

# MAIDSTONE MUSEUMS FORWARD PLAN 2022-27

Maidstone Museum  
Maidstone Carriage Museum  
The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum



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### **1 INTRODUCTION**

The forward plan 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.

The plan has been shaped by a review of past performance, the current position of the museum and its context within the Borough Council’s corporate plans and priorities. It has also been developed with national policies in mind including Arts Council England’s priorities for Museums.

The work undertaken in the previous five years has identified new aims and objectives, here which will be supported and delivered by a comprehensive action plan.

### **2 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

#### **Mission Statement**

Maidstone Museums aim to inspire, educate and challenge its visitors and users through the use of its collections, staff and buildings. We will do this by telling the story of

Maidstone, its people, their natural environment and the wider world in which they live, through the artefacts and specimens we collect and interpret.

We will achieve this by:

- Delivering a high quality informed service
- Creating a sustainable and resilient organisation
- Caring for and creating access to our collections for present and future generations
- Creating an environment that 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

### 3. THE WAY FORWARD - VISION, STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The vision, strategic aims, objectives and the action plan provide the Museums with a well formed and strategic way forward.

#### 3.1 IDENTIFYING 5 YEAR PRIORITIES

The situational analysis below (SWOT) was created by staff at a workshop in January 2022 and is key as the source of priorities for the museum service in addressing current weaknesses and being responsive to opportunities.

| <b>Strengths</b>   | <b>Weaknesses</b>  |
|--|--|
| <b>Variety and quality of Collections</b><br><br><b>Volunteer team</b><br><br><b>Maidstone Museums' Foundation</b><br><b>Partnerships with Kent Archaeological Society et al.</b><br><br><b>Free to enter</b><br><b>Educational Opportunities</b><br><br>Reputation above that of size of town would ordinarily support<br>Staff dedication<br>Historic buildings<br>Local Authority -support from other depts<br>Retail offer | <b>Tired and dated permanent displays and gallery spaces and poor access – physical, intellectual</b><br><b>Maintenance and property issues</b><br><b>WIFI coverage</b><br><br><b>Carriage Museum – location, condition, overall visitor experience</b><br><br><b>Relationship with Trusts in terms of staff time, impact etc</b><br><br><b>Marketing and public awareness</b><br><b>Data re users and analysis</b><br><br>Signage – Building externally/internally and Town<br>Refreshment offer means short visits<br>Documentation backlog and lack of space for storage<br>Limited opening hours<br>No full-time staff |
| <b>Opportunities</b>   | <b>Threats</b>   |
| <b>Building history</b><br><b>Capital Refurbishment Programme</b><br><br><b>New roles for volunteers e.g. at Carriage Museum</b><br><br><b>New partnerships</b><br><b>Engagement with residents</b><br><br><b>Growth of social media</b>   | <b>Perception that museum is dull and has limited opening hours</b><br><br><b>Falling use of Carriage Museum</b><br><br><b>Withdrawal or erosion of Council Subsidy</b><br><b>External funding cuts – Museums and Schools</b><br><br><b>Lack of staff and volunteer diversity</b>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Brenchley Gardens<br/>         Colleagues in council<br/>         Digitisation of collection<br/>         Getting out of the building with collections<br/>         Improvements in building and service to address Climate Emergency</p> | <p>Political change<br/>         Senior leadership change<br/>         Loss of staff<br/>         Kent Archaeological Society moving with their collection<br/>         Unforeseen emergency such as Covid<br/>         Charged exhibitions- 2 tier service at odds with values<br/>         National Economic Crisis – rising prices and scarcity of materials<br/>         Reduction in teaching of Arts subjects in school</p> |
|--|---|

**The items highlighted in bold are those which are most important, urgent and which we have the opportunity to address in the next five years.**

They may be grouped into priorities as follows:

1. To address the poor quality of displays and storytelling in permanent galleries through capital investment in a rolling programme of refurbishment and redisplay, beginning in 2022 with the work to deliver a new gallery telling the story of Maidstone from pre-history to the end of the mediaeval period and continuing through the museum as funding is available.
2. To address the perceived weakness of multiple independent Trusts with ever diminishing resources but needing management time and some with significant influence over the function and use of the buildings. A Governance review will be undertaken to ascertain the best options for the future taking into account legal obligations and especially charity law.
3. To address the issues of the Carriage Museum and its collections. The long term location and purpose of the museum will be addressed in a series of options designed to make the best use of this part of Maidstone’s history whilst providing a financially sustainable position for Maidstone Borough Council. The museum will consult with Cobtree Charitable Trust in preparing options.
4. To address the need for increasing access to the museum, its collections and experiences to a greater number of residents and visitors and, especially, to address barriers to those currently under-served. This will be done through providing exhibitions and displays but also by increasing participation in projects and through on-going involvement in decision making via community panels.
5. To address the need to continue to deliver value for money and provide financial sustainability for a non-statutory service. This will include identifying areas suitable for grant funding by Arts Council England and other bodies, greater use of volunteer staff, to encourage giving through donations and bequests to MMF as well as partnerships with organisations willing to fund museum activities.

## **3.2 VISION**

Maidstone Museums is an innovative and forward thinking museum service that actively engages with the communities in which they reside. We create and deliver exciting and inspiring programmes of work that inspire, challenge and educate the people of Maidstone, Kent and beyond. Our users understand that they are at the centre of our success and have the opportunity to engage at a variety of levels and inform progress. We present and deliver excellence across all departments and our collections are at the heart of our success.

## **4 STRATEGIC AIMS**

### **Aim 1:**

#### **To connect, develop and engage with all visitors and users**

It is vital that museums have a sense of purpose and continue to develop audiences. To be successful audiences must be at the heart of what the museums deliver and how they move forward. Engagement on multiple levels is crucial to the success of the museums and is a key way of contributing to Maidstone Borough Council's priorities for Maidstone.

