

# AGENDA

## HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING



Date: Tuesday 29 November 2016

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,  
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Ells (Vice-Chairman), Fort, Mrs Hinder,  
Lewins, Naghi, Pickett (Chairman),  
Revell, Mrs Stockell and Mrs Wilson

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1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Urgent Items
4. Notification of Visiting Members
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers

**Continued Over/:**

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**Issued on Monday 21 November 2016**

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact Poppy Collier on 01622 602242**. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council,  
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone Kent ME15 6JQ**

6. Disclosures of Lobbying
7. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2016 1 - 5
8. Presentation of Petitions (if any)
9. Questions and answer session for members of the public
10. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information
11. Report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development - Tourism Destination Management Plan - Progress Update 6 - 23
12. Report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development - Review of Maidstone Culture and Leisure (MCL) Festivals and Events 2016 24 - 49

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

In order to book a slot to speak at this meeting of the Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee, please contact Poppy Collier on 01622 602242 or by email on [poppycollier@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:poppycollier@maidstone.gov.uk) by 5 pm one clear working day before the meeting. If asking a question, you will need to provide the full text in writing. If making a statement, you will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on. Please note that slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2016**

**Present:** Councillor Pickett (Chairman), and  
Councillors Ells, Fort, Mrs Hinder, Lewins, Naghi,  
Revell and Mrs Wilson

**Also Present:** Councillors Newton

71. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

72. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no Substitute Members.

73. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor Newton was in attendance as an observer.

74. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

75. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

76. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 OCTOBER 2016**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

77. **PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)**

There were no petitions.

78. **QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no questions from members of the public.

79. **TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE  
BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

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

80. HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2016-17

**RESOLVED:** That the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee Work Programme 2016-17 be noted.

81. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - STRATEGIC PLAN PERFORMANCE UPDATE QUARTER 2 FOR HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

The Policy and Information Manager introduced the report setting out the progress of key strategies, plans and performance indicators within the committee's remit during quarter 2. Two performance indicators had been achieved, and of the two that had missed target there was a trend towards improvement.

In response to questions it was explained that:

- A new visitor information point was to be placed in the museum in the old reception area and Members expressed an interest in knowing how many visitors attended specifically for this service. The Head of Commercial and Economic Development agreed to ask museum staff to keep a record of this.
- A Member queried why the closure of the museum on a Monday had substantially affected footfall, as historically low footfall on that day was the justification for the closure. The Head of Commercial and Economic Development advised that school visits that would have been undertaken on a Monday now took place between Tuesday and Friday. Where a school could not accommodate a change in day, Monday visits were made by the education programme staff directly to the school. Arts Council funding had been granted which allowed the education programme to continue to 31 March 2017.
- Surveying undertaken at the Leisure Centre had identified that visitor satisfaction was below target, with the café area contributing to this result. Serco as the contracted provider of the service would take action to address this issue. The Director of Regeneration and Place advised that he had met with the centre managers and had discussed whether the results of the survey were affected by the method of collecting data and the size of the sample taken, and ways to improve surveying going forward.
- A survey of Parish Councils had returned a result of 38% satisfaction with communication from MBC. This had been reported to the Community Partnerships and Resilience Manager who would incorporate this into his work on the Parish Charter and the role of the Parish Liaison Officer.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the summary of performance for Quarter 2 of 2016/17 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and corporate strategies and plans be noted.
2. That the progress of the Strategic Plan Action Plans at appendix II to the report of the Head of Policy and Communications be noted.
3. That it be noted where complete data was not available.
4. That the performance of Key Performance Indicators from Quarter 1 of 2016/17 for which data was not available at Policy and Resources Committee on 26 July 2016 be noted.

For – 8

Against – 0

Abstain – 0

82. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT - SECOND QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING 2016/17

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement presented the report providing an overview of the revenue budget and outturn for the second quarter of 2016/17, and highlighting financial matters which may have a material impact on the medium term financial strategy or the balance sheet.

It was explained that:

- The Mote Park café had not generated its target revenue and had a projected shortfall of £125K. This was due to teething problems from which lessons had been learned.
- The crematorium service was projected to come in at £100K over target due, amongst other things, to increased memorial purchases.

With regard to the overall forecast across the council it was stated that:

- At the end of the first quarter an overspend of £250K was projected, due largely to an overspend on temporary accommodation. The overall overspend was now projected to reach nearly £500K by the end of the financial year.
- Underspends within service areas and windfalls would be utilised to offset the overspend where possible.
- The Council had a budget gap of £4M to find over a five year period. The Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee oversaw services with a net budget of approximately £4.8M. The Council's net budget was approximately £20M. Applied equally the committee would be looking to make savings of 20%.

During discussion the committee was informed that a public budget consultation had been undertaken, the results of which would inform

proposals for savings. It was anticipated that the results and proposals would be presented to committee in January 2017.

**RESOLVED:** That the revenue position at the end of the second quarter, and the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position where significant variances have been identified, be noted.

83. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - PUBLIC REALM DESIGN GUIDE AND PUBLIC ART POLICY

The Local Economy Project Officer presented the Public Realm Design Guide (including Street Furniture Guidance) and Public Art Policy. An urgent update report was also presented which included amendments to the Street Furniture Guidance, and an amended recommendation with regard to the Public Art Policy.

In response to questions it was explained that the movement of pedestrians through different areas would be encouraged thorough the use of themes and materials. Bollards would be used to guide vehicles around obstacles. The Bridges gyratory work that was in progress incorporated improved pedestrian crossings.

During discussion the committee proposed the following amendments:

**Public Realm Design Guide**

- P26, Responding to Maidstone’s heritage, paragraph two:
  - First sentence to read ‘They should include references to’;
  - First bullet point to read ‘Eminent people who have resided and/or worked in the borough and have had an impact on the local, national or world stage’.

**Public Art Policy**

- Front cover, amend title from ‘Public Art Guidance’ to ‘Public Art Policy’
- P4, Commission timeframes, opening sentences to read as follows:

“A permanent artwork will be designed to last indefinitely but not less than 10 years. Maintenance will have to be factored into the commissioning process to allow the artwork to withstand the timeframe. A semi-permanent commission will be designed to last up to 10 years.”
- P4, Themes, first bullet point to read ‘Eminent people who have resided and/or worked in the borough and have had an impact on the local, national or world stage’.

**Street Furniture Guidance**

As per the urgent update report and with the following changes:

- P4, Guidance, new paragraph 2:
  - The Local Economy Officer was asked to confirm whether there was a RAL reference for the gold colour used on town centre street furniture and to insert if identified, and to confirm whether the paint used on metal would be water-based.
  - Final sentence of paragraph to read: "Any deviation from this standard will be agreed with MBC's Street Scene Operations Manager, and the Conservation Officer."
  - All job titles to be updated and standardised across the guidance.

The Chairman requested that the finalised documents be circulated to the committee for reference.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Public Realm Design Guide, attached as appendix 1 of the report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development, and as amended by committee be adopted.

For – 8            Against – 0            Abstain - 0

2. That the Public Art Policy, attached as appendix 2 and as amended by committee, be adopted.

For – 8            Against – 0            Abstain - 0

3. That the Street Furniture Guidelines, attached at appendix 3 and as amended by the urgent update report and by committee, be adopted.

For – 8            Against – 0            Abstain - 0

4. That it be agreed that the Public Art Policy be presented to Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee to adopt as a Material Consideration for Planning purposes, and that authority be delegated to the Head of Commercial and Economic Development, in consultation with the Chairman of Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee and the Chairman of Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee, to insert a section into the Policy setting out the basis for Material Consideration.

For – 8            Against – 0            Abstain – 0

84. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.39 p.m.

# Agenda Item 11

## HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Tuesday 29 November  
2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**Yes**

### Destination Management Plan – Action Plan Progress Update

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	MCL Marketing & Sales Manager, Laura Dickson
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

#### **This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. This is an update report on the progress on the Destination Management Plan three year action plan for noting.

#### **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all –providing a wide range of attractions, accommodation and events for visitors through tourism development
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough –The economic impact of tourism supports jobs and businesses throughout the borough

#### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee	29 November 2016

# Destination Management Plan - Action Plan Progress

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress made against the three year Action Plan relating to Maidstone Borough's Destination Management Plan.

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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Destination Management Plan was adopted by Committee in July 2015 and the accompanying three year Action Plan was endorsed by Committee. The first update report was presented to committee in February 2016.

There were four working groups set up initially to deliver the Action Plan.

River - River Access Improvement & River Experience  
Town – Look, Feel and Do, Access and Visitor Management  
Events – The Place for Big Events  
Countryside – Explore Further

The DMP Board and working groups are chaired by MBC officers. Cllr David Pickett has been appointed to the DMP Board to represent Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee. In addition the groups have member representation from other Council committees where action requires their involvement.

The purpose of the working groups was to bring together the delivery partners from within the tourism and visitor economy.

An update event 'Maidstone's Tourism Destination Plan – One year On' takes place on 29<sup>th</sup> November. Stakeholders and partners have been invited to the event which will be facilitated by Visit Kent and include a presentation on the new River Cycle Path.

### 2.3 Key Successes to Date

A number of key activities were required in addition to the actions by the specific working groups. As detailed in the previous committee report the first activities were:

- The Shared Story toolkit created and available online.
- Creation of an Online Image Library.
- Online Event Planning Calendar created.
- New Historic Interpretation Panels in the town centre designed and installed.

Over the last six months more key activities were added to support the Tourism Destination Management Plan. They include:

- New iconic photography commissioned to support the Shared Story. The photography has been undertaken by a specialist tourism photographer that has previously worked on Visit England campaigns. The work will continue through the winter and spring and early summer of 2017. We have now received the first images and are busy selecting the best ones. These will be added to the image library for everyone to use.
- Commissioned new promotional videos showing the attraction of visiting the borough to support the Shared Story. Themes were identified and the filming has been carried out over the summer including using drones to capture the essence of the countryside and river.

The themes are:

History and Heritage

Food and Drink

Museums and Culture

Parks and countryside

Explore

Shopping

The Two of Us.

Events – still to be filmed.

- Development of a new website, Conference Maidstone to support Business Tourism and the wedding venues. This sector was identified as a key growth market for Maidstone in the DMP. It has the support of the venues locally and will be self-funding. It will be promoted through a regular Conference Maidstone e-newsletter to our conference and meeting planners database.
- Development of a new Museum website. Although this is a more general action it supports the need for high quality information for visitors. The new website is full responsive, and scales the design appropriately for mobile and tablet. It also provides booking for events and children's parties. This is essentially so that 24/7 booking can take place and not just during opening hours and days. New museum photography was commission specifically to enhance the website design.
- Development of accommodation, events and attractions widgets. The events group had already suggested an events widget, so it was logical to produce one for accommodation and attractions too. A widget is a piece of code that can be embedded on any website that then provides a search box. This search box draws the data from the Visit Maidstone website.  
Accommodation providers can add the attractions and what's on widgets to their website. It will provide them with the latest up to date information without the need for them to add it themselves.  
Event organisers can add the accommodation widget to their site. This was used by the Ramblin Fair organisers on their website this year.

