

Maidstone Culture & Leisure (MCL)

Business Plan 2014-2018

**Version 4
August 2014**

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Appendices

- A.** Commercial Projects List
- B.** Action Plan
- C.** Festivals & Events Strategy
- D.** MCL Marketing Plan

Reference Documents

Commercialisation Strategy
Museums' Collections Policy
Museums' Forward Plan
Museums' Audience Development Plan
Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan
Festivals and Events Toolkit

1. Business Introduction

Maidstone Culture & Leisure (MCL) commissions and delivers cultural, parks and leisure and visitor economy services. Its activities contribute to the delivery of Maidstone Borough Council's (MBC) Strategic Plan priorities for Maidstone to have a growing economy, be a decent place to live and to have corporate and customer excellence.

This business plan provides MCL with strategic leadership and support, promotes partnership working, supports sector growth and is a model for sustainability and excellence whilst maintaining the integrity of the assets it protects.

It will provide the foundation for service transformation and the development of alternative delivery mechanisms and will assist in reaffirming MBCs leadership and advocacy role in these sectors.

MCL will initially operate as a distinct commercial business unit within Maidstone Borough Council, with a single management team reporting to the Council's Head of Commercial and Economic Development it will operate using trading accounts built from a zero base budget.

2. Mission Statement

MCL will help make Maidstone a creative and exciting place to live, visit and do business whilst delivering strategic cultural, leisure, economic and social outcomes for Maidstone Borough Council.

We will do this by:

- Delivering, promoting and supporting excellent leisure facilities, cultural attractions and festivals & events for the Borough.
- Maintaining and protecting our culture and leisure assets.
- Protecting and promoting our cultural heritage and history.
- Promoting Maidstone as a destination and attracting more visitors to stay longer and spend more.
- Supporting local cultural and creative businesses and arts organisations to start and grow, working closely with the Councils' Economic Development team.
- Enabling our communities to engage and participate in culture and leisure activities.
- Developing commercial activities to generate revenue to help achieve and sustain this ambition and to reduce the subsidy from MBC.
- Looking for innovative ways to work with partners and clients to deliver shared outcomes.
- Being a leader and advocate for culture and leisure.

Our values are:

- Promoting, facilitating and providing great experiences for our residents and visitors.
- Maintaining the highest standards of quality in everything we do.
- Valuing initiative and passion within our team.
- Maximising income opportunities for ourselves and the local economy.
- Growing our business through reinvestment, creativity and initiative.
- Having Service, Teamwork, Responsibility, Integrity, Value and Equality at the heart of what we do.

3. Key Business Objectives

The business has five key objectives as set out below and these will be achieved through the implementation of a detailed live action plan which sits alongside this document.

- a) To reduce the revenue subsidy from MBC year on year and to make MCL as self-financing as possible.
- b) To assess and implement the optimum staffing structure by April 2015.
- c) To use MBC's cultural and leisure assets to generate income through commercial activity.
- d) To ensure that the business is receiving value for money for the services it procures.
- e) To assess the optimum trading model for MCL and to implement this by 2017.

The bringing together of the assets and resources under the banner of MCL's will facilitate the delivery of these objectives by realising the following benefits:

- Creating a team with a single purpose focusing on meeting the direct and indirect financial objectives and reducing the revenue subsidy from Maidstone Borough Council over the next four years.
- Increased revenues from MCL activities by maximising the use of MCL assets and resources.
- Business development and sustainability.
- High quality product and service development for our customers.
- Building the Borough's reputation as a destination and attracting more visitors to stay longer and spend more.
- Increased economic impact for the Borough.
- Strong leadership with clear strategies and shared business objectives.
- Stretched and motivated staff maximising resources to deliver the business objectives.
- Integrated marketing, PR, sponsorship, advertising and sales activities.
- Brand recognition.
- Whole team having an ambassadorial role in promoting the Borough of Maidstone.

- Optimised calendar of festivals and events and combined resources to deliver.
- Optimisation and sharing of data i.e. customer information.
- Overall performance management, evaluation and continuous improvement.

4. What we will do

4.1 Key Projects

A number of key projects will be developed in the first 18 months:

- a) Adoption of a new Festivals and Events Strategy setting out how we will use our parks and open spaces to deliver a programme of events with income generation opportunities. A programme of events will then be scheduled throughout the year.
- b) A business plan will be developed for a Mote Park Visitors Centre and Café.
- c) A business plan will be developed for a Mote Park Adventure Zone.
- d) A business plan will be developed for a Mote Park Adventure Golf Course.
- e) A business plan will be developed to introduce car park charges in our parks.
- f) A number of initiatives will be progressed using the museums' facilities and collections to generate income.
- g) A charging policy will be introduced for collection enquiries at the museum.
- h) The management arrangements for the Cobtree Estate will be reviewed.
- i) Development of concessions and product placement at our venues.