#### **Specific Objectives**

- 1.1 Develop and create an exciting and innovative museum programme
- 1.2 Secure the formal and informal Learning and Community participation offer and define what may continue if long term funding is not secured.
- 1.3 Increase and improve access to the Museum and its collections
- 1.4 Understand, learn from and improve engagement methods with users
- 1.5 Improve promotion and communication about the museums of Maidstone with the goal of greater resident engagement
- 1.6 Increase engagement by recruiting volunteers to work in visitor-facing roles at Maidstone Museum and Maidstone Carriage Museum

### **Aim 2:**

#### **Care for, manage and create active collections**

The museums have a responsibility for the care and management of its collections. It is dedicated to achieving excellence in this area and will continue to make progress through a variety of initiatives. Through digitisation and cross department working the collections will be made more accessible and active ensuring that more people can access them, both those on display and those in store. The museum will continue to work to nationally recognised standards set by Arts Council England's accreditation scheme.

#### **Specific Objectives**

- 2.1 Achieve and maintain accreditation
- 2.2 Improve documentation of collections
- 2.3 Improve access to the collections through the improvement of individual galleries and the continuing collections audit

**Aim 3:****Create and develop a sustainable and resilient museum service**

A sustainable and resilient museum is one which has clear goals and direction of travel, committed staff and volunteers and is used and supported by the local community it, in turn, purports to serve. In addition the activities and running of the service must focus on the benefit to residents and support wider goals of equity, dealing with a Climate Emergency and wider issues which may be barriers to enjoyment of Heritage and the building of cultural capital.

With the funding landscape changing it is important that the museum service assesses its funding, assets and resources. As a non-statutory service within the Local Authority, it is vital that the museums can balance their budgets and this will require new ways of creating income.

Partnership working with other organisations and stakeholders in Kent and the South East will help to build stronger museums and we will actively engage with this. With this in mind, organisations such as Maidstone Museums' Foundation and Kent Archaeological Society will be key partners in the work not only to improve archaeological displays but also in setting agendas and acting as a bridge between the museums and their members.

We will continue to engage with the museum workforce to ensure they feel valued, engaged and supported.

**Specific Objectives:**

- 3.1 Ensure financial stability and maximise income through expansion of existing methods or by the adoption of new, such as the installation of a contactless donation point in 2022
- 3.2 Ensure that the museum is actively working towards Carbon Neutrality through improvements to the museum buildings and the actions of staff
- 3.3 Ensure that the museum is responsive to resident needs and concerns and actively seeks to remove barriers to participation in recording and celebrating Maidstone's history.
- 3.4 Staff development and training is supported and encouraged in order to ensure staff are able to provide the best service possible
- 3.5 Ensure the most appropriate governance structure is in place for all museums.

**5 CONTEXT – SETTING THE SCENE**

## **5.1 ORGANISATION**

Maidstone Museums is a Local Authority run service managed and funded by Maidstone Borough Council. The Museum Director reports to the Director of Finance and Business Improvement, alongside managers responsible for other key services that help to make Maidstone a thriving place such as the Lockmeadow Leisure Complex and the Mote Park Leisure Centre.

## **5.2 STRATEGIES AND POLICIES**

Maidstone Museums' forward plan is developed with a range of local authority and other organisations policies in mind. The Vision and aims and objectives within the forward plan were developed to ensure that they help to deliver against key priorities in the documents briefly described below.

### **Maidstone Borough Council Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan sets out Maidstone's approach to responding to community needs in this financial and political era. The Council has four priorities.

- Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure
- Housing and Communities
- A Thriving Place
- Safe, Clean and Green

During the course of the plan these outcomes have been defined to show which areas the Council will concentrate on, considering the needs of the Borough and the budget reductions the Council has to find. The Council will continue to use its influence wherever possible to encourage partners to invest in Maidstone in both the priority and non-priority areas.

The museums contribute to all of the plans above by:

- Delivering an excellent museum service for the Borough.
- Maintaining and protecting our culture and leisure assets.
- Protecting and promoting our cultural heritage and history.
- Promoting Maidstone Museums as a destination and striving to attract more visitors.
- Enabling our communities and visitors to engage and participate in culture and leisure activities.
- Developing museum commercial activities to generate revenue to help achieve and sustain this ambition.
- Being a leader and advocate for Museums in the Town.

### **Arts Council England's (ACE) Strategic Plan 2010-2020**

The Strategic Plan for Arts Council England has a mission for 'Great art and culture for everyone'. To achieve this they champion, develop and invest in arts and cultural



experiences that enrich people's life's and have set five goals to ensure they reach their mission.

We contribute to these goals by delivering on key aims:

1. Care for, manage and create active collections
2. Connect, develop and engage with all visitors and users
3. Create and develop a sustainable and resilient museum service

## **6 RESOURCES**

### **6.1 Staffing**

The museum service has undergone some significant changes over the last few years. The Museums' service is directly line managed by the Museums Director who also has responsibility for the Arts and Culture Officer.

Following restructures in 2016 and 2021, the staff is made up of 1 full time staff member, funded by an external grant from the Dept. for Education, and eleven part time posts.

The museums service receives support from other Local Authority departments across a range of disciplines including legal, finance, health & safety, human resources, property management, performance, IT and so on.

For more detail please see appendix 3 – staffing structure chart

### **6.2 Financial**

#### **6.2.1 Local Authority Funding**

The museums are local authority funded. Over the years the service has undergone a variety of cuts to the budget. The resilience and sustainability of the museums is a key focus for this forward plan and it looks to try and find new sources of income and new models for delivery.