- An application has been made to the Highways Agency to change the signage on the M20 from Park and Ride at Junction 6 to tourism signage but has not yet been given permission. The sign would say Maidstone, Kent's Historic County Town.

## 2.4 The Action Plan updates can be found in Appendix I.

A summary of the key actions so far are:

### **River:**

- Formation of new Maidstone River Park Partnership
- Proposed signage from new bridge gyratory scheme and cycle path
- New River Park website
- Audit of facilities for visitors completed
- Footpath investment taking place as part of the new river cycle path.
- Identified the ownership of land along river
- Volunteering by McDonalds to clear overgrown areas.

### **Events:**

- Audit of venue facilities and suppliers completed
- Proposed development on Conference Maidstone website to include event venues information, suppliers and dedicated pages for event organisers
- Event Forward Planning Calendar – requires regular updating
- Establishment of Events Expert Group for thematic planning and joint marketing opportunities.
- New themed campaign to promote Maidstone's season of music in 2017
- What's On widgets
- Event suppliers list

### **Town:**

- The Farmers Market in Jubilee Square has now started on the last Friday of the month. Potential to move Saturday general market to the square.
- Public Realm improvements due at North end of Week Street.
- Network Rail investing in Maidstone East with new station and forecourt. Work on realm link, public art and signage.
- Audit of shopfronts at North End of Week Street. Requires next steps and funding. As public realm is being improved it could raise profile and encourage owner to improve their buildings.
- A Heritage Lottery Town Scape Initiative bid has been submitted for Gabriel's Hill which if successful will include themed trails.
- Public Realm design guide has been adopted. Four zones are included: Shopping, River and Green Spaces, Leisure and Culture and Historic and Heritage.
- A Public Art Policy has been adopted for the borough.

### **Countryside:**

- Product and marketing audit of tourism in the rural area. Survey to all parishes, tourism businesses and other organisations such as

Produced in Kent and Explore Kent

- Brown signage audit – redundant signage has been removed.
- Marketing audit - good results and partnership working. Walking routes and maps identified and added to website.
- Video of the area will be used to develop future campaigns.
- Audit of walks and trails are being assessed and providing useful information. Two working groups are now producing cycle routes and a driving tour is in the initial stages.
- 3 locations for rural information points have been identified. Leader funding application is in hand.

## 2.5 DMP Budget

There is a DMP Budget for 2016-17 of £30,000. The board have approved the proposed budget plan. (See Appendix II)

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## 3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 This report is an information update only.

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## 4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 None

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## 5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 None

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## 6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 None

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## 7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	This work contributes to the priority 'Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all'.	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Risk Management</b>	N/A	
<b>Financial</b>	None. The action plan will be delivered through a combination of existing related	Head of Commercial and Economic

	budgets, collaboration with the sector and bids for funding to appropriate sources.	Development
<b>Staffing</b>	None. This project is being delivered by the MCL Marketing and Sales Team.	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Legal</b>	N/A	
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	N/A	
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	N/A	
<b>Community Safety</b>	N/A	
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	N/A	
<b>Procurement</b>	N/A	
<b>Asset Management</b>	N/A	

**8. REPORT APPENDICES**

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

- Appendix I: DMP Action Plan Progress
- Appendix II: DMP Action Plan Budget

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[Destination Management Plan](#)

## MAIDSTONE TOURISM DMP ACTION PLANS

Actions	Progress to date
<p><b>Run Workshop sessions</b> for tourism and other businesses and organisations involved in tourism , to familiarise them with the Story and to help them think creatively about how they might use it to develop and differentiate their own offer, service or business and help to deliver the Action Plans.</p>	<p>Several events were run in 2015. A workshop for small accommodation providers is planned for early 2017.</p>
<p><b>Develop an Online Shared Story Toolkit</b> for tourism stakeholders to use, comprising Story-inspired product development ideas plus downloadable marketing copy (tailored for use in different markets) and images based on the Shared Story – so that people in the place are “singing from the same song sheet”.</p>	<p>Toolkit available on line at <a href="http://visitmaidstone.com/dmp">visitmaidstone.com/dmp</a> Image library set up. New photography and video commissioned and delivered. Will be added to image library end of 2016</p>
River Actions	Progress to date
<p><b>Programme of enhancements</b> and improvements to make the river more accessible and appealing to visitors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• signing and entrance points to the river from the town centre</li> <li>• footpath investment – signing to include distances to key points, accessibility for cyclists</li> <li>• investment in moorings</li> <li>• parking for river visitors</li> </ul>	<p>Signage and entrance points to the river being identified by group, with particular emphasis on what is stopping people accessing the river.</p> <p>The new gyratory and river cycle path will include signage, it is important that signage is combined with one brand (RIVER PARK?) and that we do not have a number of different styles of signs saying the same thing all next to one another. It is also important that these signs extend into the town centre.</p> <p>Foot path investment taking place as part of the river cycle path and new gyratory system. Group to look at any gaps in town centre and further along river path.</p>

	<p>Newly adopted Public Realm Design Guide references the river and access/wayfinding from the town centre.</p> <p>Investment in moorings – group to identify issues with current moorings and additional moorings.</p> <p>Parking to be investigated.</p>
<p><b>Focus on strengthening visitor hubs</b> on the river:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access, facilities, activities and interpretation</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for more camping cabins/pods (luxury camping huts – alternative to camping in the open) to enable long distance walking, canoeing etc</li> </ul> <p>Priority hubs :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church of All Saints/amphitheatre</li> <li>• Cobtree by Kent Life</li> <li>• Lockmeadow</li> </ul>	<p>Group to improve promotion of the river, current facilities and attractions. More people visiting and aware of the ‘River Park’ will make future events more attractive to event organisers.</p> <p>Opportunities for event organisers need to be better promoted. This could be done through the River Park Website (see below).</p> <p>Opportunities for camping, etc. will follow from this work.</p> <p>It was proposed at the DMP River meeting that a friends group is established. Ian Tucker has done a considerable amount of work on this and has produced a draft website. The group discussed at the meeting how much of the river work DMP actions would be taken on by the Friends of the river group.</p> <p>It was agreed that work would be done to help the friends group to establish. Parks &amp; Leisure Manager agreed to pass over a model of how other friends group operate.</p> <p>Ian Tucker is currently working on the structure of the group.</p> <p>The River Medway Tow Path Scheme will run through Kent Life to Cobtree Manor Park.</p>

<p><b>Create river-based events &amp; activities</b> that will appeal to visitors, animate the river, provide a reason to come today, contribute to extending the visitor day into the early evening. Opportunities could include – dragon boat racing, rowing events, festival of lights, regattas etc</p>	<p>River Park website has been produced by Ian Tucker. This will be a single place to identify all of the attractions and events along the river to be promoted. This will be aimed at both residents and visitors. Future events will then be more attractive to event organisers.</p> <p>Potential events and organisers to be identified.</p>
<p><b>Build up marketing activity</b> over time linking to countryside theme. Develop marketing collateral – maps, trails, leaflets</p>	<p>Website and promotional information produced by IT. This could be adopted as the single place for anything to do with the river.</p> <p>An audit of everything available to visitors has been completed and included in the draft website.</p> <p>Gaps and further information and trails could be produced in the future, and/or incorporated in the cycle path/ gyratory information.</p>
<p><b>Prioritise river management</b> – litter, dredging, landscaping, lighting, policing, anti-social behaviour, mooring, illegal camping</p>	<p>Group currently looking at forming a ‘Friends’ type group for the river led by Ian Tucker.</p> <p>This could coordinate volunteering, act as a voice for the river, etc.</p> <p>30-40 volunteers from McDonalds took part in clearing overgrown areas.</p>
<p><b>Develop Riverside Walking and Cycling Path from Allington to East Farleigh with connections to the wider Maidstone area. Potential to expand this up to Aylesford Bridge</b></p>	<p>Project on track to be complete summer 2017.</p>
Town Actions	Progress to date
<p><b>Develop local markets and fairs</b> – food (including a farmer’s market), arts &amp; crafts etc:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing provision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MBC have delivered 3 successful Farmers Markets – on a monthly basis so far.</li> <li>• MBC hold a 12-day street trading consent for market – therefore unlikely to go fortnightly until Jun 17 at earliest</li> </ul>

Town Actions	Progress to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and deliver new markets in different town centre locations and develop a calendar of markets throughout the year</li> <li>• Use County Town Market Charter and history as part of the positioning for street markets</li> <li>• Introduce street food</li> <li>• Develop local market management plan – litter/cleaning, selection of stall traders, access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering moving Sat general market to Jubilee Square</li> <li>• New market manager will be considering how guest markets can fit in with MBC's own markets</li> <li>• Once Farmers' market established, can build up reputation for food fair.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Use themed trails and quarters</b> to help make the town more legible for visitors and encourage exploration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify trail themes and quarters</li> <li>• Develop a programme of animation and interpretation including:</li> <li>• Making use of green spaces</li> <li>• Pavement trails/digital trails using app</li> <li>• Distinctive lighting</li> <li>• Mark the quarters e.g. with sculpture, distinctive street sign branding, lighting etc.</li> </ul>	<p>A Heritage Lottery Town Scape Initiative bid has been submitted for Gabriel's Hill which if successful will include themed trails. A Public Realm Design Guide has been adopted which sets out the council's intention to create a cohesive town centre with an integrated approach to achieving high quality public realm. It complements and builds on the improvements to date, such as Jubilee Square and the High Street, as well as the forthcoming programme of improvements and redevelopments of major sites due to be delivered between now and 2031. It recognises that Maidstone town centre has many urban characteristics and works as a set of interconnecting zones. The guide focuses on connectivity and upgrading the environment and takes a common sense approach to materials as well as advocating that embedded public art is a key strategy in highlighting local distinctiveness. Four zones are included: Shopping, River and Green Spaces, Leisure and Culture and Historic and Heritage.</p> <p>A Public Art Policy has been adopted for the borough which will become a material consideration for developer contributions. It looks at the commissioning of public art as part of a development or regeneration scheme</p>

Town Actions	Progress to date
	<p>and sets out the Council's aspirations for the borough and its people and recognises that public are can contribute to, emphasise and enhance Maidstone's unique heritage, cultural and natural assets.</p> <p>A new document setting out Street Furniture Guidelines has been adopted which aims to ensure a consistent, coordinated and high quality approach to street furniture in Maidstone town centre. The SFG is designed for everyone who specifies and/or installs street furniture in the town centre. This includes Council officers, developers and contractors.</p>
<p><b>Shopfront improvements</b> including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shop front design and window displays (produce toolkit)</li> <li>• Maintenance to frontages e.g. redecoration, brand signs</li> </ul>	<p>One Maidstone volunteers have carried out an audit of shop fronts in North end of Week Street. Need to discuss next steps, and funding.</p> <p>Restoration of shop fronts are incorporated for <i>some</i> of the properties on Gabriels' Hill in the HLF bid.</p> <p>Unlikely to be funding available for other streets including Week St. Public Realm is being improved so this could raise profile of area and incentivise owners to improve their buildings.</p>
<p><b>Strengthen town's association with the countryside</b> through celebrating and promoting local food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage local restaurants to source local produce and promote it</li> <li>• Explore potential for a new local produce centre</li> </ul>	<p>MBC could liaise with Produced in Kent and One Maidstone to promote local produce.</p> <p>Could be scope to use Granada House for local produce.</p>

