

# ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 5 July 2022  
Time: 6.30 p.m.  
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Bryant, Forecast, Fort, Garten (Chairman), Mrs Gooch, Harper, Hastie (Vice-Chairman), Hinder and Naghi

*The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.*

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## AGENDA

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Urgent Items
4. Notification of Visiting Members
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers
6. Disclosures of Lobbying
7. To consider whether any items need to be taken in private due to the possible disclosure of exempt information
8. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022 1 - 4
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)
10. Question and Answer Session for Local Residents (if any)
11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)
12. Forward Plan relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference  
The Forward Plan for the period 1 July 2022 to 31 October 2022 can be accessed here:  
  
[Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)
13. UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Local Investment Plan 5 - 40

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**Issued on 27 June 2022**

**Continued Over/:**

*Alison Broom*

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive**

### **INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC**

In order to ask a question at this meeting, please call **01622 602899** or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk) by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 1 July 2022). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk) by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 1 July 2022). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

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## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 JUNE 2022**

**Present:** Councillor Garten (Chairman) and  
Councillors Forecast, Fort, Mrs Gooch, Hastie, Hinder,  
Naghi, D Wilkinson and Young

**Also Present:** Councillors Burton, Cleator, Jeffery, Parfitt-Reid and  
Russell

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bryant and Harper.

2. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The following Substitute Members were noted:

Councillor D Wilkinson for Councillor Harper  
Councillor Young for Councillor Bryant

3. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Garten be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

4. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Hastie be elected as Vice-Chair of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

5. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

6. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor Burton, the Leader of the Council, and Councillor Russell, the Lead Member for Leisure and Arts, attended the meeting to set out their priorities for the coming year and to introduce reports as appropriate.

Councillor Parfitt-Reid, the Lead Member for Communities and Engagement, indicated her wish to speak on item 15 (2022/23 Events Plan).

Councillors Cleator and Jeffery attended the meeting as observers.

7. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

8. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

9. EXEMPT ITEMS

**RESOLVED:** That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

10. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

11. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from local residents.

12. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

13. ORAL BRIEFING FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council set out his priorities in relation to the economic development element of his portfolio explaining that this would involve reminding people that Maidstone is the County Town of Kent and open for business through his role in liaising with the business community and other partners such as Kent County Council Economic Development, Locate in Kent and the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership. One of his overriding ambitions was for everyone to work together to build Maidstone's positive reputation.

The Leader of the Council reminded the Committee that he also had responsibility for capital projects and there would be decisions which would involve input from this Committee. He would also be seeking the Committee's input on the projects to be included in the Council's submission to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

**RESOLVED:** That the briefing from the Leader of the Council be noted.

14. BRIEFING FROM THE LEAD MEMBER FOR LEISURE AND ARTS

The Lead Member for Leisure and Arts set out her priorities for the coming year making reference to the Museums' five-year plan and the Leisure Centre and sport. The Lead Member explained that she believed that leisure and the arts could improve the feel-good factor of Maidstone and

help to restore pride in the Borough. She looked forward to working in a positive and collaborative manner for the residents of Maidstone.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to aspirations in relation to the future of the Leisure Centre and the Carriage Museum. The Director of Finance and Business Improvement confirmed that the opening of the Carriage Museum as a regular occurrence could be taken forward.

**RESOLVED:** That the briefing from the Lead Member for Leisure and Arts be noted.

15. 2022/23 EVENTS PLAN

The Lead Member for Leisure and Arts introduced a report setting out details of the programme of events planned for the 2022/23 financial year emphasising the need to proactively promote these events to maximise attendance and the feel-good factor of the Borough.

The Lead Member for Communities and Engagement addressed the Committee reiterating the importance of proactively promoting events to attract visitors and build the economy.

During the discussion, reference was made to (a) the need for interactive thinking across Council departments to promote and publicise events and (b) the resourcing of events by the Council and in partnership with others.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

16. 4TH QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 2021/22

The Lead Member for Leisure and Arts introduced a report setting out the financial and performance position for the services reporting into the former Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee as at 31 March 2022 (Quarter 4). It was noted that:

- Financial performance showed an overspend against budget of £86,000 for the year.
- The main areas of overspend were the Leisure Centre, the Business Terrace and the Market.
- Income from all these services was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and a recovery was expected in 2022/23.
- In the case of the Market, budgets had been adjusted downwards in 2022/23 recognising that even without the pandemic it would have been difficult for the Market to have met its targets.
- Capital spend showed a mixed picture with two projects overspending, but a significant underspend on the Mote Park dam.
- Performance indicators were unfortunately all in negative territory, but the direction of travel was positive.

During the discussion:

- The Director of Finance and Business Improvement noted a request that the performance reports be printed in colour in future.
- The Leader of the Council advised the Committee that he had requested an update position on Business Terrace performance and the Innovation Centre to see how they were performing to target.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 4 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted.
2. That the Capital position at the end of Quarter 4 be noted.
3. That the Performance position as at Quarter 4 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted.
4. That Annual Performance for 2021/22 be noted.

17. **DURATION OF MEETING**

6.30 p.m. to 7.03 p.m.

**Economic Regeneration and Leisure Policy  
Advisory Committee**

**5 July 2022**

## **UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Local Investment Plan**

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Economic Regeneration and Leisure PAC	5 July 2022
Communities, Housing and Environment PAC	12 July 2022
Leader of the Council	20 July 2022

<b>Will this be a Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Urgency</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Leader of the Council
<b>Director</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance and Anna Collier, Corporate Insight, Communities and Governance Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

### **Executive Summary**

The Council has been allocated funding as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Release of the funding is dependent on submission of a Local Investment Plan (LIP) to the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC); DLUHC has provided substantial guidance for the scope of how the funding should be applied, the outcomes it achieves and the profiling of spend. The deadline for submission is 1st August 2022. Work has been undertaken informally with the Cabinet and key partners to create a proposed list of priority projects for the Local Investment Plan the two Policy Advisory Committees whose remit this falls within are being consulted on the proposals prior to decision by the Leader of the Council.

### **Purpose of Report**

Recommendation

**This report makes the following recommendations to the Policy Advisory Committee to recommend to the Leader of the Council**

1. The planned projects and actions in Appendix Four are approved as the Local Investment Plan for Maidstone.
  2. The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance be delegated responsibility to submit the plan to government by 1 August 2022.
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**1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</li> <li>• Safe, Clean and Green</li> <li>• Homes and Communities</li> <li>• A Thriving Place</li> </ul> <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council’s ability to achieve all our priorities as evidenced in the interventions and outcomes and the objectives of our Recovery and Renewal Plan.</p>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Cross Cutting Objectives</b>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage is Respected</li> <li>• Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</li> <li>• Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</li> </ul> <p>The report recommendation supports the achievement of the cross-cutting objectives as evidenced in the interventions and outcomes.</p>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Risk Management</b>	Covered in the risk section	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Financial</b>	The proposals set out in the recommendation will be funded by the Council’s UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation. A funding breakdown can be seen at Appendix Five.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

<b>Staffing</b>	The fund allows for up to 4% to be spent each year supporting the delivery of local investment plans. The proposal is that work will be managed with our existing staffing with additional project management support funded through the 4% allowance to be combined with other major project support.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Legal</b>	Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Information Governance</b>	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Corporate Insight Communities and Governance Manager
<b>Equalities</b>	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Corporate Insight Communities and Governance Manager
<b>Public Health</b>	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	Some of the projects seek to increase and diversify activity in the town centre and to engage with local people and this complements our strategy to make the town centre a safer place to be.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Procurement</b>	On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises as required and in accordance with the Council's financial procedure rules and the rules of the UKSPF	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
<b>Biodiversity and Climate Change</b>	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change will meet the council's commitment to take action to mitigate climate change and promote biodiversity	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) forms part of a suite of complementary Levelling Up funding. It builds on the competitive Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund through long term, stable

