

## Recovery and Renewal Progress Update

## A Vibrant Economy

Action	Agreed funding	Target Start	Target End	Expected Success	Progress at May 2022	Progress at August 2022	Progress at November 2022
<b>MidKent College Skills Hub</b>	£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	Exploring barriers preventing the project progressing with the Mall. It is felt that the shop front in the Mall remains the right location for a Skills and Community Hub. The financial investment form MKC required to make the shop front serviceable far exceeded initial programme of works forecast. Negotiation is taking place regarding the refurbishment, rent, rates and insurance with the Mall. Once agreement is reached MBC will be provided with a breakdown of costs. The project will then move forward.	Regrettably, the college have not yet identified and agreed commercial terms on suitable premises. Discussions with them remain ongoing and it is hoped that the new facility will be delivered.	The college was unable to identify and agree commercial terms on a suitable premises and have confirmed that they are no longer in a position to undertake this project.  It remains a strategic priority for the college who would welcome collaboration with the council in the future when other future opportunities and funding sources become available.

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				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.			
<b>Invest in industrial and warehouse premises to help de-risk new employment sites coming forward</b>	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.	Update delayed due to staffing changes.	There are monies allocated in the Council's capital programme for such property acquisitions or developments but at the time of writing, none have yet been identified.  This objective will now sit with the newly appointed Head of Property and Leisure that joins the Council in November.	No further update due to timeframe of appointment of Head of Property and Leisure that joins the Council in November.
<b>Vibrant Visitor Economy</b>	£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.	Update delayed due to staffing changes.	The money allocated towards this area has been used to host a calendar of 17 events throughout the summer months in Maidstone Town Centre including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fusion Festival</li> </ul>	A number of events were delivered during October Half term with Town Centre partners (One Maidstone, Hazlitt Theatre, the Mall and Fremlin Walk). These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Scarecrow trail</li> </ul>

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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brenchley Gardens Concerts</li> <li>• Art in the Park</li> <li>• Amphitheatre Workshops</li> <li>• Live theatre performances</li> </ul> <p>In addition, an autumn event has been scheduled to engage with The Mall, Lockmeadow, Royal Star Arcade and Fremlin Walk introducing the first Scarecrow Trail in Maidstone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halloween crafts at the Mall and Museum</li> <li>• Scarecrow School in Fremlin Walk.</li> <li>• 2 Walking Escape Room's created by the Hazlitt Theatre.</li> <li>• A Geek Tour @ Halloween - a night time tour at Maidstone Museum.</li> </ul> <p>Events in November and December as part of the build up to Christmas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christmas Lights Switch-on</li> <li>• Magic of Maidstone Festival Parade</li> <li>• Santa's Giant Post Box launch</li> <li>• Santa Paws at Lockmeadow</li> <li>• Father Christmas's Fireplace 2022</li> </ul>
<p><b>Capacity to develop projects and bids to take advantage of new funding opportunities</b></p>	<p>£45,000 Recovery Fund</p>	<p>Sep-21</p>	<p>Sep-25</p>	<p>Successful bids and projects completed that meet our priorities.</p>	<p>No action</p>	<p>No action</p>	<p>No action</p>

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<p><b>Transform the Town Centre through the development and delivery of a town centre strategy.</b></p>	<p>£175,680 Recovery Fund</p>	<p>Sep-21</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report taken to Policy &amp; Resource Committee in March to confirm scope and content of the strategy, and draft Engagement Strategy.</li> <li>• Draft Transport Brief has been prepared and is under discussion with KCC, pending discussion with members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior officer internal meetings have been held and discussions around scope of change.</li> <li>• Progression on access to smart data to create baseline indicators for Town Centre use.</li> <li>• Discussions ongoing around use and procurement of 3D modelling software</li> <li>• Early project briefs are being identified for discussions with Members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to smart data completed.</li> <li>• Procurement exercise underway, bids are due to be returned in November and appointment is anticipated to be in December 2022.</li> <li>• Initial Stakeholder event held in October.</li> </ul>