Town Actions	Progress to date
<p><b>Agree a strategy for improved access</b> by car and coach into the town centre and support with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear uncluttered road signing</li> <li>• Signing to car parks/coach park</li> <li>• Visitor orientation in the car/coach parks</li> <li>• Pedestrian signing from car parks to the town centre and main attractions.</li> </ul>	<p>No progress to date</p> <p>How can signage into town be improved?</p> <p>Need an audit of pedestrian signing from car parks into town – is it logical to visitors who are unfamiliar with town?</p> <p>Integrated transport strategy will address some of these issues.</p>
<p><b>Review coach parking provision</b> – volume, location and facilities – to reflect needs of international coach parties for shopping, and take account of potential growth</p>	<p>Coach park currently at Sittingbourne Road – not ideal location. Maidstone East possible alternative.</p> <p>If Maidstone has good facilities for drivers, more coaches will visit.</p> <p>Liaison required with Planning.</p>
<p><b>Improve welcome and visitor facilities</b> at the rail stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome sign and town map on board</li> <li>• Clear signing to drop-off/pick-up points</li> </ul> <p>Longer term, a need to deliver new development at Maidstone East station to improve first impressions and provide additional welcome &amp; visitor facilities.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Network Rail investing in Maidstone East with a new station and forecourt in 2017. MBC officers are working with them on design, including public realm link, public art and signage. North end of Week Street due to have public realm improvements which will link into the Maidstone East redevelopment and create a sense of arrival in the town centre.</p>
Event Actions	Progress to date
<p><b>Create an Events Experts Group</b> that brings together senior decision makers from the main venues &amp; MBC to “join the dots” when it comes to planning &amp; infrastructure, programming &amp; marketing</p>	<p>The DMP Working group will now continue in the future as the Maidstone Events Group with members from all the main event venues and local events organisers. Additional venues have been identified and will be asked to join. Group will meet 2-3 times per year. Next meeting February 2017. Group has identified a joint</p>

Event Actions	Progress to date
	marketing opportunities based around the music them of events in Maidstone from April until October. A marketing campaign will be developed to maximise this opportunity. It will include branding, digital communications and a printed leaflet that will last the campaign length. Funding for the campaign will be through paid advertising or sponsorship. Project to start in January and progress reviewed at next meeting.
<p><b>Carry out an Audit &amp; Gap Analysis</b> – looking at infrastructure &amp; resources (physical &amp; people), including venue capacities, transport links, traffic management, parking, signing, policing &amp; crowd management. Must take into account potential negative impact on local communities &amp; environment. Should include analysis of processes (licensing, highways, planning etc) too. Gap Analysis will then identify if new infrastructure/processes needed - &amp; specific actions should then be developed.</p>	<p>Survey results have been compiled. Group decided the best location for this information would be on the Conference Maidstone website where specific pages can be created specifically for events. Officers to look at module and development required to achieve this by next meeting. Many of the venues already on the website. As there are synergies between events and conferences this makes sense rather than build new platform. Group to supply list of suppliers that they recommend to assist event organisers.</p>
<p><b>Develop an Event Organisers' Toolkit</b> – to make it easier to hold an event in the borough. (We understand this is already under way – but it will need to be updated once the above Audit &amp; Gap Analysis is completed)</p>	<p>This will be added to the website as above.</p>
<p><b>Set up a “No Clash Diary”</b> – for venues to enter information on provisional as well as firm bookings. This is an “internal” tool for venues, organisers, accommodation providers and public agencies within the Borough (and neighbouring areas) to use – to help them avoid clashes, to spread events across the year, and also facilitate identification of potential “clusters” for joint development &amp; marketing (see next action).</p>	<p>This has been set up using google calendar It sits on DMP pages on <a href="http://visitmaidstone.com/dmp">visitmaidstone.com/dmp</a>. It will move to the Conference Maidstone website along with the new events pages and required to fill in as part of the events notification.</p> <p>Regular reminder to be sent to event planners. Safety Advisory Group administration to be informed so this becomes part of the</p>

Event Actions	Progress to date
	process.
<p><b>Develop themed seasons/festivals</b>, inspired by the Shared Story and by major events. May need a DMP Group sub-group – an “Events Development Taskforce”. Members of the Taskforce to be selected for their specific skills (marketing, events management, programming, fundraising).</p>	<p>One Maidstone leading for the town centre.</p> <p>Group looking at themes from 2017 onwards i.e. sporting, comedy and come with idea for next meeting.</p> <p>Apparent from 2016 that there is a strong music theme from Spring to Autumn. Group to develop a brand for season and produce leaflets, editorial pages to promote. Production to start Feb 2017.</p>
<p><b>Develop a consumer-facing “Events for Visitors Calendar”</b> – comprising an online real time database of confirmed events for consumer marketing (website content, emarketing, social media &amp; traditional media relations work), linked to the Culture Kent data pool. Evolution of current online events calendar on Visit Maidstone. Related to “No Clash Diary” – but serves different purpose. Drives events information on Visit Maidstone &amp; Visit Kent websites, but also for tourism industry’s own marketing (could incorporate a “widget” for tourism providers to use on their own websites, providing a live feed). Will need to be promoted to visitor-facing businesses as well as consumers. Needs tight criteria &amp; market focus so only features events with clear visitor-appeal, and presents them in a way that motivates visits (e.g. clustering them, using Shared Story themes etc).</p>	<p>Complete.</p> <p>Consumer events calendar available on visit Maidstone.com/whats-on. List and images can be enhanced and linked to social media.</p> <p>Event organiser can add their events on directly.</p> <p>Widget has been created and information circulated to accommodation providers, attractions and event organisers. Three widgets created what’s on, accommodation and Things to Do.</p>
Countryside Actions	Progress to date
<p><b>Product audit</b> – map &amp; gap current provision of trails, walks and</p>	<p>Survey went out to Parish Council at the beginning of January 16 with 6 weeks for</p>

Countryside Actions	Progress to date
countryside & river experiences	<p>return.</p> <p>Information has been assessed and whilst it was originally perceived that we would link walks and cycle routes to Parish Council websites, this would have been only partially possible and therefore would have created confusion for users . <i>The standard for most of the websites and ability to upkeep them was insufficient.</i></p> <p>Brown sign audit from Parish Councils returned a very poor result. Tourism undertook this survey in the Spring of 2016, generated a list of redundant signage and got it removed.</p>
<p><b>Marketing audit</b> – understand who currently markets the countryside experiences, where and how. Find best digital solution to make sure that online information for visitors from various sources is easily found. Consider how best to use/work with existing brands and sub-brands e.g. Garden of England, Heart of Kent, Our Land</p>	<p>We have had an excellent result from this and have found potential new partners to develop and market with.</p> <p>Explore Kent with its expertise has kindly offered to help us to develop our maps for the south and west of the Borough.</p> <p>The Medway Valley Countryside Group has also generated lots of walks and maps along the route of the River Medway. Lots of walks are linked to the train stations along the route making this very sustainable. These have already been added to the visit Maidstone Website. They also work in conjunction with Explore Kent.</p> <p>The North Downs Way Trail Manager has also been very busy working on walking routes from rail stations from Bearsted to Lenham (and beyond), making both and excellent contact with sustainable routes.</p>
<p><b>Develop themed experiences and trails</b> that use Shared Story for inspiration, include key attractions, pubs etc along trail to drive more spend</p> <p><b>Develop marketing collateral</b> – digital and offline. Rich online</p>	<p>Developing marketing collateral and themed experiences has been started with the video of the Maidstone area. Video will be used to promote the Borough on social media and at Bluewater.</p> <p>Filming has taken place and will be used in future campaigns</p>

Countryside Actions	Progress to date
<p>content.</p> <p><b>Audit walks and trails selected for promotion to visitors to ensure they are easy to use and attractive</b> – safe and easy to find car parks at start points, good facilities along the way, e.g. picnic sites, interpretation, benches, viewpoints etc. Ensure the routes are consistently signed and that refreshment stops and attractions along the route provide appropriate facilities for walkers and cyclists, e.g. cycle lock ups . Develop a plan for investment to plug gaps in provision.</p>	<p>Still in assessment process and awaiting returns.</p> <p>Some very useful information was returned to us in relation to North Downs walks and River Medway walks, with maps and info. This will prevent us doubling up on work.</p> <p>The meeting in September generated two working groups one for the west of the Borough for cycle routes and one for the Headcorn, Staplehurst and Marden. Meetings are currently being arranged to collate the information and get them into a suitable format with the help of Explore Kent.</p> <p>Staplehurst Parish Council very kindly sent all their walking routes to us and we are in the process of getting these into a digital format. Produced in Kent have kindly marked up maps for us, so that routes can take in as many of their members as possible.</p> <p>A driving tour is also in the initial stages.</p>
<p><b>Develop rural Visitor Information Points</b> – “i” branded.</p>	<p>Work has started on Leader funding bid and potentially there will be new electronic visitor activity data as well, possibly using Scout.</p> <p>Three sites have now been identified to be developed but there was a question over whether the funding would be available for the scope of this project. A question mark remains over this but a submission of the outline plan with costs will now go forward before February and once we have a response from this then we will have to review the situation and drive it forward or review how this can be achieved.</p>
<p>Work towards becoming <b>Kent’s first “Walker Friendly”</b> destination using the Cyclist Welcome and Walkers Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify key towns/villages and support Walkers</li> </ul>	<p>Going to have be the 4<sup>th</sup> Walker Friendly destination but it would seem that this could be a great place for walking without the car. North Downs Way and Stations are working together and have potential to join in.</p>

**Countryside Actions**

Welcome accreditation (prioritise villages with direct train links into Maidstone)

- Promotional activity

**Progress to date**

<b>DMP Budget 2016-17 £20000</b>							
<b>Action no.</b>	<b>DMP Action</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Other funding proposed</b>	<b>Date of delivery</b>	<b>budget year</b>	<b>Actual cost</b>
<b>Total Spend 2015-16</b>							
1	Town - improve look and provide information	Install poster cases	£1,500.00	no	Complete	2016-17	£1,500
2	Destination awareness	12 visitor economy campaign with Bluewater	£2,600.00		on going	2016-17	£2,600
3	Town	Strategic Signage on M20	£3,000.00		awaiting decision		
4	Improve Signage	pedestrian signage - improvement to signs and install additional posts where required eg. signage to Mote Park	£4,000.00		subject to public realm improvements	2016-17	
5	DMP toolkit	New Photography	£8,000.00		in progress - summer images done. Scheduled Winter and spring	2016-17	£8,000
6	DMP toolkit	video - series of short medium and long themed videos. including drone	£11,000.00	may include partners contribution	Complete	2016-17	£11,000
7	Rural TIC's	4 rural Tourist Information points	£4,000.00	Leader Plus - will bring down total. Will require annual on costs	subject to funding	2016-17	
8	Events toolkit	develop online information for event planners	£500.00		awaiting quote	2016-17	
<b>Total Predicted Spend 2016-17</b>			<b>£34,600.00</b>				
<b>Actual DMP Spend</b>							<b>£23,100</b>

# Agenda Item 12

## HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE

**Tuesday 29  
November 2016**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**Yes**

### Review of MCL Events and Festivals 2016

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	MCL Marketing & Sales Manager, Laura Dickson
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

#### **This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. To continue to support Proms in the Park but look for alternative funding and introduce ticketing to reduce the cost to Maidstone Borough Council (MBC).
2. To develop a new multi-cultural event and food festival and outsource it to an external provider with a reducing subsidy over 3 years so it becomes self-financing.
3. To approve the amendments to the Festivals and Events Policy relating to the noise levels and frequency of events.