#### **6.2.2 Fundraising**

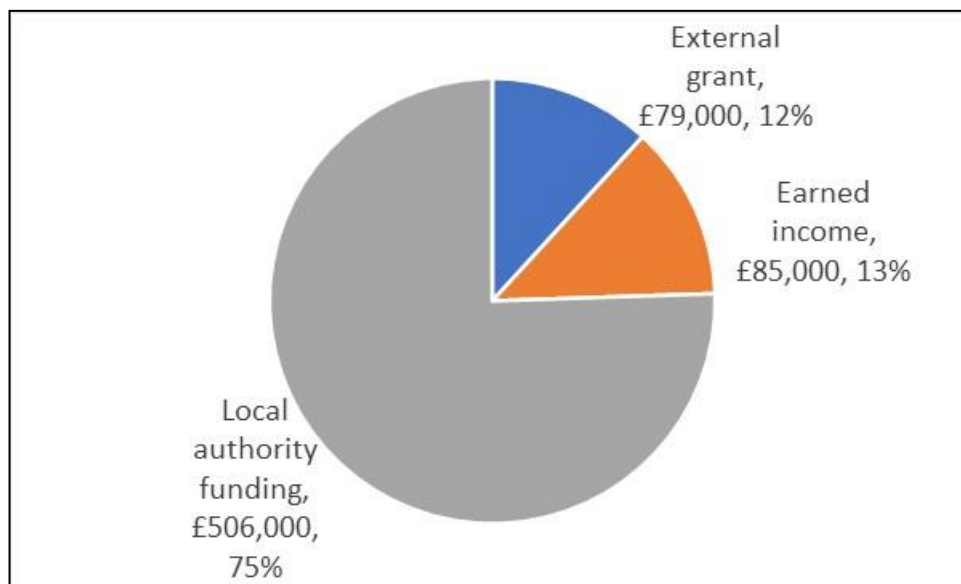
The museums have had great success in receiving a variety of grants from trusts and foundations via the Maidstone Museum Foundation. Grant applications will need to fit with the forward plan aims and objectives to ensure that a strategic approach is taken to any new project that may be funded. External funding needed over the next few years will be for the refurbishment and redevelopment of gallery spaces, potential developments at the Carriage Museum and to support income generation.

A small amount of money is received from donations either through the main foyer or in the exhibition spaces. New donation boxes have been introduced since 2015, funded by Maidstone Museums' Foundation. The latest addition is a Goodbox contactless donations box for card payments.

### 6.2.3 Earned income

The museums bring in over £80,000 of earned income into the budget and the development of these income streams are a key priority for the future sustainability of the museum. The income comes from room hire, children's parties, retail, workshops, talks, tours, corporate loans, rent, photo reproduction and so on. Through research and work with staff and users we have identified areas that have potential for new streams of revenue and also for higher levels of income to be achieved, although income was badly impacted by closures caused by the Coronavirus lockdowns. It is not yet clear if or when a return to former levels may be guaranteed.

Projected income for 2022/23 is summarised below.



## 7. IMPLEMENTATION AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Cultural Services operates within a Council-wide performance management system which is structured around effective political and managerial leadership, a clear vision, action centred service planning, regular performance reporting and constructive challenge. This Forward Plan responds to other key strategies such as the Borough Council's Maidstone Culture and Leisure Business Plan and Economic Development Strategy. To ensure that the Museums Forward Plan is delivered, the Council will review and monitor the Action Plan through various methods:

- The Forward Plan action plan has been developed by Maidstone Borough Council Museums staff and feedback from stakeholders and users through a variety of methods. Maidstone Borough Council's Museums service will take responsibility for driving this work and for monitoring delivery.

- Using the Covalent performance monitoring system, the Museums performance indicators and action progress will be reported quarterly to Senior Management Team, and Members.
- A comprehensive approach will be introduced to ensure we gather relevant data and feedback from users, stakeholders, partners and non-users.
- Team meetings, one-to-ones and appraisal structures are in place to ensure there is discussion on actions on a continuous basis and to enable progress to be addressed and updated or adjusted on a regular basis.
- This Forward Plan will be updated annually to ensure any relevant changes are considered and that the action plans are updated.

## **8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

Maidstone Borough Council and its Museums believe everyone should be treated fairly and with respect. The Council recognises that diversity issues will impact on planning and delivery of services and we are committed to ensuring that our work has a positive impact for everyone in the Borough, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religious belief. We welcome the positive contribution that an increasingly diverse population will make to the future prosperity of Maidstone. Discrimination is a reality for some people in the Borough. Because of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and other factors, people are denied opportunities, have difficulty accessing services, and suffer inequalities. We want to create an inclusive and supportive environment that offers equity of outcome.

Maidstone Borough Council will assess and monitor the relevance and effect of the Museums Forward Plan on equalities through its Equality Impact Assessment.

Through this Plan, Maidstone Borough Council commits to;

- Creating an inclusive Museums Service that offers equity of opportunity to all.
- Ensuring that all new Museum strategies are accessible and easy to read
- Actively seeking opportunities to engage and involve under-represented groups in the museum's work in meaningful ways
- Involving residents and other cultural stakeholders in Maidstone in decision making, co-creating and curating the museum

## 9. MUSEUMS ACTION PLAN

|   |   |                            |  |  |          |
|---|---|----------------------------|--|--|----------|
| <b>Key Aim 1:</b>   | <b>Connect, develop and engage with all visitors and users</b>        |                            |  |  |          |
| <b>Specific objective 1.1:</b>  | <b>Develop and create an exciting and innovative museum programme</b> |                            |  |  |          |
| Actions   | End Date  | Lead person                | Additional Resources which may be needed | Measures of Success  | Priority |
| <p>Deliver a high quality, varied and popular temporary exhibitions programme ensuring that they meet the exhibition policy ambitions to programme exhibitions covering:</p> <p>Contemporary topics and art works<br/>           Summer family exhibitions<br/>           Collections based/focused</p>   | 2027  | Public Programming Manager |  | <p>2 exhibitions per year mounted in the main temporary exhibition galleries</p> <p>80% rated good or excellent achieved for each in customer feedback</p> <p>Evaluation report produced for each exhibition relating to goals identified in the PID</p> <p>Annual income target met</p> | 1 & 5    |
| <p>Create and deliver a range of events for users of all ages that complement the museums' collections and raise its profile.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under 5s</li> <li>• Children and families</li> <li>• Adult visitors</li> <li>• Over 60s</li> <li>• Under-represented audiences</li> <li>• Maidstone Museums' Foundation</li> </ul> | 2027  | Public Programming Manager |  | <p>Min 2 events or a series of events programmed for each audience listed in Actions</p> <p>80% rated good or excellent achieved for each in customer feedback</p> <p>Evaluation report produced for each series of events relating to</p>   | 4 & 5    |

