

**LEAD MEMBER FOR  
LEISURE AND ARTS****19<sup>th</sup> July 2022****Maidstone Museums Forward Plan 2022-2027**

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
PAC	5 <sup>th</sup> July 2022
Lead Member on the Executive for Leisure and Arts	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2022

<b>Will this be a Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Urgency</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Lead Member on the Executive for Leisure and Arts
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Director Finance and Business Improvement
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Museums Director
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**Executive Summary**

The Maidstone Museums Five Year Forward Plan lays out the priorities for the coming period with identified actions and measures of success in providing an accessible and sustainable service for residents and visitors.

**Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to highlight the business priorities and success criteria for Maidstone Museums from 2022-2027 and to seek approval for release of capital funding to enable work to commence on the proposed new archaeology gallery.

**This report makes the following recommendations to the Lead Member on the Executive for Leisure and Arts:**

1. That the Maidstone Museums Forward Plan 2022-2027 be approved for consultation with external stakeholders.
  2. That the release of funds up to £50,000 from the Museums capital programme for initial work on the new archaeology gallery be approved.
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# Maidstone Museums Forward Plan 2022-2027

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</li> <li>• Safe, Clean and Green</li> <li>• Homes and Communities</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> </ul> <p>We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council's overall achievement of its aims in A Thriving Place</p>	Victoria Barlow, Museums Director
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is Respected</li> <li>• Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</li> <li>• Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</li> </ul> <p>The report supports the achievement of the Heritage is Respected cross cutting objective by ensuring the sustainable running of Maidstone Museums.</p>	Victoria Barlow, Museums Director
<b>Risk Management</b>	The plan accords with budgetary and other resource allowances. Performance Indicators will allow success to be measured	Victoria Barlow, Museums Director
<b>Financial</b>	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Mark Green, Head of Finance and Business Improvement

<b>Legal</b>	Under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) the Council 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. The Maidstone Museums Five Year Forward Plan lays out the priorities for the coming period with identified actions and measures of success and therefore meets this duty in respect of the museum service.	Interim Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules.	Victoria Barlow, Museums Director
<b>Equalities</b>	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	The recommendation will not have a negative impact on Crime and Disorder.	Mark Green, Head of Finance and Business Improvement
<b>Procurement</b>	On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises We will complete those exercises in line with financial procedure rules.	Mark Green, Head of Finance and Business Improvement
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	The ongoing decarbonisation study will detail measures the Museum can take as part of its strategy to become net zero by 2030, the study will include looking to reduce energy bills by improving insulation, LED lighting, and heating systems, as well as the potential for further onsite renewable energy generation, water waste reduction and EV charging infrastructure.	James, Wilderspin, Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Business Plan for 2022-2027 (Appendix 1) sets out the vision and the strategic aims for Maidstone Borough Council's Museum Service over the next five years and explains how the museums contribute to the Council's overall priorities.

2.2 This Five Year Plan reflects the overall outcomes of the museums' 20 Year Plan:

- The delivery of a high quality service
- Creating a sustainable and resilient organisation
- Caring for and creating access to our collections for present and future generations
- Inspires, educates and challenges visitors and users
- Ensuring that the museum is accessible to all and has the power to transform lives through the use of its collections
- Developing and encouraging a forward-thinking and innovative workforce
- Working to nationally recognised standards.

2.3 The plan was developed through a review of existing practice, a review of the original Transformation plans after the failure to secure £4m from Lottery Heritage Fund, staff discussion and workshops both prior to closure for the Covid lockdowns and after. Once a draft plan was outlined, the museum management team consulted with the elected members with the leading responsibility for the area at the time, being the Chair and Vice Chair of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee to discuss their ambitions for heritage in the borough and how these might be met. That discussion highlighted the following priorities:

1. To address the quality of displays and storytelling through, initially, the redisplay of the museum and Kent Archaeological Society's archaeological collections to tell the story of Maidstone's earliest history with themes that affected the shaping of the borough such as migration, industry and agriculture.
2. To complete a review of the Carriage Museum and its operation with a short term goal to open the museum using volunteer staff.
3. To review the governance of the museums and the role of external trusts in the operation of the museum and to streamline or strengthen those relationships where appropriate.
4. To provide better access for all residents to collections and decision-making through the audit and cataloguing of collections, upgrades to the museums' collections software including online versions, new exhibitions and one-off displays as well as the establishment of user panels working on, initially the new archaeology gallery.

Key milestones in the successful completion of these objectives and the 5 Year Plan are highlighted below:

<b>DEADLINE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>
01-Jul-22	Launch of volunteer recruitment campaign
31-Jul-22	Complete review of museum marketing by external media adviser to increase footfall and spend
30-Jul-22	Commence volunteer-led regular openings of the Carriage Museum with the first to coincide with Maidstone River Festival
July-Sept 2022	Complete specialist archaeological object research for new gallery to identify rare and important items in the museums' collection
September 2022	Report to PAC and Executive Member on options for the future of the Carriage Museum. Action Plan will follow on from decision.
30-Sep-22	Implementation of recommendations from museum marketing review
30-Sep-22	Complete review of museum governance and relationship with Trusts
15-Dec 2022	Procurement, appointment and contract agreement for Exhibition Design Specialists completed
30-Nov-22	Production of Community Engagement Plan to ensure the involvement of residents in future plans and developments completed
November 2022 - August 2023	Scientific analysis of human remains and artefacts for new gallery to identify where people and objects came from to Kent and how the environment affected them
01-Dec-22	Action plan for Community Engagement Plan implementation begun
01-Jan-23	Application made for continuation of funding from Arts Council England/DCMS for Learning Service
01-Apr-23	New visitor feedback surveys introduced to direct future service improvements
Jan-June 23	Iterative design process including initial concepts through to final design of gallery

June to November 2023	Specification, procurement of AV and interactive designers and content production for new Archaeology Gallery
23-Dec-23	Refurbishment of area for new Archaeology Gallery completed while the museum is closed to the public
07-Jan-24	Start of fit out and install of Archaeology Gallery
01-May-24	Launch of new Archaeology Gallery
30-Nov-24	Replacement of museum's cataloguing software Adlib inc online version for public browsing

Underpinning all this work is the continuing need for the museum to find a secure financial footing and sustainable ways of working as well as the day-to-day delivery of a high quality service.

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Option 1: Proceed with the Five Year Plan as outlined in this report.
- 3.2 Option 2: Do not proceed with the Five Year Plan.
- 3.3 Option 3: Propose modification to the Five Year Plan.

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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The preferred option is to proceed with the Five Year Plan as outlined in this report. This will ensure that the actions set out start to be implemented at the earliest possible date and is consistent with the Council's overall strategic objective of making Maidstone a thriving place.

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### **5. RISK**

- 5.1 This report is subject to further consultation and has no risk management implications. Any risks arising from consultation will be assessed separately.

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### **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 The recommendations in this report are consistent with the development of the Museum's plans as outlined at meetings of the former Economic

Regeneration and Leisure Committee. Further consultation will now take place with key stakeholders.

- 6.2 This issue was considered by the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Policy Advisory Committee at its meeting held on 5 July 2022. The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the report.
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## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 7.1 The Forward Plan will be released for consultation with key stakeholders including the Maidstone Museum Foundation, Kent Archaeological Society, schools and residents via specific interest panels (such as for young people) and via the museum's website.
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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

The following document is to be published with this report and forms part of the report:

- Appendix 1: 2022-27 Maidstone Museums Forward Plan
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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.