#### **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – by providing a wide range of quality cultural events and supporting the ambition for Maidstone to be known for events.
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough – the economic impact of events supports jobs and businesses in the borough

#### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Heritage Culture & Leisure Committee	29 November 2016

# Review of MCL Events and Festivals 2016

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 MBC support two events each year both financially and with officer time, Proms in the Park and the Maidstone Mela. Given the budgetary issues facing MBC over the next few years, funding for these events is at risk and will be considered in saving proposals.
  - 1.2 The report includes the Mela consultation results and the survey of attendees from Proms in the Park. It sets out suggestions as to how Proms and the Mela can be delivered and supported in the future.
  - 1.3 There were also two large music festivals in Mote Park run by external event companies. This part of the report is for information only and provides an overview of these events in 2016.
  - 1.4 The report also recommends an amendment to the Council's adopted Festivals and Event Policy regarding the noise levels and frequency of events.
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Festivals and Events Policy

The Festivals & Events Policy sets out the priorities, aims and objectives for the delivery of the Council's Festivals and Events programme. The vision is:

*"To develop a festivals and events programme that creates a lively and vibrant place to live, work and visit, whilst ensuring the sustainable use of the Borough's venues and;  
That by 2017 Maidstone borough is recognised as a destination that hosts and develops high quality sustainable festivals and events; and cultivates community creativity for maximum economic benefit and social enjoyment."*

Festivals and events directly support tourism and the economic impact of events benefits the borough as outlined in the Council's Economic Development Strategy. The Tourism Destination Management Plan (DMP) identifies events as one of key growth areas that will drive more visitors to the borough.

Well organised festivals and events are recognised for their ability to produce benefits for the local economy, bring life to an area, create interest in the area and reflect the place. Due to the broad dynamics of events and festivals, which cover sports, leisure, special interest, culture, heritage and the arts, they can each have a positive impact and make a significant contribution to the status and image of the Borough.

Maidstone Borough has an established history and tradition of hosting Events and Festivals. There is a comprehensive and diverse range of activities; from music events, to community events that have direct links to the well-being and cohesion of the local community.

## Overview of 2016 Events

### 2.2 Proms in the Park

- 2.2.1 Proms is run and funded by MBC. Parkwood Leisure, who manage the Hazlitt Theatre, provide the event management as part of their contract. MBC provide financial support of £14,000 per year as well as staff resource in planning and marketing the event. There is no additional marketing budget therefore in 2016 advertising was sold in the event programme to finance the promotional activities.
- 2.2.2 The event took place on the Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2016, the bank holiday weekend, with Maidstone Wind Symphony providing the headline performance. Approximately 1,800-2,000 people attended the event. Following a decision to cut fireworks from the programme for wildlife reasons, the programme started earlier in the afternoon. It was no longer necessary to finish after dark and the programme was therefore planned to allow the audience to leave safely whilst there was still light. This has the advantage of reducing the risk and necessity for additional lighting and safety barriers.
- 2.2.3 In addition to Maidstone Wind Symphony, a selection of performances and roaming entertainment was provided, with This Art of Mine providing activities and magician Adam Hoffman performing throughout the day.
- 2.2.4 There were concerns about whether or not the fireworks would deter attendance. However it is a free event, so there is never any guarantee as how many people will attend. The weather can also play a major factor in attendance. This year's event had a good sized crowd that comfortably fitted the space in Whatman Park.
- 2.2.5 Mid Kent College provided student volunteers who helped with the meet and greet, giving out programmes. They are interested in getting more involved in the future, providing a food concession although subject to student availability over the bank holiday.
- 2.2.6 In additional to the performances on stage, This Art of Mine supplied a children's craft station and there was a stilt walker and magician to entertain the crowd. There was one catering concession, but the majority people brought their own picnic.
- 2.2.7 The full list of main-stage performers included:  
**Maidstone Wind Symphony:** Regarded as one of the United Kingdom's finest wind orchestras, Maidstone Wind Symphony was founded by Brendon Le Page in 1998, and has had musical directors including Jeremy Cooper and current director Jonathan Crowhurst.  
**Hazlitt Youth Theatre:** The Hazlitt Youth Theatre started in September 1997 as a weekly workshop for 11-18 year olds. Since then, HYT has

expanded dramatically and now consists of nearly 200 members, aged 6-18 years.

**Maidstone Singers:** The Maidstone Singers, founded in 1998, is a group of 20 accomplished singers who perform a cappella choral works dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

**Energize:** Energize is a community choir based in Parkwood, Maidstone.

**Invicta Jazz:** Invicta Jazz Orchestra is a 30+ strong big jazz band, with Music Director Scott Jenkins a founding member.

**Rochester Choral Society Chamber Choir:** The Rochester Choral Society was formed in 1873 and has performed regularly in Rochester Cathedral since 1922.

2.2.8 During the event a survey of the audience as carried out to gauge the views on a number of issues. This was not a full consultation but a simple survey of attendees. There were two main questions. Firstly to ask their view regarding fireworks at the event and secondly their view on ticketing prices to attend the event. Over 60 questionnaires were completed. The results of the questionnaire are in Appendix I.

2.2.9 The key results were:

- 28% were not Maidstone residents.
- 32% attended with children
- 48% preferred the event to stay in May and have no fireworks, 32% didn't mind when it was, 20% would move it in September with fireworks.
- 54% would be prepared to pay £5 or less for a ticket, 7% would pay up to £10, 16% would not pay. Another 11% would pay if there were fireworks.
- 13% had a friend or family member taking part.

2.2.10 Proms in the Park adds a great cultural event to Maidstone's programme of events. However the number of attendees is modest in comparison to the cost to run the event is calculated at between £7-£10 per person. The survey also suggests that a third of the audience were not Maidstone residents, although it is recognised the economic benefit visitors bring to the town.

## 2.3 **Maidstone Mela**

2.3.1 Maidstone Mela was set up in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, with the intention of creating an event that promoted positive perceptions of different cultures, and provided a celebratory, inclusive community and family focused event for the Maidstone district. Until this year it has been held in Mote Park and has been free to attend with MBC supporting the event both financially and with staffing resources.

2.3.2 The event is budgeted at £35,500 to run. A grant from Arts Council and income from stall holders reduces the budgeted contribution from MBC to £15,550 not including staff costs. However in 2015 the net cost to MBC was £18,674, even with a reduction to the size of event.

- 2.3.3 The Mela has evolved over the years into a general community event with more community and charity groups than food and drink sellers. The programming on the stage is diverse and does showcase different cultural genres, but the main draw is usually the headline act such as Ruby Turner in 2014 or a tribute act such as Bob Marley.
- 2.3.4 It was recognised that this event required a complete review given the drift away from original objectives, current budget challenges and the lack of internal resources at MBC to deliver this event. Delivering the 2015 event was extremely challenging and was pushed over budget with increased costs of staging, infrastructure, stewarding, reduced income from stalls and the need to employ an external Event Manager.
- 2.3.5 This year a presence was maintained for the Mela whilst a full consultation was undertaken with stakeholders on its future. Following a meeting with Cohesion Plus, our delivery partners for the event, in February to discuss the proposal, the idea of a 'Street Mela' in Maidstone town centre was suggested. This was seen to have the advantage of taking a taste of a multi-cultural event to a wider and different audience in the town centre and engaging with the wider community in a consultation on its future. The BME forum brought volunteers who helped with the consultation process on the day.
- 2.3.6 The Street Mela took place on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September. There were two performance areas, Jubilee Square and Fremlin Walk for music and dance performances. It featured exciting performances including:
- Four by Four Bhangra Dancers**
  - Reel Eire Irish Dancers**
  - Phase 5 Steel Band**
  - Wolf's Head Morris**
  - Ronak Mela Brass Band**
  - Maidstone Nepalese Community Group**
- 2.3.7 In addition there were street mime artists, stilt walkers, human statues, and an interactive arts workshop for young people. A street trading license was granted for a small number of food stalls in Jubilee Square. The council trailer was used as the base for the consultation. As a taster event it ran smoothly and was in general well received by the public, many of whom had never experienced the Mela.
- 2.3.8 Should an event be held in the town in future some stage and seating would make the viewing of the acts more comfortable for the audience. The event did attract a number of people who came to specifically complain that that it 'had been moved' from Mote Park. 140 questionnaires were completed on the day and a further 785 online. The analysis is discussed in the consultation section of this report and a summary of consultation is in Appendix II.
- 2.3.9 During the Street Mela it became apparent that name 'Mela' was either not understood or associated with one ethnic group rather than recognised as a multi-cultural festival.

## **2.4 Large Events in MBC Venues**

Maidstone Culture and Leisure had existing income targets for festivals and events. The hire of Mote Park for external events such as the Ramblin Man Fair and the Big Day Out make a significant contribution to these income targets which were put in place to support the budget for the parks and leisure service.

### **2.4.1 The Big Day Out**

The Big Day Out is not an MBC event but is a large festival held on MBC land where we have a hire contract in place. Mote Park was booked for this new family focused music festival. The event took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> June with a build period from Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June.

2.4.2 The festival was ticketed with early bird tickets available at a discounted price and all ticket process set at a low level from £15 -£25 for adults. Initially planned as a one day event, demand was so high that the first day sold out quickly and a second day was added.

2.4.3 The entertainment took place on a main outdoor stage and a second outdoor stage. A small amount of fairground rides were provided. In addition to the music performers there were a number of well-known children's acts such as Peppa Pig. The main stage acts included Diversity, Union J, Chas and Dave, The Hoosiers and the Lightning Seeds.

