

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 27 November 2018
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Cuming, Fermor, Fort, Harper (Chairman), Hastie, Hinder,
Mrs Hinder, Lewins and Mrs Wilson (Vice-Chairman)

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.

AGENDA

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| 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 should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information | |
| 8. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2018 | 1 - 7 |
| 9. Presentation of Petitions (if any) | |
| 10. Questions and answer session for members of the public | |
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PUBLIC SPEAKING AND ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk.

Issued on Monday 19 November 2018

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

In order to speak at this meeting, please contact Democratic Services using the contact details above, by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting, i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday, 23rd November 2018. 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.

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk.

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to the **Policy and Resources Committee**, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by **three** Councillors, to the **Head of Policy and Communications** by: 19 November 2018

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 30 OCTOBER 2018

Present: Councillors Cuming, Fermor, Fort, Harper (Chairman), Hinder, Mrs Hinder, Joy, Lewins and Mrs Wilson

Also Present: Councillor Adkinson

72. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Hastie.

73. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillor Mrs Joy was present as a substitute for Councillor Hastie.

74. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

75. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor Adkinson was present as a Visiting Member and indicated his wish to speak on Agenda Item 12 – Local Nature Reserves.

The Chairman indicated that he intended to read out a statement from Councillor Round who could not attend due to illness on Agenda Item 12 – Local Nature Reserves and Agenda Item 15 – MBC Festivals and Events Update.

76. **CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chairman suggested that Agenda Item 15 – MBC Festivals and Events Update 2018 be considered after Agenda Item 12 – Local Nature Reserves as it was likely to stimulate a lot of debate.

RESOLVED: That Agenda Item 15 – MBC Festivals and Events Update 2018 be considered after Agenda Item 12 – Local Nature Reserves.

77. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

The following Councillors disclosed an interest in Agenda Item 12 – Local Nature Reserves:-

- Councillor Harper – Trustee of Fant Wildlife Group
- Councillor Hinder – Chairman of Friends of Boxley Warren Trust
- Councillor Mrs Wilson – Member of the River Len Nature Reserve Management Committee

78. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

79. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

80. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 OCTOBER 2018

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2018 be signed as a correct record.

81. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

82. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

83. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Committee Work Programme for 2018/19.

The following changes were made to the Work Programme:-

Review of Sports Facilities Update – this should be changed to 'Update on Sports Pitches Bookings'.

Bio-Diversity Action Plan – Mrs Jennifer Shepherd, the Head of Environment and Public Realm advised that the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership had been commissioned to write the plan. The Medway Valley Countryside Partnership had raised concerns about completing the plan by the deadline due to staffing issues. Mrs Shepherd confirmed she would update the Committee at the end of the financial year as to whether the plan was scheduled to be completed in time.

400th Anniversary of the Charter of the Swans to Maidstone Borough Council – This could be taken off as it would be discussed under the Festivals and Events Update on the agenda.

Visit to Museum for Members of the Committee – The Chairman undertook to speak to the Museum's Director to progress this.

Plans for the Museum Café – The Chairman would speak to the Museum’s Director to firm up a date when a report would come to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted subject to the changes made by the Committee.

84. LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

Mrs Deanne Cunningham, Team Leader (Heritage, Landscape and Design) presented her report which scoped the requirements for the creation of additional Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and set out a list of sites identified in a recent Member Survey.

The Committee noted that an additional four sites were included in the Maidstone Borough Council Annual Monitoring Report 2017 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. However, if Members wanted to move forward with a programme for creating new LNRs and strengthening policy, then a robust evidence base would be required with a framework for assessment. In addition a Consultant would need to be appointed to carry out a full feasibility study.

Councillor Adkinson spoke on this item as a Visiting Member.

The Chairman read out a statement from Councillor Round who could not be present and made the following points:-

- He drew attention to the work done at Policy and Resources Committee in respect of the Medway Flood Action Plan to reduce the risk of harm from flooding.
- He advised that the Headcorn Parish Council, Ward Members and other agencies were working together to improve an area along the Headcorn Beult SSSI with the objective to provide a public area for conservation and wildlife.

In the proceeding discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- Once the Bio-Diversity Action Plan had been agreed a further report on Nature Reserves should be considered to reconsider areas eligible to become nature reserves, including River Medway corridor.
- The Council only had two designated nature reserves and this needed to be increased.
- That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2017 did not include amendments made to the 10 Year Parks and Open Spaces Plan but carried a recommendation that the Officer should make the amendments according to what was said at the meeting. Therefore a Reference should be made to the Democracy Committee to request that the Committee ask for minutes to include all

amendments made at Committee meetings to promote transparency.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The report be noted.
- 2) A more detailed evaluation and feasibility assessment of sites be carried out.
- 3) The 10 year Parks and Open Spaces Plan be published on the Council's website as soon as possible.
- 4) The Democracy Committee be requested to look at the value of including any amendments to a strategic document, that have been moved and agreed by a Committee, in the minutes to create more transparency.

Voting: Unanimous

85. MBC FESTIVALS AND EVENTS UPDATE 2018

The Committee considered the report of Mrs Laura Dickson, the Visitor Economy Development Manager which provided a review of large events held on council land and set out recommendations for the future of Proms in the Park.

Mrs Dickson provided an update on the events undertaken throughout the year. A number of events had taken place, including:-

- Proms in the Park
- Shemomedjamo
- Ramblin' Man Fair
- Oktoberfest
- Community Mela

Mrs Dickson confirmed that the organisers of the Community Mela had contacted the Council to warn that the 2019 event was under pressure and there was a risk it would not take place. Mrs Dickson also highlighted the funding gap for Proms in the Park for 2019 as Parkwood Leisure had indicated that it would cost more to run the event in 2019. Officers estimated that it would cost at least £17,000 to deliver the event which would not take into account costs associated with marketing and MBC staff time.

The Chairman read out a statement from Councillor Round as he was not able to attend as a Visiting Member and speak on this item.

The Committee debated the report and made the following comments:-

- There should be more advertising to encourage people to make use of Jubilee Square.
- To make use of the Bandstand in Brenchley Gardens on a Sunday having various bands playing such as the Salvation Army. To also re-invigorate Brenchley Gardens to make it a safe place for families to use.
- Once the new Culture and Arts Officer was in post, one of their top priorities should be to bring together the relevant community groups together with a view to organising a Pride Event.

Due to the funding issues with Proms in the Park, and the information that had been received from organisers of the Community Mela, the Committee debated the possibility of withdrawing the £5,000 funding for the event and transferring it to the Community Mela.