## Resilient Communities

Action	Agreed funding	Target Start	Target End	Success	Progress at May 2022	Progress at August 2022	Progress at November 2022
<b>Establish Community Compact</b>	n/a	May-21	n/a	Partnership in place between the community and voluntary sector and the council. Joint projects completed and greater resilience	MBC represented on KCC and District Council VCS Forum established in November 2021. MBC Consultation team supporting team on district mapping exercise of local forums and bodies to understand the offer across Kent.	No further update. Next Meeting of board – 23 Sept 2022	<p>The Civil Society Strategy (CSS) was agreed by KCC Cabinet in December 2020 and as part of this, KCC committed to supporting better engagement with the VCS. KCC established a Strategic Partnership Board for the VCSE and a VCSE Steering Group, which is independent of KCC and brings together a range of VCS representatives. The districts are represented by Dr Susan Priest on the VCSE Strategic Partnership Board as agreed by the Joint Kent Chiefs.</p> <p>An informal group of officers from the districts had been meeting on a bimonthly basis since November 2021 however it was agreed in August 2022 by JKC to review the membership of this group and design a more robust engagement mechanism to enable deeper engagement between KCC and all districts on VCSE support and strategic issues and to support dialogue at the Strategic Partnership Board for the VCSE.</p> <p>The terms of reference for this group have now been</p>

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							formalised and MBC will be represented by the Insight, Communities and Governance Manager.
<b>Support and Encourage Volunteering in the Borough.</b>	£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	Working with KCC as part of Kent Volunteers pilot to promote and develop platform in Maidstone with VCS partners.	<p>Further development to Voluntary and Community pages on website underway, to incorporate Kent Volunteers platform and resources to support individuals and organisations with volunteering.</p> <p>A Volunteering and Funding Support Event, organised by Funding for All in partnership with MBC is currently under development and will take place at the end of November at the Council's new Community facilities at Trinity.</p> <p>The event will include guest speakers, offering experience and expertise in the sector. It will also</p>	<p>Website pages have been developed and will now include a publicly available repository of VCS groups in Maidstone.</p> <p>The Council's join up with the VCS has been extended to include Churches and Faith groups. The Policy and Communities and Engagement team have mapped all the groups known to exist in Maidstone and proactively reached out to them so that they have a single point of contact at the Council, and we can signpost them to funding and support on offer as well as maintain a two way channel of communication across the VCS at critical times.</p> <p>In partnership with Funding for All, MBC are hosting a 'Volunteering &amp; Funding Advice</p>

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						include 1-1 mentoring and networking.	<p>Event' on 30 November at Trinity House.</p> <p>This event is for volunteers and VCS organisations supporting people in the borough of Maidstone.</p> <p>It will offer funding support and explore opportunities for volunteer engagement. Training will be delivered on volunteering and diversifying funding sources. There will be opportunities to meet funders and have 1:1s with funding advisors. There will also be a marketplace where groups can connect with and seek support from a range of VCSEs and support organisations for VCSEs.</p> <p>The day will end with a panel discussion about volunteering and the way forwards in Maidstone borough.</p> <p>This training event will be useful for those who wish to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explore opportunities to volunteer in Maidstone borough</li> <li>• recruit volunteers for VCSEs in Maidstone borough</li> <li>• find out about available funding and learn about new funding sources</li> </ul>