|  |   |                          |  |  |          |
|--|---|--------------------------|--|--|----------|
| members as agreed in MoU   |   |                          |  | goals identified in the PID<br>Annual income target met  |          |
| <b>Specific objective 1.2:</b>   | <b>Secure the formal and informal Learning and Community Participation offer and define what may continue should funding not be renewed</b> |                          |  |  |          |
| Actions  | Dates   | Lead person              | Additional Resources   | MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | Priority |
| Deliver Museums and Schools project; delivering workshops linked to the national curriculum, and Arts Awards | 2027  | Learning Officer         | <b>Funding:</b><br>Arts Council<br>England<br>Funding<br>through<br>Department of<br>Education | Meaningful engagement' as defined by Arts Council:<br>5500 individual pupils (visits in, outreach, virtual sessions, loans boxes)<br><br>100+ Arts Award achieved.                             | 4 & 5    |
| Promote and deliver a primary education offer in person and online   | 2027  | Learning Officer         |  | Deliver to 86% of Primary Schools in the borough<br><br>4 Twilight sessions per year<br><br>80% rated good or excellent achieved for each in teacher feedback<br><br>Achieve financial targets | 4 & 5    |
| Informal learning offer:   | 2027  | Public Programme Manager | Volunteers   | 3 craft activities per week during school holidays<br><br>Volunteers to provide handling activity in galleries for min one day   | 4 & 5    |

|   |   |                          |                               |  |          |
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|   |   |                          |                               | per week (Saturdays and during school holidays)<br><br>Relaunch Cur8 and hold 10 sessions per year   |          |
| Create and deliver informal and formal learning activities that link to the temporary exhibitions.                                  | 2027  | Public Programme Manager |                               | Minimum one event per temporary exhibition aimed at priority audience identified in PID<br><br>80% rated good or excellent achieved for each in audience feedback  | 4 & 5    |
| Prepare plan for Learning activities to meet Accreditation standard should M&S funding be discontinued and no replacement available | Sept 2022   | Public Programme Manager |                               | Plan completed   | 4 & 5    |
| <b>Specific objective 1.3:</b>  | <b>Increase and improve access to the Museums and its collections</b> |                          |                               |  |          |
| Actions   | Dates   | Lead person              | Additional Resources          | MEASURES OF SUCCESS  | Priority |
| Increase number of objects on display and frequency of change   | May 2024  | Public Programme Manager |                               | Maidstone Museums' Foundation choice in progress<br><br>Volunteer choice in progress<br><br>Mystery Object display in progress<br><br>Greater number of objects on display after completion of capital refurbishment programme | 1 & 4    |
| Complete items identified in the capital refurbishment programme  | May 2024  | Director                 | External experts<br>Designers | New Archaeology Gallery open<br><br>One subject area/gallery   | 1 & 4    |

|   |              |  |   |   |                   |
|---|--------------|--|---|---|-------------------|
|   |              |  | Community panels<br>Stakeholders<br>Funders | refurbished every 5 years<br><br>Meet targets identified in individual project PIDS   |                   |
| <b>Specific Objective 1.4:</b>  |              | <b>Understand, learn from and improve engagement with users</b>                            |   |   |                   |
| <b>Actions</b>  | <b>Dates</b> | <b>Lead person</b>   | <b>Additional Resources</b>                 | <b>MEASURES OF SUCCESS</b>  | <b>Priorities</b> |
| Review Audience Development Plan and rescope as Community Engagement Plan   | 30-11-2022   | Director   |   | Plan adopted and actions in place   | 4                 |
| Review current and develop new surveys as required for the following areas of activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Participatory activity</li> <li>• Stakeholder</li> </ul> | 01-04-2023   | Director   | Consultation and Engagement Officer         | Min 4 targeted surveys available on site and online.<br><br>50+ per month completed<br><br>Responses reviewed quarterly<br><br>Staff and volunteers trained in delivering surveys | 1 & 4             |
| Establish consultative panels   | 2023         | Director   |   | Stakeholders x 2+ per annum<br>Resident x 3 per annum<br>Education – twilight session quarterly<br>Young person’s panel - quarterly   | 4                 |
| Create a mechanism to communicate on action taken on feedback received.   | Dec 2022     | Director   |   | Measures identified and in place<br><br>Page on website established for this purpose  | 4                 |
| <b>Specific objective 1.5</b>   |              | <b>Improve promotion and communication about the museums of Maidstone with the goal of</b> |   |   |                   |



| <b>greater resident engagement</b>   |                                 |   |                             |  |                   |
|--|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|-------------------|
| <b>Actions</b>   | <b>Dates</b>                    | <b>Lead person</b>                      | <b>Additional Resources</b> | <b>MEASURES OF SUCCESS</b>   | <b>Priorities</b> |
| Commission a review of museum marketing to advise on best use of limited time and resources, training and development for staff, brand recognition and messaging.                                    | July 2022<br><br>August 2022 on | Visitor Services and Operations Manager | Consultant Comms Manager    | Report and action plan produced and accepted.<br><br>Actions carried out and individual MoS in place | 1 & 5             |
| Improve signage around Maidstone Town Centre so that the museum's presence is clearly signalled and visitors are directed towards it.  | August 2022 on                  | Director                                | Economic Development team   | Improved visitor numbers   | 1                 |
| <b>Specific objective 1.6</b>  |                                 |   |                             |  |                   |
| <b>Increase engagement by recruiting volunteers to work in visitor-facing roles at Maidstone Museum and Maidstone Carriage Museum</b>  |                                 |   |                             |  |                   |
| <b>Actions</b>   | <b>Dates</b>                    | <b>Lead person</b>                      | <b>Additional Resources</b> | <b>MEASURES OF SUCCESS</b>   | <b>Priorities</b> |
| First tranche of new volunteers working at Carriage Museum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create role Descriptor</li> <li>• Advertise roles</li> <li>• Recruit</li> <li>• Train</li> </ul> | 30 July 2022                    | Visitor Services and Operations Manager |                             | Carriage Museum open on Saturdays during season in 2023<br><br>Plans to grow team in place           | 3                 |
| Carry out Options Appraisal for Carriage Museum  | 2022                            | Director                                |                             | Clear path for future of the Carriage Museum and collections   | 3                 |
| SEE ALSO 1.2 and 1.4   |                                 |   |                             |  |                   |
| <b>Key Aim 2:</b>  |                                 |   |                             |  |                   |
| <b>Care for, manage and create active collections</b>  |                                 |   |                             |  |                   |
| <b>Specific objective 2.1</b>  |                                 |   |                             |  |                   |
| <b>Achieve and maintain Accreditation Standard</b>   |                                 |   |                             |  |                   |