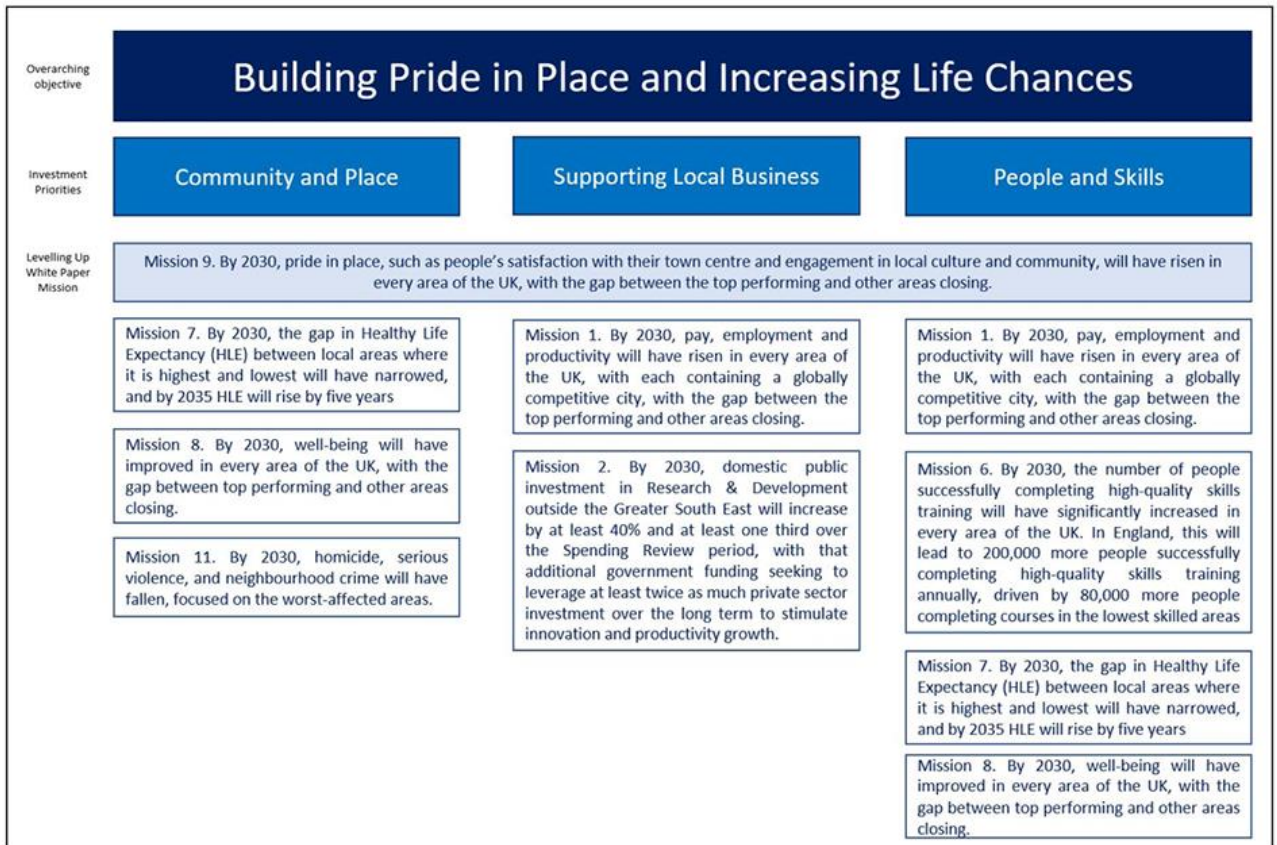
funding, allocated to all places. In England the fund has been allocated at District Level in two tier areas.

**Vision and Objectives of the UKSPF**

2.2 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will support the UK Government’s wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK by delivering on each of the four parts of Levelling Up:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards, especially in those places where they are lagging.
- Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest.
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost.
- Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency

2.3 The primary goal of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. This aligns with Levelling Up White Paper missions, particularly: ‘By 2030, pride in place, such as people’s satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.’ More detail is set out in the table below.



## **Funding**

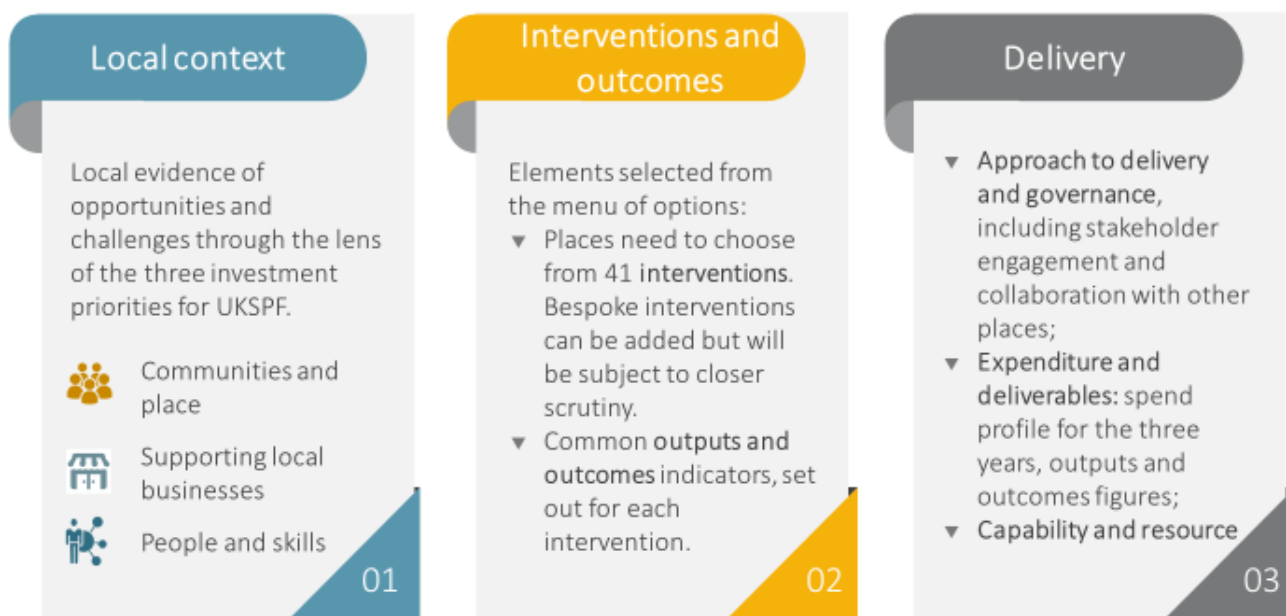
2.4 Maidstone has been awarded £1,199,253 to spend over the next three years profiled as follows:

Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Amount	£145,540	£291,081	£762,632
Support Cost (up to and taken out of in year total)	£5,821.60	£11,643.24	£30,505.28
Minimum Capital Spend out of total	10% £14,554	13% £37,840.53	20% £152,526.40

2.5 Release of the funding is dependent on submission of a Local Investment Plan (LIP) to the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC); DLUHC has provided substantial guidance for the scope of how the funding should be applied, the outcomes it achieves, the profiling of spend and the split between capital and revenue funding. This does not preclude alternative interventions being put forward in the LIP although to do so would require additional evidence to be included. The deadline for submission is 1 August 2022.

## **The Local Investment Plan**

2.6 The local investment plans will feature three broad components:



1. **Local context:** this provides an opportunity for places to set out their local evidence of opportunities and challenges through the lens of the three investment priorities for UKSPF. Please see summary at Appendix One

2. **Selection of outcomes and interventions:** where places identify the outcomes they wish to target based on their local context, and the interventions they wish to prioritise, under each investment priority, from the menu of options. These should be clearly linked to local opportunities and challenges. Interventions and outcomes taken from the UKSPF prospectus have been included in the shortlisting at Appendix Four
3. **Delivery:** this will represent the most detailed stage of the investment plans and is broken down into the following:

- a) Approach to delivery and governance: where places outline the structures and processes that will support the delivery of their chosen interventions. Places will be expected to set out the engagement they have undertaken as part of the development of their Plan, including their engagement with MPs.

*MBC has engaged with both MPs and a range of partner organisations to identify the challenges, outcomes and potential project proposals for our Local Investment Plan. Details are set out in paragraph 2.8 below.*

*It is proposed that strategic oversight is achieved through regular updates to the Executive and regular engagement with the MBC Anchor Institutions Group plus Maidstone MPs*

*Delivery of the projects will be within existing MBC staff resources complemented by One Maidstone (the Business Improvement District) and Involve Kent, with programme management overseen by The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance. Project management support will be funded through the UKSPF. There will be an operational programme board comprising representatives for each of the delivery partners managed by the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance.*

- b) Expenditure and deliverables: detailing what places want to deliver with their investment plan, including the spend profile for the three years of the fund as well as outputs and outcomes figures, and where places have already identified specific projects, they wish to fund under each of the investment priorities.