2.4.4 The event was well run and any issues arising were dealt with quickly. Parking was bookable in advance but on the first day many cars without booking turned up causing tailbacks on the surrounding roads. However the organiser reacted quickly and opened the parking to all without taking payment to solve the problem. There was no issue on the second day. There were queues at the entrance gates to the festival arena on the first day taking up to 45 minutes to get through the security. However this was resolved on the second day with an increase in the staff manning on the gates.

2.4.5 There were 7 noise complaints. The noise levels were not breached at any point and in fact were generally at a much lower level than the maximum permitted due to the family nature of the event.

2.4.6 The weather was particularly bad with heavy rain storms on the first day. This caused a problem for some of the children's character acts who were unable to make an appearance on safety grounds. We have suggested a covered area in future for this type of performer.

2.4.7 As with any large event the full Event Management Plan went to the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) was signed off prior to the event. There was a full SAG debrief of the event and there were no concerns over the event, just some suggestions based on the issues mentioned to improve the event.

## **2.5 Ramblin Man Fair**

2.5.1 This is another is another large event where Mote Park was booked by an external event promoter and where a hire contract was put in place. This year the festival ran on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> July. Although this is the second

year the festival has taken place, it this was the first year for this promoter to run Ramblin Man since taking over the brand from the company that went into receivership last year.

- 2.5.2 Concentrating on a core offering of classic and Southern rock music it showcased both legends and new talent. As a celebration of classic rock, progressive rock, country and blues music, the live music featured the likes of Whitesnake, Black Stone Cherry, Family, Procol Harum, Thin Lizzy, Airbourne, Europe, Uriah Heep, Hawkwind, Hayseed Dixie, Warren Haynes, Walter Trout and more.
- 2.5.3 Glamping was offered on site and live vehicle camping were able to book pitches. There was additional camping on the Mote Cricket Club and the Rugby Club fields. All the hotels in the borough and beyond were fully booked. Day parking was available at the grammar school, keeping the parking at Mote Park free for park users.
- 2.5.4 The festival organiser has provided information that we have used to assess the economic impact of the event. There were 16,765 admissions, 6,280 people attended both days. 75 % of Festival goers were from outside Kent and there were tickets sold to 23 countries around the world. The organisers used over 150 local contractors and spent over 280 bed nights in the borough. All the information gathered has enabled us to use the economic impact of events toolkit. This is an industry standard model that allows us estimate of the worth of an event to the destination. The initial estimate showed the event was worth over £1.5m. However now that we have been able to add more detailed information provided by the festival organiser, the figure now shows an economic impact of over £2.5m (Appendix III).
- 2.5.5 There were 45 Stage 1 complaints and 4 have progressed to Stage 2. The majority of complaints were about music noise and 1 was about traffic management. The noise complaints all came from due east of the park. There was no significant noise audible from behind the leisure centre, Mote Road or the roads to the west of the arena. The organisers halted stage performances for 30 minutes on both days to accommodate wedding ceremonies at Turkey Mill.
- 2.5.6 SAG agreed the event plan before the event. The maximum permitted noise levels were largely maintained throughout the weekend but there were five instances on Saturday where the monitored noise went over the levels set. These breaches were minor breaches with the maximum breach being 2 decibels. The SAG debrief discussed these issues and the organisers have assured SAG that they will put measure in place to eliminate this happening next year. This will include reviewing the orientation of the main stage and the appointment of specialist event noise consultants. The maximum noise levels permitted will remain the same as per the Festival and Events Policy, but some additional information will be provided as explained in 2.6. The noise limit will be included in the licence and hire contract in 2017. There were no other concerns raised at the debrief from Licensing, MBC Food Safety, Health and Safety, Building Control, Environmental Services, NHS or Kent Police.

## 2.6 Noise Levels and the Number of Days for Noisy Events

2.6.1 There has been some confusion over the number of 'noisy' events permitted in Mote Park. The Noise Council Environmental Noise Control at Concerts provides guidance which refers to concerts only. However there are many other events, not classified as concerts that can cause disturbance and have an impact on the surrounding area.

2.6.2 In order to differentiate type of events, particularly those that are noisier but not necessarily concerts, an amendment to the approved Festival and Events Policy is proposed. The proposal is to introduce three categories of event:

- Category A events - amplified noise profile will extend beyond the boundary of the park and will be clearly audible at properties within and/or surrounding the parks and/ or significant:
  - increase in the number of visitors to the parks,
  - change to the normal use and operational matters in the parks,
  - impact on the surrounding area.

Examples- Music Concert, VIP Visit, high profile event

- Category B events - where the number of participants requires changes to normal use of the park and the surrounding infrastructure. Much lower noise profile but utilising amplified noise to communicate to audiences or with live / recorded music as part of the entertainment.

Example- Large scale charity run, cultural festival.

- Category C events - events with little or no impact on the surrounding area and no amplified noise.

Example- Nature talks and smaller community events.

2.6.3 Introducing these categories will help balance the impact of the different types of events and provide clarification to stakeholders of the amount of event days that can be expected and their likely impact on the surrounding community as we set out to deliver the Festival and Events Policy vision.

2.6.4 Due to the anticipated impact of each type of event, each category has a graduated limit to ensure those events with the greatest impact are restricted. Where appropriate a music noise level will be applied which is measured 1m from the façade of any noise sensitive property or locations identified by the Environmental Enforcement team through consultation with event organisers as appropriate (All Category A or Category B events which are reviewed by the Safety Advisory Group).

2.6.5 Although setting the noise limits in terms of dB(A) is convenient it does not always take into account the intrusiveness of low frequency noise. Low

Frequency noise, by its nature is harder to control and can travel further, having a broader impact on the surrounding community and further afield. Even if the dB(A) limits are being met it can seem to residents that the noise is loud because the genres of music rely heavily on the low frequencies for the audience to enjoy the experience of the event. Their absence makes events untenable. Therefore it may be necessary to set additional criterion in terms of low frequency noise or apply additional conditions on a case by case basis.

2.6.6 The proposed limits per year are as follows:

Mote Park

Category	No. Events	Maximum No. Days	Music Noise Level if appropriate
A	Up to 3	6	65dB LAEQ (15min)
B	Up to 8	12	Should not exceed 15dB LAEQ (15min) above the normal background levels
C	Unlimited	N/A	N/A

Whatman Park

Category	No. Events	Maximum No. Days	Music Noise Level if appropriate
A	1	2	65dB LAEQ (15min)
B	2	4	Should not exceed 15dB LAEQ (15min) above the normal background levels
C	Unlimited	N/A	N/A

2.6.7 It should be noted that The Noise Council guidance suggests the maximum number of days for concerts with a 65dB LAEQ (15min) limit is 3 days per year. A venue hosting more than 3 days of concerts is recommended to have a limit of 15dB LAEQ (15min) above the normal background levels. For Mote Park the day time limit is likely to be approximately 60dB which could reduce by up to 20dB in the evening. These limits would significantly impact on Mote Park’s attractiveness to event organisers as a concert venue and the social/economic benefits of hosting concerts/festivals in the grounds of the park.

2.6.8 The proposed noise limits are such that the impact on communities will be manageable whilst retaining the commercial viability of the park as a category A venue. As previously explained the levels for a Category A concert/festival are such that the music will be clearly audible at properties surrounding the park and significantly louder than the normal background levels. To ensure the impact is restricted, Category A events

will be required to finish by 23:00 (22:30 on Sundays) and they will be distributed over the festival season (May-September) to ensure events are not concentrated.

2.6.9 The noise limits proposed in the 2.6.7, are greater than those recommended in the guidance and members will need to consider whether the impact on residents is significant enough to reduce the availability of Mote Park as a Category A venue and compromise the delivery of the policy vision.

**Current Wording:**

Large music events involving high powered amplification can cause disturbance to those living in the vicinity. The Noise Council Code of Practice on Noise Control at Concerts provides guidance on the number and level of noise for urban venues such as parks.

The number of amplified music events with a Music Noise Level (MNL) of up to and not exceeding 65dB(A) in Mote Park will be limited to 5 events per year. These events will be limited to a maximum of 3 consecutive days or a total of 8 days in the year.

The number of amplified music events with a Music Noise Level (MNL) of up to and not exceeding 65dB(A) in Whatman Park will be limited to 3 events per year and a maximum of 2 consecutive days and no more than 5 days in the year. If the frequency and timing of these events will cause additional disturbance, then the maximum Music Noise Level will be set lower and must be agreed to by the event organiser.

**New wording:**

Large music events involving high powered amplification can cause disturbance to those living in the vicinity. These events we will categorise to ensure the impact of these events is minimised and spread out over the Festival and Event season. The category of events will be as follows:

- Category A events - amplified noise profile will extend beyond the boundary of the park and will be clearly audible at properties within and/or surrounding the parks and/ or significant:
  - increase in the number of visitors to the parks,
  - change to the normal use and operational matters in the parks,
  - impact on the surrounding area.

Examples- Music Concert, VIP Visit, high profile event

- Category B events - where the number of participants requires changes to normal use of the park and the surrounding infrastructure. Much lower noise profile but utilising amplified noise to communicate to audiences or with live / recorded music as part of the entertainment.

Example- Large scale charity run, cultural festival.

- Category C events - events with little or no impact on the surrounding area and no amplified noise.

Example- Nature talks and smaller community events.

In order to manage the impact of events, each park will be assigned limits based on the category types event and, where appropriate, the noise limits will also be set follows:

Mote Park

Category	No. Events	Maximum No. Days	Music Noise Level if appropriate
A	Up to 3	6	65dB LAEQ (15min)
B	Up to 8	12	Should not exceed 15dB LAEQ (15min) above the normal background levels
C	Unlimited	N/A	N/A

Whatman Park

Category	No. Events	Maximum No. Days	Music Noise Level if appropriate
A	1	2	65dB LAEQ (15min)
B	2	4	Should not exceed 15dB LAEQ (15min) above the normal background levels
C	Unlimited	N/A	N/A

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### 3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

#### **Proms in the Park**

- 3.1 Continue with current arrangements and support in full financially.
- 3.2 No longer fund or run Proms in the Park
- 3.3 Support Proms in the Park but look for alternative methods of funding to reduce the subsidy over the next three years to move towards a cost neutral position. This could include making it a ticketed event, applying for Arts Council funding, and sponsorship.

#### **Maidstone Mela**

- 3.4 No longer fund or support Maidstone Mela or a multi-cultural festival.
- 3.5 Reduce the size of the Mela and outsource the event management to fit the current budget continuing to work with partners to deliver the event. This

will be dependent on continued Arts Council funding and income through stalls and require MBC funding in full.

- 3.6 Develop an new 2 -3 day multi-cultural event and food festival, outsourcing the event and reducing the subsidy over 3 years until it becomes firstly self-funding and then potentially profitable.

#### **Festival and Events Policy**

- 3.7 The Festival and Events policy remain the same.
  - 3.8 Amend the Festival and Events policy to provide clarity over noise levels and number of event days.
- 

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

### **Proms in the Park**

- 4.1 3.3 above Support Proms but look for alternative funding models. Proms makes a valuable contribution to the cultural calendar as well as providing an outlet for our local orchestras and choirs.  
Introducing paid tickets for adults based on the ticket price that the survey found to be most palatable to attendees would not make the event self-financing but could reduce the subsidy. Other funding would need to be found in addition to make it cost neutral. The survey also showed that is preferable to keep Proms at the end of May where it is already established. According to attendees, fireworks was not the most important part of the event.