The Chairman undertook to contact the organisers of the Community Mela to understand whether a joint event with Shemomedjamo was a possibility. Additionally the Chairman confirmed that he would email members requesting that they allocate £200 of their member grant to the Community Mela to provide additional financial support.

The Committee requested that an additional event take place in 2019 in order to celebrate the 400th Anniversary of the granting of the first charter to the Mayor of Maidstone to keep swans on the River Medway. This could be in the form of an exhibition in the Museum with an event bringing together the River Medway user groups.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The updates in the report be noted.
- 2) The Proms in the Park be discontinued and that the remaining £5,000 budget for 2019 be used to support the Community Mela for one year only, subject to outcomes being agreed between Cohesions Plus and MBC and pump prime new events in Brenchley Gardens.

Voting: Unanimous

86. 2ND QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING 2018/19

Mr Mark Green, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement presented his report on the 2nd Quarter Budget Monitoring 2018/19.

The Committee noted that there was an underspend against the revenue budget of £106,000 but this was expected to change to an overspend of £16,000 by the end of the financial year.

Mr Green explained that there were some significant variances that had contributed towards underspend which included the delay in the opening of the Adventure Zone and the shortfall in income at the Market.

It was also noted that some capital expenditure had slipped to next year, due to the Mote Park Dam works taking longer than expected to complete and the Visitor Centre detailed design discussions being delayed.

In response to a question from a Member of the Committee, Mr Green advised that:-

- There had been a long term trend of decline in Markets nationally although at Maidstone the Tuesday Market had remained stable.
- The Internal Audit team would consider how the Market was accounted for as the Market Manager had little jurisdiction over his budget. An investigation would follow the Audit into how to rejuvenate the Market to improve its performance. Officers were working on improvements to the I.T. network to enable Officers at the Market to use wifi and social media. This report would come back to the Committee in the Spring.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) 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.
- 2) The capital position at the end of the second quarter be noted.
- 3) That a report on the Market be presented to Committee in April once Internal Audit had provided their findings.

Voting: For: unanimous

87. DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2019/20 - 2023/24

The Committee considered the report of Mr Mark Green, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement which provided an update on the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 – 2023/24.

Mr Green explained that the Medium Term Financial Strategy set out in financial terms how the Council would fulfil its Strategic Plan over the next five years which was due to be adopted in December at full Council.

It was noted that the Council's budget would be in a balanced position next year assuming that the Council tax is increased by 3%. However the funding position after 2020 was uncertain due to a lack of clarity from central government. Therefore financial projections had been prepared covering the five year MTFS period based on three different scenarios - favourable, neutral and adverse.

Members were asked to consider and comment on the draft MTFS. Any changes and comments would be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee in November.

Members made the following suggestions:-

- That there should be a clear definition for Environment issues under the responsibilities of all the Service Committees.
- That any suggested comments should be emailed to the Chairman within the next few days to enable him to present these to Officers for inclusion.

RESOLVED: That Members give consideration on how the Committee's budget is mapped across the Strategic Plan objectives and provide comments to the Chairman within the next few days.

Voting: Unanimous

88. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.15 p.m.

	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Tourism Destination Management Plan Progress Update	HCL	27/11/18	Dawn Hudd	Laura Dickson
Q2 Performance Report 2018/19	HCL	27/11/18	Angela Woodhouse	Anna Collier
Update on Sports Pitch Bookings	HCL	17/12/18	Dawn Hudd	Mike Evans
Update on Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan	HCL	17/12/18	John Foster	Mike Evans
Areas to Designate as Wildflower Meadows	HCL	17/12/18	Jennifer Shepherd	
Fees & Charges 2019/20	HCL	29/01/19	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Strategic Plan 2019/20 - 2023/24 - Final	HCL	29/01/19	Alison Broom	Angela Woodhouse
Medium Term Financial Strategy - Budget Proposals 2019/20	HCL	29/01/19	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Museums consultation results and fundraising strategy	HCL	29/01/19	John Foster	Victoria Barlow
Cemetery Update	HCL	29/01/19	Jennifer Shepherd	Sharon Smith
Q3 Budget Monitoring 2018/19	HCL	05/03/19	Ellie Dunnet	Paul Holland
Q3 Performance Report 2018/19	HCL	05/03/19	Angela Woodhouse	Anna Collier
Museums Future Governance Options Update	HCL	05/03/19	William Cornall	Victoria Barlow
Biodiversity Action Plan	HCL	05/03/19	Jennifer Shepherd	Andrew Williams

	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Leisure Services - Scoping Report	HCL	01/02/19	William Cornall	
Joint Heritage Bid - All Saints Church (requested by Cllr Joy)	HCL	TBC	William Cornall	Victoria Barlow
80th Anniversary of the start of WWII	HCL	TBC	John Foster	Laura Dickson
Market Review	HCL	TBC	John Foster	Fran Wallis
New Market on Jubilee Square	HCL	TBC	John Foster	Fran Wallis
400th Anniversary of the Charter of the Swans to Maidstone Borough Council	HCL	TBC	TBC	(at the request of Cllr Harper)
Long Term Maintenance of Assets	HCL	TBC	TBC	TBC (at the request of HCL Committee)
Sport Position Statement	HCL	TBC	TBC	Mike Evans

Agenda Item 12

Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee

27 November 2018

Key Performance Indicator Update Quarter 2 2018/19

Final Decision-Maker	Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications, and Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Anna Collier, Policy and Information Manager and Ashley Sabo, Performance and Business Information Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee is asked to review the progress of Key Performance Indicators that relate to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020. The Committee is also asked to consider the comments and actions against performance to ensure they are robust.

This report makes the following recommendations to Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee:

1. That the summary of performance for Quarter 2 of 2018/19 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee	27 November 2018

Key Performance Indicator Update Quarter 2 18/19

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Having a comprehensive set of actions and performance indicators ensures that the Council delivers against the priorities and actions set in the Strategic Plan.
- 1.2 Performance indicators are judged in two ways. Firstly on whether performance has improved, sustained or declined, compared to the same period in the previous year. This is known as direction. Where there is no previous data, no assessment of direction can be made.
- 1.3 The second way is to look at whether an indicator has achieved the target set and is known as PI status. If an indicator has achieved or exceeded the annual target they are rated green. If the target has been missed but is within 10% of the target it will be rated amber, and if the target has been missed by more than 10% it will be rated red.
- 1.4 Some indicators will show an asterisk (*) after the figure. These are provisional values that are awaiting confirmation. Data for some of the indicators were not available at the time of reporting. In these cases a date has been provided for when the information is expected.
- 1.5 Contextual indicators are not targeted but are given a direction. Indicators that are not due for reporting or where there is delay in data collection are not rated against targets or given a direction.

