

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND
CULTURAL SERVICES

Report prepared by Laura Dickson

Date Issued: 15th April 2011

1. Relocation of Maidstone Visitor Information Centre
 - 1.1 Decision
 - 1.1.1 To note the relocation of the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) to the Museum in May, and an amendment to the Museum opening hours.
 - 1.2 Recommendation of Assistant Director Regeneration and Cultural Services
 - 1.2.1 That the relocation of the VIC to the Museum, and the amendment to the Museum opening hours be noted.
 - 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation
 - 1.3.1 The relocation of the VIC to the Museum East Wing extension has formed an integral part of the project and in Council decisions on the design and the decision to proceed. Additionally the relocated VIC has formed part of the bid for funding to the Heritage Lottery Fund.
 - 1.3.2 The east Wing Extension is due to be completed in early July and open to the public in the latter part of that month. Additionally the Visitor Economy Business Unit came into force on 1st April. The transfer of the VIC to the Brenchley Gallery is required in order to enable staff in the new structure to be trained and experience the new premises.
 - 1.3.3 Additionally, there are currently three sites requiring customer service staff; the museum, the VIC and the Hazlitt Arts Centre box office. The new structure has been designed to cover the operation of the Hazlitt Arts Centre box office and the new museum reception.
 - 1.3.4 The early relocation of the VIC will ensure that the service is appropriately staffed in order to continue to provide excellent customer service, whilst allowing a schedule to be put in place to enable cross training of front line staff.

- 1.3.5 For operational reasons a revision of the opening hours of the Museum is necessary in order to meet the new service requirements.

Current	Opening hours
Museum Monday - Saturday Sunday	10.00am – 5.15pm 11.00am – 4.00pm
VIC Monday – Saturday Sundays and bank holidays	10.00am – 5.00pm closed
New opening hours	
Monday – Saturday Sunday (April – September) Closed Sunday November – March Bank Holidays	10.00am – 5.00pm 12.00pm – 4.00pm 10.00am -4.00pm

- 1.3.6 There is a busy period expected at the Museum during the school Easter holidays. Whilst the extension is being built the holiday workshops have been taking place in the Brenchley Gallery rather than the education room. The move would take place after this time. Although there will be workshops during the May half term, the disruption will be minimal.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.4.1 The VIC remains at the Town Hall. This would result in additional staffing costs for service. It could undermine the previously agreed arrangements with HLF.
- 1.4.2 The VIC stays at the Town Hall until the opening of the new extension. This would stretch the staff resources trying to cover the scope of the service with the new staff levels and budget requirements. It would also make vital training of the staff difficult to achieve.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 1.5.1 The creation of the new service and its relocation into the Museum supports the Council's objective to "Maximise our leisure and cultural offer to enhance the quality of life for our residents whilst attracting visitors, new residents and businesses," as set out in Strategic Plan 2011-2015. It also supports the outcome to "...demonstrate value for money services that residents are satisfied with."

1.6 Risk Management

Risk Description	Likelihood	Seriousness or Impact	Mitigation Measures
A delay in the relocation could result in an inability to deliver services, customer dissatisfaction and additional staffing costs	D	3	A design of the temporary space requirements, ICT and equipment issues have already been undertaken. The logistics of the move are currently being planned.
Inadequate communication of the relocation to customers and suppliers causes bad publicity	D	4	Posters will be put up outside the Town Hall door, website will be altered, suppliers informed and the communications team will be requested to use the Maidstone Matters and Downs Mail to spread the message. A press release will be issued.

(Likelihood: A = very high; B = high; C = significant; D = low; E = very low; F = almost impossible)

(Seriousness or Impact: 1= catastrophic; 2 = critical; 3 = marginal; 4 = negligible)

1.7 Other Implications

1. Financial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Staffing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Legal	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Community Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Human Rights Act	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Procurement	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Asset Management	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 1.7.1 Financial Implications: The new Visitor Economy Business Unit will be able to achieve the necessary budget savings if these proposals are implemented.
- 1.7.2 The move will require borough services to provide staff to assist in the move for 2 days at £451.57 per day. There are no other costs associated with the move.
- 1.7.3 The management of the space left behind will need to be addressed by the Head of Democratic Services who is responsible for the Town Hall.
- 1.7.4 Staffing: The re-structure of the services has already taken place. This has taken account of the planned relocation of staff and their working hours.
- 1.7.5 Equality Impact Needs Assessment: The temporary location of the service will be fully accessible to disabled users

1.8 Relevant Documents

None

1.8.1 Appendices - None

1.8.2 Background Documents - None

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes

No

If yes, when did it first appear in the Forward Plan?

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This is a Key Decision because:

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Wards/Parishes affected:

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How to Comment

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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