| <b>Actions</b>  | <b>Target</b>                      | <b>Lead person</b>  | <b>Additional Resources</b> | <b>MEASURES OF SUCCESS</b>   | <b>Priorities</b> |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Review all applicable policies and procedures every 5 years   | 2022<br>2027                       | Collections Manager |                             | Existing policies and procedures kept up to date<br><br>Creation of any missing policies and procedures to improve efficiency and setting standards/expectations | 1                 |
| Complete accreditation return/s by next completion date.  | TBC by Arts Council                | Collections Manager | Staff time                  | Full Accreditation achieved  | 1                 |
| <b>Specific Objective 2.2: Improve care and documentation of collections</b>  |                                    |                     |                             |  |                   |
| <b>Actions</b>  | <b>Target</b>                      | <b>Lead person</b>  | <b>Additional Resources</b> | <b>MEASURES OF SUCCESS</b>   | <b>Priorities</b> |
| Audit of displayed collections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More complete and accurate records on Adlib</li> <li>• Update valuations for insurance</li> </ul> | Yearly during closed period 2022-7 | Collections Manager |                             | One display gallery audited per year<br><br>Valuations updated for all audited items   | 1 & 4             |
| Upgrade Adlib Collections Management System   | 2024                               | Collections Manager |                             | Upgraded Adlib system  | 1 & 4             |
| Address documentation backlogs  | 2027                               | Collections Manager |                             | 1000 objects updated per annum   | 1 & 4             |
| Implement actions in the care and conservation Plan   | 2027                               | Collections Manager |                             | Complete carriage clean once per year<br><br>Update condition and conservation need records for objects in gallery audit   | 1 & 4             |

|   |   |   |  |  |                   |
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|   |   |   |  |  |                   |
| <b>Specific Objective 2.3:</b>  | <b>Improve access to the collections</b>  |   |  |  |                   |
| <b>Actions</b>  | <b>Target</b>   | <b>Lead person</b>                      | <b>Resources</b>                         | <b>MEASURES OF SUCCESS</b>   | <b>Updates</b>    |
| Review purpose and desirability of Adlib online access for public           | 2024  | Collections Manager                     | Funding Consultation and Engagement Team | Public consultation on expectations completed<br>Purpose identified<br>Costs identified<br>Funding secured<br>Design complete<br>Website launched<br>Use monitored quarterly | 4 & 5             |
| Work with learning and interpretation on new ways of using the collections. | May 2024  | Collections Manager                     |  | Increased use of collections by learning and interpretation teams to work with visitors<br><br>Increase in hands on-work offered to visitors and participants                | 4                 |
| SEE ALSO 1.3 CAPITAL PROGRAMME  |   |   |  |  |                   |
| <b>Key Aim 3:</b>   | <b>Create and develop a resilient and sustainable Museum Service</b>  |   |  |  |                   |
| <b>Specific objective 3.1:</b>  | <b>Ensure financial stability and maximise income through expansion of existing methods or by the adoption of new, such as the installation of a contactless donation point in 2022</b> |   |  |  |                   |
| <b>Actions</b>  | <b>End date</b>   | <b>Lead Person</b>                      | <b>Additional Resources</b>              | <b>Measures of Success</b>   | <b>Priorities</b> |
|   |   |   |  |  |                   |
| Retain Kent Archaeological Society as tenants                               | 2025  | Director                                |  | SLA agreed<br>Service charge received yearly   | 5                 |
| Continue to develop and promote the museum facilities for room hire:        | June 2022   | Visitor Services and Operations Manager | IT team                                  | Meet income targets<br>WIFI audit carried out  | 5                 |

|  |                 |   |  |   |                |
|--|-----------------|---|--|---|----------------|
| Develop the retail offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School goody packs developed</li> <li>Bespoke items related to the collections</li> <li>Locally produced items on sale or return</li> </ul> | Dec 2023        | Visitor Services and Operations Manager   | Finance Team   | <p>Liaise with Finance to agree method of recording depreciation on old stock</p> <p>Consult school teachers on Goody Bags</p> <p>Review current stock on S/R and return undesirable stock</p> <p>Identify 3 new ways of promoting the museum shop and measure their impact</p> <p>Meet financial targets</p> | 5              |
| Maximise contributions as financial donations  | 2027            | Director  | Maidstone Museums' Foundation<br><br>Kent Archaeological Society | <p>Access to digital desk top gained</p> <p>Payment requested each quarter</p> <p>Level of donations noted and rises year on year</p>   | 5              |
| Promotion of donations and bequests etc  | 2023            | Director  | Maidstone Museums' Foundation                                    | <p>SLA on paying as unrestricted funds to museum</p> <p>Promote on museum websites, printed material etc</p>  | 5              |
| <b>Specific objective 3.2</b>  |                 | Ensure that the museum is actively working towards Carbon Neutrality through improvements to the museum buildings and the actions of staff and visitors |  |   |                |
| <b>Actions</b>   | <b>End date</b> | <b>Lead person</b>  | <b>Resources</b>   | <b>MEASURES OF SUCCESS</b>  | <b>Updates</b> |
| Biodiversity and Climate Change Plan   | 2027            | Visitor Services and Operations   | Biodiversity and Climate   | Manager consulted on materials and actions as part of the Capital   | 1 & 5          |