2. Quarter 1 Performance Summary

- 2.1 There are 27 key performance indicators (KPIs) which were developed with Heads of Service and unit managers, and agreed by the four Service Committees for 2018/19. 5 are reported to the Committee for this quarter.
- 2.2 Overall, 80% (4) of targeted KPIs reported this quarter achieved their target compared to 100% (5) in quarter 1 and 25% (1) in the same quarter last year.

RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A	Total
KPIs	4	0	1	0	5
Direction	Up	No Change	Down	N/A	Total
Last Year	3	0	2	0	5
Last Quarter	3	0	2	0	5

3. Performance by Priority

Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone borough an attractive place for all, & Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

- 3.1 The Hazlitt Theatre sold 52.5% of all available tickets during quarter 2, against a target of 50% (as stated in the contract). The percentage to capacity for this quarter is commendable considering this is not typically a busy time of the year for theatres. The team at the Hazlitt continue their focus introducing acts that cater to a wide range to customers. One of the latest introductions was the Bing Live Show which was a hit for families with young children.
- 3.2 The number of students benefiting from the museum's educational service was 1,431 against a target of 2,074. Although the target was missed for this quarter, the previous quarter was over by 978, so it would appear that teachers have planned visits in June rather than July when schools were only active for two weeks. Schools were on holiday from mid-July to the second week of September and this always has an impact on quarter 2. However, during this time 450 children completed their Arts Award as part of the Green Spaces, Natural Places project which encouraged pupils to explore parks and natural environment and reflect on their health and well-being.
- 3.3 Footfall at the Museum and Visitor Information Centre was 18,448 against a target of 16,250. Discworld and Beyond, an exhibition of the work of Paul Kidby attracted a wide audience of illustration and Terry Pratchett fans. The exhibition included linked activity days and a special early opening on a Sunday for people with Dementia, their families and carers. Heritage Open Day offered the chance to visit the Observatory tower, not usually open to visitors. This event sold out very quickly as the nature of the staircase and size of the tower meant numbers had to be limited.
- 3.4 The number of contacts to the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) was 1092 against a target of 782. Of these, 626 were walk-ins, 435 were by telephone and 31 via email. The heatwave in July brought many contacts from people looking to make the most of the good weather. As always, it is difficult to assign a specific cause for VIC contacts but contacts are generally higher in the summer months.
- 3.5 There were 198,370 users at the leisure centre during quarter 2 against a target of 186,079. The centre hosted boxing, a youth orchestra and wrestling events during this quarter. The team had a family discount offer throughout the summer holidays to enable families to access a range of activities. There were also extra fun activities introduced over the holidays to encourage families to visit the centre. Other offers during the summer included a free 7 day pass and no joining fees.

4. RISK

- 4.1 This report is presented for information only, committees, managers and heads of service can use performance data to identify service performance and this data can contribute to risk management.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 The Key Performance Indicator Update is reported quarterly to the Service Committees; Communities Housing and Environment Committee, Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee, and Heritage Culture and Leisure Committee. Each Committee will receive a report on the relevant priority action areas. The report is also presented to the Policy & Resources Committee, reporting only on the priority areas of: A clean and safe environment, regenerating the Town Centre, and a home for everyone.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 The Council could choose not to monitor the Strategic Plan and/or make alternative performance management arrangements, such as frequency of reporting. This is not recommended as it could lead to action not being taken against performance during the year, and the Council failing to deliver its priorities.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The key performance indicators and strategic actions are part of the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2015-20 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. They also cover a wide range of services and priority areas, for example waste and recycling.	Head of Policy, Communications & Governance
Risk Management	The production of robust performance reports ensures that the view of the Council's approach to the management of risk and use of resources is not undermined and allows early action to be taken in order to mitigate the risk of not achieving targets and outcomes.	Head of Policy, Communications & Governance
Financial	Performance indicators and targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and determining good value for money. The financial implications of any proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and associated annual budget setting process. Performance issues are highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.	Senior Finance Officer (Client)
Staffing	Having a clear set of targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place	Head of Policy, Communications & Governance

Legal	There is no statutory duty to report regularly on the Council's performance. However, under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) a best value authority 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. One of the purposes of the Key Performance Indicators is to facilitate the improvement of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of Council Services. Regular reports on the Council's performance assist in demonstrating best value and compliance with the statutory duty.	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Privacy and Data Protection	The data will be held and processed in accordance with the data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 2018 and in line with the Data Quality Policy, which sets out the requirement for ensuring data quality. There is a program for undertaking data quality audits of performance indicators.	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Equalities	The Performance Indicators reported on in this quarterly update measure the ongoing performance of the strategies in place. If there has been a change to the way in which a service delivers a strategy, i.e. a policy change, an Equalities Impact Assessment is undertaken to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on individuals with a protected characteristic.	Equalities & Corporate Policy Officer
Crime and Disorder	None Identified	Policy & Information Manager
Procurement	Performance Indicators and Strategic Milestones monitor any procurement needed to achieve the outcomes of the Strategic Plan.	Head of Policy, Communications & Governance, & Section 151 Officer

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Key Performance Indicator Update Quarter 2 18/19





9. BACKGROUND PAPERS




None

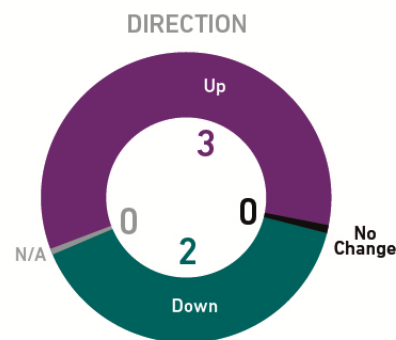
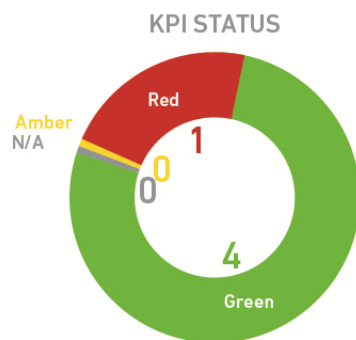
Performance Summary

This is the quarter 2 performance update on Maidstone Borough Council’s Strategic Plan 2015-20. It sets out how we are performing against Key Performance Indicators that directly contribute to the achievement of our priorities. Performance indicators are judged in two ways; firstly, whether an indicator has achieved the target set, known as PI status. Secondly, we assess whether performance has improved, been sustained or declined, compared to the same period in the previous year, known as direction.