*It is proposed that the MBC Investment Plan focusses on Maidstone Town centre. This is consistent with our Strategic Plan, Our Economic Development Strategy, our associated Covid Recovery and Renewal Plan and complements the objectives of our Community Safety Plan. Appendix Three sets out the range of proposed projects. Given the scale of funding it is proposed to invest in a small number of projects to achieve maximum impact.*

- c) Capability and resource: to allow places to outline the resource they have to manage and work on UKSPF, as well as their capability and previous experience of delivering similar funds.

*To be completed by Head of Policy, Communications and Governance as part of submission once decisions on the governance and specific projects to be included in the LIP have been made. The projects include feasibility studies, expert support from within the Council and external support from partners.*

- 2.7 The plan will be submitted via an online platform. The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance has been identified as the lead officer to complete the submission. £20,000 was made available to support development of the investment plan in addition to the UKSPF money. The Council appointed Mutual Ventures, a consultancy with expertise in strategic planning, investment planning and business case development in the public sector to deliver sustainable social, economic, and cultural value to local people, to assist and advise in the development of a plan which will be approved by Government.
- 2.8 To produce a successful plan, lead local authorities are tasked with working with a diverse range of local and regional stakeholders, civil society organisations, employer bodies responsible for identifying local skills plans, and businesses or business representative groups to achieve Fund outcomes in their areas. To achieve this, an event was held with key stakeholders facilitated by Mutual Ventures. This included Kent County Council, Mid Kent College, the police, health partners, the community sector, One Maidstone and a faith group. This engagement enabled us to bring together our Anchor Institutions as proposed in the Town Centre Strategy scoping report presented to and agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee in March 2022. There have been more detailed conversations with our key delivery partners for the LIP following the workshop. Other potential projects identified with our Anchor Institutions will be considered as part of our wider Town Centre Strategy. MBC contributed through officer expertise in housing, community safety, communications, events, biodiversity and climate change, parks, public health, economic development and financial inclusion. Details of this engagement will be set out in our submission.
- 2.9 A summary of the outputs of the workshop can be seen at Appendix Two. Key challenges and opportunities considered were greening in the town centre, creating pride in place, changing the narrative around the town centre to enhance its reputation and creating an attractive and interesting destination. Emphasis was placed on the importance of greater partnership working, improving community infrastructure, and improving mental health.
- 2.10 MPs should provide an advisory role to lead local authorities, reviewing the investment plan prior to submission to UK government for sign-off. Meetings have been held with Helen Grant, MP and Helen Whatley, MP who have both indicated support for the plan and the ideas put forward. The draft plan has been sent to them both for comment and their views will be included in the final report for consideration by the Leader.
- 2.11 Regular discussions have been held with the Executive throughout this process. The Executive have identified their priority for the fund to promote pride in place, through promotion of the Town Centre, local businesses and

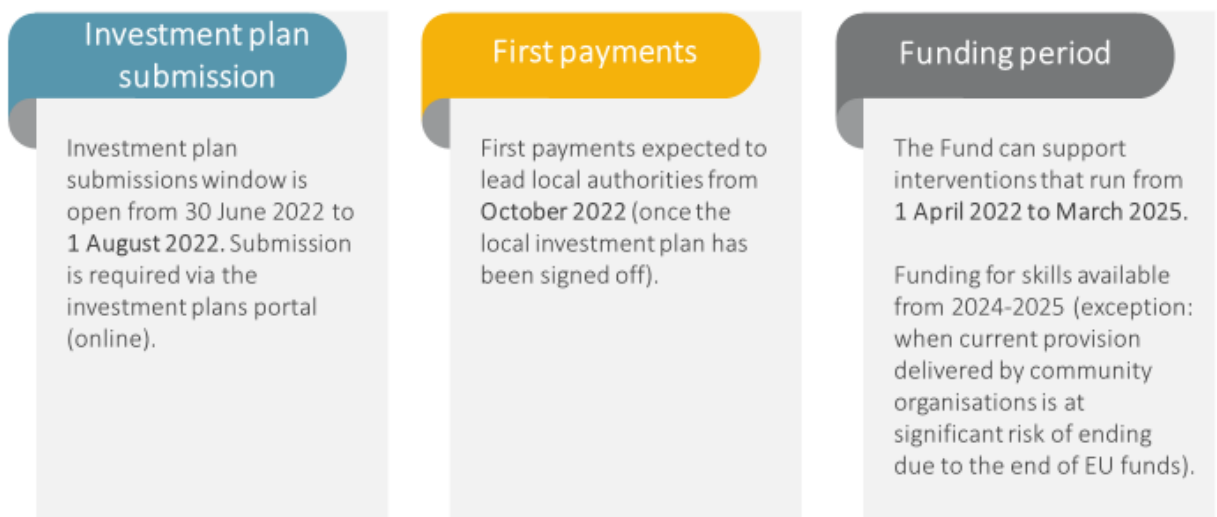
events including uplifting the quality of spaces and buildings with a strong emphasis on heritage and culture.

2.12 A full list of the 18 projects that have been produced through engagement with the Anchor Institution Group, Members and Officers submitted and considered by the Executive can be seen at Appendix Three. There are too many to be delivered with the amount of funding available and hence officers, in conversation informally with the Executive and our partners, have suggested a prioritised short list of projects.

2.13 The short list of projects and spend per year are at Appendix Four, with an easy read financial breakdown at Appendix Five.

### **Important Dates**

2.14 There are key timescales set out by DLUHC for the submission of the investment plan, timings of the projects and connected funding, this is set out below.



2.15 The timing of shortlisted projects and the period from which they will be funded is set out in Appendix Four and Appendix Five.

2.16 To get the investment plan submitted there is a strict timeline to which we need to adhere.

- Economic Regeneration and Leisure PAC - July 2022
- Communities, Housing and Environment PAC - 12 July 2022
- Leader of the Council decision- 20 July 2022
- Final Submission date – 1 August 2022

2.17 Not meeting the final submission date on the 1 August 2022 may result in losing the funding.

### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The short list of projects can be seen below and full details including the correlating interventions as identified by government, outcomes, estimated spend and which year the project falls can be seen at Appendix Four with a summary of spend by year at Appendix Five.
- A. Building Pride in Place through promotion of the Town Centre and Events
  - B. A Safe and Attractive Town Centre achieved through Greening and Lighting, supported by green volunteers
  - C. A Community Arts Hub and Maker Space
  - D. Links from the Town Centre to Lockmeadow - Activity/Outdoor Gym – Callisthenics
- 3.2 The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) could choose to revisit the original list of potential projects and propose an alternative shortlist than as shown above at 3.1. This could also include narrowing the current proposed shortlist by removing projects, expanding it to include additional projects or combining projects as has been done already.
- 3.3 It is important to note that if the PAC choose to do this, that any recommendation should be made with consideration of the available funds and the profiling of that funding that as set out at 2.4. DLUHC are very clear in their prospectus that funding has to be spent as profiled so we are not able to spend our allocation for future years early. Any spend beyond the in-year allocation would constitute growth to the Council’s budget for that year. Any underspend would need to be returned to DLUHC.
- 3.4 PAC could choose to recommend a new project or ask for an additional project to be explored. Should the PAC consider this option then the timeline as set out at 2.14, should be considered as well as the requirement to engage key stakeholders.
- 3.5 Reject Entirely, if the Committee recommends that the Council should not create a Local Investment Plan the Council would risk losing the allocation set out in the UKSPF. If a completely new plan was proposed this would require significant work in a very short space of time, with the final deadline for submission set as 1 August 2022.

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

- 4.1 It is recommended that the short list of interventions shown at Appendix Four is approved. The interventions have been developed in consultation with key stakeholders with the final list reviewed, developed and supported by Cabinet.
- 4.2 The projects meet the funding allocated by Government and can be delivered within the timescales as required as part of the investment plan.



