

Maidstone Museum Development Options

Final Decision-Maker	Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	John Foster, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Victoria Barlow, Museum Director
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All wards

Executive Summary

Following the adoption of the 20 Year Plan by members, officers have been working with Innes Associates (architects) and DesignMap (exhibition designers) to produce options for a refurbished museum focussing on the layout and visitor path within redeveloped galleries.

The final report is available as Appendix 1. It lays out several possible options for members to consider. Each option has its pros and cons but are of different scales of magnitude.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That:

1. A Heritage Lottery Bid (Development Phase) be submitted in November 2019 for Option 2 (Large Minus) at a maximum of £4.9m.
2. Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development to finalise Option 2 following further work as set out in paragraph 3.
3. Maidstone Museum Friends be tasked with raising match funding for the Heritage Lottery Bid, in partnership with Officers of £140,000, as set out in Option 2.

4. Should the Heritage Lottery Bid (Option 2) be unsuccessful, a further report will be presented to the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee, seeking approval to deliver Option 3 (Medium).
5. Option 1 (Large) be endorsed as the longer-term vision for the museum.
6. Maidstone Museum Friends be requested to raise a further amount of £1.7m, over a 5-year period, to enable the long term vision (Option 1) to be delivered.
7. The significant risks associated with the successful delivery of Option 1 and 2 be noted.

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	3 September 2019

Maidstone Museum Development Options

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p>Impact on Corporate Priorities</p>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council’s ability to achieve A Thriving Place through the provision of an attractive and popular visitor attraction in the heart of the town centre.</p>	<p>Head of Regeneration and Economic Development</p>
<p>Cross Cutting Objectives</p>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation is Reduced and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations support the achievements of the Heritage is Respected cross-cutting objectives by improving and protecting our heritage through the better display, interpretation and access to the material culture held in the collections of Maidstone Museum. These collections represent the heritage of Maidstone’s residents since the earliest inhabitation of the area in the pre-historic era right up to the modern period.</p> <p>The report recommendations support the Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected cross-cutting objectives by the provision of a specific gallery focusing on the natural history of</p>	<p>Head of Regeneration and Economic Development</p>

	the borough, bio-diversity and the challenges faced by differing habitat types across the whole borough.	
Risk Management	Refer to paragraph 4.3 for possible risks and mitigation for each option.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Financial	Accepting the recommendations will demand new spending of up to £6.6m. We plan to fund that spending as set out paragraphs 3.2.10 and 3.2.11, and 4.3 bullet point 2.	Senior Finance Manager
Staffing	We will deliver the immediate recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Legal	Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers as set out at in local authority legislation (including the general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011) and the Council's Constitution.	Team Leader, Contracts and Commissioning
Privacy and Data Protection	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Equalities	We recognise the recommendations may have varying impacts on different communities within Maidstone. Therefore, we have completed a separate equalities impact assessment at Appendix 2	Equalities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Senior Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendations of this report have no impact on Crime and Disorder	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Procurement	On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises for recruitment of consultants, designers etc. and procurement of materials and services. We will complete those exercises in line with financial procedure rules.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Maidstone Museum 20-year Plan was considered by Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee (HCL) in July 2017 which resolved that the Plan be adopted. A key finding of the Museum Plan was that a **“complete reordering and renewal of the museum is necessary** if we are to provide residents with a “vibrant and active service... regularly used by many members of the local community and visitors from further afield, which engenders a feeling of ownership and pride”. An Economic Impact Assessment for the museum and Carriage Museum shows that these two venues generated £1.6m spend by visitors to Maidstone in 201/19 (see Appendix 3) and increased footfall at the museum brought about by the refurbishment of the museum would increase this amount proportionately. In October 2018 the HCL Committee received an update report which set out actions for 2018/19. One of these actions was to “Review existing galleries and displays and determine the priority order for improvements and interpretation.”
- 2.2 In the last three months, following Member approval of the outline stories for the new galleries, the Council has commissioned Innes Architects and DesignMap exhibition designers to develop four options for the reconfiguration and redevelopment of museum spaces including galleries, events and activity space and storage. These are set out in Appendix 1 Stage 2 Report Feasibility Study at Maidstone Museum.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

It should be noted that each of these options will require further partnership and negotiation with major stakeholders such as Maidstone Borough Council Planning Services, The Bently Wing Trust (which may require, by mutual consent, an amendment to the Deed of Variation to the 1889 Trust Deed relating to the Bently Wing), Kent Archaeological Society and Maidstone Museums Foundation.