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							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meet funders who fund projects in Maidstone borough</li> <li>• glean funding advice specific to their needs</li> <li>• network with other volunteers and VCSEs who serve the borough of Maidstone</li> </ul> <p>It is hoped that this will be the first of a series of events, developed with the sector to respond to its need.</p>
<b>Online Community Participation</b>	£15,000 Recovery Fund	Sep-21		Online tool in place and used to successfully engage with the public on projects and initiatives.	Project to deliver new engagement platform underway. To be launched in July to deliver Resident Survey, facilitating wider public involvement and engagement in Council projects, initiatives and decision making.	<p>'Let's Talk Maidstone' was rolled out in July 2022, launching the Resident Survey. The response to the Resident Survey so far has eclipsed the response rate of previous years with 3341 responses to date (survey still open).</p> <p>The platform allows residents to engage in different ways such as quick polls or providing qualitative information via 'stories' and comment tools. Background information can be included on the 'project' page such as FAQs which help inform visitors to the platform on the purpose of the consultation.</p>	<p>Two engagement 'hubs' have been developed on the platform – 1 for Economic Development and 1 for Planning</p> <p>Economic Development are utilising 'Let's Talk Maidstone' to help develop an upcoming Innovation Centre Research and Development event with the Business Community.</p> <p>A Planning Hub has now been launched for the 'Sustainability and Design Mapping exercise'. This seeks to find out resident views on features and characteristics of the borough.</p> <p>The Resident survey closed at the end of September. A total</p>

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						<p>To date, Let's Talk Maidstone has been used to engage the public on Operation Broc, an Arts project for Mote Park, a Business Hub has been created for Economic Development and a Planning Hub (to host local plan consultation) is due to be launched in September 2022.</p>	<p>of 5027 people responded to the questionnaire, of which 3584 provided age and gender allowing these responses to be weighted in line with the population of Maidstone.</p> <p>Since its launch in July the platform has been used to deliver the following Consolation and Engagement activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operation Broc</li> <li>• Mote Park Arts</li> <li>• Scarecrow Festival</li> <li>• Marden Task Force</li> <li>• Waste and Recycling</li> <li>• Community Governance Review</li> <li>• Budget Survey</li> <li>• Community Wi-Fi</li> </ul> <p>Air Quality Action Plan (due to launch in November).</p>
<b>Community Resilience Fund</b>	£150,000 Recovery Fund	Oct-21	Oct-24	30 projects delivered by a variety of community and voluntary sector groups and organisations.	<p>20 organisations were funded from the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the Community Resilience Fund amounting to £58, 429.00.</p> <p>The funding will support a wide variety of activities from a diverse group of organisations including, Hi Kent, Maidstone Street</p>	There will be a second wave of funding available in Autumn/Winter 2022 for organisations in the VCS.	The second wave of funding will launch mid-November to help support communities through the winter months. Applications will be invited from organisations across the VCS who deliver services or activities that support or improve physical and mental well-being, making the community feel better and the

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					Pastors, Fusion healthy living and Rubicon Cares. Organisations will be able to continue to provide or increase their ability to meet demand by providing activities and support ranging from counselling sessions and mental health support to outdoor activities to support wellbeing.		community a better place. The overarching outcome is to help individuals and communities achieve 'pride in place.'
<b>Equip Trinity Foyer to be a Community Hub</b>	£30,000 Recovery Fund	Jun-21	Oct-21	New community hub delivered for all housing and related support services in Trinity.	Equipment has been installed, and further resources being purchased, for digital inclusion for those using the Community Hub. This will include static laptops, audio visual training equipment and tablets for individuals to use.  The handover of the refurbished building has been delayed – expert by end of June with activities and digital services going live to our community mid July 2022.	The building is now open and fully operational.	The building is operational, and all the residential units full.  The customer IT is in place and being used every day.  The training room has been operating seminars and workshops for both internal and external partners/stakeholders and beneficiaries.  The desk top IT is present and those who require some help to access any IT related issue can seek support from our Support Officers on site everyday.
<b>Financial Inclusion Strategy and Actions</b>	£34,320 Recovery Fund			The number and value of unclaimed benefits that residents are supported to claim A reduction in the number of	The Welfare Officer posts have now been in place since March 2022. A project was carried out in March 2022 to issue fuel vouchers	<b>March/April fuel voucher</b> offer: 1400 households, total vouchers issued 3184 – Total value of vouchers issued £65272	<b>Update on Household support fund – fuel voucher</b>  Aug/Sept - 1277 vouchers issued valued at £49.00 each.