## **5. RISK**

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
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## **6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 6.1 An event was held with key stakeholders and facilitated by Mutual Ventures. The event was well attended and included representatives from Health, housing associations, KCC, Police, education, faith as well as council officers from Housing, Community Safety, Climate Change, Parks, Health Economic Development and Financial Inclusion.
- 6.2 Meetings have been held with Helen Grant MP and Helen Whatley MP who have both indicated support for the plan and the ideas put forward. The draft plan has been sent to them both for comment and their views will be included in the final report for consideration by the Leader.
- 6.3 Regular discussions have been held with the Executive throughout this process, identifying key priorities to guide discussions with key stakeholders and reviewing the list of identified proposed interventions.
- 6.4 Further feedback has been sought on the draft plan from stakeholders, their feedback will be reported to PACs if available and to the Leader prior to making the decision
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## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 7.1 Once approved the Head of Policy Communications and Governance will prepare the Investment Plan with advice and support from Mutual Ventures to ensure a high-quality plan and its submission before the deadline of the 1 August 2022.
- 7.2 Projects planned for the period 2022/23 can be implemented prior to receipt of funding in October 2022. So key officers and the relevant partners will put plans into action as soon as the projects have been approved by the Leader of the Council for submission as part of the Local Investment Plan.
- 7.3 The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance will appoint the operational programme board chairing the meeting monthly.
- 7.4 It is proposed that strategic oversight is achieved through the MBC Executive and regular engagement with the MBC Anchor Institutions Group plus Maidstone MPs.

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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Evidence of Challenges, the Local Context
- Appendix 2: Workshop Event Summary
- Appendix 3: Long List of Interventions
- Appendix 4: Short List of Projects to form part of the Local Investment Plan
- Appendix 5: Funding breakdown

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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

## Summary of the key challenges

Underneath the overarching aim of building pride in place and increasing life chances, there are three UKSPF investment priorities: communities and place; supporting local business; and people and skills.



### LOCAL BUSINESS

- Vacancy rates of retail units have risen
- Town Centre footfall has dropped
- Town Centre footfall at night-time is low and falling



### PEOPLE AND SKILLS

- Relatively high numbers of people on universal credit living in High Street.
- Relatively high numbers of people on Employment and Support allowance.



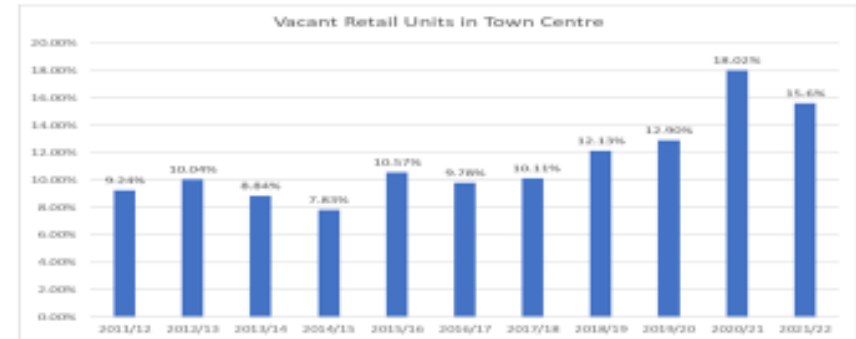
### COMMUNITIES AND PLACE

- Reduction in the use of local services.
- Falling pride of place and people's happiness.
- People generally do not feel safe using the town centre at nighttime
- Residents have noticed an increase in the number of people using illegal substances in public.

## Local business - challenges



Town Centre footfall has dropped from a peak of c3.25m in 2017/18 to 2.25m in 2021/22.



Vacancy rates of retail units have risen from 9.24% in 2011/12 to 15.6% in 2021/22.

### Town Centre visits

**69%**

People said they visit the Town Centre during the day either weekly or more frequently

**15%**

Said they visit the Town Centre during the night at least weekly

**39%**

Over 75's year olds and disabled people don't visit during the night.

## People and skills - challenges



### PEOPLE AND SKILLS

- Significantly higher numbers of Universal Credit claimants in High Street – 1,835, which represents 15% of the total 11,350 residents.
- Higher numbers of people on Employment and Support Allowance.
- Highest numbers of people on Income Support in Park Wood and Shepway North.

### Qualifications (2020)



## Communities and place – key challenges

People feel less satisfied living in Maidstone...

Grant Thornton Sustainable Growth Index: community, trust and belonging (2019)

Maidstone's is ranked

172nd  
out of 324 local authority areas



They are using public infrastructure less...

	2019		2021
Museum visits	78,029	↓	33,490
Leisure centre	758,290	↓	275,091

And do not feel safe in the town centre, especially at night

80% said they do not feel safe visiting the Town centre at night time

32% of young people feel least safe in the town centre

Surveys found that the three least safe areas of Maidstone were identified as:

- Town Centre
  - Brenchley Gardens
  - Week Street
- (all town centre locations)



Satisfaction with local area as a place to live

## Workshop Event Summary

### Attendees

- One Maidstone
- NHS
- Mid Kent College
- Golding Homes
- KCC
- Police
- Faith leader
- MBC reps – Housing, Community Safety, Climate Change, Parks, Health Economic Development, Financial Inclusion, Town Centre Strategy

### Summary of Identified Challenges and Opportunities

- Its about the tone of the high street
- Footfall and dwell time.
- Decline in satisfaction in place
- Growth in poor mental health and its impacts e.g. employability
- Working poor – struggling and at risk
- Out of area placements
- Pollution and flooding long term climate impact
- Importance of green spaces for aesthetics and health.

### Identified Outcomes

Green and Environment	Health Skills and Inclusion	Footfall Pride and Safety
Identity of 15 minute neighbourhood – carbon neutral	Strong and welcoming community	Increase footfall and reduction in vacancy rates
Improving Climate Change resilience	Access to services in one place	Increase in pride in place for those who live , work and visit
Lifting the quality of existing green and open space	Holistic approach through partnership working	Increase in people feeling safe.

## Potential Interventions – ideas longlist by category

### Local Business

- Arts hub located in the Town Centre using existing vacant building
- Regular festival or event organised by the Council. Council to provide seed funding which would decrease as event generates additional income in future years. Consideration of an arts sculpture trail

### People and Skills

- Green skills training, linked to potential development of green space, working with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership.
- Arts Hub in Town Centre

### Communities and Place

- New green space located on the top of the Town Centre car park
- Uplifting current green spaces throughout the Town and Town Centre to make Maidstone more attractive to residents and visitors, including outdoor gym equipment along the river
- Activate and animate – well being project using Brenchley Gardens
- Focused financial inclusion collaboration to help vulnerable people in the town centre, sharing data to identify and target support.
- Health hub in Town Centre – integrated care provided by multidisciplinary teams as a walk in facility

## Potential Interventions – priority listing

### High Priority and Strong Strategic Fit

- **New green space on the roof of the existing car park in the Town Centre. Use of the space could incorporate community activities, commercial activities and green initiatives.**
- **Green skills training – linked to the above (and potentially making use of the physical space) investing in green skills training for Maidstone.**
- **Uplift of existing parks green space throughout the town centre to make the area more appealing to residents and visitors. Research shows close links between green space and improved health and wellbeing outcomes.**
- **New annual event (or events) programme aimed at drawing more visitors to Maidstone. This could include a sculpture trail of iguanodons linked to parks. Whilst a highly popular idea this will require significant logistical support from the Council and is likely to cost more than just the UKSPF allocation.**

### Medium Priority

- Improved night-time economy through partnership with local faith groups to align to existing priorities.
- Improved community outreach and information sharing with target groups
- Arts hub located in Town Centre, making use of existing venues
- 'Go Green' information centre, with businesses demonstrating green ideas and technology to residents.