Key to performance ratings

RAG Rating	
	Target not achieved
	Target slightly missed (within 10%)
	Target met
	Data Only
















Direction	
	Performance has improved
	Performance has been sustained
	Performance has declined
N/A	No previous data to compare



RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A	Total
KPIs	4	0	1	0	5
Direction	Up	No Change	Down	N/A	Total
Last Year	3	0	2	0	5
Last Quarter	3	0	2	0	5

**Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all,
& Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone
Borough**

Ensuring there are good leisure and culture attractions

Performance Indicator	Value	Target	Status	Last Year	Last Quarter
Percentage of all available tickets sold at the Hazlitt	52.54%	50%			
Number of students benefiting from the museums educational service	1,431	2,074			
Footfall at the museum and Visitors Information Centre	18,448	16,250			
Contacts to the Visitor Information Centre (visits, calls and emails)	1,092	782			
Number of users at the leisure centre	198,370	181,094			

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

27 November 2018

Tourism Destination Management Plan – Action Plan Progress Update

Final Decision-Maker	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Dawn Hudd - Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Laura Dickson - Visitor Economy & Events Development Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

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

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the update of the 3 year action plan is noted.
2. That the Tourism Destination Management Plan is reviewed and updated and a one year rolling action plan is developed.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee	27 November 2018

Tourism Destination Management Plan – Action Plan Progress Update

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Tourism Destination Management Plan (DMP) was adopted by Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee in July 2015 and the accompanying three year Action Plan was endorsed by the Committee.
- 1.2 There are no dedicated DMP staff, as this is a plan for the whole borough and for all of the stakeholders to deliver.
- 1.3 Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) has always been committed to delivering a tourism development service for the borough and the DMP provides a tourism strategy that focusses and supports the day to day work of the Visitor Economy Development team.
- 1.4 The Visitor Economy Development team delivers the marketing of the borough as a destination for visitors, supporting and advising businesses and working in partnership with county, regional and national tourism organisations.
- 1.5 Update reports were presented to committee in February 2016, November 2016, September 2017, and in March 2018.
- 1.6 The DMP Board is chaired by an MBC officer and the Chair of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee is appointed to the Board. The Board consists of partners from within the tourism and visitor economy who review the progress action plan quarterly.

Update

- 1.7 The final 3 year DMP Action Plan Update can be found in Appendix 1.
- 1.8 MBC are in discussions with Visit Kent to carry out a review of the current Destination Management Plan. It is thought that the plan as a whole is still valid, with the same target markets with the potential for growth for Maidstone, but will require updated data figures. The Economic Impact of Tourism for Maidstone (Cambridge Model research) is due for release by Visit Kent within the next month.
- 1.9 The 3 year action plan has now been largely delivered. A few actions were no longer valid, had no budget to deliver, or may have superseded by other factors.
- 1.10 It is proposed that a new one year rolling action plan supporting the DMP will be produced. This will be done in consultation with Members and with tourism businesses through a series of workshops in January 2019. As tourism businesses are gearing up for Christmas and the Cambridge model

results are yet to be released, the timing of the workshops are aimed to fit with the industry, who share the delivery of the plan.

- 1.11 Our investor agreement with Visit Kent ensures Maidstone is well represented in marketing campaigns and projects throughout the year. We are on target to achieve the actions set out in the service level agreement. This includes participation for our businesses in a Discover England Fund (DEF) project, funded by Visit England, to develop a brand-new product to promote gardens and gourmet tourism in England to international visitors.
- 1.12 Supported by our businesses, a second year of participation in Tourism South East's Meet beyond London campaign has been agreed. This is aimed at top corporate clients for business tourism.
- 1.13 The Visit Maidstone website is currently been re-engineered to reflect the technology improvements available. It will have a fresh new look and improve the user experience. It is scheduled to launch in January 2019 and a demonstration will be given to Committee at the appropriate time.

DMP Budget

- 2.15 There is no dedicated DMP budget. Projects are funded through a combination of existing related budgets, funding from the Kent Business Rates Pool, collaboration with the sector and bids for funding to appropriate sources. The workshops will identify those actions that require funding support.
- 2.16 The annual tourism service marketing budget is also used to support the DMP work. The marketing budget is £31,000 and is dependent on a £15,000 income target for advertising revenue on the website and publications.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 That the Tourism Destination Plan is reviewed and updated and a new one year rolling action plan developed. **RECOMMENDED**
- 2.2 That the Tourism Destination Plan is not reviewed and updated and a new action plan is not developed. This would effectively decommission the Tourism Destination Management Plan.

This option is **NOT RECOMMENDED**

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

That Option 2.1 above is approved. The plan provides the strategic direction for the visitor economy. The plan is for all tourism stakeholders in the borough and provides a focus on those markets that have the potential for growth. It enables tourism businesses with their development plans by providing a local context.

A review of the plan will check the focus is correct, and take into account developments in tourism locally and nationally since 2015. It is essential to update the data figures when the Economic Impact of Tourism in Maidstone report is published December 2018.

4. RISK

4.1 Without a strategic plan, the potential to grow the visitor economy is reduced and may lead to disparate activity that is unconnected. The DMP has brought together Maidstone’s tourism industry, working in partnership to ensure that Maidstone can increase the volume and value of an industry that is one of the few growth industries in the country. Without a plan that focuses on the growth markets, the volume and value of tourism may decline.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 None

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 A series of workshops with members and the tourism businesses and stakeholders will take place in the New Year as part of the review process. A PR campaign around the value MBC places on the visitor economy would be planned.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The DMP contributes to Priority 1 of the Strategic Plan – Keeping Maidstone and attractive place for all: Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Risk Management	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	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.