4.2 Income Generation

MCL will be commissioned by MBC to provide cultural and leisure outcomes with authority to operate commercially in order to generate income to sustain and develop the business and reduce the revenue subsidy required from the Council.

The areas in which MCL will operate commercially include:

- Tickets, passes, reward & loyalty memberships with partners
- § Merchandise and related retail
- § Space and venue hire
- § Leisure activities such as an adventure zone in Mote Park
- § Leisure card for both residents and visitors which will provide a range of discounts and promotions
- § Catering & hospitality in our venues
- § Education, coaching & training facilities and activities
- § Advertising and sponsorship
- § Car park charging in our parks
- § Festivals and events hosting and staging
- § Customer services
- § Collection loans

Section 12 describes how commercial activities will be developed and the marketing strategy will provide the basis for promotion and sales.

4.3 Challenges

There are a number of challenges which the business will need to overcome if it is to achieve these objectives.

- a) The legal framework within which we can deliver paid for events in our parks and open spaces.
- b) Understanding the true cost of the business, including recharges from MBC.
- c) Political and user opposition to commercial activity e.g. using parks for music events whilst protecting the natural habitat and welfare of the wildlife.
- d) Capacity to deliver our ambitious objectives.

5. The Sector

The Leisure market in the UK contributes 4% to Gross Value Added making it worth over £55bn. The industry represents around 9% of total UK employment– more than Manufacturing, Transport, Construction or Financial Services. In terms of 16-25 year olds the figure grows to 21%. Thus it serves as a vital element of economic regeneration.

66% of all Leisure businesses are small and medium enterprises; the start-up rate of businesses is 20% higher in the Leisure sector. Leisure is already a substantial proportion of Maidstone's economic activity; the night time economy alone is currently worth £75 million and supports 1,500 jobs.

Maidstone also boasts a significant retail centre employing around 4,400 people. A growing leisure business can leverage the footfall generated by retail and in turn create the additional features needed to develop Maidstone into a vibrant cultural, leisure and retail destination.

MCL will build on these vital foundations, by providing compelling and targeted activities and becoming a leading Leisure Destination for the South East.

Tourism is an important sector for Maidstone as visitors from outside the borough bring an injection of expenditure into the borough, which helps to raise local incomes and employment both directly and through multiplier effects. The last available figures using the 'Cambridge model' to assess the economic impact of the sector in Maidstone were from 2011 (more recent figures will be released later in 2014), and the main findings were as follows:

- *Spend* - around £176.8m was spent on trips to Maidstone in 2009 by overnight and day visitors, up 2% compared to 2009. It is estimated that a further £53m was added through multiplier effects. Drawing together direct business turnover, supplier and income induced expenditure, and related expenditure, the total value of tourism activity is estimated to have been around £249.9m, up 4% compared to 2009.

- *Trips* - It is estimated that around 3.3 million tourism day trips were made to Maidstone in 2011, down 1% compared to 2009. In addition, around 393,000 overnight tourism trips were made.
- *Origin of spend and trips* –Domestic visitors made 83% of overnight trips (327,000) and overseas visitors made 17% of trips (66,000). By comparison, 26% of expenditure was made by domestic staying visitors; 11% by overseas staying visitors and 63% by day visitors.
- *Jobs* – an estimated 3,700 Full-Time Equivalent Jobs or 5,000 ‘Actual Jobs’ (with the addition of seasonal and part-time employment) were supported by the tourism sector – around 7% of total employment.

The cultural sector also contributes greatly to the UK economy as well as bringing life to an area and creating a sense of place.

- For every £1 invested in Arts and Culture up to £6 is generated for the local economy.
- The cultural economy creates 694,706 jobs across England.
- 49% of tourists visiting Britain plan to go to a live music Concert or Event.
- Jobs in the creative and cultural sector are expected to increase up to a third by 2020.
- Music, visual arts and performing arts contribute to over £4 billion a year to the national economy.

6. Business Operational and Organisational Structures

As previously stated Maidstone Borough Council has identified the benefit of bringing together its cultural and leisure services into one business unit. By commissioning MCL to deliver its cultural, parks and leisure and visitor economy objectives and outcomes it has given MCL the freedom to operate commercially to generate income and reduce the revenue subsidy thereby protecting the services for the future.

The diagram below demonstrates the core activities of each area, the commercial activities that will be developed and the support functions for the business.