### **Multi-Cultural Festival**

- 4.2 3.6 Develop a new 2–3 day multi-cultural event and food festival that is longer and more sustainable. Outsourcing this would bring in expertise with the aim of reducing the subsidy over 3 years through the income raised by the food festival stalls. Discussion on the viability of this option with an external food festival company have indicated that this would be a good development of this event and feasible.

From the consultation it is clear that the most important elements for a future multi-cultural event are food, entertainment, children’s activities and local products and goods to buy. Using the existing budget will help to establish the event so that it can be self-financing within 3 years. There is no longer the staff resource within MBC to provide event management so any event would have to be external managed or completely outsourced. We would seek bidders to run the event on a reverse tender basis with a reducing budget of £15k year one, £10k year two, and £5k year three, after which the event would be self-sustaining, and may even return an income to MBC thereafter.

### **Festival and Events Policy**

- 4.3 3.8 Amend the policy to clarify the position. It will be clear that the MBC sets the number of amplified music events in Mote Park. The number of events maintained otherwise we would reduce the income potential of the park. The legacy of the Radio One event in 2009 was that Maidstone and Mote Park was to become a venue for major music events. The Destination Plan identifies Maidstone as the ‘Place for Big Events’. Events such as the Big Day and Ramblin man provide necessary income to maintain and

develop the park as well as providing additional events for the cultural calendar.

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

- 5.1 The Multi-Cultural Events and Festival Survey was conducted during the 'Street Mela' and as an online survey between 9 September and 23 October 2016. 140 surveys were completed at the Street Mela and a further 785 online.
- 5.2 Overall, 72% of respondents had heard of the Maidstone Mela and 28% have not. The greatest difference between groupings relates to ethnicity where 82% of respondents from BME group have previously heard of the Mela compared to 71% of respondents from white groups – an 11% difference.
- 5.3 53% of respondent said they had never visited the Mela. The highest proportion being in the 18 to 24 years old group where 76% had never visited. The acorn profile for those who have visited the Mela shows that 32% have a household income less than £20k and that there are a higher proportion of households where someone is unemployed compared to Maidstone overall.
- 5.4 For those people who had visited before:
- 75% rated The Mela as good or very good, 7% rated it as bad or very bad
  - 71% rated the variety of stalls as good or very good, 12% rated it as bad or very bad
  - 81% rated the music and entertainment as good or very good, only 6% rated it bad or very bad
  - 69% rated the food and drink offer as good or very good, 11% bad or very bad
  - 55% rated the activities for children as good or very good, 10% rated them as bad or very bad
  - 83% would recommend the event to family or friends
  - 69% thought it was important that Maidstone has a multi-cultural event to celebrate the diversity of its communities, 13% said it unimportant or very unimportant
  - 75% agreed that cultural festivals help people gain knowledge and appreciation of other cultures
  - The top things that people wanted to see at a multi-cultural festival were:
    - Food stalls 26%
    - Musical Acts and Entertainment 24%
    - Children's activities 12%
    - Local goods for sale/local products 11%
  - 51% thought a multi-cultural event should be held in the summer and 18% in the autumn.
  - 53% said it should be held in a park with 38% of these specifically stating Mote Park. 19% said in the town centre, 12% across more than one location. 16% inferred we should not hold such an event at

all. Other comments stated places with good transport, links, and parking.

- 74% want to be a visitor only and not involved in the delivery of the event. 10% said they would volunteer. The remainder would perform or have a stall.

## 6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Communicate with all relevant partners and stakeholders on agreed options and work to implement them.

## 7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	Festivals and Events are important securing a successful economy for the borough through events that bring in visitors and are enjoyed by residents.	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Risk Management</b>	By not supporting Proms and a multi-cultural event as recommended in the report MBC carries the risk of reputational damage and damage to the visitor economy.	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Financial</b>	The options in the report have financial implications for the council.	[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]
<b>Staffing</b>	All options have staffing implications that will be dealt with at individual event level.	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Legal</b>	There will be legal input required for any outsourced event contracts as well as the normal contracts relating to the hiring.	Team Leader (Contracts and Commissioning)
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	No impact	[Policy & Information Manager]
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	N/A	

<b>Community Safety</b>	N/A	
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	N/A	
<b>Procurement</b>	The procurement of any event management contracts will be in accordance with the council's constitution	[Head of Service & Section 151 Officer]
<b>Asset Management</b>	N/A	

## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

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

- Appendix I: Proms in the Park Survey
- Appendix II: Multi- Cultural Events Consultation Summary
- Appendix III: Ramblin Man Economic Impact report

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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Revised Festival and Events Policy v2 February 2016

[Maidstone Destination Management Plan 2015](#)

[Economic Development Strategy](#)

[Code of Practice on Environmental Noise Control at Concerts](#)

## **Proms in the Park Survey Analysis**

**1. Are you a Maidstone resident?**

Yes – 72%

No – 28%

**2. How did you travel to Proms?**

Car – 41%

Walked – 38%

Combination of transport – 12%

Bus – 5%

Train – 4%

**3. Who did you come to the event with today?**

Family with children – 32%

Family without children – 20%

Friends – 24%

Alone – 16%

Friends and Family – 8%

**4. Because of the nesting season we were unable to have fireworks this year, would you prefer for the event to:**

Remain in May and not have fireworks – 48%

Don't mind – 32%

Change the time of year to September and have fireworks – 20%

**5. Would you be prepared to buy a ticket for this event?**

£5 and under – 54%

No, probably not – 16%

Donation bucket – 12%

£10 and under – 7%

If there were fireworks, £5 and under – 10%

If there were fireworks, £10 and under – 1%

**6. Do you have a friend or family member taking part?**

No – 87%

Yes – 13%

**7. Where did you hear about this event?**

Facebook – 28%

Friends/Family – 24%

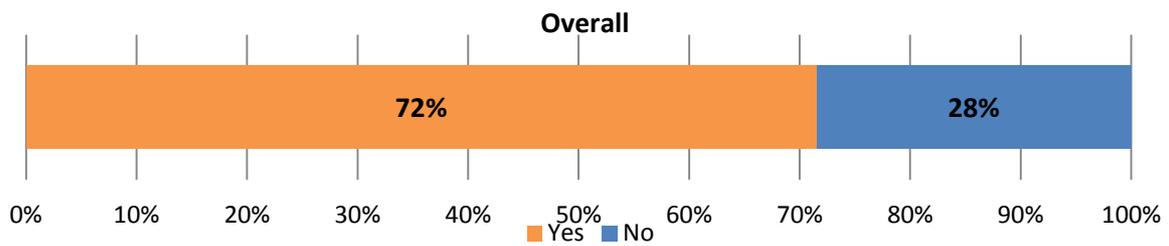
External Publications (Downs Mail, KM) – 24%

What's on Around Maidstone leaflet – 12%

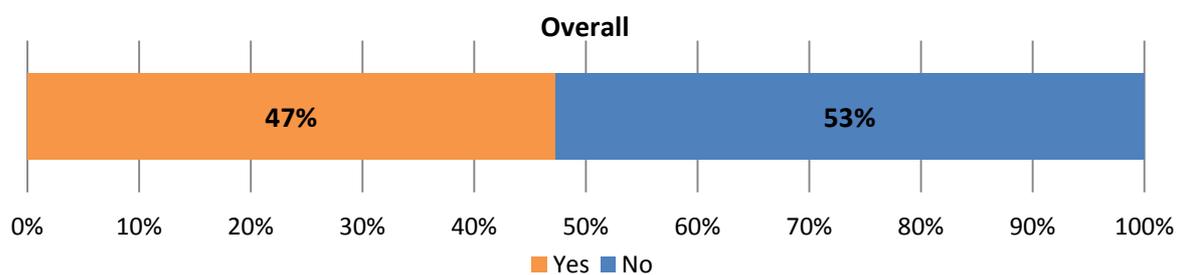
Visit Maidstone website – 8%

Poster sites – 4%

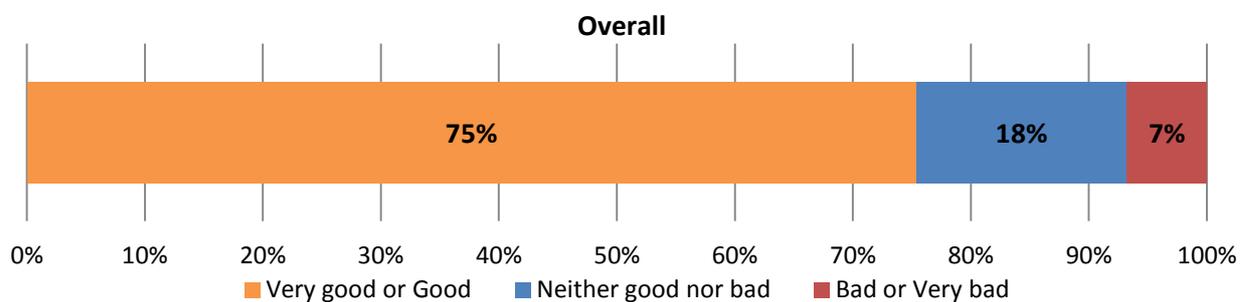
### Have you heard of Maidstone Mela?



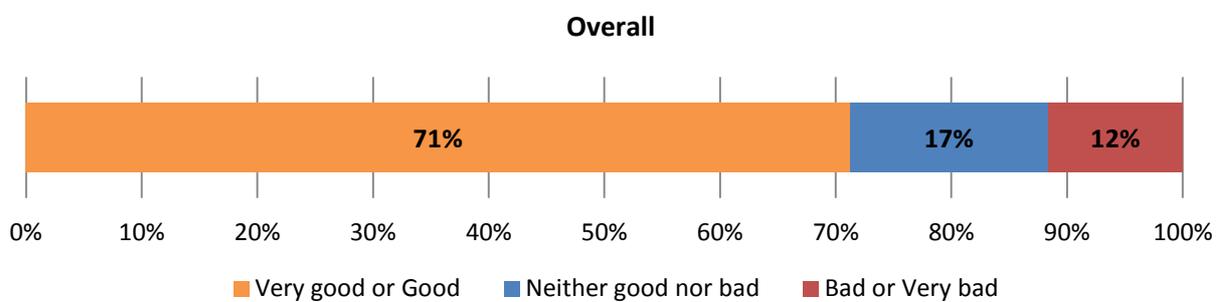
### Have you ever visited the Maidstone Mela?