	Framework. [That consideration is shown in this report at 4]. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.	
Financial	There is no dedicated DMP budget. The action plan is delivered through a combination of existing related budgets, funding from the Kent Business Rates Pool, collaboration with the sector and bids for funding to appropriate sources.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	There are no dedicated DMP staff. This project is being delivered by the Visitor Economy Development team	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.
Legal	Each local authority has a statutory duty to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". The Tourism Destination Management Plan demonstrates compliance with that duty.	Keith Trowell (Team Leader Corporate Governance)
Privacy and Data Protection	None	[Legal Team]
Equalities	The equalities impact would be considered as part of individual projects as identified in the action plan.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Crime and Disorder	None	[Head of Service or Manager]

Procurement	None	[Head of Service & Section 151 Officer]
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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: Maidstone DMP – Update Action Plan 2015-2018

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

DMP - [https://www.visitmaidstone.com/dbimings/Maidstone%20DMP%20-%20FINAL%20030915\(1\).pdf](https://www.visitmaidstone.com/dbimings/Maidstone%20DMP%20-%20FINAL%20030915(1).pdf)

Actions	Who is involved	Time-scale	Status	2015	20 16	2017	2018
<p>Run Workshop sessions 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>MBC Visit Kent (VK) Tourism South East (TSE)</p>	S	Completed	Several events ran 2015	One Year on Event – November 2016	‘Maidstone is Great’ tourism business workshops and Stakeholder event	Planned Business support visits
<p>Develop an Online Shared Story Toolkit 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>MBC Visitor attractions / businesses</p>	S	Completed	Toolkit available on line at visitmaidstone.com/dmp	<p>Image library set up.</p> <p>New photography and video commissioned and delivered. W was added to image library end of 2016</p>	<p>More photography and images added 2017</p>	<p>Library maintenance.</p> <p>Image Library being transferred to new platform as previous one has closed.</p>

1. RIVER

Actions	Who is involved	Time-scale	Status	2015	20 16	2017	2018
<p>1.1 Programme of enhancements and improvements to make the river more accessible and appealing to visitors: signing and entrance points to the river from the town centre</p> <p>footpath investment – signing to include distances to key points, accessibility for cyclists</p> <p>investment in moorings</p> <p>parking for river visitors</p>	<p>MBC KCC EA One Maidstone Maidstone River Park partnership (MRPP) Cobtree Estate</p>	M-L	Some activities complete. Others will be ongoing	<p>£2m of Single Local Growth Funding has been allocated to create a cycle path along the river from Allington to East Farleigh. MBC £500,000 subject to final decision on funding.</p> <p>MBC Funding has been confirmed. KCC currently writing brief for detailed design. DMP group will be kept updated with opportunity for input. Tonbridge and Malling BC are not contributing to the scheme. However they <i>may</i> be some scope to extend a footpath up to Aylesford.</p> <p>Signage as part of Gyrotory is for vehicular signage only. Potential for pedestrian signage as part of cycle route project.</p>	<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 gyrotory 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 gyrotory system. Group to look at any gaps in town centre and further along river path.</p> <p>Investment in moorings – group to identify issues with current moorings and additional moorings.</p> <p>Parking to be investigated.</p>	<p>Completion of the Medway Towpath between Aylesford and Barming, which included a sustainable all-weather surface along the river bank, as well as ecological restoration.</p> <p>Maidstone River Park signage along the route of the Medway Towpath.</p> <p>Refurbishment of Fairmeadow towpath, between High Level Bridge and St Peters Bridge, which had been badly damaged by tree roots over many years. This project included new lighting, rubbish bins and seating.</p> <p>Additional parking for river in town centre at new Sandling Road pay & display.</p> <p>Major refurbishment of East Farleigh Lock</p> <p>Restoration of Elemental lights on Maidstone Bridge and St Peters Bridge.</p> <p>Cobtree Management Estate Trust has agreed to</p>	<p>Additional Interpretation and signage required depending on funding.</p> <p>Two thirds of all the issues around the riverside improvements and maintenance have been done.</p> <p>Amphitheatre cleared and now visible from Lockmeadow</p> <p>Buddleia cleared from riverside at Archbishops' Palace area.</p> <p>Riverside area by Thai Orchid has been cleared.</p> <p>Area between St. Peters and Maidstone Bridges – all flower beds have been cleared of weeds.</p> <p>High level bridge to Whatman Bridge – cleared so that river can be seen from Whatman park</p> <p>Cycle Path extension and pelican crossing work still to be confirmed.</p>

						<p>finance a new Toucan crossing for £30,000k to enable the cycle path to be extended across Forstall Field to Cobtree Manor Estate Park. Date for this work to be confirmed.</p> <p>Fairmeadow 'mushrooms' removed and 16 permanent mooring rings installed.</p> <p>Signage to and from town centre to be audited following public realm improvement scheme for Week Street and Gabriel's Hill.</p>	<p>Issue with the Unicomes Lane beyond Tovil and residential structures being put up. People by buying cheap land from River Medway land.com and putting up structures and mobile homes</p> <p>There is now an enforcement case for the land along the riverbank of the Medway, off Unicomes Way. The land has been sectioned and sold by the owner to several different parties. Planning Enforcement are currently in the process of preparing for service a non-immediate Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights and 12 Enforcement Notices for the various structures and moorings along the stretch of land.</p>
<p>1.2 Focus on strengthening visitor hubs on the river: Improve access, facilities, activities and interpretation</p> <p>Explore opportunities for more camping cabins/pods (luxury camping huts – alternative to camping in the open) to enable long distance walking, canoeing etc</p> <p>Priority hubs :</p>	<p>MBC MRPP New barge café Kentish Lady</p>	<p>M-L</p>	<p>Some activities completed. Others will be ongoing</p>	<p>Formation of 'Friends of Maidstone River Park' 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. Opportunities for event organisers need to be</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.</p> <p>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>Volunteer-led committee progressing plans to set up a Community Interest Company and preparing a five to ten year action plan.</p> <p>New Barge café between Maidstone Bridge and St. Peters Bridge given planning permission. To open on a mooring at Fairmeadow for 2018</p>	<p>Barge Café owner has been given Tenancy at Will of the toilets at fairmeadow . Opened for business end of May.</p> <p>Working on CIC set up for Maidstone River Park Partnership (MRPP) to enable them to bid for funding</p>