|  |  |  |                                     |   |                |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|----------------|
|  |  | Manager  | Change Manager<br>Property Services | Refurbishment<br>Medium-term plan for museum adopted  |                |
| <b>Specific objective 3.3:</b>             |  | Ensure that the museum is responsive to resident needs and concerns and actively seeks to remove barriers to participation in recording and celebrating Maidstone's history. |                                     |   |                |
| <b>Actions</b>                             | <b>End date</b>  | <b>Lead person</b>   | <b>Resources</b>                    | <b>MEASURES OF SUCCESS</b>  | <b>Updates</b> |
| Engagement Plan                            | November 2022<br><br>Action Plan initiated Dec 2022 on | Director   |                                     | Public Consultation carried out<br><br>Plan to increase public participation and decision-making in place<br><br>Staff and Volunteer diversity increased<br><br>Staff training in anti-discriminatory practice and awareness raising. (Previous examples include Dementia Awareness and Autism Awareness) | 4              |
| Community Consultation and decision-making | 2027   | Director   | Participant rewards Equalities Team | Consultative panels in place inc but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents</li> <li>• Young People</li> <li>• Subject interest groups for Capital Programme</li> <li>• Under-provisioned groups</li> </ul>   | 4              |

| <b>Specific objective 3.4:</b>  |                 | Staff and volunteer development and training is supported and encouraged in order to ensure all are able to provide the best service possible |                             |   |                   |
|---|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| <b>Actions</b>  | <b>End date</b> | <b>Lead person</b>  | <b>Resources</b>            | <b>MEASURES OF SUCCESS</b>  | <b>Updates</b>    |
| CPD   | 2027            | Director  |                             | Annual CPD programme identified with all staff and volunteers and recorded.<br><br>All-staff and/volunteer training as opportunities are identified<br><br>All staff to carry out ELMS training and refresh as required | 1 & 4             |
| <b>Specific objective 3.5:</b>  |                 | Ensure the most appropriate governance structure is in place for all museums and associated Trusts.   |                             |   |                   |
| <b>Actions</b>  | <b>End date</b> | <b>Lead person</b>  | <b>Additional Resources</b> | <b>MEASURES OF SUCCESS</b>  | <b>Priorities</b> |
| Carry out regular review of Museum Governance<br><br>Continue to monitor viability of Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment Trust | Sept 2022       | Director  | Legal<br>Finance            | Reviews completed<br><br>Brenchley Trust dissolved<br><br>Queens Own Trust financial viability assessed and legal advice taken<br><br>Continuing discussions with Bently Trust  | 2                 |

## **Appendix 1**

### **1. HISTORY**

- 1.1. Maidstone Museum was established in 1858 by Maidstone Borough Council. The collections are outstanding in their diversity and quality and consist of approximately 660,000 artefacts and specimens. Whilst its origins are typical of a regional museum created through Victorian munificence, the work of collectors, staff and benefactors over almost 150 years has created an overwhelmingly rich and varied collection of far greater than regional significance.
- 1.2. The Tyrwhitt-Drake Collection of Carriages (the Carriage Museum) was established in 1946 by Sir Hugh Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake, twelve times mayor of Maidstone. His collection of carriages, augmented by important vehicles on loan from the Royal Collections and the Victoria & Albert Museum, form one of the most important collections of horse drawn vehicles in Europe.
- 1.3. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum has been housed in the Museum since 1960. It is an independent charitable trust of which the Council is the sole trustee. Its collection of regimental memorabilia includes over 3,000 medals including four Victoria Crosses.
- 1.4. The museums are recognized as having the largest mixed collections in the county and one of the most important in the south-east of England, outside London. It is regarded by many people as the county museum of Kent.
- 1.5. The Brenchley Trust and the Bently Trust (both registered charities) are partners. The Trustees retain ownership of the collections deposited by Julius Brenchley (1873) and by Samuel Bently (1889) but their care and management functions have long since passed into the hands of the Council. Until recently, both Trusts received regular grant-aid from the Council. Their current income is now restricted to small amounts of interest on investments.
- 1.6. The museums have complied with the highest standards of the past Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's (MLA) Accreditation Scheme and the current scheme managed by Arts Council England.
- 1.7. The service has received significant sums of grant aid, which included £400,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, which was attracted for the redevelopment of Maidstone Museum's west wing in the late 1990s. The west wing redevelopment project was completed in 2003.
- 1.8. In 2012 a new extension opened at Maidstone Museum offering significant improvements to the facilities on offer and a more attractive visitor facility. The project attracted £2million of grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund and match funding of a variety of Trusts and Foundations and over £1.8m from the Local Authority.

### **2. BUILDINGS**

- 2.1. Maidstone Museum's central core consists of the Great Hall and the Withdrawing Room date from that period but the Cloisters and Long Gallery (restored around 1870) are survivals from an earlier Tudor building. Between 1698 and 1743 a substantial wing was added to the rear of the Elizabethan building. This was the building which, in 1858, was purchased by the Borough Corporation to accommodate the collections of art and archaeology earlier bequeathed by the owner of the house, Thomas Charles, a local surgeon and antiquarian.