Maidstone Culture & Leisure (MCL)

Core operations:

Cultural Services

- Collection Management
- Accreditation
- Education
- Exhibitions
- Interpretation
- Funding bids
- Trusts management
- Cultural provision
- Professional advice
- Hazlitt Theatre contract

Parks & Leisure

- Professional advice
- Horticultural provision
- Management Plans
- Maintenance
- Open space strategy and provision
- Play area management
- Leisure Centre contract management
- Cobtree Estate management
- Education
- Capital investment

Visitor Economy

- Place marketing
- Visitor information
- Industry relationships

Support Services:

- Admin
- Finance
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Volunteer coordination
- Retail stock control
- Bookings
- Caretaking

Commercial operations:

- Visitor services
- Retail sales
- Ticket sales
- Café operation/contract management
- Leisure activities
- Events
- Festivals
- Venue/room hire
- Marketing/PR
- Sponsorship/advertising
- Corporate packages/membership
- Visitor packages, MCL card
- Commercial services
- Kent Conference Bureau
- Education services
- Collections loans
- Paid exhibitions
- E-commerce
- Collection enquiries

7. Products and Services Provided

7.1 Cultural Services

Vision

“We will use the substantial recent investment in the borough’s cultural and leisure infrastructure as a platform to promote excellence, broaden engagement and deliver a lasting legacy of cultural economic and social benefits to residents, visitors and businesses.”

We will do this by

- A programme of activities where we will engage, support and collaborate with partners to promote excellence and sustainability.
- Providing leadership and advocacy across the cultural sector.
- Managing Maidstone Museums.
- Developing and delivering a programme of Festivals and Events.
- Managing the Hazlitt Theatre and Arts Centre contract with Parkwood Leisure.
- Developing and enhancing MBCs cultural provision.
- Ensuring the community has access to vibrant, exciting and inclusive cultural and leisure activities and facilities.
- Acting as an advocate and champion for Maidstone’s cultural and leisure offer on the local, regional and national stage.
- Improving audience engagement.
- Making the case for culture.

7.1.1 Museums

Vision

“Maidstone Museums aim to inspire, educate and challenge its visitors and users through the use of its collections, staff and buildings. We will do this by telling the story of Maidstone, its people, their natural environment and the wider world in which they live, through the artefacts and specimens we collect and interpret.”

Introduction

Maidstone Museum & Bentsley Art Gallery is one of the most important regional museums in the South East. Its collections are recognised as being outstanding in their diversity and quality and consist of over 660,000 artefacts and specimens. There are a number of Trusts and partner organisations that contribute to the museums and own some of the collections; they are listed at section 13.

The museums offer access to the collections through innovative programming of their permanent galleries and temporary exhibitions. The temporary exhibitions give opportunities for innovation, joint partnerships and more contemporary work allowing the museum to reach new and targeted audiences.

Admission to Maidstone Museum and the regimental museum is currently free and there is a small admission charge to the Museum of Carriages. Over 86,000 people visited the museum in 2013/14 including education visits.

Education and learning is a key focus for the Museum and it offers a wide range of formal and informal learning opportunities to visitors of all ages. Adult and group visitors can participate in workshops designed to increase access to the collections, lectures, behind the scenes tours and guided tours of the galleries.

Schools are offered a range of workshops that deliver to the national curriculum at the Museum in a dedicated classroom and also sessions which can be delivered at their own premises. The number of schools engaging continues to rise with approximately 8,500 children engaging with the museum through this programme of work.

The informal learning offer to children is extensive and includes a popular programme of activities aimed at families with children in the school holidays. This has been developed over the last five years and has been a major factor in the increased use of the museums over this period. The quality and range of the participatory activities has created a large number of users who repeatedly visit the museums to participate.

The collections staff deal with a large number of public enquires ranging from family history to identification of objects.

The Council's museums and collections provide a unique opportunity to provide new and exciting ways for the public to have a better and wider appreciation of our culture and heritage whilst maximising the use of our assets. The museum has recently had an award winning extension and the operational team are extremely knowledgeable and experienced.

The extensive collections, the temporary exhibition spaces and the rooms within the museum are all under-utilised assets and present us with opportunities to expand our offer increase footfall, increase our profile and create a more financial and sustainable future.

We do this by

- Management and development of the Maidstone Museum & Bentsley Art Gallery and the Carriage Museum.
- Development of income generating activities, events and new commercial opportunities in the museums.
- Collections Management.
- Achieving and maintaining museums accreditation.
- Providing educational opportunities.
- Providing permanent and temporary exhibitions maximising the use of the extensive and diverse collection.
- Interpretation and orientation of spaces, exhibitions and permanent displays.
- Developing funding bids to support existing and new activities.
- Partnerships with Trusts.
- Providing professional advice.
- Responding to enquiries about the collections.

7.1.2 Festivals and Events

Vision

"To develop a festivals and events programme that creates a lively and vibrant place to live, work and visit, whilst ensuring the sustainable use of the Borough's venues and;

That by 2017 Maidstone borough is recognised as a destination that hosts and develops high quality sustainable festivals and events; and cultivates community creativity for maximum economic benefit and social enjoyment."

Introduction

Well organised festivals and events are recognised for their ability to produce benefits for the local economy, bring life to an area, create interest in the area and reflect the place.