<p>Church of All Saints/amphitheatre Cobtree by Kent Life Lockmeadow</p>				<p>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 agreed that work would be done to help the friends group to establish. JT agreed to pass over a model of how other friends group operate. Ian Tucker is currently working on the structure of the group.</p> <p>Maidstone River Park partnership has been created to bring together private, public and voluntary sector.</p>	<p>season. Owners will open and maintain Fairmeadow toilets for season.</p> <p>Opening of the Lodge Coffee kiosk at Teston Country Park</p> <p>Open day at Maidstone Crown</p> <p>Refurbishment of Lockmeadow Centre and opening of Gourmet Burger Kitchen</p>	
<p>1.3 Create river-based events & activities 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>MBC MRPP Comm. Mela group</p>	<p>S-M</p>	<p>Some activities completed. Others will be ongoing</p>	<p>River Park website is being 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.</p> <p>Future events will then be more attractive to event organisers.</p> <p>Potential events and organisers to be identified.</p>	<p>Draft Website and promotional information produced by IT. This could be adopted as the single place for anything to do with the river.</p> <p>River Park website to identify all of the attractions and events along the river to be promoted. This will be aimed at both residents and visitors. An audit of everything available to visitors has been completed and included in the draft website.</p>	<p>New River Event for August Bank holiday 2018 in development</p> <p>Maidstone Community Mela at Whatman Park in 2017</p> <p>Proms in Whatman Park 2017/2018</p> <p>Teddy Bears Picnic staged at Whatman Park</p>	<p>Proms in the park took place 26th May.</p> <p>Community Mela took place on 22nd July</p> <p>MRRP ran a social media and website campaign over the Bank Holiday weekend to raise awareness of the River Park and its numerous attractions.</p> <p>It was branded as the Maidstone River Park Gala Weekend.</p>
<p>1.4 Build up marketing activity over time linking to countryside theme. Develop marketing collateral – maps, trails, leaflets</p>	<p>MBC KCC- Explore Kent MRPP</p>	<p>S-M</p>	<p>Some activities completed. Others will be ongoing</p>	<p>Maidstone River Park website created.</p> <p>Leaflets of canoe trail being shared on websites, and websites now linking to each other. An audit of everything</p>	<p>Gaps and further information and trails could be produced in the future, and/or incorporated in the cycle path/ gyatory information.</p>	<p>Explore Kent has produced Cycle path map and leaflet. At print.</p>	<p>Leaflets can now be downloaded from Visit Maidstone website</p>

				available to visitors has been completed and included in the website.			
1.5 Prioritise river management – litter, dredging, landscaping, lighting, policing, anti-social behaviour, mooring, illegal camping	EA MBC MRRP	S-M	Some activities completed and others will be ongoing	Ian Tucker has been nominated to Chair a 'Friends of Maidstone River Park'. This organisation (once formalised) will undertake to identify 'grot spots' and help co-ordinate clean-ups etc. EA has offered use of boats to assist in litter and vegetation clearance.	Maidstone River Park Partnership leading to coordinate volunteering, act as a voice for the river, etc 30-40 volunteers from McDonalds took part in clearing overgrown areas.	<i>Love Where You Live</i> riverside clean-up with McDonald's Maidstone and MBC. Team of 24 from McDonalds to spend 6 hours clearing from Lockmeadow to Maidstone Bridge.	Clearance of riverside area and amphitheatre is improving the issues of anti-social behaviour.

2. CREATING A DISTINCTIVE COUNTY TOWN

2.1 Develop local markets and fairs – food (including a farmer's market), arts & crafts etc: Review existing provision Develop and deliver new markets in different town centre locations and develop a calendar of markets throughout the year Use County Town Market Charter and history as part of the positioning for street markets Introduce street food Develop local market management plan – litter/cleaning, selection of stall traders, access	MBC KCC	S-M	Some activities completed. Others will be ongoing	MBC progressing with fortnightly Farmers Market on Jubilee Square. Other locations considered for other markets are Brenchley gardens and in front of County Hall. However issues with space/access and low footfall. Work with PinK to investigate Street Food	MBC have delivered 3 successful Farmers Markets – on a monthly basis so far. May increase to 2 per month MBC hold a 12-day street trading consent for market – therefore unlikely to go fortnightly until Jun 17 at earliest Considering moving Sat general market to Jubilee Square New market manager will be considering how guest markets can fit in with MBC's own markets Once Farmers' market established, can build up reputation for food fair.	Work underway to extend planning permission and obtain an annual street trading licence for MBC to facilitate new markets and street food. Looking to increase frequency of Farmers market. Food market to run for 12 days prior to Christmas 2017.	Extended planning permission was granted for extended market on Jubilee Square. Aim is to set up market under the Markets Act - benefits include getting traders at short notice which cannot be done at the moment.
2.1 Use themed trails and quarters to help make the town more legible for	MBC KCC One Maid-	S-M	Ongoing	Town Team already looking at themed trails for schools. Need to be	A themed trail is proposed in the HLF bid for Gabriels' Hill – for visitors as well as	History trail updated and leaflet completed.	Public realm – Work progressing well after a few initial delays relating

<p>visitors and encourage exploration: Identify trail themes and quarters</p> <p>Develop a programme of animation and interpretation including:</p> <p>Making use of green spaces</p> <p>Pavement trails/digital trails using app</p> <p>Distinctive lighting</p> <p>Mark the quarters e.g. with sculpture, distinctive street sign branding, lighting etc.</p>	<p>stone</p>			<p>mindful DMP relates to <i>visitors</i> – how can the Town Team’s trail be modified for tourists?</p> <p>Town Team installed lighting on Town Hall with a view to establishing it in policy to be expanded elsewhere. Need to identify which buildings could be lit, and funding.</p>	<p>residents. The bid was unsuccessful.</p> <p>FrancisKnight produced: A Public Realm Design Guide 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.</p> <p>A Public Art Policy for borough which will become a material consideration for planning purposes. This policy has been produced for Maidstone Borough Council officers and developers. It has a borough wide remit that looks at the commissioning of public art as part of a development or regeneration scheme.</p> <p>A Street Furniture Guidelines to ensure a consistent, coordinated and high quality approach to street furniture in Maidstone town centre.</p> <p>New Historic Interpretation panels are located</p>	<p>Public Realm Phase 3 improvements to Week Street and Gabriels Hill will include a history timeline; public art; signage to key attractions and themed squares.</p>	<p>to drainage and utilities. Will be stopping for the Christmas embargo at the end of November and restarting in January with completion in May 2019.</p>
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					throughout town.		
<p>2.3 Shopfront improvements including: Shop front design and window displays (produce toolkit)</p> <p>Maintenance to frontages e.g. redecoration, brand signs</p>	One Maidstone	S-M	Ongoing	Ken Scott and volunteers have done audit of shop fronts in North end of Week Street. Need to discuss next steps, and funding.	<p>Shop front improvements are incorporated in the HLF bid for <i>some</i> of the properties on Gabriels' Hill. Bid unsuccessful.</p> <p>Unlikely to be funding available for other streets incl Week St. Public Realm is being improved so this could raise profile of area and incentivise owners to improve their buildings.</p>	One Maidstone are campaigning to reduce A Board clutter.	Contribution being sought from Marks & Spencer S106 agreement for a shop front improvement grant scheme.
<p>2.4 Strengthen town's association with the countryside through celebrating and promoting local food</p> <p>Encourage local restaurants to source local produce and promote it</p> <p>Explore potential for a new local produce centre</p>	Explore Kent MBC PiK Event umbrella	S-M-L and Ongoing	Ongoing Ongoing	<p>What is Produce in Kent already doing re promoting local food in restaurants? How can Maidstone promote?</p> <p>Need to identify suitable location for possible local produce centre, and funding</p>	<p>MBC could liaise with PinK and One Maidstone to promote local produce</p> <p>Could be scope to use Granada House for local produce however would need to incorporate with C&R's plans.</p>	<p>Local produce and markets section on Visit Maidstone website.</p> <p>Business encouraged to work with Produced in Kent.</p> <p>Monthly Farmers market with local producers in Jubilee Square.</p> <p>New 3 day food Festival - Shemomedjamo in Mote park in September 2017.</p> <p>Second food fair in Mote Park in June.</p> <p>Event organisers given list of local food traders for events.</p>	<p>See event section re 2019 – Marketing campaign around food.</p> <p>2nd year of Shemomedjamo, moved to August bank holiday weekend</p>