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				<p>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</p>	<p>in conjunction with KCC to those on pre-payment meters. Over 3,000 vouchers were issued in a month to 1,000 households.</p> <p>Using the Policy in Practice data pensioner households have been contacted who may be entitled to claim Pension Credit.</p> <p>Postcards are being sent out to those who live in deprived areas who are not claiming Council Tax Support who are likely to be entitled. This will be rolled out across the Borough by area.</p> <p>The Welfare Officers will help customers who are contacted to complete applications, or they will signpost to charities or the DWP for support. Support will be provided if these customers are in rent arrears, not claiming disability benefits that they may be entitled to or unable to provide the necessary support for their families</p>	<p><b>CTS pilot scheme:</b> 150 MBC residents contacted – 18 confirmed they would apply (data outstanding re results) 150 TWBC residents contacted – 23 confirmed they would apply (Data outstanding re results)</p> <p><b>CTS UC applications</b> – 410 MBC residents contacted – 110 applied – yearly award of £66153.88</p> <p>- 262 TWBC residents contacted – 103 applied – yearly award of £52847.96</p> <p><b>PC take up</b> – MBC 146 residents contacted – 72 applications submitted – due to Pension Credit backlog only 19 have been completed by DWP, total value of yearly award £45284.20. 53 Claims still waiting to be assessed by DWP. TWBC – 119 residents contacted – 55 applications submitted – due to Pension Credit backlog only 13 have been completed by DWP, 12 accepted and 1 declined – total value of yearly award</p>	<p>Total value of £62573.00. 518 Households impacted.</p>

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						<p>£31034.64- 43 claims still waiting to be assessed by DWP.</p> <p><b>Household support fund – fuel voucher</b> – approx. 1277 vouchers to issue valued at £49.00 each. Have issued 587 to date and remainder to be issued by end of September. Households impacted – 431</p>	
<b>Love Where You Live and Get Involved.</b>	£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.	<p>The 1s community Environmental project has started with a location in Tovil being identified as suitable and meeting the required criteria. Existing local volunteer groups, new volunteers, relevant members and Tovil Parish Council have all been updated and a dedicated Working group will be created in the coming months.</p> <p>A slight delay has been created due to complications removing a dilapidated building but with MBC's Building Control and Legal assisting in the</p>	Tovil project in progress. Further projects to be revaluated based on community appetite.	No further update.

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					removal of this building, the matter is due to be resolved within the next 2 months. Once the matter of the building is resolved with timelines, work will start.		

## The Way We Work

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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.	All 3 work streams of the culture change project have progressed over the last few months. The first work stream involves holding listening sessions which started at the Chief Executive level and will run through all the way to managers so that everyone has the chance to participate in these sessions in order to support the desired culture for the organisation. The second activity reviews the whole council system and this will involve staff, partners and service users to help us to understand how we are perceived and what we need to adapt or change to achieve continuous improvement in our approach to service design and delivery. This event will be taking place in July.	Listening sessions at WLT and manager level have continued across the organisation. The feedback from the manager sessions will be reviewed by the HOS to see what changes/improvements need to be made based on the feedback. The WLT had an away day on 25 July where they reviewed all the feedback from the listening sessions to identify key messages and current issues from the discussions held at team level. The WLT also explored what things they would want to hear in the future from staff and how as a group they going to make the organisation feel different to achieve this. There will be further discussions at WLT on the actions discussed at the away day. The Whole Systems event with internal staff and external partners took place on 8 July. There were a number of topic areas discussed at this meeting and the outputs	The culture change project is on-going and we will be working on the outcomes from listening sessions but these take time to plan and implement.