MCL's Festivals and Events Strategy focuses on events that take place in the Borough's parks and open spaces and provides a strategic framework for enabling them. It recognises the fact that major events represent business, cultural leisure and sporting assets; they make a

positive contribution in influencing perception of an area, in helping to stimulate economic activity and in enhancing social and cultural wellbeing.

Maidstone Borough has an established history and tradition of hosting Events and Festivals. There is a comprehensive and diverse range of activities; from music events, to community events that have direct links to the well-being and cohesion of the local community.

The Festivals and Events policy sets out the priorities, aims and objectives for the delivery of the Council's Events and Festivals programme and ensures that any current or proposed event, whether organised or supported by the Council or as an activity held on its land, can be evaluated against a set of guiding principles.

We will do this by

- Developing an annual calendar of diverse, quality festivals and events across the Borough.
- Direct delivery, joint venture and commissioning.
- Cultivating relationships with industry contacts to secure world-class major festivals and events within Maidstone's Parks.

7.1.3 Hazlitt Arts Centre

In 2013 MBC outsourced the management of the Hazlitt Arts Centre to Parkwood Leisure for 15 years following a robust procurement process. The contract is managed by MCL.

The Hazlitt Theatre presents an eclectic mix of entertainment for all the family, from the music of Joe Brown and Voulez Vous to the raucous comedy of Lee Evans. Its traditional proscenium arch and intimate auditorium make it the perfect venue for drama, family shows, comedy, music and variety.

The theatre is serviced by a licensed bar and refreshment facilities with seating for up to 382 people, a stage of 6.4m (W) x 8m (D) x 4.5 (H), an orchestra pit, fly tower, film screen and full lighting and sound facilities. There are 5 dressing rooms and a large scene dock for storage of scenery.

The Hazlitt Theatre is one the main theatres for Maidstone and was named after William Hazlitt, the famous essayist, who was born in Maidstone in 1778. It opened in 1955.

The Exchange Studio is the ultimate in flexible studio spaces, theatre in the round, dance floor, cabaret, thrust and end on. The Studio is the ideal space for contemporary drama, developing workshops, band nights and comedy clubs. The theatre is serviced by its own dressing rooms, licensed bar and refreshment facilities with a seating for up to 150 people.

The Graham Clarke Gallery is an intimate town gallery for local artists to exhibit and create work. The gallery is accessible six days a week Monday - Saturday from 10am - 5.30pm. The Gallery measures 10m x 5m with a working height of 2.8m, all walls are white with hanging tracks along all walls and down the centre. The policy of The Graham Clarke Gallery is to provide facility for local artists to exhibit, sell and run workshops.

The Fourth Wall is a space for rehearsals of any size or a very useful break out room. This fully equipped space is within the Hazlitt Arts Centre measuring 10m x 12.5m with a usable height of 5.5m. There is easy access to the bar area and the Exchange Studio.

7.2 Visitor Economy

Vision

“By 2020 for Maidstone to be acknowledged as one of Kent’s primary visitor destinations, as befits the county town and its surrounding area”

Introduction

Tourism and leisure makes an important contribution to the Maidstone economy as described in Section 3. Visitors to Maidstone visit the borough for a variety of reasons and from a variety of places. MCL will play a co-ordinating role that supports improved infrastructure, information and partnership working.

The fundamental challenge for Maidstone is to capture a greater share of South East tourism and build on the borough’s heritage, urban and rural strengths.

To achieve this MCL will encourage cohesiveness between the public and private sector in the development of policies and campaigns to make Maidstone more attractive and competitive in the visitor market and to meet the current needs and future aspirations of the Borough’s businesses, resident and visitors.

We will do this by

- Consolidating our position as one of the South East’s prime destinations for business tourism.
- Further developing our leisure and tourism offer combining town and countryside and focusing on sustainable tourism.
- Working to increase the amount and quality of visitor accommodation, including more provision in Maidstone town centre.
- The River Medway becoming a much more important focal point for visitors.
- The Borough’s residents and tourism businesses being more aware of the importance of the visitor economy and its role in helping to promote the area and to welcome visitors.
- Improving Maidstone’s image and marketing the borough by promoting the area as an attractive place for visitors and residents, ensuring protection of our cultural assets, and enhancing residents’ pride in the local area.
- Developing Maidstone Borough as a visitor destination and thereby increasing the contribution tourism makes to the local economy, ensuring maximum employment opportunity, business investment and visitor expenditure.
- Maximising the use of resources in addressing the tourism development needs of the Borough through partnership.
- Improving the attractiveness of the offer and working with partners to develop products.

7.3 Kent Conference Bureau

Vision

“To generate profitable, year round business from the meetings industry market for our members and the county of Kent”

Introduction

Kent Conference Bureau (KCB) is a not for profit organisation and is the only dedicated conference bureau in Kent. It was set up initially as Maidstone Conference Bureau in October 1997 to promote the borough of Maidstone and the surrounding area as a destination for conferences, exhibitions and corporate events. In 1998 the operations of the Bureau expanded to promote the whole county of Kent, thus becoming Kent Conference Bureau.