Low Priority, too expensive or poor strategic fit

- Integrated Health & Wellbeing drop in centre located in the Town Centre or using the Trinity building

**Appendix Three**

**Interventions Proposals**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Related Intervention</b>	<b>Estimated cost</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
One	Activate and Animate for wellbeing - held in Brenchley Gardens, Trinity Park, Fairmeadow, Amphitheatre Commit to ongoing spring/ summer Olympia boxing scheme at Brenchley Gardens – outreach to young people supporting Youth Service outreach work. Install outdoor table tennis equipment at Trinity Park and Brenchley Gardens Annual series of Wellbeing Sessions across town location : morning and lunchtime Tai Chi, Mediation, Yoga. Coaching sessions at new Fairmeadow fitness station – 5pm – 6pm.	E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.	£200,000	Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Increased use of cycleways or paths Jobs created Improved perception of facilities/amenities Increased users of facilities/amenities Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	
Two	Activity/Outdoor Gym – Callisthenics - Fairmeadow Riverside spaces. Provides a free to use outdoor gym experience – a destination from town centre and for walkers and joggers on towpath; synergy with nearby boat café. Activation of open spaces that have potential to increase footfall, improve health outcomes, provide a focus and identity for Fairmeadow. If space allows additional provision of interactive equipment that provide an element of competition/gamification of fitness. Space would provide for coaching and training providers to develop their business.	E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.	£106,500	Increased footfall Increased visitor number Increased use of cycleways or paths Jobs created Improved perception of facilities/amenities Increased users of facilities/amenities Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	In Suggested shortlist
Three	Arts Hub - The Project: Community Arts Hub & Maker Space Utilise an empty unit/building in the town centre and repurpose to provide: • Low cost exhibition space for	E6: Support for local arts, cultural,	£50,000	Jobs created Jobs safeguarded Increased footfall	In Suggested shortlist

**Appendix Three**

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	<p>local artists and creatives• Space to deliver arts activities and workshops for the local community• Retail area where creatives can hire a shelf/unit to sell their products• Space for community arts groups to meet/rehearse (e.g. local choirs)• 6 – 8 low-rent studios for use by local artists and creatives• Mix of clean and messy studio spaces• Informal meeting area(s) to facilitate networking and collaboration• Potential to employ an ‘artist in residence’ to lead activities or to work with different artists/groups to deliver• Focal point for arts in the town• Base for town centre events and festivalsArtists and creatives can be offered discounted hire rates in exchange for giving some of their time to lead workshops and/or help manage the facility.If the right premises can be identified there is potential to enhance the offer to include small-scale theatrical productions/music performances/open-mic sessions/comedy nights/poetry readings, etc. which could also contribute to the early evening and night-time economy.</p>	<p>heritage and creative activities.</p>		<p>Increased visitor numbers Improved engagement numbers Improved perception of facilities/amenities Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support Improved perception of events</p>	
<p>Four</p>	<p>Beam - Scheme which enables councils, communities and employers to support those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness Purchase of a system – BEAM which enables councils, communities and employers to support those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness through a caseworker who works on a support plan and the community supports through donation and support and through this they are supported into work, long term accommodation. This process removes barriers to sustaining housing.Employment Support includes• Budgeting, Identifying a suitable career path and related job training, Support with CV and job applications, Interview preparation Access to employer partners Laptops, mobile phones, wifi, Clothes and travel Childcare</p>	<p>E33: Employment support for economically inactive people:</p>	<p>60,000 - £80,000</p>	<p>Number of economically inactive individuals in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support Increased active or sustained participants of UKSPF beneficiaries in community groups (and/or) increased</p>	<p>Project can be funded from alternative sources</p>

**Appendix Three**

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	<p>costsHousing Support includes• 1:1 budgeting and affordability sessions, Tenancy training, Tenancy search support, Landlord introductions and management for 12 months, Rental deposit, plus 1st months rent advance, Basic home furnishings, Moving van costs</p>			<p>employability through development of interpersonal skills Increased proportion of participants with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL) Number of people in supported employment (and) number of people engaging with mainstream healthcare services Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services Number of people engaged in job-searching following support</p>	
Five	<p>Go green info centre - Pop up, walk in community information centre for residents to access information and see real world solutions to help them become more sustainable. People who are confused, sceptical or don't know where to start can drop by for advice, resources, and to see sustainable solutions, products and services already other there that can help them become more sustainable. Local sustainable businesses are invited to</p>	<p>E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to</p>	<p>£150,000 - £200,000</p>	<p>Number of people reached Number of organisations receiving financial support other than grants Number of</p>	<p>Pilot due to go live, limited link to intervention. If successful potential to</p>

## Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	showcase and demonstrate their goods and services for free to reach local people and create clarity and confidence in making greener choices. Where possible the centre will also be used for events, talks and coincide with other climate and biodiversity campaigns subject to funding and staff/expert availability	improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.		organisations receiving grants Number of organisations receiving non-financial support Number of households receiving support Number of households supported to take up energy efficiency measures Greenhouse gas reductions Increased take up of energy efficiency measures	be funded elsewhere
Six	Green Walls for Pride in place and improved mental well being -Enhancing Greenery in Town Centre - Green/Living Walls for Pride in place and improved mental well being. Numerous viable greening initiatives have been scoped in Maidstone Town Centre to improve green aesthetics, create biodiversity corridors, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. For example, two areas have been scoped as viable for large scale green or living walls, and the High Street area of Maidstone Town Centre has been accessed in terms of planting additional urban trees/hedge rows, Installing Large Tree Planters in pedestrianised areas to allow for continued access and flexibility.	E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.	£150,000 - £200,000	Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Increased use of cycleways or paths Jobs created Improved perception of facilities/amenities Increased users of facilities/amenities Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	Project can be funded from alternative sources

### Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
Seven	Health and Wellness Centre/ developing trinity foyer		TBC		Project can be funded from alternative sources
Eight	Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty		147,200		Project rejected across Kent
Nine	Lighting the Town Centre creating a safe space and making the most of our lovely buildings.	E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.E5: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'.	TBC	Jobs created Jobs safeguarded Increase footfall Increased visitor numbers Reduced vacancy rates Greenhouse gas reductions Improved perceived/experienced accessibility Improved perception of facilities/amenities	In Suggested shortlist
Ten	Maidstone's Green Team; a volunteer programme for people experiencing mental health issues who live in the town centre to undertake practical outdoor activity focused on nature and horticulture. The Team would be supported and led by a professional therapeutic	E35: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve	£60,000-£80,000	Number of people supported to participate in education	In Suggested shortlist

**Appendix Three**

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	<p>horticulture specialist, providing training and support to build skills and confidence. The Team will maintain and improve green spaces in the town centre (council/ partners/ privately owned) contributing to improved place, sense of pride and belonging. This will be promoted and celebrated to improve wider public perception of new residents.</p>	<p>opportunities and promote wellbeing.</p>		<p>Number of volunteering opportunities supported            Number of people taking part in work experience programmes            Increased number of people familiarised with employers' expectations, including, standards of behaviour in the workplace            Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision</p>	
<p>Eleven</p>	<p>To support and promote new and existing arts and culture events in Maidstone Town Centre to help establish the pride of place and create an image of what Maidstone is known for. Through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertisement of existing planned events for 2022/23</li> <li>• Support new and existing activities in the Town Centre through the creation of a grant pot for new events</li> <li>• Purchase of specialist equipment for events in order to be able to support new events and commissioned events</li> <li>• Hire of Freelance event organiser to plan 3 events for 2023/24 including; Harvest Food Festival and Christmas Market.</li> </ul>	<p>E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.</p>	<p>£300,000-£400,000</p>	<p>Jobs created            Jobs safeguarded            Increased footfall            Increased visitor numbers            Improved engagement numbers            Improved perception of facilities/amenities            Number of community-led</p>	<p>In Suggested shortlist</p>

### Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund the Light Up Festival in February 2023</li> <li>* Working with faith partners to ensure cultural events for all communities year round</li> </ul>			arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support Improved perception of events	
Twelve	Multi-storey car park roof top Green Space/Park/Events Area (The Mall Car park Maidstone Town Centre)	E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.	£50,000-£150,000	Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Increased use of cycleways or paths Jobs created Improved perception of facilities/amenities Increased users of facilities/amenities Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	Concerns regarding limited impact
Thirteen	Mini Iggy Trail- a quiet Invasion of Iguanodons! Purpose of this trail is to introduce residents /visitors to the town centre offer of parks , open spaces , town centre features, history with a unique fun, tiny sculptural trail of 'Iggies'. The trail can be promoted from Maidstone's 'Mother Iggy' at Maidstone East – promotional material available through the Museum and online. Each park would have a unique resin-bronze mini Iggy discretely placed at each location and definitely not placed in full view ie. Create an element of discovery but the character of the area is retained to the general public. Suggested	E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with	£60,000	Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Increased use of cycleways or paths Jobs created Improved perception of facilities/amenities Increased users of facilities/amenities	In Suggested shortlist



