

**PLANNING AND
INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

5 April 2023

Shop Front Design Guidance

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Executive meeting	18 April 2023
PI PAC	5 April 2023

Will this be a Key Decision?	Yes
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman
Lead Officer and Report Author	Janice Gooch
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Historically MBC had a Design Guide for shop fronts (c.1990s) in the form of supplementary planning guidance (SPG) but no current guidance exists. The proposed guidance provides an understanding of the development of shop fronts and introduces the elements that make a good shop front with a heritage setting, it also provides initial guidance on the other factors that require consideration, such as planning, building control and licensing authorisations.

The reason for the guidance is to aide shop owners/ occupiers to provide high-quality, suitable design shop fronts, and to offer design support for case officers when dealing with planning applications.

The guidance could be adopted in the Council's DPD for "Design & Sustainability" and the Town Centre Strategy.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to the Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure:

1. That the proposed guidance document, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed as a material planning consideration
 2. That the guidance should be promoted for inclusion in the forthcoming Design and Sustainability DPD
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Shop Front Guidance

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve growth and thriving place. 	Rob Jarman
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendation(s) supports the achievement(s) of encouraging heritage within the town centre</p>	Rob Jarman
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section	Rob Jarman
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation. 	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will deliver the recommendations 	Rob Jarman

	with our current staffing.	
Legal	There are no specific legal implications arising from the report at this time. In due course as the guidance is progressed (if approved) into the future DPD then the relevant statutory and regulatory processes will need to be adhered to.	Cheryl Parks Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
Information Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes. 	Information Governance Team
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment 	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals. 	Housing and Inclusion Team Leader
Crime and Disorder	Higher quality shopfronts can reduce perceptions of crime	Rob Jarman
Procurement	None required	Rob Jarman
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<p>The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no implications on biodiversity and climate change. 	Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 Whilst historically MBC had a Design Guide for shop fronts (c.1990s), at present we have no guidance. The proposed guidance provides an understanding of the development of shop fronts and introduces the elements that make a good shop front with a heritage setting. The guidance also provides initial guidance on the other factors that require consideration, such as planning, building control and licensing.

2.2 The reason for the guidance is to aid shop owners/ occupiers to provide high-quality, suitable design shop fronts, and to offer design support for Case

Officers when dealing with planning applications. The guidance will therefore form a bench mark for future applications within the borough's retail areas.

- 2.3 Officers are looking for the guidance to ultimately be adopted in the Councils emerging DPD for "Design & Quality" and be fundamental to the Town Centre Strategy. It is the intention of the Economic Development Team to use the guidance with the roll out of a shop front grants scheme for the Town Centre, subject to the approval of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure PACs and subsequent approval by the Executive.
- 2.4 The document is designed to support the planning process and help improve the retail frontages within Maidstone Town Centre, and the smaller areas.
- 2.5 Whilst this is not, and cannot be used as a policy, it will provide guidance for owners/ occupiers and for Case Officers to ensure good quality, suitable shop fronts (and associated advertising, etc) to our retail areas to encourage footfall by creating attractive places to visit.
- 2.6 By creating attractive areas, it is envisaged to encourage public to visit and spend time (dwell time) within the Town Centre, and the other retail areas within the Borough. By creating the guidance, this will give assistance to both the public and case officers on best practice to encourage a high level of quality and design.
- 2.7 Press release could be undertaken. (A recent press release for Canterbury Council has been undertaken as part of a big push of Enforcement works within the city centre).

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee could choose to recommend that the Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure agree the recommendations as set out in the report; or
- 3.2 The Committee could choose not to recommend that the Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure agree that the guidance be approved for use in consideration of planning applications and for other economic development and town centre projects and promoted for inclusion in the forthcoming Design and Sustainability DPD

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is option 3.2.

1.1 By approving the guidance, a clear steer on design for shopfronts will be given to those making applications to change shop fronts as well as providing

a valuable tool for officers in assessing such proposals. There is currently a policy vacuum on what is an important matter.

1.2 There will also be benefits to wider projects run by the Economic Development Team and as part of the Town Centre Strategy.

5. RISK

5.1. There is not anticipated to be any discernible risk associated with the report and its recommendations. Any risk has been assessed in regard to the Council's risk management principles.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 Consultation has been undertaken within the HLD Team, William Cornall. At the time the guidance is incorporated into the Design and Sustainability DPD it will be subject to specific consultation as part of the relevant plan making regulations.

6.2 No formal public consultation has been undertaken to date on the document.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 The report and guidance, if approved, will be available on the MBC's website. If approved by the Lead Member the guidance will be used to assist consideration of planning applications where it is appropriate to do so.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Shop Front Design Guidance
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A