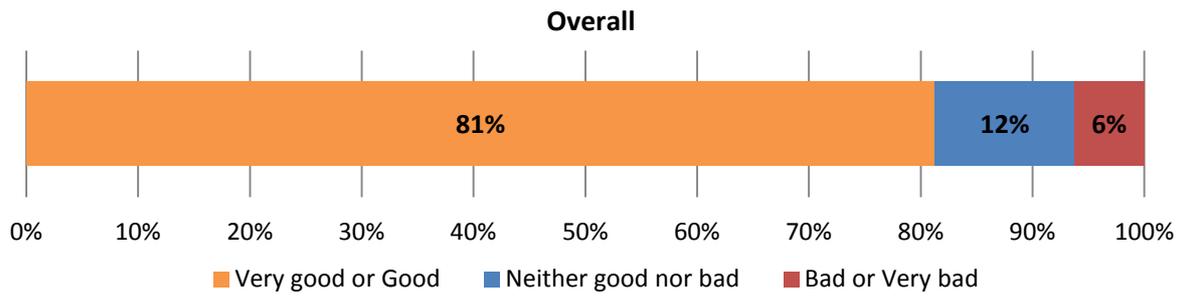
### How did you rate the Maidstone Mela as a multi-cultural event?



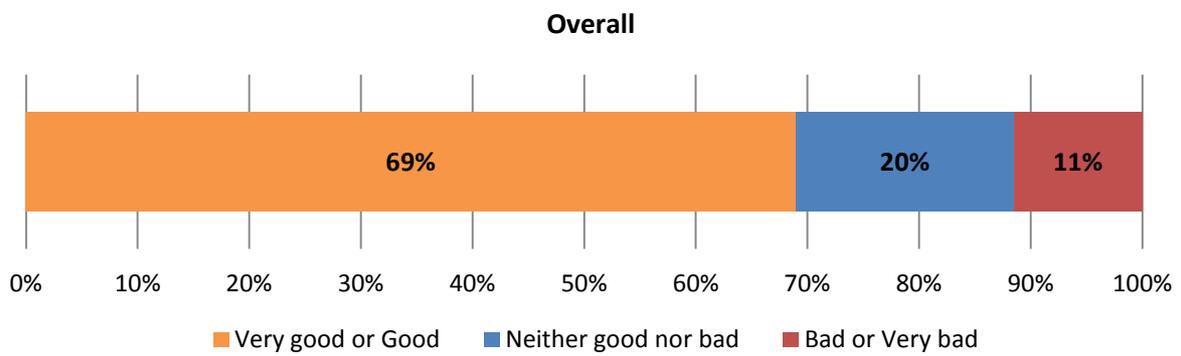
### Rating: Variety of stalls



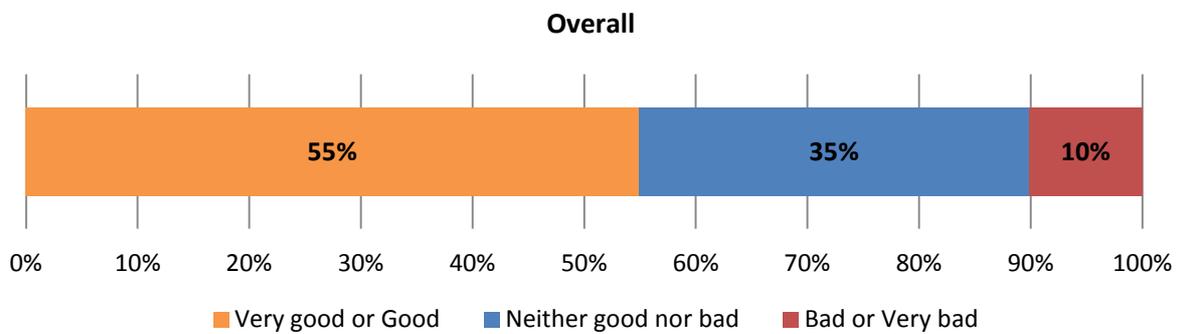
### Rating : Music and entertainment



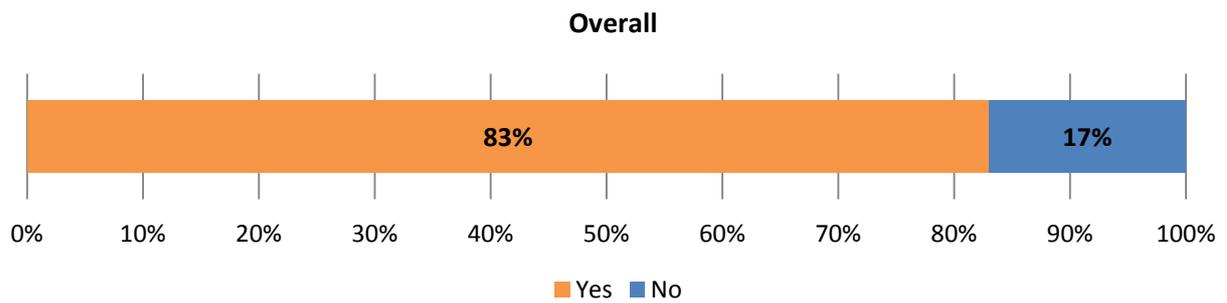
### Rating: Food and drink offer



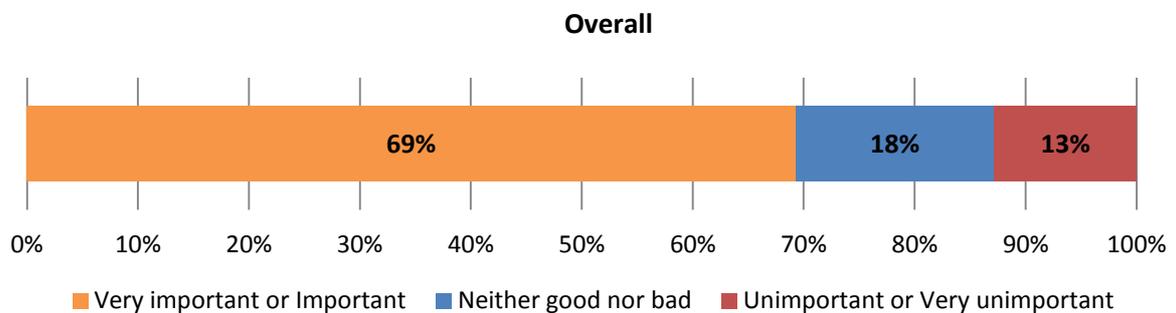
### Rating activities for Children



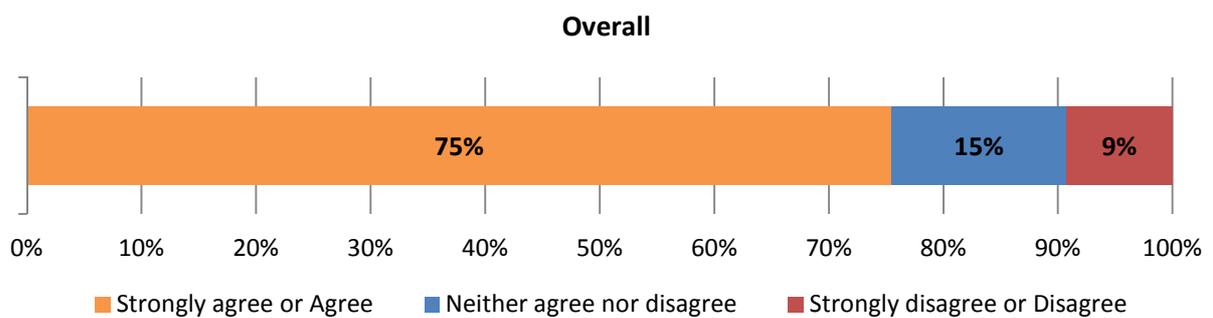
### Would you recommend this event to family or friends?



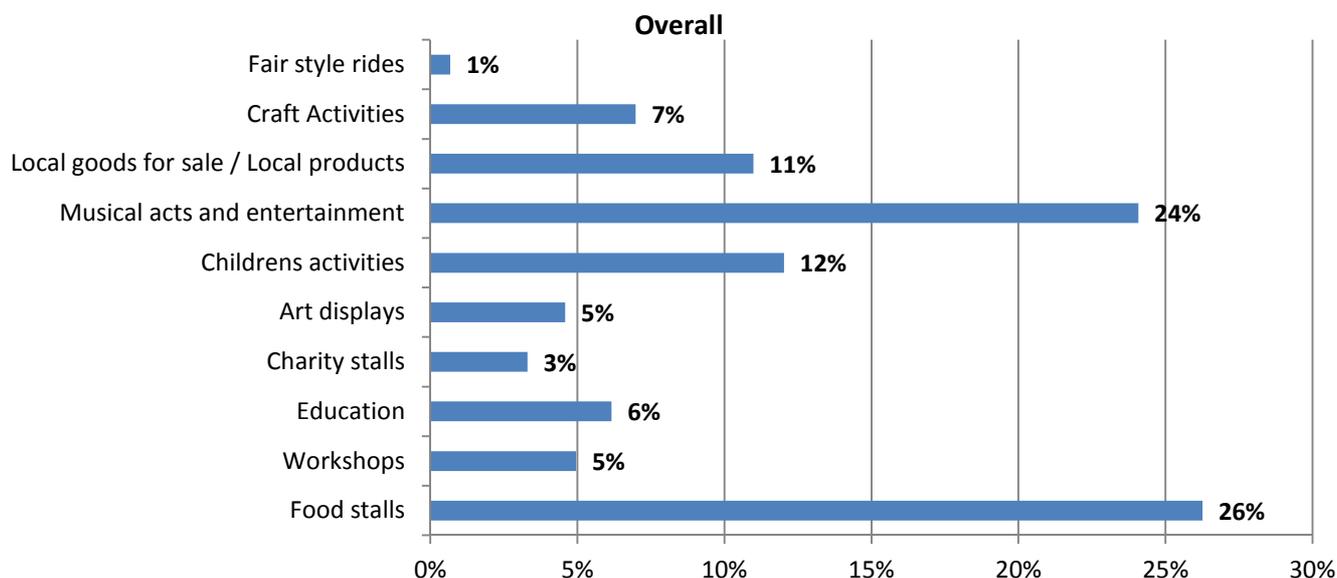
### How important is it that Maidstone has a multi-cultural event that celebrates the diversity of its communities?