**Appendix Three**

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	size 30-35cm tall.Project lends itself to social media posts photos, collecting a full set , education pack. It is accessible , free and inclusive and can be used at the simplest level by small children yet also provide a means to engage with adults Each Iggy can have it's own tale to tell about the area , it's history , or provide a creative writing platform . They can be utilised for seasonal events too.	incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.		Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	
Four-teen	The One You Kent Service is a health improvement service aiming to help adults across the county avoid future diseases caused by modern day life. One You' aims to encourage adults to take control of their health to enjoy significant benefits in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy. Everyday habits and behaviours, such as eating too much unhealthy food, drinking more than is recommended, continuing to smoke and not being active enough, are responsible for around 40% of all deaths in England.Healthy changes start with little changes. Whether you want to lose weight, get active, quit smoking, or just feel better about life One You Kent is here to support YOU.The Interactive Health Kiosk is an invaluable tool to check the health of your workforce, community, organisation or individual. The Health Kiosk is portable, quick, easy to use and delivers immediate confidential results. Taking a Health MOT can take from as little as 8 minutes enabling users to self-test key indicators of their general health and wellbeing and walk away with an anonymous printout of their results with a comparison to medical accepted standards. The Interactive Health Kiosk is effective as an early warning system for potential health problems such as high blood pressure.The Health MOT Roadshow is a mobile unit designed to deliver health MOTs to individuals. Targeting areas of health inequality, the Roadshow enables	E15: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.	TBC	Greater engagement as a result of support Improved perception of facility/infrastructure project	Project funded from elsewhere

### Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	<p>members of the community to have one-to-one sessions with trained staff and use of Wellbeing People’s Interactive Health Kiosk. The Recalibrate Wellbeing® Programme is an online coach-led course that promotes behavioural change. This 12-week wellbeing programme focuses on 4 key elements that bring about transformational and sustainable results: Mindset, Nutrition, Movement &amp; Lifestyle</p>				
Fifteen	<p>Promoting the Town Centre to Increase Pride in the Borough - Create and Establish a Brand for Maidstone Town Centre—so that residents, businesses and visitors identify with what Maidstone stands for. To do this we will commission an external expert agency to create a brand and communications strategy e.g. Love Ashford and Love where you live. This will include engagement and reach on social media. Improve and Increase our digital presence• Temporarily increase expertise on digital reach – either commission or hire expertise to improve our digital presence and maximise brand impact. It is vital now more than ever to keep the innovative communication going through social media platforms and take advantage of local marketing campaigns to build brand awareness and reach a wider audience both locally and from new visitors to their high street. • A Digital High Street – create a dedicated website for Maidstone Town Centre to include places to stay, things to do, shopping, food and drink, latest events, venue hire, travel and parking. Example - first one launched in Ashford (www.loveashford.com) promotes everything that is happening in the town centre. This type of website that could be created include Canterbury / Herne Bay – <a href="https://www.canterbury.co.uk/homepage/48/buy_in_the_bay">https://www.canterbury.co.uk/homepage/48/buy_in_the_bay</a> Borough Insight - a dedicated edition of the magazine focusing on shopping, food and drink, events,</p>	<p>E8: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area. E17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally.</p>	£150,000	<p>Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Increased number of web searches for a place Reduced vacancy rates</p>	<p>In Suggested shortlist</p>

### Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	venue hire, travel and parking in the Town Centre. One edition annually Creating inward investment brochures – Maidstone a premiere town to get people to come in to invest Promotional Video created– create positive images of Maidstone that can be used online– for leisure, business, communities, homes, shops, restaurants, parks and heritage. There are a huge number of activities coming up in July 2022 that would showcase the town centre – needs to be captured so it can be used in future years as well as capturing future events so a video that can be added too and clipped as needed depending on promotion purpose.				
Sixteen	Royal British Legion Industries, delivery of the Building Better Opportunities Projects		TBC		Insufficient information supplied – appears out of area
Seventeen	Targeted financial inclusion projects/targeted community outreach - Targeted project work focused on an identified area of concern – for example looking at financial uptake in certain groups, like pensioners/or families struggling with fuel/food poverty, as well as projects where it is the actual benefit that we are trying to promote/increase, like Council Tax Support or Free School Meals(FSM)/Healthy Start Vouchers. With this sort of project you can also concentrate on certain areas within the borough, that we know struggle with deprivation, like Parkwood/Shepway.It would be a great opportunity to work collaboratively with other agencies, NHS/Housing Associations/DWP/Local Schools/Charities and Local Communities. The dream project if we had resources would be to complete a project where we could pool the data held with our partners, concentrate on a specific area – for example Council Tax Support Take UP, and	E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.	TBC	Number of people reached Number of organisations receiving financial support other than grants Number of organisations receiving grants Number of organisations receiving non-financial support Number of households receiving support	Project can be achieved through alternative means

**Appendix Three**

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	<p>each resident that we are in contact with is provided with a holistic review of their needs. So not only are we getting Council Tax Support uptake, but if there is a need we refer for any additional benefits, complete applications for FSM, refer for digital uptake and any other support.</p>			<p>Number of households supported to take up energy efficiency measures Greenhouse gas reductions Increased take up of energy efficiency measures</p>	
Eigh-teen	<p>Young Person GREENSKILLS volunteer Programme Work with our project partners at Medway Valley Countryside Partnership to create a supported environmental volunteering and learning programme specifically targeted towards 16-20 years olds . There is an appetite amongst this cohort of young people to want to take action for their environment and for biodiversity and other drivers such as Duke of Edinburgh Awards and National Citizen Service create a desire to seek out suitable long term volunteering opportunities. Session would run 40 weeks of the year in sync with academic year – 9.30- 12.30 every Saturday at a location listed above or close environs facilitated by experienced staff from MVCP who would provide tools, gloves , leadership, insurance and risk management. Tasks would range from litter removal, habitat creation and management, making and installing nest boxes, environmental art, planting trees and gardening. Engagement with young people to create tangible positive outcomes in the townscape, builds self-esteem, builds connections and pride in one’s home town and a greater understanding of how to be an active citizen for the ‘now’ and into the future.</p>	<p>E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.</p>	<p>£22,000</p>	<p>Improved engagement numbers Volunteering numbers as a result of support</p>	<p>In Suggested shortlist</p>

Appendix Four

**Final Shortlist of Interventions**

Project	Intervention	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Outcomes (taken from Government Guidance)
<p><b>Project A - Building Pride in Place through promotion of the Town Centre and Events. (original projects eleven, Thirteen and Fifteen combined):</b></p> <p>Actions and Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Creative communities funds for local organisations and groups to support events £30,000 per annum</li> <li>•Festive Trail event – working with One Maidstone to create a festive trail to run through the Town Centre from the last week of November through to December £20,000 in year 1</li> <li>•Advertising budget to promote events across all channels £20,000 per annum</li> <li>•Borough Insight Events and Town centre focussed £25,000 per annum</li> <li>•Events Expertise to develop bespoke events £5,000 in year 1 and £20,000 in year 2 and year 3</li> <li>•Promotional video for business and events in TC £10,000 year 1, £5,000 years 2 and 3</li> <li>•Equipment purchase to support events £10,000 year 1 and £20,000 year 3</li> <li>•Iggy Sculpture Trail, £60,000 in year</li> <li>•Arts Carnival £20,000 in year 2 and 3 – making the July event bigger than present this will include engaging more schools and community groups with</li> </ul>	<p>E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.</p> <p>E5: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'.</p> <p>E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.</p> <p>E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.</p>	<p>£120,000</p>	<p>£175,000</p>	<p>£180,000</p>	<p>Jobs created Jobs safeguarded Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Improved engagement numbers Improved perception of facilities/amenities Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support Improved perception of events Increased footfall Increased use of cycleways or paths Increased users of facilities/amenities Improved perceived/experienced accessibility</p>

**Appendix Four**

Project	Intervention	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Outcomes (taken from Government Guidance)
<p>the creative workshops as well as potentially adding a skills training scheme for emerging local artists and producers to create a stronger, lasting legacy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner for Elmer 2, £60,000 in year 3</li> </ul>					
<p><b>Project B - A Safe and Attractive Town Centre achieved through Greening and Lighting (Original Projects Six, Nine, Ten and Eighteen):</b> have been combined for exploration through a feasibility study in year 1, £20,000 before any works are approved. The feasibility study will be combined with other work required for the Town Centre Strategy so the amount allocated reflects the study being partly funded from the TCS allocation</p> <p>Project C - Ten and Eighteen combined: Green Volunteering Project to Improve Town Centre Green Spaces, Increase Volunteering and Improve Wellbeing</p> <p>the remit has been widened to provide volunteering to all age groups.</p> <p>A volunteering project will be commissioned externally through Involve this will be supported by our parks and open spaces manager</p>	<p>E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.</p> <p>E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.</p> <p>E5: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'.</p> <p>E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places</p>	<p>£20,000</p>	<p>£60,000</p>	<p>£440,000</p>	<p>Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Jobs created Improved perception of facilities/amenities Increased users of facilities/amenities Improved perceived/experienced accessibility Jobs safeguarded Reduced vacancy rates Number of people supported to participate in education Number of volunteering opportunities supported Number of people taking part in work experience programmes Increased number of people familiarised with employers' expectations, including, standards of behaviour in the workplace Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision</p>