3.1 Option 1: Large

- 3.1.1 The first option is a large-scale scheme which would see a wholesale refurbishment and redisplay of the museum.
- 3.1.2 New visitor routes would lead visitors upstairs to galleries telling the story of Maidstone Through Time (local history) and Maidstone in the World (world collections) before returning them to the ground floor for the story of our military connections and the palaeontological significance of Maidstone and the story of the Mantellodon (Iguanodon). This is a change to the layout previously suggested to Members and has been proposed because detailed work on layouts showed that there was insufficient gallery space on the ground floor to tell a coherent main story. Thus the ground floor has been retained for public area activities, the two sub-stories mentioned above and an exhibition about the history of the museum from Tudor Manor House onwards.
- 3.1.3 A large temporary gallery and events space would also be created in the former café and costume gallery for events and activities which help

bring income to the museum. Items from the costume gallery will be on show as part of the Maidstone Through Time galleries.

- 3.1.4 The front courtyard will be sealed off from the street both to clarify the entrance to the museum, create a secondary security barrier which will allow us to continue borrowing objects from other museums without the expense of additional insurance under the Government Indemnity Scheme and enhance its use as a fine weather activity space or outdoor display area for suitable artworks and other objects.
- 3.1.5 This option would result in some changes to the reception area, the museum shop and Visitor Information Centre which would all be contained in a reconfigured entrance/shop and canoe gallery.
- 3.1.6 The report by Innes Associates also makes some suggestions for an Extra Large option which would see the removal of the car park to rear of the Museum and the creation of a garden. This may be of interest at a much later date but officers are not recommending it as an option at this time due to the works suggested being beyond what is actually necessary to fulfil our objectives as laid out in the 20 Year Plan.
- 3.1.7 The projected cost of Option 1 would be £6.6m. This is a significant sum. It would require a major fundraising campaign aimed at external funding agencies, charities and other grant-giving bodies.
- 3.1.8 The first choice of funder for such a project would be the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF - previously Heritage Lottery Fund). NLHF will fund up to 90% of a project. Since 2018, changes to the National Lottery Heritage Fund mean that large grants (over £250,000) are grouped into two categories: Heritage Awards for a maximum of £5m and Horizon Heritage Awards for projects over £5m.
- 3.1.9 Whilst previously, a bid of circa £7m would not have been exceptional, there are now only 10-12 awards of over £5m each year for projects focused on natural heritage and landscapes or heritage at risk. It's highly unlikely that the Maidstone Museum project would satisfy this awards bidding criteria.

3.2 Option 2: Large Minus

- 3.2.1 The second option would be for a smaller scheme incorporating most of the changes described in Option 1 which could be carried out in isolation without rendering future works impossible.
- 3.2.2 Option 2 would see the transformation of seven out of nine galleries on the first floor, the Temporary Exhibition gallery moved to the ground floor (former café) space and an event room created in the current Costume Gallery. A reconfigured reception, shop, canoe gallery and Visitor Information Centre would allow for the creation of the 'WOW' point on entry and the sealing off of the front courtyard from the street would ensure a suitable level of security and create an external activity, display space.

- 3.2.3 The difference between this and Option 1 is that under this scheme, the current Dinosaur and Natural History Galleries would remain unchanged, climate control measures for sensitive collections are scaled back and allowances for improving physical access and upgrades to windows etc. have been reduced.
- 3.2.4 This project provides a realistic level of improvement that would be beneficial in bringing in new visitors, delivering excellent temporary exhibition and event spaces and improving access to most of the museum. Importantly, this option would not preclude further works being carried out later if funds were to become available.
- 3.2.5 This option would cost £4,916,00. NHLF grants up to £5m are decided by regional committees, rather than the UK Board which make decisions on UK-wide strategic interventions and major awards over £5 million. Tactically it is therefore prudent that the Museum seek to scale the proposed building works and gallery fit out expenditure to below £5m.
- 3.2.6 Projects funded by NLHF follow timescales set out by them. Other funders are aware of this and are used to this process so will usually offer grants to be paid at set stages of the Lottery process.
- 3.2.7 Timescales for a project which is successful at all stages:

September 2019 Expression of Interest (EOI)

This information is used to decide whether or not to invite the applicant to submit a development phase application. NHLF aim to respond to a submitted EOI within 20 working days of receipt.

November 2019 Development round bid submitted

This is the earliest a bid could be submitted and no dates have yet been published for 2020.

March 2020 Decision on Development round submission

If the project was unsuccessful at this stage, we would return to members for permission to proceed with the Medium scale option (see paragraph 3.3) costing £1.3m. This would allow a realistic fundraising target, critical improvements to the museum and allows for future improvements should funding become available.

