

WORKING GROUP 1: RIVER

Actions	Who needs to be involved	Priority	Time-scale	Estimated costs and potential funding sources	Progress to date
<p>Programme of enhancements and improvements to make the river more accessible and appealing to visitors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signing and entrance points to the river from the town centre • footpath investment – signing to include distances to key points, accessibility for cyclists • investment in moorings • parking for river visitors 	<p>Kent County Council – cycle routes and infrastructure Maidstone Borough Council Environment Agency Town Centre Management</p>	High	M-L	<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.</p> <p>Signage as part of the Bridges Gyrotory scheme is for vehicular signage only. Potential for pedestrian signage as part of cycle route project.</p>
<p>Focus on strengthening visitor hubs on the river:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access, facilities, activities and interpretation • Explore opportunities for more camping cabins/pods (luxury camping huts – alternative to camping in the open) to enable long distance walking, 	<p>Attractions and businesses e.g. Kentish Lady River Cruises, boat restaurant, All Saints Church, Museum of Kent Life, Lockmeadow Maidstone Borough Council Visit Kent Environment Agency Medway River Users Association, Rowing Club</p>	Medium	M-L	<p>Arts Council – Grants for the Arts</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 better promoted. This could be done through the River Park Website (see below)</p>

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<p>canoeing etc</p> <p>Priority hubs :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church of All Saints/amphitheatre • Cobtree by Kent Life • Lockmeadow 	Kent County Council				Opportunities for camping, etc. will follow from this work.
<p>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>Maidstone Borough Council</p> <p>Business owners</p> <p>Medway Valley County Partnership</p> <p>Maidstone Town Team</p> <p>Town Centre Management</p> <p>Invicta Rowing Club and other river user groups</p>	Medium	S-M	<p>Sponsorship</p> <p>Town Centre Management, Town Team, Arts Council – Grants for the Arts</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.</p> <p>Future events will then be more attractive to event organisers.</p> <p>Potential events and organisers to be identified.</p>
<p>Build up marketing activity over time linking to countryside theme. Develop marketing collateral – maps, trails, leaflets</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council</p> <p>Visit Kent</p> <p>Business owners</p> <p>Explore Kent</p> <p>Kent Downs AONB Unit</p>	Low	S-M-ongoing	<p>Maidstone Borough Council</p> <p>Businesses involvement in campaigns/advertising in leaflets etc</p>	<p>Leaflets of canoe trail being shared on websites, and websites now linking to each other.</p>
<p>Prioritise river management – litter, dredging, landscaping, lighting, policing, anti-social behaviour, mooring, illegal camping</p>	<p>Police</p> <p>Environment Agency – dredging, water litter picks</p>	High	S-M and ongoing	<p>Volunteering e.g. for litter picks with Environment Agency, prioritisation of existing maintenance</p>	<p>Ian Tucker has been nominated to Chair a 'Friends of Maidstone River Park'. This organisation (once formalised) will undertake to identify</p>

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	Maidstone Borough Council Kent County Council – Highways Town Centre Management and Maidstone Town Team			budgets	‘grot spots’ and help co-ordinate clean-ups etc. EA has offered use of boats to assist in litter and vegetation clearance.
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	Kent County Council Maidstone Borough Council	High	M-L	£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. Funding from Tunbridge and Malling is in doubt and the project may need re-scoping as a result.	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.

WORKING GROUP 3: EVENTS

Actions	Who needs to be involved	Priority	Time-scale	Estimated costs and potential funding sources	Progress to date
<p>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>	<p>Main venues Maidstone Borough Council Kent County Council Safety Advisory Group</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>S</p>	<p>Members of the group</p>	<p>First meeting took place November 2015. Events Working groups comprises required decision makers and will invite others as they become apparent.</p>
<p>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 infrastructure/processes needed - & specific actions should then be developed.</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council Kent County Council Emergency services Venues Event organisers</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>To be explored</p>	<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. 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 countryside survey returned .</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council Kent County Council Venues, Event organisers Emergency services, Safety Advisory Group</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>S</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council</p>	<p>Once audit complete this will be done. Work is not underway as per the action comment.</p>

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completed)					
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).	Main venues Maidstone Borough Council Kent County Council Visit Kent Culture Kent	High	S	Venues Maidstone Borough Council	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.
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).	Venues Locally-based organisers Maidstone Borough Council	Medium	M	Taskforce members Sponsors	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
Develop a consumer-facing “Events	Maidstone Borough	High	M	Visit Maidstone	Consumer events calendar

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<p>for Visitors Calendar” – comprising an online realtime database of confirmed events for consumer marketing (website content, emarketing, 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 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>Council - Visit Maidstone Venues Event organisers Visit Kent Culture Kent Kent County Council</p>			<p>Venues Event organisers</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Widget to pool information for other providers is being investigated.</p>