## Appendix Four

Project	Intervention	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Outcomes (taken from Government Guidance)
<p>50 volunteers per annum</p> <p>Cost breakdown, £60,000 in year 2 and 3: Salary of Horticultural Therapist- £35k including oncosts. Project Leader (Vol recruitment, support, coordination and identification and management of sites) £20k (part time role, includes on costs)</p> <p>Contribution towards materials, plants, tools, insurance, health and safety, rent for storage, use of vehicle, recruitment and management costs £5k. Involve will also match fund £15k per year</p> <p>Project will begin in council owned/leased or accessed sites in the town centre, with plans for future sites to be taken on as the scheme grows to unloved sites in the town centre, e.g. Fairmeadow</p>	<p>E35: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing.</p>				<p>Improved engagement numbers Volunteering numbers as a result of support</p>
<p><b>Project C - A Community Arts Hub &amp; Maker Space (Original project three)</b></p> <p>Utilise an empty unit/building in the town centre and repurpose to provide:</p>	<p>E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.</p>		<p>£5,000</p>	<p>£45,000 est</p>	<p>Jobs created Jobs safeguarded Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Improved engagement numbers</p>

**Appendix Four**

Project	Intervention	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Outcomes (taken from Government Guidance)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low cost exhibition space for local artists and creatives</li> <li>• Space to deliver arts activities and workshops for the local community</li> <li>• Retail area where creatives can hire a shelf/unit to sell their products</li> <li>• Space for community arts groups to meet/rehearse (e.g. local choirs)</li> <li>• 6 – 8 low-rent studios for use by local artists and creatives</li> <li>• Mix of clean and messy studio spaces</li> <li>• Informal meeting area(s) to facilitate networking and collaboration</li> <li>• Potential to employ an ‘artist in residence’ to lead activities or to work with different artists/groups to deliver</li> <li>• Focal point for arts in the town</li> <li>• Base for town centre events and festivals. Artists and creatives can be offered discounted hire rates in exchange for giving some of their time to lead workshops and/or help manage the facility</li> </ul> <p>If the right premises can be identified there is potential to enhance the offer to include small-scale theatrical productions/music performances/open-mic sessions/comedy nights/poetry readings, etc. which could also contribute to the early evening and night-time economy. A site appraisal to identify the best space will be undertaken in 2023/24, and work may begin that year on the space – budget dependent</p>					<p>Improved perception of facilities/amenities            Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support            Improved perception of events</p>



**Appendix Four**

Project	Intervention	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Outcomes (taken from Government Guidance)
<p><b>Project D - Links from the Town Centre to Lockmeadow - Activity/Outdoor Gym – Callisthenics – (original project two</b></p> <p>It is a good idea to provide facilities/activities to draw people between the town centre and Lockmeadow; the play equipment recently installed at Lockmeadow has been very popular.</p> <p>Fairmeadow Riverside spaces. Provides a free to use outdoor gym experience – a destination from town centre and for walkers and joggers on towpath; synergy with nearby boat café.</p> <p>Activation of open spaces that have potential to increase footfall, improve health outcomes, provide a focus and identity along with an opportunity to uplift the area and renew existing facilities in the area.</p> <p>If space allows additional provision of interactive equipment that provide an element of competition/gamification of fitness. Space would provide for coaching and training providers to develop their business.</p>	<p>E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.</p>		<p>£40,000</p>	<p>£66,500</p>	<p>Increased footfall            Increased visitor number            Increased use of cycleways or paths            Jobs created            Improved perception of facilities/amenities            Increased users of facilities/amenities            Improved perceived/experienced accessibility</p>

Project	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Total
Projects A - Building Pride in Place through promotion of the Town Centre and Events.	£120,000	£175,000	£180,000	<b>£475,000</b>
Project B - A Safe and Attractive Town Centre achieved through Greening and Lighting supported by volunteering	£20,000	£60,000	£440,000	<b>£520,000</b>
Project C - A Community Arts Hub & Maker Space		£5,000	£45,000	<b>£50,000</b>
Project D - Links from the town centre to Lockmeadow - Activity/Outdoor Gym – Callisthenics –		£40,000	£66,500	<b>£106,500</b>
<b>Total Projects</b>	£140,000	£280,000	£731,500	£1,151,500
<b>Total Project Management</b>	£5,821.60	£11,643.24	£30,505.28	£47,970
<b>Total Spend</b>	<b>£145,822</b>	<b>£291,643</b>	<b>£762,005</b>	<b>£1,199,470</b>
<b>Government Planned Spend</b>	£145,540	£291,081	£762,632	£1,199,253
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-£282</b>	<b>-£562</b>	<b>£627</b>	<b>-£217</b>

Total Check

£1,151,500

£1,199,470

**ECONOMIC REGENERATION  
AND LEISURE POLICY  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**5<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**Maidstone Museums Forward Plan 2022-2027**

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

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

**Executive Summary**

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

**Purpose of Report**

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

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

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

# Maidstone Museums Forward Plan 2022-2027

## 1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

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

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

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Business Plan for 2022-2027 (Appendix 1) sets out the vision and the strategic aims for Maidstone Borough Council's Museum Service over the next five years and explains how the museums contribute to the Council's overall priorities.
- 2.2 This Five Year Plan reflects the overall outcomes of the museums' 20 Year Plan:
- The delivery of a high quality service
  - Creating a sustainable and resilient organisation
  - Caring for and creating access to our collections for present and future generations
  - Inspires, educates and challenges visitors and users
  - Ensuring that the museum is accessible to all and has the power to transform lives through the use of its collections
  - Developing and encouraging a forward-thinking and innovative workforce
  - Working to nationally recognised standards.
- 2.3 The plan was developed through a review of existing practice, a review of the original Transformation plans after the failure to secure £4m from Lottery Heritage Fund, staff discussion and workshops both prior to closure for the Covid lockdowns and after. Once a draft plan was outlined, the museum management team consulted with the elected members with the leading responsibility for the area at the time, being the Chair and Vice Chair of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee to discuss their ambitions for heritage in the borough and how these might be met. That discussion highlighted the following priorities:
1. To address the quality of displays and storytelling through, initially, the redisplay of the museum and Kent Archaeological Society's archaeological collections to tell the story of Maidstone's earliest history with themes that affected the shaping of the borough such as migration, industry and agriculture.
  2. To complete a review of the Carriage Museum and its operation with a short term goal to open the museum using volunteer staff.
  3. To review the governance of the museums and the role of external trusts in the operation of the museum and to streamline or strengthen those relationships where appropriate.
  4. To provide better access for all residents to collections and decision-making through the audit and cataloguing of collections, upgrades to the museums' collections software including online versions, new exhibitions and one-off displays as well as the establishment of user panels working on, initially the new archaeology gallery.

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

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



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

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

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

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

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

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

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### **5. RISK**

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

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

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

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

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## **7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

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

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

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

None.

# MAIDSTONE MUSEUMS FORWARD PLAN 2022-27

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



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## APPENDICES

- 1) Background information
- 2) Learning performance review – Museums and Schools impact
- 3) Staffing structure chart

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

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

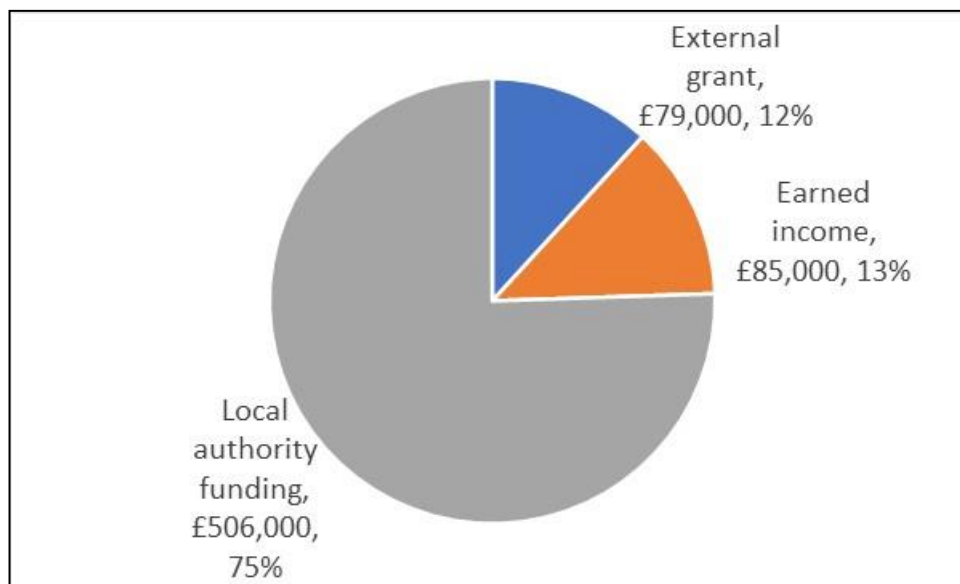
The museums have had great success in receiving a variety of grants from trusts and foundations via the Maidstone Museum Foundation. Grant applications will need to fit with the forward plan aims and objectives to ensure that a strategic approach is taken to any new project that may be funded. External 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