April 2020 Development round begins

Typically this phase lasts up to two years and is used to develop the project from broad ideas to detailed designs, carry out partnership development, set up community and advisory panels, do in depth research and, importantly, secure partner funding. Throughout this phase, the museum would be assigned a project officer and mentor by the NLHF. The role of these is to ensure that the project is viable and that the bid is in a state of readiness to go forward to application at Delivery round. However, it must be stressed that the Delivery round bid is treated entirely independently of the Development bid. Success at the first stage does not guarantee success at the second as this depends on both the

quality of submission but also which other projects are competing for the same funding.

April 2022 (estimated) Submission of Delivery round bid

Submission windows have not yet been published beyond 2019. At this stage the project should be developed to RIBA Stage 3 which means that work on site can start as soon as permission is given. The Delivery bid will also include an Activity Plan which will show how the project itself will meet NLHF objectives to 'achieve positive outcomes for those involved' including participants, visitors, volunteers and other stakeholders. These activities might include learning projects with schools, opportunities to get involved with the work of the museum, community-based events, training posts or other events and activities

August 2022 (estimated) Decision on Delivery Round

September 2022 Delivery round begins

The Delivery Round can take up to 5 years. It is important to note that this 5 year includes all capital works and fit out on site, delivery of the Action Plan, project evaluation and post work administration of finalising accounts etc.

Information required about	2020 Development Phase Application	2020 Delivery Phase Application
Activities	<p>Outline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is this project likely to involve? The nature and range of activities that will engage people with heritage 	<p>Detail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed action plan, showing all activities in your project This will be included in your Activity Plan
Capital Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft or outline conservation plan Details of ownership Initial breakdown of capital works Plans for architectural elements to RIBA stage 1 Plans for non-architectural elements such as interpretation or digital outputs at the equivalent of RIBA stage 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation Plan Ownership details confirmed and meeting NLHF requirements Plans for architectural elements to RIBA stage 3 Plans for non-architectural elements such as interpretation or digital outputs at the equivalent of RIBA stage 3
Project Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about which outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed information about which outcomes

	your project might achieve	your project will achieve
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3.2.8 The bid would be written by the Museum Director with input from MBC officers, Innes Associates and partners such as Maidstone Museums Foundation. This work can be completed by the November deadline.

3.2.9 Similar sized museum projects approved by the NLHF include St Albans Museum (opened 2019) who received £2.8m towards a £7.75m project with St Albans Borough Council providing £3m and the rest secured from Trusts and other fundraising. Pitzhanger Museum received £5m between 2016 and 2019 for a project estimated to cost between £8.2 and £10m

3.2.10 Maximum grant funding from NLHF would require match funding of 5% of the Development Phase and 10% of the Delivery Phase. £350,000 is already allocated in the Council's capital programme towards the Museum. If the full 10% match funding is to be achieved (£490,000) further funds will need to be found.

3.2.11 It is not possible for the Council to contribute further capital funding to the project. The Council's capital program now relies on prudential borrowing which means additional capital expenditure must be able to demonstrate how borrowing will be repaid. It is challenging to identify a reliable source of additional expenditure in the Museum on which to make a case for this additional capital contributions. Similarly, if savings could be found these might fund borrowing too. However this would require the museum activities to be reduced or for the Museum to close on more days. It would be difficult to defend such action at the same time as trying to convince external funding organisations to invest in the Museum. Consequently, it is proposed that The Maidstone Museum Foundation, operating as an independent charity, will be tasked with raising the sum of £140,000 needed to match fund a £4.9m bid from external trusts and charities according to an agreed fundraising strategy, with the support of Council officers.

3.2.12 Potential funders include but are not limited to Arts Council England, Garfield Weston, The Art Fund, Esmee Fairbairn, The John Ellerman Foundation, Clore Duffield, The Foyle Foundation, Association of Independent Museums, the Kent Community Foundation, The Cooperative Trust, The Bernard Sunley Foundation, The Charles Hayward Foundation, The Wallace Foundation and Golding Homes Community Chest. These represent charities mostly supporting museum capital projects but others will fund specific parts of the project relating to, for example, young people, health and wellbeing or encouraging minority participation. Also included in the fundraising strategy will be targets for individual giving, sponsorship and gallery naming rights.

3.3 Option 3: Medium

3.3.1 This option takes the elements of Option 2 and removes the gallery refurbishments so that the focus is on the effective use of public space in the building. An improved experience on entering the museum will be backed up with new temporary exhibition gallery and events spaces with

toilets in the West Wing for the first time and refurbishment of the front courtyard.

3.3.2 This option would cost £1,332,000. This level of funding would require external funding and again Maidstone Museum Foundation would be asked to partner with officers on a fundraising campaign.

