

Appendix 3 - Recovery and Renewal Action Plan

A VIBRANT ECONOMY					
Action	Agreed funding	Target Start	Target End	Expected Success	Progress at January 2023
-	£60,000 Recovery Fund	Sep-21	TBC	<p>Provision of a town centre venue to provide accessible training, careers advice, and employability support for all residents. Courses delivered to a range of participants including book-keeping and computerised accounting, skills development online courses, essential digital skills, certified work skills programmes, food hygiene and employability workshops and support. Courses delivered to a range of participants including bookkeeping and computerised accounting, skills development online courses, essential digital skills, certified work skills programmes, food hygiene and employability workshop and support. With space for ten participants to be physically present in the hub it is envisaged that 208 people would be able to take advantage of the hub for courses</p>	<p>No change in position since November 22.</p> <p>(The college was unable to identify and agree commercial terms on a suitable premises and have confirmed that they are no longer in a position to undertake this project. It remains a strategic priority for the college who would welcome collaboration with the council in the future when other future opportunities and funding sources become available.)</p>

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				and support over 26 weeks.	
Invest in industrial and warehouse premises to help de risk new employment sites coming forward	Capital Programme funding	Sep-21	N/A	Projects are identified to invest in and Maidstone is seen and delivers its promise of being open for business, businesses can expand and locate to the Borough.	A package of Town Centre Capital Bids to the value of £5m in support of the new Town Centre strategy have been submitted. A further bid for £250k has been submitted for Maidstone Innovation Centre to facilitate more flexible workspace (wet labs) and associated shared high-tech equipment.
Vibrant Visitor Economy	£32,000 Business Rates Pool	Jul-21	Jul-23	Maidstone has an enhanced arts and culture offer with increased visitors to key attractions and an increase in footfall in the town centre.	Complete
Capacity to develop projects and bids to take advantage of new funding opportunities	£45,000 Recovery Fund	Sep-21	Sep-25	Successful bids and projects completed that meet our priorities.	No action

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<p>Transform the Town Centre through the development and delivery of a town centre strategy.</p>	<p>£175,680 Recovery Fund</p>	<p>Sep-21</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Town Centre Strategy in place by 1 March 2023, projects may begin prior to this. Maidstone town centre becomes a centre of excellence for urban sustainability with a strong focus around arts, culture, leisure and visitor economy creating a place where people want to live, feel safe and which prides itself upon being a town centre which is relevant to all of the Borough's residents and to which all of the borough's residents can relate.</p>	<p>Consultant appointed; inception meeting held in December 2022. Town Centre Walk about meeting took place on 18 January 2023.</p>
<p align="center">RESILIENT COMMUNITIES</p>					
<p>Establish Community Compact</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>May-21</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Partnership in place between the community and voluntary sector and the council. Joint projects completed and greater resilience</p>	<p>KCC established a Strategic Partnership Board for the VCSE and a VCSE Steering Group, which is independent of KCC and brings together a range of VCS representatives. The terms of reference for this group have now been formalised and MBC will be represented by the Insight, Communities and Governance Manager.</p>