Key Aim 1:	Connect, develop and engage with all visitors and users				
Specific objective 1.1:	Develop and create an exciting and innovative museum programme				
Actions	End Date	Lead person	Additional Resources which may be needed	Measures of Success	Priority
Deliver a high quality, varied and popular temporary exhibitions programme ensuring that they meet the exhibition policy ambitions to programme exhibitions covering: Contemporary topics and art works Summer family exhibitions Collections based/focused	2027	Public Programming Manager		2 exhibitions per year mounted in the main temporary exhibition galleries  80% rated good or excellent achieved for each in customer feedback  Evaluation report produced for each exhibition relating to goals identified in the PID  Annual income target met	1 & 5
Create and deliver a range of events for users of all ages that complement the museums' collections and raise its profile. <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		Min 2 events or a series of events programmed for each audience listed in Actions  80% rated good or excellent achieved for each in customer feedback  Evaluation report produced for each series of events relating to	4 & 5

members as agreed in MoU				goals identified in the PID 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> Arts Council England Funding through Department of Education	Meaningful engagement' as defined by Arts Council: 5500 individual pupils (visits in, outreach, virtual sessions, loans boxes)  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  4 Twilight sessions per year  80% rated good or excellent achieved for each in teacher feedback  Achieve financial targets	4 & 5
Informal learning offer:	2027	Public Programme Manager	Volunteers	3 craft activities per week during school holidays  Volunteers to provide handling activity in galleries for min one day	4 & 5



				per week (Saturdays and during school holidays)  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  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  Volunteer choice in progress  Mystery Object display in progress  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 Designers	New Archaeology Gallery open  One subject area/gallery	1 & 4

			Community panels Stakeholders Funders	refurbished every 5 years  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.  50+ per month completed  Responses reviewed quarterly  Staff and volunteers trained in delivering surveys	1 & 4
Establish consultative panels	2023	Director		Stakeholders x 2+ per annum Resident x 3 per annum Education – twilight session quarterly 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  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  August 2022 on	Visitor Services and Operations Manager	Consultant Comms Manager	Report and action plan produced and accepted.  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  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>			

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<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 2027	Collections Manager		Existing policies and procedures kept up to date  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:</b>		<b>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  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  Update condition and conservation need records for objects in gallery audit	1 & 4

<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 Purpose identified Costs identified Funding secured Design complete Website launched 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  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 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 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  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 Property Services	Refurbishment 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  Action Plan initiated Dec 2022 on	Director		Public Consultation carried out  Plan to increase public participation and decision-making in place  Staff and Volunteer diversity increased  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.  All-staff and/volunteer training as opportunities are identified  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  Continue to monitor viability of Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment Trust	Sept 2022	Director	Legal Finance	Reviews completed  Brenchley Trust dissolved  Queens Own Trust financial viability assessed and legal advice taken  Continuing discussions with Benthif 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.

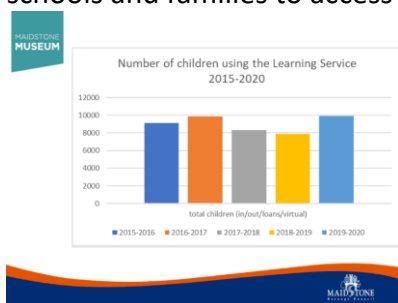
To achieve these outcomes, the team delivers:

- 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

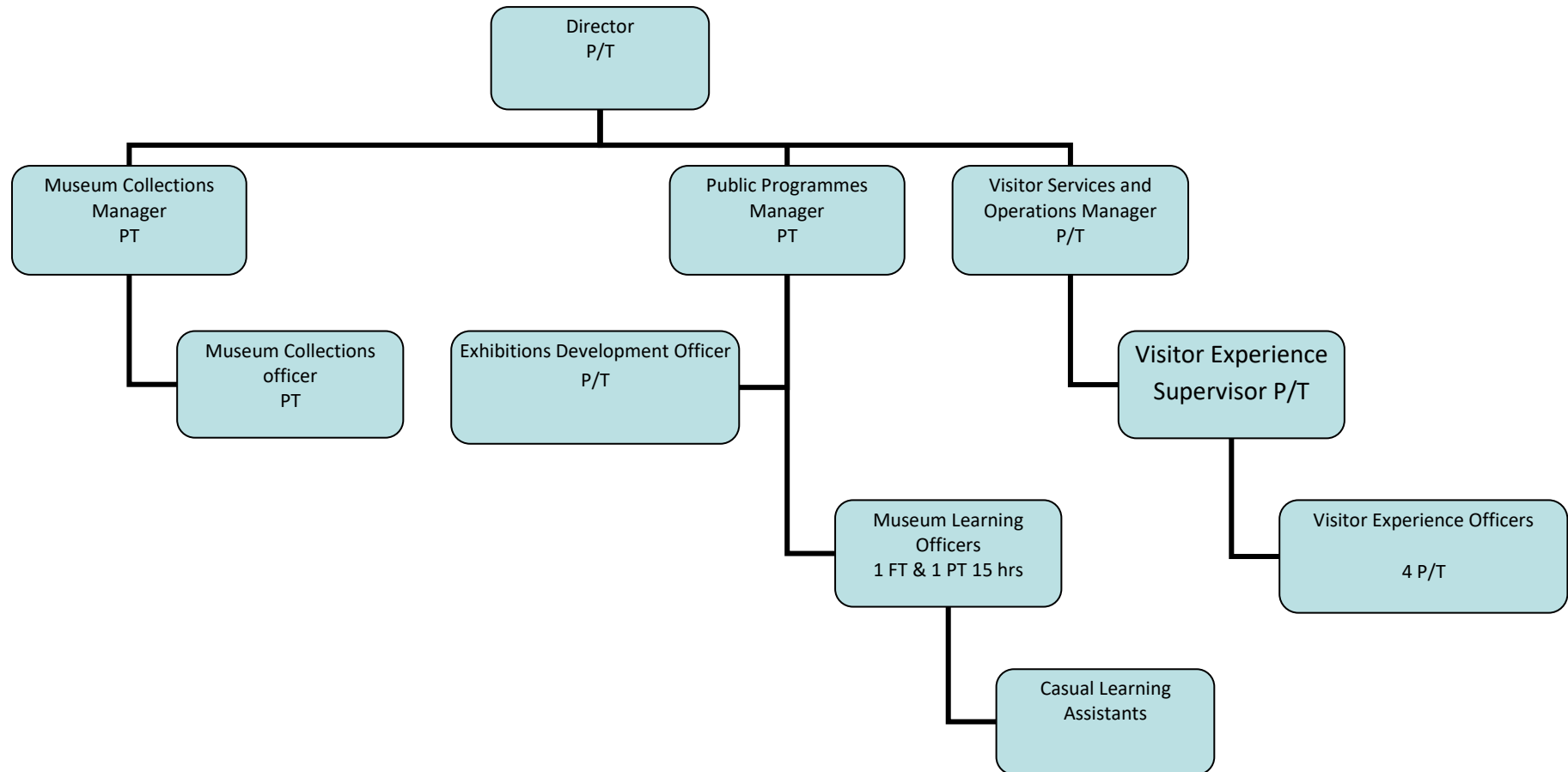
In addition to formal schools provision, the Learning Team runs various informal learning activities. These are mainly targeted at children from 4-11 and take place during holiday periods, with a programme of craft drop-in sessions, often based on temporary exhibition topics, such as a 'surreal' half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



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