WORKING GROUP 2: COUNTY TOWN

Actions	Who needs to be involved	Priority	Time-scales	Estimated costs and potential funding sources	Progress to date
<p>Develop local markets and fairs – food (including a farmer’s market), arts & crafts etc:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Maidstone Borough Council Maidstone Town Team Land Securities (Fremlin Walk) Produced in Kent (food events and link to Kent programming and promotion) National Association of British Markets Stall holders Town Centre Management</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>S-M-ongoing</p>	<p>Kent Business Rates Pool, Town Team, Private Sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Use themed trails and quarters to help make the town more legible for visitors and encourage exploration:</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council – planning department</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>S-M</p>	<p>Section 106 planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Team already looking at themed trails for schools. Need to be mindful DMP relates to <i>visitors</i>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify trail themes and quarters Develop a programme of animation and interpretation including: Making use of green spaces Pavement trails/digital trails using app Distinctive lighting Mark the quarters e.g. with sculpture, distinctive street sign branding, lighting etc. 	Local businesses Town Teams Town centre Management				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – how can the Town Team’s trail be modified for tourists? 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.
Shopfront improvements including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shop front design and window displays (produce toolkit) Maintenance to frontages e.g. redecoration, brand signs 	Maidstone Borough Council – including Planning Department Building owners	MEDIUM	S-M	Building owners, shops and eating places, Matched funding for shopfront upgrades from Kent Business Rates Pool and Section 106	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ken Scott and volunteers have done audit of shop fronts in North end of Week Street. Need to discuss next steps, and funding.
Strengthen town’s association with the countryside through celebrating and promoting local food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage local 	Produced in Kent Local restaurants and cafes Maidstone Borough	Medium	S-M L – for local produce	To be explored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is PinK already doing re promoting local food in restaurants? How can Maidstone promote?

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<p>restaurants to source local produce and promote it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore potential for a new local produce centre 	Council		centre		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to identify suitable location for possible local produce centre, and funding
<p>Agree a strategy for improved access by car and coach into the town centre and support with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear uncluttered road signing Signing to car parks/coach park Visitor orientation in the car/coach parks Pedestrian signing from car parks to the town centre and main attractions. 	<p>Maidstone Borough Council Kent County Council Highways Department Car park companies Coach operators</p>	Medium	M-L	Kent Business Rates Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can signage into town be improved? Need an audit of pedestrian signing from car parks into town – is it logical to visitors who are unfamiliar with town? Integrated transport strategy will address some of these issues.
<p>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>Maidstone Borough Council Coach operators Businesses welcoming coach groups e.g. House of Fraser, Museum</p>	Medium	M	To be explored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coach park currently at Sittingbourne Road – not ideal location. Maidstone East possible alternative. If Maidstone has good facilities for drivers, more coaches will visit.
<p>Improve welcome and visitor</p>	Southeastern Trains	High	S-M-L	Redevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Rail investing in

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<p>facilities at the rail stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome sign and town map on board • Clear signing to drop-off/pick-up points <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>Maidstone Borough Council Network Rail</p>			<p>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>Maidstone East – what influence can group have on welcome signs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North end of Week Street due to have public realm improvements

WORKING GROUP 4: COUNTRYSIDE

Actions	Who needs to be involved	Priority	Time-scales	Estimated costs and potential funding sources	Progress to date
Product audit – map & gap current provision of trails, walks and countryside & river experiences	Explore Kent AONB Maidstone Borough Council Visit Kent Produced in Kent Parishes Rural stakeholders e.g. Young Farmers, WI, CPRE, National Trust, RSPB, Kent Wildlife Trust, Hadlow Pilgrims’ Way Company – Walk Awhile	High	S	Partner time Commission co-ordinator	Survey has gone out to Parish Council at the beginning of January with 6 weeks to return it. We have done a chase before the final day which was 14 th February, but have not as yet has time to assess all information sent. Brown sign audit from Parish Councils returned a very poor result, so we are going to have to do that in house. Some parish councils have been keener than others to encourage visitors.
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	Maidstone Borough Council Explore Kent Kent Downs AONB Unit Kent Wildlife Trust Visit Kent	High	S	Partner time	We have had an excellent result from this and have found potential new partners to develop and market with.
Develop themed experiences and trails that use Shared Story for inspiration, include key attractions, pubs etc along trail to drive more	Maidstone Borough Council Kent County Council Visit Kent	Medium	S-M	Leader funding	

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<p>spend</p> <p>Develop marketing collateral – digital and offline. Rich online content.</p>	<p>Key visitor attractions</p> <p>Other tourism businesses – including pubs and accommodation</p> <p>Transport operators (to enable circular walks/cycle + rail/bus routes)</p> <p>AONB</p> <p>Explore Kent</p> <p>Parishes</p>				
<p>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 provide appropriate facilities for walkers and cyclists, e.g. cycle lock ups . Develop a plan for investment to plug gaps in provision.</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council</p> <p>Kent County Council</p> <p>Environment Agency</p> <p>AONB</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Southeastern Farmers</p> <p>Fishing Clubs</p>	Medium	M		Still in assessment process and waiting returns.
<p>Develop rural Visitor Information Points – “i” branded.</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Council</p> <p>Tourism South East</p> <p>Local rural tourism businesses</p>	High	M	Leader funding	Work has started on Leader funding bid and potentially there will be new electronic visitor activity data as well, possibly using Scout.

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	Parish Councils Kent County Council, Highways				
<p>Work towards becoming Kent's first "Walker Friendly" destination using the Cyclist Welcome and Walkers Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key towns/villages and support Walkers Welcome accreditation (prioritise villages with direct train links into Maidstone) • Promotional activity 	Visit Kent Explore Kent Maidstone Borough Council Tourism South East	Medium	M	Leader funding, participant fees	Going to have 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.