The purpose of KCB is to promote Kent as a conference and event destination throughout the United Kingdom by maximising the advantages of the area to bring sustainable economic growth to the region.

Celebrating 15 years of success, KCB currently represents over 60 Kent venues and has just launched a new website to celebrate this. KCB represents a selection of remarkable venues suitable for hosting all types events in an informative guide showcasing the venues represented.

KCB has an independent board made up of 16 people who represent venues across Kent. It meets quarterly to set strategy, review the bureau’s performance and sets KCB’s values and standards.

The board meetings also create a great opportunity for the members to network and share industry related news.

We will do this by

- Enhancing Kent’s reputation as a national conference destination.
- Developing the conference sector as an important element of the county’s economic success.
- Increasing the number of venues the Bureau represents annually. In 2013-14 55 venues were represented and currently for 2014-15 this has increased to 67.
- Aiming to have a 5% year on year increase in conversion rates securing quality leads and contributing to the Maidstone’s economic growth.

7.4 Parks & Leisure

7.4.1 Parks and Open Spaces

Vision

“Providing high quality accessible, open spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy, engendering a feeling of pride for our residents and opportunities for all to engage through participation, volunteering, attending events or simply relaxing.”

Introduction

The borough has 30 larger parks and open spaces and many smaller pockets of land. These range from our four Green Flag Parks to amenity areas which are left for wildlife.

The jewel in the crown is Mote Park which covers 465 acres and attracts over 1 million visits per year. As well as achieving green Flag Status for the first time this year, Mote Park was voted the third best loved park in the People Choice Awards across the whole of the UK. It also currently has a score of 4.5/5 on trip advisor.

MCL also manages 69 play areas, 686 allotment plots, and thousands of trees that contribute 425 hectares of green space to Maidstone Borough.

We will do this by

- Managing the boroughs 30+ parks and open spaces including Mote Park, Whatman Park, and South Park.
- Managing the Cobtree Estate including Cobtree Park, Golf Club and Kent Life attraction.
- Managing the Borough’s play areas and developing the play area strategy.
- A programme of festivals and events in the parks.
- Supporting commercial opportunities using the parks.
- Maintaining and achieving Green Flag status.
- Encouraging participation through events and volunteering.
- Providing professional advice to other areas of the council.
- Making Maidstone town centre a green and welcoming place
- Developing Parks Management Plans.
- Managing the maintenance of the parks and open spaces with our in-house maintenance team.
- Developing open space strategy and provision.
- Providing education opportunities in our parks and open spaces.

7.4.2 Maidstone Leisure Centre

Vision

“Providing excellent and accessible sports and fitness facilities for our residents, to encourage participation and promote health and well-being.”

Introduction

Serco Leisure was awarded a 15 year contract to manage the Leisure Centre in 2009 by Maidstone Leisure Trust which has itself been awarded the contract by MBC. MCL monitors the contract on a day to day basis on behalf of the Trust.

The Centre underwent a major refurbishment in 2010. This resulted in a large increase in visitor numbers with over 700,000 people using the facilities in 2013.

In addition to the usual facilities that you would expect in a leisure centre such as a swimming pool, wave machine, flumes and badminton courts, the centre was also designed to double up as a 1,000 seat concert hall which enables a variety of performances by local groups such as Maidstone Symphony Orchestra and Choral Society, as well as well-known national performers such as Jimmy Carr.

We will do this by

- Developing the relationship between MBC, Maidstone Leisure Trust and Serco Leisure with the aim of providing the best possible facilities and experience for centre users which is supported by monthly user satisfaction surveys.
- Monitoring and evaluation the contract and addressing any non-performance or changes required at the earliest possible opportunity.

7.4.3 Cobtree Manor Estate

Vision

“Working with and on behalf of the Cobtree Manor Estate Trust (CMET) to provide leisure facilities for Maidstone residents and visitors to the borough, in accordance with the wishes of the charities founder Sir Garrard Tywitt Drake”.

Introduction

MCL manages the Cobtree Estate on behalf of the Cobtree Management Estate Committee, (CMET) which is an independent charity. The estate includes Cobtree Manor Park, Cobtree Manor Golf Manor Golf Course and the Kent Life Heritage Farm attraction.

Through working with the Committee we are able to help develop and improve these popular attractions with the final phase of development at **Cobtree Manor Park** due to

complete in early 2015. This will include a new visitor centre, indoor café, indoor class room and improved toilet facilities. Previous phases included improvements to the path network across the park, a very popular children’s play area, sculpture trail and improvements to the car park. The improvement programme has led to visitor numbers doubling since 2012.