3. ACCESS AND VISITOR MANAGEMENT

<p>3.1 Agree a strategy for improved access by car and coach into the town centre and support with:</p> <p>Clear uncluttered road signing</p> <p>Signing to car parks/coach park</p> <p>Visitor orientation in the car/coach parks</p> <p>Pedestrian signing from car parks to the town centre and main attractions.</p>	<p>MBC KCC Fremlin The Mall Lockmeadow</p>	<p>M-L</p>	<p>ongoing</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>New Visitor Information poster sites and What's On poster sites with maps installed or replaced by car parks</p>	<p>An audit of town centre signage will be undertaken after the public realm improvements are complete.</p> <p>Work being undertaken on car parking, P&R and buses. All Member workshop to consider early options November (mid). SPST Committee to consider report January 2018.</p>	
<p>3.2 Review coach parking provision – volume, location and facilities – to reflect needs of international coach parties for shopping, and take account of potential growth</p>	<p>MBC The Mall Fremlin Walk Lockmeadow</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Ongoing</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>Discussion with parking now regarding Lockmeadow as Sittingbourne road getting too full with cars.</p>	<p>Developing coach driver offer with Visitor Information.</p> <p>Coach parking has not been included in the parking review.</p>	<p>New offer from Fremlin/House of Fraser for pre-booked coach parties.</p> <p>New offer from the museum for pre-booked coach visits</p> <p>Both offers launched at excursions exhibition in January 2018</p>
<p>3.3.Improve welcome and visitor facilities at the rail stations:</p> <p>Welcome sign and town map on board</p> <p>Clear signing to drop-off/pick-up points</p> <p>Longer term, a need to deliver new development at Maidstone East station to improve first impressions and provide additional welcome & visitor facilities.</p>	<p>MBC KCC Net-work Rail South-eastern trains</p>	<p>S-M-L</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Redevelopment proposals exist for Maidstone East Station and these improvements could be incorporated. £1m of Single Local Growth Fund is available in 2016/17 for the redevelopment of the Ticket Office buildings.</p> <p>Network Rail investing in Maidstone East –(Maps to go on temp hoardings) North end of Week Street due to have public realm</p>	<p>SE Trains added Maidstone destination information to website and supplied poster sites in London.</p>	<p>Station improvement programme at Maidstone East to link to Phase 3 public realm improvements, create a sense of arrival on new concourse with signage.</p> <p>New Thameslink service to run from Maidstone East from 2018.</p>	<p>Thameslink service now delayed until December 2019.</p> <p>New 'Welcome to Maidstone the County Town of Kent' signs installed on all platforms at Maidstone East station.</p> <p>Maidstone East development underway with the demolition of the former derelict Victoria pub. that will take 9</p>

				improvements. Required good maps and information			months to come down. A new station forecourt and new glass, brick, ragstone and steel extension will be built and completed by November 2019. A planning application will be submitted shortly. A proposal for an art installation on the forecourt will be considered by HCL committee in December.
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4.Events

<p>4.1 Create an Events Experts Group that brings together senior decision makers from the main venues & MBC to “join the dots” when it comes to planning & infrastructure, programming & marketing</p>	MBC private sector venues Event promoters	s	Completed	<p>First meeting took place November 215. Events Working groups comprises required decision makers and will invite others as they become apparent.</p>	<p>This group is now the Maidstone Events Group. Additional venues have been identified and will be asked to join. Group will meet 2-3 times per year. Next meeting February 2017.</p>	<p>Event Forum - met at start of year and potential members identified</p>	<p>Met 20 February and projects identified. Online collaboration tool to be used to communicate.</p>
<p>4.2 Carry out an Audit & Gap Analysis – looking at infrastructure & resources (physical & people), including venue capacities, transport links, traffic management, parking, signing, policing & crowd management. Must take into account potential negative impact on local communities & environment. Should include analysis of processes (licensing, highways, planning etc) too. Gap Analysis will then identify if new</p>	MBC Parishes Venues	s	Completed	<p>List of questions for venue audit to be prepared by Jo and Barbara from an event organisers perspective and Natalie from a venue perspective.</p> <p>Now been circulated to group members for comment. Survey questionnaire being prepared to go out early January.</p> <p>Additional questions added and questionnaire sent to group for approval. To be sent out once</p>	<p>Survey sent and venues chased for response. Spreadsheet of the results has been compiled. Members of event group have been emailed to ask how best to show information and to ask for volunteer.</p>	<p>Group decided the best location for Event venue information would be in the Conference Maidstone website. Information now added to new events section on Conference Maidstone</p>	<p>Economic impact of events – project by Events Forum so that as many events as possible be measure using Event impact toolkit. Visitor survey to be created and used. Needs to be suitable for non-ticketed and free events to get best measurement.</p>