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<p>Support and Encourage Volunteering in the Borough.</p>	<p>£25,000 Recovery Fund</p>	<p>Jun-21</p>	<p>Oct-22</p>	<p>Increase in the number of volunteers, volunteering in the Borough and as a consequence more community initiatives delivered. Work with involve to develop an indicator</p>	<p>The Council's Community website pages have been developed to include support for volunteering and now include a publicly available repository of VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) groups in Maidstone. Faith Groups and Places of Worship have also now been mapped and contacted with a view to including them in the repository. MBC hosting a 'Volunteering & Funding Advice Event' on 30 November at Trinity House. This event provided advice and support to volunteers and organisations from the VCS on volunteering and funding and explored opportunities for volunteer engagement. 1:1 appointment with funding advisors throughout the day. A second event is planned to focus on volunteering opportunities.</p>
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<p>Online Community Participation</p>	<p>£15,000 Recovery Fund</p>	<p>Sep-21</p>		<p>Online tool in place and used to successfully engage with the public on projects and initiatives.</p>	<p>Two engagement 'hubs' have been developed on the platform – 1 for Economic Development and 1 for Planning. Economic Development also used 'Let's Talk Maidstone' to develop an Innovation Centre Research and Development event with the Business Community. A Planning Hub was launched for the 'Sustainability and Design Mapping exercise'. This sought to find out resident views on features and characteristics of the borough. Closed 12 December. The Resident survey closed at the end of September. A total of 5027 people responded to the questionnaire, of which 3584 provided age and gender allowing these responses to be weighted in line with the population of Maidstone.</p> <p>Since its launch in July the platform has been used to deliver the following</p>
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					<p>Consultation and Engagement activities:</p> <p>Operation Broc, Mote park arts, Scarecrow festival, Marden Task Force, Waste and Recycling Newsletter, Community Governance Review, Budget Survey Community Wi-Fi, Air Quality Action Plan, Resident Survey, Sutton Valence Polling Places Review.</p>
Community Resilience Fund	£150,000 Recovery Fund	Oct-21	Oct-24	30 projects delivered by a variety of community and voluntary sector groups and organisations.	<p>1st wave of funding – £89,842 allocated to 23 projects. The 2nd wave of funding – £30,086 allocated to a further 18 projects. Sufficient funds remain to launch a 3rd of funding. Timescale to be confirmed.</p>
Equip Trinity Foyer to be a Community Hub	£30,000 Recovery Fund	Jun-21	Oct-21	New community hub delivered for all housing and related support services in Trinity.	Complete

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<p>Financial Inclusion Strategy and Actions</p>	<p>£34,320 Recovery Fund</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The number and value of unclaimed benefits that residents are supported to claim. A reduction in the number of households in financial crisis or at risk of moving into crisis. Increased take up of debt advice services by households with problem debt. A reduction in the number of households identified as being in a repeated pattern of Council Tax debt. The number of low-income households supported with energy efficiency measures. The number of low-income households supported to access a more appropriate tariff</p>	<p>Currently targeting residents living in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs), 254 Landlords of registered HMO's have been contacted as far and as a result tenants have been supported with food vouchers from the Household Support Grant.</p> <p>In addition, the Compliance Officer, working with internal teams, is also supporting vulnerable individuals and households via a separate allocation of funding from the Household Support Grant, providing fuel vouchers for pre-payment meters and food vouchers. £2779.00 in fuel and food vouchers have been issued and £3323.00 in other support awarded.</p> <p>MBC Pension Credit take up to Jan 2023: MBC – 177 residents identified. 95 applications submitted 56 successful 33 awaiting DWP assessment</p>
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					<p>6 non qualifiers. Total yearly award of £154,805.04.</p> <p>MBC Council Tax Support/ Universal Credit applications: -747 residents contacted, 115 awarded – yearly award of £89,942.56</p> <p>TWBC (Pension Credit)– 154 residents identified. 62 applications submitted, 36 successful, 24 awaiting DWP assessment and 2 non qualifiers. Total yearly award of £107,233.36.</p> <p>TWBC (Council Tax Support/Universal Credit)- 625 residents contacted, 149 awarded - Total yearly award of £93,718.56.</p>
Love Where You Live and Get Involved.	£35,000 Recovery Fund	Sep-21	Sep-22	8 community environmental projects delivered. Civic Pride increased as measured by the Resident’s Survey. Baseline the number of participants in the project.	1 Community Project delivered. Project cancelled.
THE WAY WE WORK					
Increase HR capacity to facilitate agile working and	£50,000 Recovery Fund	Oct-21	Oct-22	Better understanding from staff on impact of changes to organisation	Complete

