

# Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee

1<sup>st</sup> Nov 2016

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

**Yes**

## Public Realm Design Guide and Public Art Policy

<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>	Fran Wallis, Local Economy Project Officer
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards

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

1. To adopt the Public Realm Design Guide, attached as Appendix 1 of this report
2. To adopt the Public Art Policy, attached as Appendix 2 of this report
3. To adopt the Street Furniture Guidelines, attached as Appendix 3 of this report
4. To agree that the Public Art Policy should be presented to Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transport committee to adopt the Policy as a Material Consideration for Planning purposes.

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

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – by creating a more coherent way of dealing with art and public realm
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough - by creating a more attractive place

### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Heritage Culture and Leisure	1 <sup>st</sup> Nov 2016

# Public Realm Design Guide and Public Art Policy

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This purpose of this report is to present members with the Public Realm Design Guide which is specifically for the town centre (which also includes guidance on street furniture), and a Public Art Policy which is borough-wide. Both documents have been created, following extensive consultation from a variety of stakeholders.
  - 1.2 The purpose of the Public Realm Design Guide is to ensure that all future public realm works in the town are more coherent with the rest of the town, and reflect the rich character and history to ensure that the town centre has a unique look and feel to it.
  - 1.3 The purpose of the Public Art Policy is to ensure that public art can be incorporated into any new large developments at an early opportunity, to ensure that opportunities are not missed regarding integrating art into a development to create a sense of place, and character.
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 During early discussions on Phase 3 of the Maidstone Town Centre Public Realm project, it became clear that a piece of work was required, prior to Phase 3 itself, to establish a set of principles regarding the public realm in Maidstone town centre. Phases 1 and 2 were completed several years ago, and other developments have taken place in the town centre (e.g. Fremlin Walk) but each development has had its own style. Consequently as each new phase of Public Realm comes about, there will potentially be a mismatch of styles and character.
- 2.2 FrancisKnight consultants were therefore appointed to develop a Design Guide for public realm in the town centre. Their work has brought together other reviews of public realm and town centre visioning which have gone before, to create a document which developers of the public realm can refer to. For each further phase of public realm which the council carry out, the set of principles will be adhered to by designers to ensure some consistency. The document is also available to external stakeholders and developers to encourage them to adopt the same principles.
- 2.3 During production of the Public Realm Design Guide, FrancisKnight have consulted extensively with a range of stakeholders, including MBC officers, particularly from the Environmental Services Section, Borough Council Members, and external partners from Town Centre Strategic Advisory Board and One Maidstone. A workshop was also arranged, which helped to bring out some of the key themes.
- 2.4 Through the consultation work, four zones emerged in the town – Shopping, River & Green Spaces, Leisure & Culture, and Historic & Heritage Zone. The Design Guide maps out the zones and highlights their key features,

opportunities and any negative aspects they may have. A recurring theme within all the zones was the issue of connectivity and how visitors to the town negotiate their way around.

- 2.5 FrancisKnight were also appointed to develop a Public Art Policy, which is intended to be borough-wide. This document is intended to create more clarity on defining what public art is, and how the Council can use it to enhance an area, by incorporating art into public realm at an early stage, but also to encourage public art to be included particularly for large developments (e.g. housing developments).
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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Option 1: Heritage Culture and Leisure Committee agree to the recommendations made in this report, specifically:
    - 3.1.1 Adopt the Public Realm Design Guide (as Appendix 1), to ensure that future public realm projects within the town centre will follow the guide, to ensure consistency and coherence.
    - 3.1.2 Adopt the To adopt the Public Art Policy, attached as Appendix 2 of this report
    - 3.1.3 To adopt the Street Furniture Guidelines, attached as Appendix 3 of this report
    - 3.1.4 To agree that the Public Art Policy should be presented to Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transport committee to adopt the Policy as a Material Consideration for Planning purposes.
  - 3.2 Option 2: Heritage Culture and Leisure Committee could choose not to adopt the Public Realm Design Guide, Street Furniture Guidance, and the Public Art Policy. This would mean that there would be no guidance or consistency on any future public realm developments, from either MBC or private developers. There would continue to be a mismatch of materials, and missed opportunities to incorporate art and interpretation of Maidstone's rich heritage and history.
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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the committee agree to Option 1 – to agree to the recommendations set out in this report, and adopt the Public Realm Design Guide, Street Furniture Guidance, and Public Art Policy, and to refer the Public Art Policy to SPST committee with the recommendation that it is adopted to become a Material Consideration for planning purposes.
  - 4.2 This will ensure that all future works to the public realm are carried out in a consistent manner, with clear guidance on themes, zones and ensuring the rich history and culture of Maidstone is incorporated. The Public Art Policy will ensure that new developments are encouraged to incorporate art within the scheme, to add to the character of the place.
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### **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

5.1 As mentioned previously, this piece of work has been the result of a great deal of consultation. Initially the consultants reviewed the various current documents which have been produced in the past, to bring all the information together. They have then consulted with council officers, HCL Committee members and Ward Members. They have presented to external stakeholders including the Town Centre Strategic Advisory Board, and One Maidstone. In addition, a workshop was held, to which all Members were invited. This allowed a great deal of constructive feedback to be incorporated into the document. A members briefing was then held, to which all Members were invited, to give members the opportunity to see the final draft, prior to it being presented to HCL committee, to capture any 'last minute tweaks' or other minor comments.

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

6.1 The Public Realm Design Guide, and Street Furniture Guidance will be published and made available to all developers working on public realm projects. In particular, the consultants who are currently working on Phase 3 of the public realm will be using the document to ensure that their proposals tie in to what has been approved.

6.2 The Public Art Policy can be presented to SPST Committee, following HCL Committee's approval, to ensure that Public Art can be included as a material consideration for Planning purposes.

## **7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – by creating a more coherent way of dealing with art and public realm Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough - by creating a more attractive place	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Risk Management</b>	No risks identified	
<b>Financial</b>	The three documents attached to this report help to support the Council's overall strategy of making Maidstone an attractive place. The cost of preparing these documents has been met from Maidstone's share of the Kent Business Rates Pool, which has been earmarked for economic development	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	initiatives.	
<b>Staffing</b>	No staffing issues identified	
<b>Legal</b>		[Legal Team]
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	An EQIA is not required at this stage. Individual public realm projects would be subject to assessment at the detail stage.	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	The guide identifies the parks and river as an under-utilised asset of the town and encourages improvement.	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Community Safety</b>	Community Safety aspects of public realm would be dealt with at the detailed design stage of individual projects.	Head of Commercial and Economic Development
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	None identified	
<b>Procurement</b>	None identified	
<b>Asset Management</b>	The aim of the guide and in particular the street furniture guidance is to ensure future consistency of materials and styles	Head of Commercial and Economic Development

## 8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix I: Public Realm Design Guide
- Appendix II: Public Art Policy
- Appendix III: Street Furniture Guidance

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## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None