- 2.2. In the years soon after the Museum's opening, more galleries were built to house the growing collections. On the eastern side a new wing was added in 1869, matched by new wing to the west in 1873 made possible by donations from Julius Brenchley, amongst others.
- 2.3. The eastern elevation was extended in 1889 to accommodate the Bentlif Art Gallery funded by local shoe manufacturer Samuel Bentlif to honour his brother George and enlarged still further with a third extension in 1924. On the western side the Victoria Gallery, housing the town's library, was built between 1897 and 1899 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. It operated as a free public lending library until 1936. In 1977 a fire damaged much of the upper floors in the west wing and 18<sup>th</sup> century extension. Maidstone Museum & Bentlif Art Gallery is Grade II\* listed.
- 2.4. The west wing's Brenchley Room is the main large function venue and also houses the museum's café.
- 2.5. The new east wing houses the Museums' new entrance, shop and Visitor Information Centre. It offers new and improved gallery spaces, public toilets (including accessible toilets), new educational facilities, meeting rooms and better storage for the collections. Taken together the east wing project provided the largest raft of improvements undertaken at Maidstone Museum in over 120 years.
- 2.6. The main staff accommodation was in Chillington House, a 19<sup>th</sup> century town house close by, but not adjacent to, the Museum in St. Faith's Street. It offered relatively poor staff accommodation as well as some storage. Room was converted in the Museum in February 2014 to ensure that all staff have good quality workspace and are situated under one roof to encourage and stimulate joint working across teams and build resilience.
- 2.7. Security of the museums' buildings is provided by an intruder alarm system monitored and maintained by Chubb Fire and Security, a nationwide provider of security and fire protection services. Chubb also provide maintenance and monitoring of the fire detection systems.
- 2.8. Access for mobility impaired visitors to Maidstone Museum's upper floor galleries is limited. There are eleven changes of floor level and although wheelchair users can now access the first floor of the East Wing via the new passenger lift they cannot, because of two sets of stairs, access the rest of the first from the east wing.
- 2.9. The Tyrwhitt-Drake Collection of Carriages is housed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century stable block of the Archbishop's Palace complex in Mill Lane. It is a large two storey building which provides little more than basic accommodation for this important collection of horse-drawn vehicles. The displays are located on two levels; access to the upper level is by a small staircase and so it is not possible for wheelchair users to visit the upper floor. The building is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is sited in Mill Street, a very busy major road providing vehicular access through the town centre. The Carriage Museum's current position and relative isolation provides a major barrier to its future success. Recent attempts to relocate the collection to Mote Park (2002) and Cobtree Manor (2009) have foundered. The feasibility of relocating the collection to an alternative local site offering more suitable accommodation is currently being examined and should be completed by the end of 2015.

### **3. COLLECTIONS**

The British archaeology collection covers Kent and beyond; excavation archives cover over 100 sites, mostly in Kent. The internationally recognized Early Mediaeval (Anglo-Saxon) collection comprises



approximately 2,000 Kentish artefacts. Foreign archaeology includes outstanding pieces such as the Gandhara heads and over 400 Egyptian artefacts.

The local history collections relate to all areas of local life. Of particular interest are those relating to local industries, transport and social life. There are high quality collections of arms and armour, clocks and watches and an outstanding collection of coins and medals numbering approximately 18,000 specimens, from Celtic and Ancient Greek to modern. The collection of photographs and maps is of major local importance and is complemented by over 10,000 items of printed ephemera relating to the history of the Borough and of Kent. The Social History Collection was reviewed in the early 2010s and many disposals took place. The current collection in this area is deficient in its ability to represent the local history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond.

The Museum holds an internationally important collection of artefacts of Pacific, Oceanic and African ethnography as well as diverse material from Asia and North and South America. The Brenchley Pacific Island material is unique for its fixed date of collection. There is no comparable collection of Oceanic material in Britain or Ireland.

The fine and applied art collections comprise 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century furniture, musical instruments, toys and games, ceramics, glass, costumes and needlework, paintings, prints and drawings and sculpture.

The ceramics form the most significant collection in the region with around 700 English pieces including early Kentish ware as well as around 250 European pieces. The collection of Chinese ceramics, mostly of 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century date, is very comprehensive.

Approximately 8,000 specimens of costume date from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century. They include baby and children's clothing, uniform, shoes, headwear, fans, parasols, bags, jewellery and accessories. Complementing needlework collections comprises around 700 specimens, including English embroidery and samplers, European embroideries and Eastern textiles.

Our Japanese collections are amongst the best in the country. At their core lie two important donations; a bequest in 1908 by Henry Marsham, a retired army officer who travelled to Japan in the 1870s to collect ceramics, and a donation in 1924 by Walter Samuel of a large collection of sword fittings, netsuke, lacquer, books and prints. It includes a magnificent series of almost 600 Edo-period (1600-1868) wood-block prints, depicting scenes from Japanese life and culture.

Our 580 oil paintings include minor continental Old Masters and 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century British works, including rare paintings by the Maidstone born essayist William Hazlitt. Watercolours include over 200 works by Albert Goodwin. There are over 1,000 Kentish topographical drawings, 40 'Old Master' drawings and over 3,500 prints, including an important collection of the work of the Victorian printing pioneer George Baxter. The sculpture collection of around 125 pieces includes work by Jacob Epstein and Henry Moore.

Around 400,000 specimens make up the natural history holdings and include collections of national and international significance.

The collections of palaeontology and vascular plants are of national importance, with type, cited and figured specimens; the plants including voucher specimens for Kent and the nationally important Hawkweed (West) Collection. The main strengths of the palaeontology are the marine Cretaceous and Tertiary of Kent, especially Chalk, Lower Greensand and Lenham Beds; but also Gault and London Clay. There is an extensive collection of Pleistocene vertebrate material and fossils from the Kent Coalfield. There are collections representing British palaeontology from Cambrian onwards and some

international material. Rocks (46,000) and minerals (7,000) are represented on a worldwide scale. We possess one of the finest mineral collections in the country outside the national museums.

The bird collections include 1,800 mounted British specimens, 400 foreign birds and over 1,100 cabinet skins. There are also 300 birds' nests and an outstanding collection of bird's eggs covering most species on the British list.

The Herbarium contains approximately 30,000 specimens, representative of the flora of the British Isles. There is also a British collection of some 6,000 specimens of critical genera including *Rubus*, *Taraxacum* and *Hieracium*. The Herbarium collection is the basis of Philp's *Atlas of the Kent Flora*.

There are approximately 500 specimens of algae and fungi; 5,800 specimens of lichens, mosses and liverworts, representing British coverage, with the majority of Kentish origin; an entomology collection of around 250,000 specimens forming a comprehensive collection of British insects; and an important collection of several thousand shells, mainly of tropical marine origin, but including temperate marine and freshwater, and tropical terrestrial species.

The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum's collection of regimental memorabilia includes over 3,000 medals including four Victoria Crosses.