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new ways of working				culture Actions taken to meet future workforce requirements.	
Embedding new ways of working and ensuring the office is fit for purpose	£50,000 Recovery Fund £40,000 Capital Programme	Oct-23	TBC	Flexible office space that supports the new ways of working with the right technology and facilities.	The pilot for OneDrive and Teams document collaboration is being configured. A proposed governance structure for the M365 programme was approved by MKS Exec Board on 5th January 2023.
Ensure staff have the right equipment (office and home) to enable new ways of working	Capital Programme	Oct-21	TBC	Staff able to effectively work anywhere	No further update to report.
Planning Development Control fixed term post	£35,000 Recovery Fund	ASAP	N/A	Backlog resolved and staff able to meet demands on the service	Complete
Planning Enforcement fixed term post	£35,000 Recovery Fund	ASAP	Mar-22	Backlog resolved and staff able to meet demands on the service	Complete
Increased capacity in Heritage and Landscape	£70,000 Recovery Fund	ASAP	N/A	Backlog resolved and staff able to meet demands on the service	Complete
Increased capacity within Data Analytics to provide support for recovery and renewal projects	£50,000 Recovery Fund	Jul-22	Jul-23	18 dashboards in place by 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 dashboards have been completed. • 2 dashboards are pending additional changes. • 8 dashboards under development. The team remain on target to achieve 18 by summer 2023 and have improved the

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					information published on the website, with dashboards accessible here.
Business Grant Distribution	£30,000 New Burdens Funding	Ongoing	N/A	Maidstone continues to be the business capital of Kent	COMPLETE
Revenues and Benefits – Citizens Advice Maidstone Post	£18,000 Contain Outbreak Management Fund	Aug-21	N/A	Residents with debt problems are assisted to maximise income, reduce debt by claiming the benefits they are entitled to	COMPLETE

Since Quarter 1, progress has been made against a number of remaining actions including those contributing to 'a vibrant economy.' A package of Town Centre Capital Bids to the value of £5m in support of the new Town Centre strategy have been submitted. A further bid for £250k has been submitted for Maidstone Innovation Centre to facilitate more flexible workspace (wet labs) and associated shared high-tech equipment. With regards to the development of the Town Centre and a Town Centre Strategy, a Consultant has been appointed and an inception meeting was held in December 2022. On 18 January a Town Centre Walk about meeting took place.

Work is on-going to support resilient communities across Maidstone as part of financial inclusion workstreams. In addition to the continued work being undertaken to maximise the uptake of Pension Credit and Council Tax Support, the Welfare team and other front facing teams supported financially vulnerable households with funding from the Household Support Grant. £2779.00 fuel and food vouchers have been issued and £3323.00 has been awarded in other support.

The Community Resilience Fund was open for a second wave of applications for funding in December 2022. Applications were assessed by a Member panel in January 2023. A further 18 projects have been supported, with a total of £30,086 awarded to organisations supporting the well-being of communities in Maidstone. Sufficient funds remain to launch a 3rd of funding.

REALLOCATION OF FUNDING

We have reviewed the spend against projects planned as part of the Recovery and Renewal Action Plan. The following projects will not spend all or part of their allocated funds and therefore require a reallocation of funding.

- Vibrant Economy - Mid Kent College skills hub – £60k.
- Resilient Communities - Support and Encourage Volunteering in the Borough – reallocate £11,583 (out of original £25K)
- The Way We Work - Embedding new ways of working and ensuring the office is fit for purpose £30k (out of original £50k)

Mid Kent College was unable to secure a fit for purpose empty property for less than double the available funds. The College has now moved on to exploring other options. Work is continuing on the volunteering project and officers are exploring how this may be achieved in partnership with KCC and other district Councils, without such significant investment. The investment in office space and IT equipment has been met from other funding, 5k has recently been allocated from the original pot for new ways of working to new hybrid working equipment to ensure the meeting rooms on floor 6 are fit for purpose.

The amount to be reallocated is £101,583. It is proposed that this money is redistributed to two successful projects already in the plan.

- Resilient Communities – Community Resilience Fund -£52,083
- Resilient Communities – Extension of Let’s Talk Maidstone on a three year subscription – £49,500

The Community Resilience Fund has been an extremely successful project for which we receive more applications than we are able to support, the money enables community groups and organisations across the borough to continue to support and provide services to local residents . There is currently only enough funding for one more round around spring/summer, this will enable us to go out to go out for an additional round in winter 2023.