					<p>The final work stream looks at identifying, recognising and building on the positive activities that are already taking place at the council and encouraging others to participate in these events. This was presented to staff in the all staff webinar in April where everyone participated in the event by providing ideas on all the different activities staff have been involved with and new ones that could be set up to increase staff engagement.</p>	<p>have been shared with the relevant individuals. The key messages from the different themes will also be shared with the WLT. We are working on creating a Teams page to encourage staff to be involved in events/activities that they are interested in as part of the community building work stream of the culture change project. At the next all staff webinar in September an update will be provided to all staff on the work that has been done on the project and things we have delivered and looking to implement on our culture change journey.</p>	
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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.	£45k funding required to provide specialist M365 consultancy and to backfill support for long-term covid sickness. £15k per partners (3) partners beginning April 2022.	Backfill support post has now ended. Learning and knowledge gained has been shared within the ICT team. Support enabled ICT to move the entire email service to the cloud and build the foundations on which the partnership will move documents to the cloud, and support new and modern ways of working through the use of workflow and automation, collaboration (internally and with external partners) and	Plans are being developed to move staff "personal" drives and departmental file shares to the Microsoft 365 Cloud – into OneDrive and Teams. A pilot will commence imminently, and will be followed by a carefully planned move throughout 23/24. This has been made possible by the backfill support post that ended in the summer.

						Enterprise Social Media tools to improve internal communications.	
<b>Ensure staff have the right equipment (office and home) to enable new ways of working</b>	Capital Programme	Oct-21		Staff able to effectively work anywhere	£30k spent on specialist consultancy between April 22 and end of June 22. The period prior to this was funded out of existing ICT pooled budgets). The balance (£10k) is accounted for in the expense of providing additional hardware (laptops, conferencing tools etc and licences to support lockdown measures and increased homeworking 2020/21.	<p>Conference room facilities ("HP Slice" device for "Teams in a room") are in place across the partnership.</p> <p>Specialist consultancy has provided the foundation to improve and secure remote access as we move more services to the cloud.</p>	No update to report.

## Responding to Increased Demands arising from COVID-19

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<b>Planning Development Control fixed term post</b>	£35,000 Recovery Fund	ASAP		Backlog resolved and staff able to meet demands on the service	This has been achieved	Complete	Complete
<b>Planning Enforcement fixed term post</b>	£35,000 Recovery Fund	ASAP	Mar-22	Backlog resolved and staff able to meet demands on the service	This has been achieved	Complete	Complete
<b>Increased capacity in Heritage and Landscape</b>	£70,000 Recovery Fund	ASAP		Backlog resolved and staff able to meet demands on the service	This has been achieved with the fixed term appointment of a principal conservation officer	Complete	Complete
<b>Increased capacity within Data Analytics to provide support for recovery and renewal projects</b>	£50,000 Recovery Fund	Jul-22	Jul-23	18 dashboards in place by 2023	Existing fixed term post within the Information and Analytics team will be extended later this year. Ten dashboards have already been developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Management</li> <li>• Planning Enforcement</li> <li>• Community Protection</li> <li>• Customer Services</li> <li>• Waste Crime</li> <li>• Street Cleansing</li> <li>• Data Protection</li> <li>• Revenues</li> <li>• HR</li> <li>• Property</li> <li>• Compliance</li> </ul>	There are now seven more dashboards currently in various stages of development, with a current focus on the service areas within Revenues and Benefits. The team remain on target to achieve 18 by summer 2023.  The team continue to improve the information held on the website and dashboards are publicly accessible <a href="#">here</a>	There are nine completed dashboards, with a further four under review and another 7 under development.  The team remain on target to achieve 18 by summer 2023.  The team have improved the information published on the website, with dashboards accessible <a href="#">here</a> .

					Four more dashboards are currently in various stages of development. Meaning the team are well on target to achieve 18 by summer 2023. The team are now focusing on improving the information held on the website and making dashboards publicly available where relevant and possible		
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<b>Revenues and Benefits – Citizens Advice Maidstone Post</b>	£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 pro-actively contact 40 low-income households who are experiencing with debt issues.	In line with the monitoring requirements of the SLA, data detailing contacts and outcomes is reported to the Inclusion Board.	No further update.