be used up.
Increased capacity in Heritage and Landscape	£70,000 Recovery Fund	ASAP		Backlog resolved and staff able to meet demands on the service	The process is in place to recruit to several posts in HLD. One of which is for the appointment of a new fixed term (1 year) Landscape Conditions Implementation Officer post. The contract for the part-time Principal Conservation Officer post (2 days per week) comes to an end at the end of March 2022 and the post will be re-advertised as another 1-year fixed term contract. Additionally, a specialist contractor is about to be appointed for 4 months to help clear the backlog of tree applications. Funding will need to be carried forward to 2022/23 to accommodate these arrangements.
Increased capacity within Data Analytics to provide support for recovery and renewal projects	£50,000 Recovery Fund	Jul-22	Jul-23	18 dashboards in place by 2023	Action not yet due - post due to be recruited in summer

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Business Grant Distribution	£30,000 New Burdens Funding	ongoing		Maidstone continues to be the business capital of Kent	Two additional staff have been recruited to support the Maidstone Business Boost programme, with 67 discretionary awards made to date totalling just over £1 million
Revenues and Benefits – Citizens Advice Maidstone Post	£18,000 Contain Outbreak Management Fund	Aug-21		Residents with debt problems are assisted to maximise income, reduce debt by claiming the benefits they are entitled to	A service level agreement has been entered with the Citizens Advice Bureau who proactively contact 40 low-income households who are experiencing with debt issues.