The Kent Life Heritage Farm attraction is managed on behalf of CMET by Continuum. They are a professional attraction management company who also run The Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth, Oxford Castle and Yorks Chocolate Story. Having a specialist attraction management company ensures that the attraction is professionally run by people who fully understand their market and customers. The contract is due for renewal in October 2015.

Cobtree Manor Golf Course is operated on a lease by Mytime Active which provide specialist golf course management, they also run 18 other golf courses across the UK, many of them on behalf of local authorities. They have had this lease since 2009 and in this time have developed the offer provided at the golf course considerably. The lease is due for renewal January 2015.

We will do this by

- Working with the CMET and the service providers for the estate to develop the offer, improve visitor facilities and generate income to protect and sustain the asset.
- Reviewing the management arrangements for the estate to ensure best value and to optimise revenues.

7.5 Markets

Vision

“To provide the county town with a vibrant local market which will provide choice to shoppers, support local produce and give opportunities to start-up businesses.”

Introduction

We currently deliver a twice weekly market at Lockmeadow, which has been on the site for over 100 years. The on-site market hall is also used every day for indoor markets, auctions and other activities such as dog shows and archery.

We will do this by

- Reviewing the current market, its offer, frequency, location and demand.
- Seeking to introduce new specialist market offers such as a Makers Market, and Farmers Market.

7.6 Marketing & Sales Development

Vision

“To provide a focused and targeted marketing and sales strategy and service for MCL and to facilitate a commercial culture and drive income generation to meet the financial aspirations of the business”.

Introduction

The Marketing and Sales Development Team will provide services on a commissioned basis initially to MCL covering the types of activity listed below.

Commissions will be based on clearly defined outcomes from the business plans/service plans of each area and a marketing strategy developed jointly where appropriate.

The team will be able to expand to take on new income generating work and commissions from other MBC departments, partners and external clients.

We will do this by

- Providing marketing strategy and advice.
- Destination marketing, promoting the Borough as a visitor destination and enhancing Maidstone’s image.
- Managing Kent Conference Bureau to provide a profitable venue finding service for the county.
- Developing and maintaining websites.
- Commercial activity promotion and sales.
- Education programmes promotion and sales.
- Press, PR and social media.
- Programme marketing and sales.
- Sponsorship and advertising.
- Monitoring and evaluation of marketing activity.

The illustration below shows the scope of activity that will be provided by this team



7.7 Support Services

Vision

“To provide MCL with an efficient and effective business support structure to facilitate the delivery of the business plan, achieve income generation and meet customer needs.”

The business will be supported by a strong back office function which will combine a number of areas currently undertaken across different teams.

7.7.1 Caretaking

- Day to day building Maintenance
- Exhibition building

7.7.2 Volunteer coordination

- Coordination of all volunteer teams for museums and parks
- Volunteers rotas

7.7.3 Bookings and ticket sales

- Room bookings
- Events bookings
- Event admin
- Ticket sales

7.7.4 Administration

- General enquiries
- Retail ordering and stock control
- Staff rotas

7.7.5 Finance

- Purchase orders and payment processing
- Sales invoices

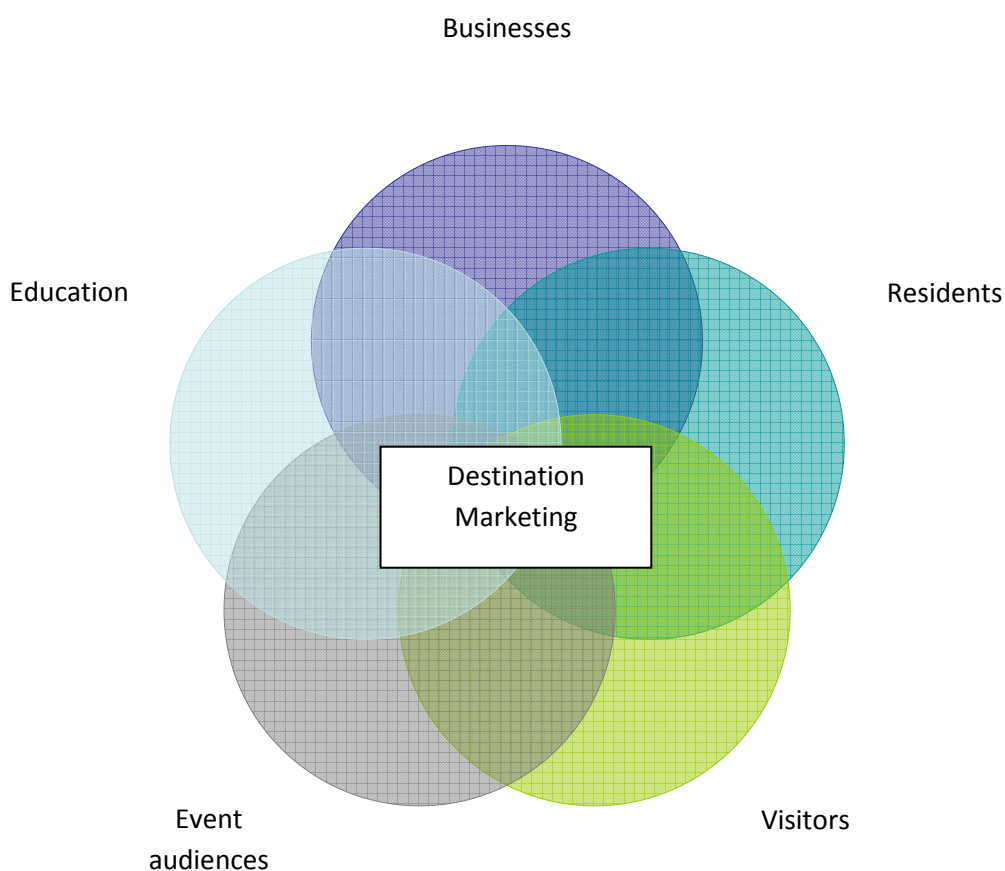
7.7.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