The Tyrwhitt-Drake Museum of Carriages comprises of a large collection of horse drawn carriages and associated material the bulk of which was given to the town by Sir Hugh Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake. It is widely regarded as the best public collection of carriages in the country and one of the finest in Europe.

#### **4. SERVICES**

The museums offer access to the collections through permanent and temporary exhibitions and displays.

A wide range of learning services are offered to visitors. Adult visitors can participate in workshops designed to increase access to the collections, talks, workshops, behind the scenes tours and guides. Schools are offered a range of workshops at the Museum and sessions which can be delivered at their own premises. The highest take up for our schools programme is from Key Stage 2 groups (aged 7-11). Maidstone Museum were one of the 10 regional museums chosen to be part of the Museum and Schools project; this has meant that over the last 10 years the learning focus has been on school children and curriculum learning. (background report given in appendix 2)

There is an extensive and popular programme of activities aimed at families with children in the school holidays. This has been developed over the decade years and has been a major factor in the increased use of the museums over this period. The quality and range of the activities has created a large number of users who repeatedly visit the museums to participate.

The curatorial staff deal with a large number of public enquires ranging from family history to identification of objects. This service is currently free. Charging for this would raise relatively little and involve a great deal of administration as has been experienced in relation to QORWKRM enquiries.

## **APPENDIX 2)**

### **1. LEARNING AT MAIDSTONE MUSEUM & BENTLIF ART GALLERY**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

The Museum has employed at least one member of staff to take responsibility for learning for approximately the last 25 years. The role has always encompassed engagement with both schools and families. However, the scope of learning delivery has changed considerably during that time and even more so since the end of 2012.

Over the last 10 years a combination of employed and casual learning deliverers has existed. 2 members of staff and casual Learning Assistants are funded under the DoE/ACE Museums and Schools project. This funding is precarious as it is only awarded on a year on year basis but has been extended from a three year project until now.

Workshops are charged on an hourly rate, with linked craft activities for most topics and now can be offered in the museum, in school and online.

The Museum has a purpose-built classroom, added in 2012 as part of the HLF-funded East Wing extension. The classroom seats a maximum of 32 KS1 or 2 pupils, and slightly less for KS3 or 4 pupils. The old education room is still used for lunch breaks if needed.

#### **1.2 MUSEUMS AND SCHOOLS PROJECT - TRANSFORMATION**

This project, funded by the Department of Education through Arts Council England, was awarded to the Museum in July 2012. In total 10 regional museums were partnered with 10 national museums; Maidstone Museum and Bently Art Gallery was partnered with the British Museum. The project area covers all of Kent and Medway UA.

The funding currently runs at £68k per year which covers salaries.

#### **1.3 MUSEUMS AND SCHOOLS OUTCOMES AND TARGETS**

The overarching objective for Museums and Schools was to increase cultural engagement through an increase in pupil visits into the museum, in particular from schools with a higher than average uptake of Free School Meals. This has been achieved, as outlined in 'results' below. A target figure of 24,300 pupil visits over the lifetime of the project was given, to consist of 8,100 pupils each visiting three times.

Outreach was not originally counted towards targets but has now been highlighted, especially in the aftermath of school closures due to Covid. In addition, targets for individual pupils gaining Arts Awards, schools gained Artsmark and records in the Kent Children's University Passport are set.

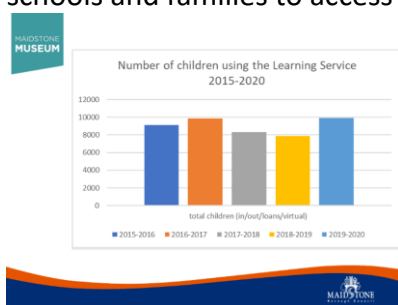
To achieve these outcomes, the team delivers:

- Consultation with schools
- The team regularly monitor the take up of sessions and requests from teachers for sessions on new or popular curriculum areas. The galleries are now used extensively as well as the classroom
- The creation of resources linking to the collections and workshops, including more than 50 outreach boxes and gallery interactives.
- Forging partnerships with other (mainly volunteer-led) museums to enhance their learning offer, disseminate best practice and enable more school visits to take place in these locations.
- Training for the Learning Team in Arts Awards delivery and moderation.
- A passport scheme to enable counting of repeat visits, given to pupils on their first school visit.

- Creation of new informal learning events and activities and participation in national events to encourage repeat visits.

## 1.4 MUSEUMS AND SCHOOLS RESULTS

- The *Museums and Schools* funding has allowed us to have a team for delivery including a FT Learning officer, a part time Learning Assistant and a team of casual staff.
- We have developed a programme of workshops for schools, on 19 themes for visits into the museum, 8 for outreach and 5 for virtual/live lessons.
- We have created 30 loans boxes for schools to hire, each of which contain 10 objects, photographs and a detailed teacher pack.
- As part of our targets for ACE we are trained to deliver Arts Awards and regularly deliver our 10 packages to 150-400 children each year.
- The funding also allowed for the creation of over 200 online resources in the past 18 months for schools and families to access while learning from home.



## 1.5 INFORMAL LEARNING

In addition to formal schools provision, the Learning Team runs various informal learning activities. These are mainly targeted at children from 4-11 and take place during holiday periods, with a programme of craft drop-in sessions, often based on temporary exhibition topics, such as a 'surreal' half term activity week to link with 'Dipping into Dali'. These activities are charged for.

In addition, weekend family events throughout the year are run, again often linking to temporary exhibitions, wherever possible, activities for an older age range of 11+ are created. These activities are usually charged for.

The Learning Team also regularly delivers 'Story Time' for under 5s each Friday and a monthly Saturday morning club for 10-14 year-olds, 'Cur8'.

### Appendix 3 – Current Museum Structure

This is the current structure of the Museum Service. We are passionate about ensuring that the Museums Service are fit for purpose and are currently reviewing the Front of House and commercial operation and alongside this strengthening the Marketing side to ensure there is more dedicated support. We have just agreed a new structure for management of the museum which is shown underneath.