infrastructure/processes needed - & specific actions should then be developed.				countryside survey returned.			
4.3 Develop an Event Organisers' Toolkit – 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 & Gap Analysis is completed)	MBC	M-L	Ongoing	This will be added to the website as above.	Once audit complete this will be done. Work is not underway as per the action comment.	Online events application process being developed by MBC	Work in progress with web team to make online events notification and applications for use of council parks and venues.
4.4 Set up a “No Clash Diary” – 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 & marketing (see next action).	MBC Venues Organisers	S	Completed	This has been set up using google calendar and is being tested by the group before making available to external organisers. It sits on DMP pages on visitmaidstone.com/dmp It has been tested. No needs to have more explanation added and then send to event organisers, SAG administration and our venues to ask organisers to add to. They must email activation request to add on events	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. Regular reminder to event planners. SAG administration to be informed so this becomes part of the process.	Push for organisers to populate no clash diary for 2018 and beyond as number of events is increasing.	Will investigate how it can be integrated into the online event notification on MBC website. Looking at Event app with SAG to simplify event process.
4.5 Develop themed seasons/festivals , 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).	MBC Events venues and organisers One Maidstone	M-L	Ongoing	TCM leading. Group looking at themes from 2016 onwards i.e. sporting, comedy and come with idea for next meeting. Food fair already being organised by Barbara	One Maidstone leading. Group looking at themes from 2017 onwards i.e. sporting, comedy and come with idea for next meeting. Apparent from 2016 that there is a strong music theme from Spring to Autumn. Group to develop Summer of Music brand for season and produce brand,	Along with River Partnership early discussion on event taking Place in 2018 One Maidstone delivering a Harvest Festival, Live Nativity and Easter Egg Hunt. Looking at branding for Maidstone Summer of	Summer of Music for 2018 campaign included poster, web pages, adverts, digital campaign The Event group have decided that the Summer of... brand will be used each year. 2018 ,.. Music – ties in the with the 40 th Anniversary of Leeds Castle Classical

					leaflet, editorial pages to promote. Production to start Feb 2017. (No resources available, delayed until 2018).	Music 2018. New events in 2017 – Oktoberfest, Madness at the Kent Event Centre, Community Mela, Shemomedjamo, Multicultural Food festival	concerts 2019 – will be Summer of Food & Drink (many foodie events and local producers. Ties in with 90 th anniversary of the County Show) 2020 – Summer of Sport – this will tie in with the Olympics Potential to apply for Arts council funding for event to be delivered.
4.6 Develop a consumer-facing “Events for Visitors Calendar” – comprising an online real time database of confirmed events for consumer marketing (website content, e-marketing, social media & 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 & 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 & market focus	MBC Event organisers	M	Completed	Consumer events calendar available on visit Maidstone.com/whats-on. List and images can be enhanced and linked to social media. Event organiser can add their events on directly. Widget to pool information for other providers is being investigated.	Consumer events calendar available on visit Maidstone.com/whats-on. List and images can be enhanced and linked to social media. Event organiser can add their events on directly. 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.	Widget for websites to be demonstrated at 2017 investor/stakeholder event.	What’s On pages are the most viewed on the website. Accounts for 31% of all page views. – 227,494 views Jan-Dec 2017 Jan – August 2018 – 170,016 page views 41%

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).							
5. Countryside							
5.1 Product audit – map & gap current provision of trails, walks and countryside & river experiences	MBC Parishes Explore Kent Visitor Attractions	S	Completed	As discussed in the Countryside meeting a Survey Monkey survey has been created and sent out to Parish Council's and Visitor Attractions to collate the information across the Borough. This includes where they do their marketing and what they market and how they reach their audiences. Responses deadline is 14/2/16 and we can collate and chase missing data hopefully before next meeting on 3/3/16 2pm.	Survey has gone out to Parish Council at the beginning of January 2016 with 6 weeks to return it. Brown sign audit from Parish Councils returned a very poor result, so we completed in house. Redundant brown signs have been removed. Some parish councils have been keener than others to encourage visitors.		
5.2 Marketing audit – 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	MBC Parishes Attractions Explore Kent	S	Completed	In conjunction with above	We have had an excellent result from this and have found potential new partners to develop products with.		
5.3 Develop themed experiences and trails that use Shared Story for	MBC Explore Kent	M-L	Completed	As above	Developed marketing collateral and themed experiences. Videos	Cycle routes and walking routes produced by Explore Kent and National	

<p>inspiration, include key attractions, pubs etc along trail to drive more spend</p> <p>Develop marketing collateral – digital and offline. Rich online content.</p>			Completed		<p>produced. Video will be used to promote the Borough on social media and at Bluewater.</p> <p>Videos loaded on Visit Maidstone Site.</p>	<p>Cycle Trail (River).</p> <p>Will be available online on VisitMaidstone and Explore Kent shortly. Leaflets in production.</p>	
<p>5.4 Audit walks and trails selected for promotion to visitors to ensure they are easy to use and attractive – 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</p> <p>Provide appropriate facilities for walkers and cyclists, e.g. cycle lock ups . Develop a plan for investment to plug gaps in provision.</p>	<p>MBC UK Elector Bikes KCC</p>	M	Completed		<p>Still in assessment process and waiting returns. 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. Meeting on 7th September to take forward ideas and areas.</p>	<p>UK electric bikes have developed 4 new cycle rides around the Marden, Staplehurst and Headcorn area taking in attractions and Produced in Kent sites. Will be available this Autumn as downloadable pdf on Visit Maidstone.</p> <p>North Downs Trail Officer and Explore Kent are checking and developing trails from train stations onto the North Downs around the Hollingbourne area. However currently not progressing due to South Eastern contract for the service due to end soon, and they are not willing to develop this until new contract in place.</p> <p>A driving tour for the North of the Borough has been researched. And will be developed over the winter ready for 2018.</p>	
<p>5.5 Develop rural Visitor Information Points – “i” branded.</p>	<p>MBC Private sector venues</p>	M	Ongoing with revised action	<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>Work has started on Leader funding bid and potentially there will be new electronic visitor activity data as well, possibly using Scout.</p>	<p>VIP points has been shelved due to match funding not being available.</p> <p>Visitor information website</p>	<p>Work in progress</p>

						stickers to be produced and given to rural tourism related businesses	
5.6 Work towards becoming Kent's first "Walker Friendly" destination using the Cyclist Welcome and Walkers Welcome Identify key towns/villages and support Walkers Welcome accreditation (prioritise villages with direct train links into Maidstone) Promotional activity	SE Train MBC	M	Revised - not possible action	Will have to be the 4 th 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.		See above work on walking routes and SE trains situation. 15 old walking route leaflets found for Staplehurst are to be investigated and reproduced in a downloadable format.	Work on walking routes in progress