- Contract monitoring for:
Hazlitt Theatre
Maidstone Leisure Centre
Cobtree Golf
Kent Life
Museum Café and;
Any other leisure or culture contracts awarded by MBC/MCL
- Performance management of service areas including Covalent updates, service plans and corporate outcomes.

8. Customers and Audiences

All marketing and promotional activity will be coordinated through one team and will ensure that the message that Maidstone is a great place to live, visit and work is clearly communicated. This will strengthen the Maidstone brand and contribute to the development of Maidstone as a destination for visitors and businesses.

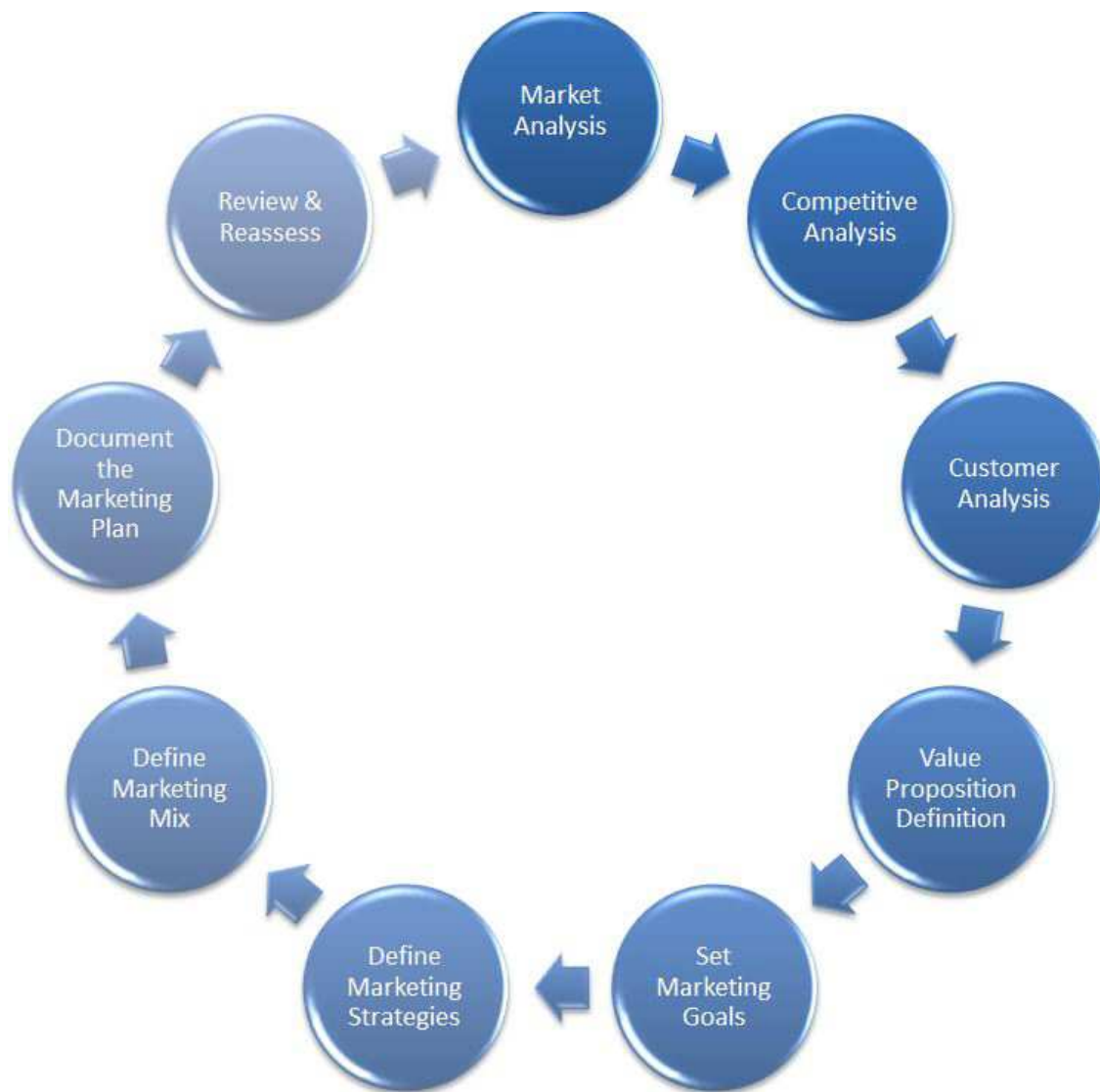
We will identify Maidstone's USPs and develop an overarching place marketing message with individual strap lines for the different audiences. This will be reflected in our marketing strategy, delivery plans and campaigns.