3.4 Option 4: Small

3.4.1 The possibility of using only Maidstone Borough Council's capital reserves already assigned to the museum has been investigated. However, the sum, approximately £350,000, would not be sufficient to do more than refurbish one existing gallery. This would fail to deliver the ambition set out in the 20 Year Plan and would not support the long-term option set out in the Museums Governance Review approved by HLC in March 2018. This review concluded that long term, Members should consider the possibility of transferring the Museums to an independent charitable trust. It was felt however, that the museum would not currently provide an attractive proposition to potential Trustees and that more work was necessary to improve the Museums' sustainability before this was a realistic option. Option 4 is therefore rejected as it would not significantly raise visitor numbers or ensure that enough of this historic building is refurbished. Option 4 would also cause difficulties in carrying out a larger option later, should the opportunity arise.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Members are asked to approve the vision of change embodied in Option 1: Large as a longer-term ambition but for Option 2: Large Minus to be adopted as the preferred option.

4.2 Officers feel this has the following benefits:

- Option 2 fulfills 80% of the goals of Option 1 but with significantly more chance of a successful funding bid.
- Newly improved museum displays which would better reflect the local history and population of Maidstone in both its urban and rural wards leading to greater visitation
- Better physical access to the museum for those with disabilities and impaired mobility or parents with pushchairs.
- Improved facilities through work carried out as part of refurbishment would mean reduced maintenance costs in future
- Co-production and human centred design would bring members of the public together to work on the project which assists with the building of social cohesion and a sense of ownership again leading to increased use of the building.
- The economic benefits to the town could be significant if visitor numbers are improved. Using the Association of Independent Museums' Economic Impact Assessment, it is calculated that visits to the museum from local (i.e. borough residents) and day trippers contribute £1.6m to the economy of Maidstone. (See Appendix 3)

4.3 However Option 2 still brings with it significant risks.

- The project heavily relies on NLHF funding and a bid for £4.9m is still towards the top end of the funding available. Lottery funding has reduced in recent years and many major capital improvements have already been carried out over the last 20 years, especially in museums and so the NLHF may prefer to fund more, smaller projects than fewer, large ones.
- The amount bid for at Development Phase will depend on the costs likely to be incurred during this phase and cannot be assumed to be a percentage of the overall project. However, the following sums have been paid to museums over the past 5 years:

	Development Phase	Project total
Sheerness Docks	£500,000	£8.4m
Gairloch	£32,000	£2m
Oxford City	£142,000	£1.6m

The project applicant has to find 10% of the Development Phase costs which are at risk as there is no guarantee that the project will receive Delivery Phase approval.

- Additional match funding needs to be raised requiring the support of the Maidstone Museum Foundation for a sum of £140,000 during the two year Development Phase stage. A further £1.7m would need to be raised to complete the longer term vision set out in Option 1. This is scale of fund raising, outside of the HLF, not previously attempted.
- Risk of failure at the Delivery Bid point is somewhat mitigated by the two stage application process. The Development Phase of the project ensures that a project is ready and, in theory, suitable for Lottery funding. It lessens the risk that a large bid will fail through insufficient understanding or planning, although it may still not gain final funding for the reasons mentioned elsewhere. In addition Officers propose to return immediately to Committee should a bid for Development phase funding fail.
- The size of the work involved does mean that operations will be disturbed at some point while work goes on. Closure or partial closure of the museum will affect KPIs and income generation.
- Museum staff will have to carry out developmental work during their normal working hours and so some activities will have to be deprioritised or stopped. These include answering public enquiries, project-based activities and work on new temporary exhibitions.
- However, there is also a significant risk that if the project does not go ahead, Maidstone will have lost the opportunity to create the change necessary to make the museum more sustainable in the future. The current problems with the museum and its galleries, if unaddressed will

lead to falling footfall and income, an underused and expensive building and, eventually, obsolescence.

- 4.4 However, the overall potential benefit in relation to the effort and work required, in conjunction with the likelihood of funding, staff resources and relationships with partners formed as part of the work on Ancient Lives means that Option 2, if it is successful, provides the best use of time and resources in ensuring the future sustainability of the museum.
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5 RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. That consideration is shown in this report in paragraph 4.3. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

6 CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Members of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure have previously approved the outline concept, stories and the appointment of specialist consultants to carry out this latest piece of work attached as Appendix 1
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7 NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The next steps would be for officers to contact NLHF and discuss eligibility and the work needed for a first stage bid. At this point specialist museum designers would need to be appointed to drive the project.
- 7.2 A fundraising strategy would be prepared in partnership with Maidstone Museum Foundation
- 7.3 A programme to take the project up to the stage one bid (next opportunity April 2020) would be drawn up.
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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: Stage 2 Report Feasibility Study at Maidstone Museum
 - Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment
 - Appendix 3: Economic Impact Assessment
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