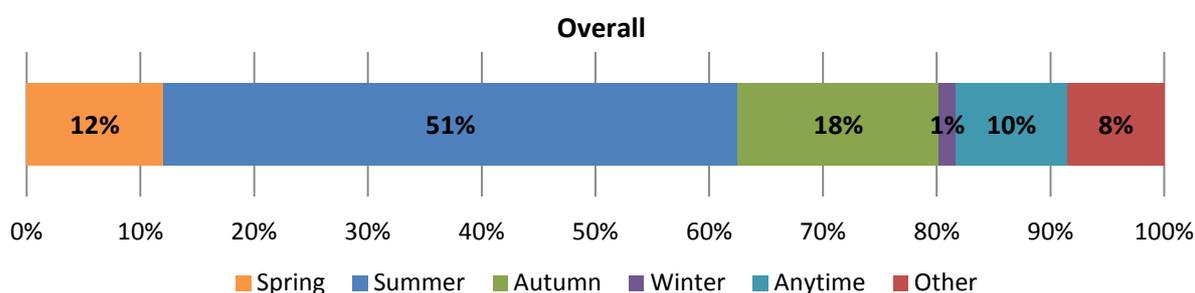
### To what extent do you agree or disagree that Cultural Festivals help people gain knowledge or appreciation of other cultures



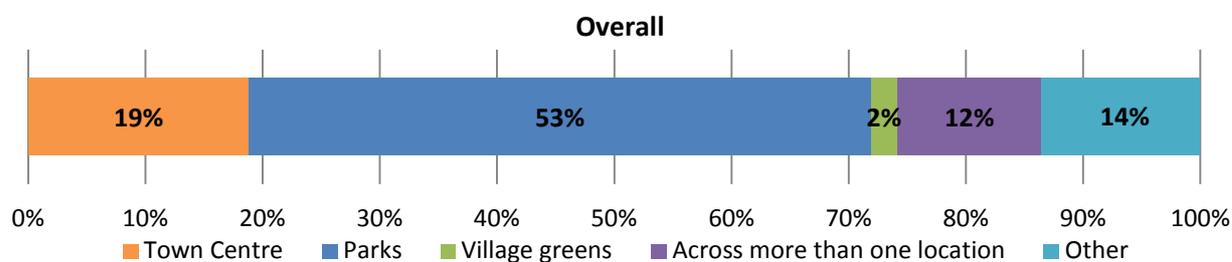
### What top three things would you want to see at a multi-cultural festival?



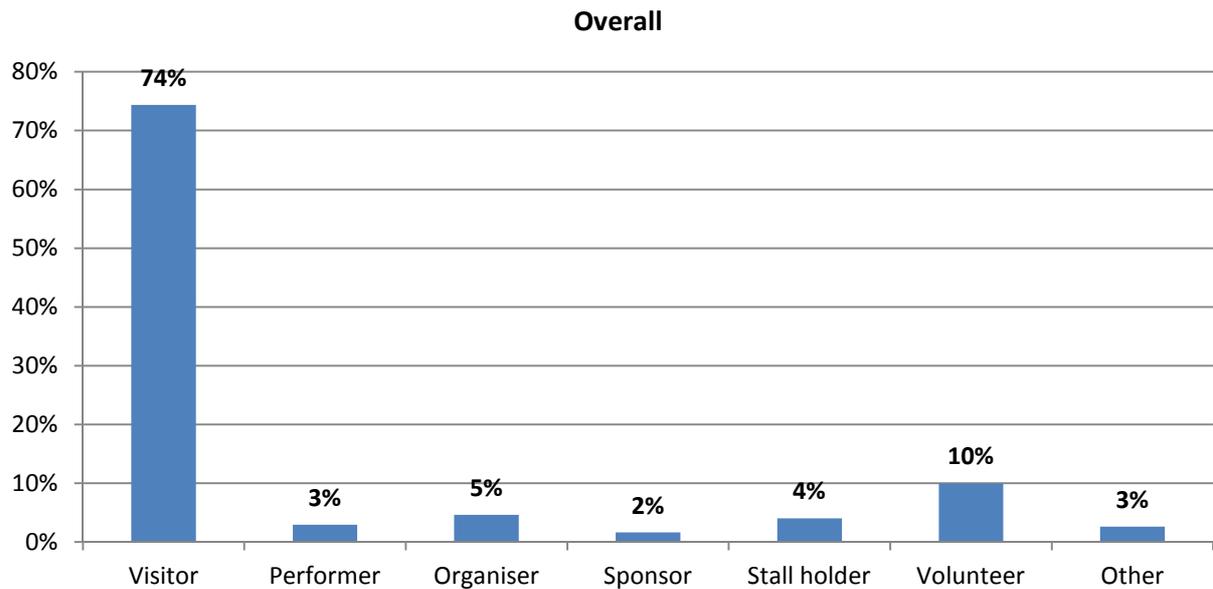
### What time of year do you think a multi-cultural festival should be held?



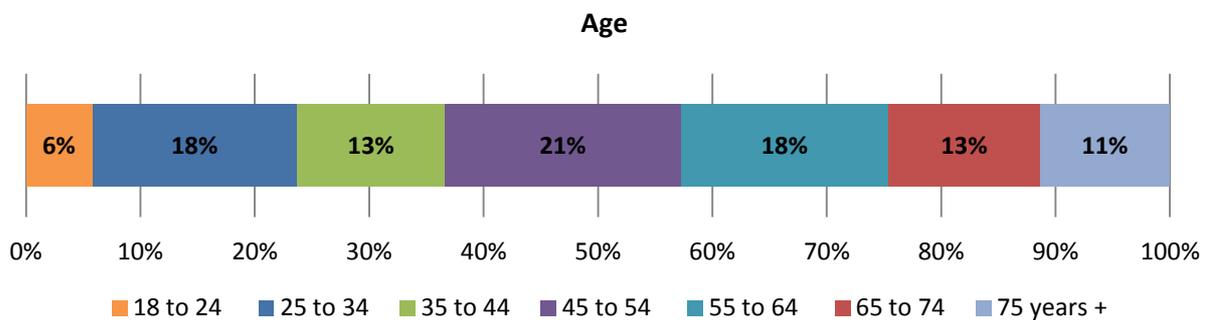
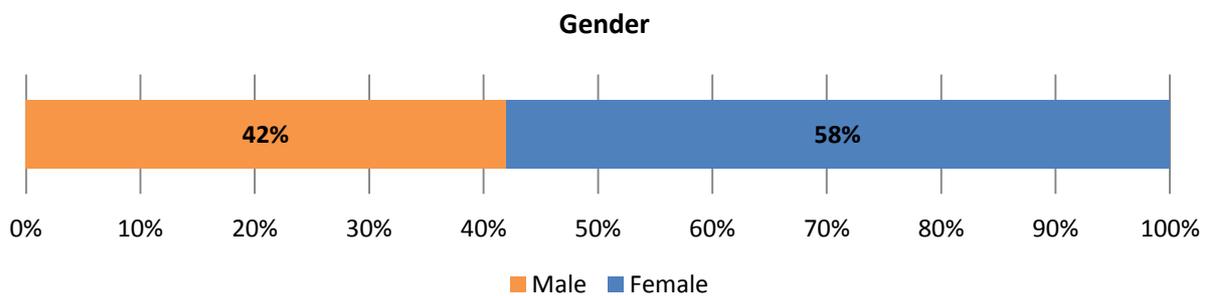
### Where do you think it is a good place to hold a multi-cultural festival or event?



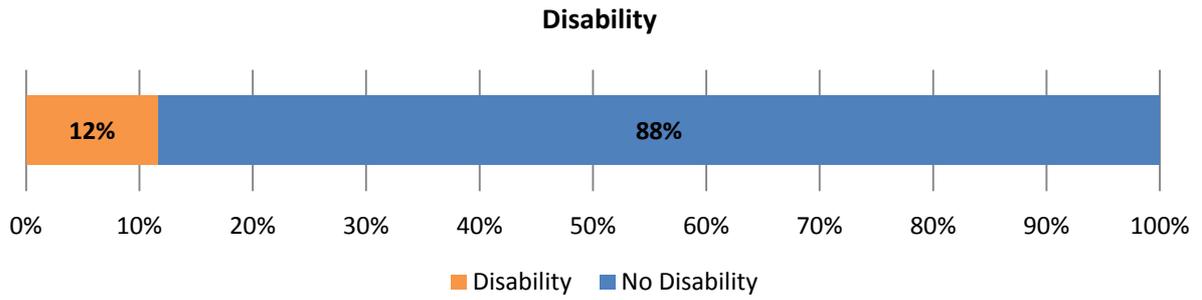
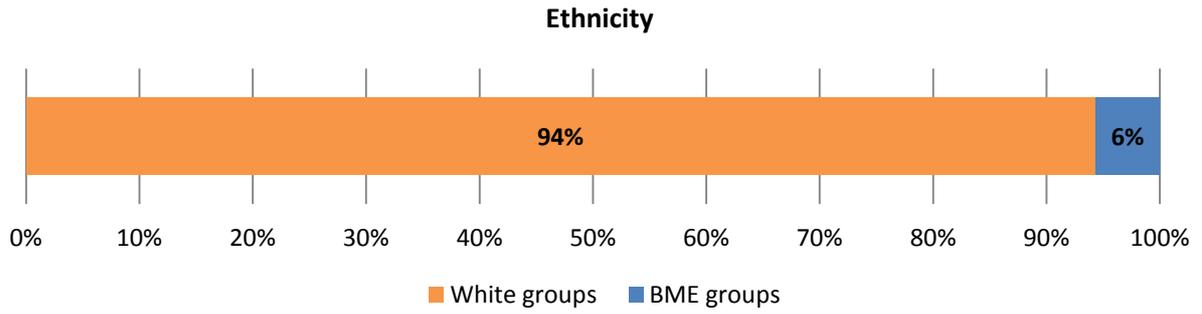
## How would you like to be involved in a multi-cultural festival?



## Survey Demographics



Appendix II - Multi-Cultural Events and Festival Summary of Consultation



**Event Name: Ramblin Man**

**Event Year: 2016**

**Host Economy: Maidstone**

**Event Region: England excl London**

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**Spectator spending £1,709,630**

Based on 16,762 spectator admissions

- **Total Spectator Admissions 16,762**

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- **Average number of days attended 2**

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- **% of Spectators resident in the host economy 15**

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- **% of non-local spectators who are casual visitors 0**

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- **Number of Commercial stayers 2,922**

---
- **Number of Non-Commercial stayers 0**

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- **Number of Day visitors 4,202**

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- **Average number of nights spent in the host economy 3**

---
- **Average cost per bed-night (per person) £65**

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- **Average daily spend on non-accommodation items £80**

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**Attendee spending £665,745**

Based on 2,700 attendee admissions

- **Total Attendees 2,700**
- 

- **Average number of days attended 20**
- 

- **% of Attendees resident in the host economy 85**
- 

- **Number of Commercial stayers 13**
- 

- **Number of Non-Commercial stayers 0**
- 

- **Number of Day visitors 392**
- 

- **Average number of nights spent in the host economy 21**
- 

- **Average cost per bed-night (per person) £65**
- 

- **Average daily spend on non-accommodation items £80**
- 

**Direct leakages £220,000**

- **Spectator and Attendee Spending with Non-local Vendors £220,000**
- 

**Direct spending £420,000**

- **Organiser spend in Host Economy £420,000**
- 

**Direct Economic Impact £2,575,375**

- **Direct Economic Impact £2,575,375**
-

## GVA

- **Spending to GVA Ratio 44.7%**
- 

- **GVA Impact £1151192.625**
- 

- **GVA per Workforce Job £26806**
- 

- **Jobs Supported 43**
-