Marketing Strategy

MCL's Marketing Strategy, which will sit alongside the Business Plan, will ensure that we concentrate our resources on the optimal opportunities with the goal of increasing sales, achieving competitive advantage and building the MCL brand and reputation. It will set out how we will market our products and services to our customers, what our objectives are and how we will execute them.

We will follow the continuous process shown below which is based on many successful marketing models to ensure that we develop the right marketing mix for our business using intelligence on Product, Promotion, Price, Place, People, Physical Evidence and Process. At the heart of the strategy will be a new MCL website.



9. Financial Information

The financial information in the following tables has been prepared using the consolidated Cost Centres MCL has inherited from the services it has brought together. The intention is to establish a baseline to measure performance against, and to carry out the actions described in section 11.

There are several points to note with regard to the interpretation of Cost Centre budgets and their presentation in this business plan:

- The Leisure Centre contract (service charge and deferred payment) is cost neutral in the existing Cost Centres and is therefore not shown here. The Leisure Centre contract is, however costing MBC circa £630,000 per annum.
- The Hazlitt Theatre contract is included in MCLs Cost Centres and so is shown here. This figure is part of a contractual arrangement with Parkwood Leisure and is therefore outside the scope of this Business Plan.
- Depreciation has been shown as it exists within MCLs Cost Centre budgets. Moving forward it should be removed as it is not part of the operating costs and it implies that MCL holds major assets (which it could potentially realise if it so wished), which it does not.
- The Revenue Targets inherited from the Cost Centres have in some cases been set without previously although the ability to achieve them is limited. A good example would be the target of £30,000 in Parks & Leisure which represents revenue expected from car park charges in Mote Park which were proposed in 2011. When the proposal was abandoned the revenue target was not removed. Work is being undertaken to establish the 'gap' between revenue targets and achieved income.
- The apportionment of recharges relating to Kent Conference Bureau and Tousirm Marketing need further analysis to disaggregate them from the Local Economy Team which will sit outside of MCL.
- The staffing budget shown in the financial summary includes indirect salary costs and is not all in the control of MCL. The controllable salary budget for MCL is £740,600.

The following tables below set out the current budget position for those services which come under the MCL banner.

MCL Financial Summary

Description	Museums	Carriage Museum	Hazlitt Arts Centre	Events	Tourism	Marketing	Kent Conference Bureau	Leisure Centre	Cobtree Estate	Parks & open Spaces	Playground Improvements	Allotments	Market	TOTALS
Staff costs	389,690	13,200	2,500	420	57,330	76,720	61,940	16,890	52,530	141,320	15,520	2,050	66,150	896,260
Repairs and maintenance - premises	89,080	7,500	29,000	5,630					69,220	1,499,920	5,700		104,750	1,810,800
Public Convenience Cleaning									14,990	104,910			14,990	134,890
Street Cleaning													22,140	22,140
Utilities and NNDR	138,360	10,420							34,770	51,150			74,680	309,380
Premises Insurance	21,670	2,750						16,940	1,990	4,040	12,850		1,650	61,890
Public Transport													5,200	5,200
Casual user allowance									600					600
Equipment purchase, maintenance & hire	6,900	300		5,300					3,620	7,600			5,690	29,410
Materials and supplies	20,600						10,000		1,000					31,600
Catering provision	6,000													6,000
Cash Collection	880												1,750	2,630
Protective Clothes									500					500
Photocopying and Stationery							600		700	470				1,770
General expenses	30,620			28,870			20,000		247,140	14,360	10,500		100	351,590
Audit Fee									4,500					4,500
Bank charges	700						100							800
Licence fees	400						2,610		200					3,210
Couriers							100							100
Professional services	300			31,030					23,490	5,600	2,000	11,080		73,500
Post, Telephones and mobiles	3,400	20			700		400		1,100	1,200			1,000	7,820
Computer Charges										16,750				16,750
Conferences							1,200							1,200
Grants to Outside Bodies & Subscriptions					35,300		690			32,330			600	68,920
General Insurances	16,560	2,830						1,670		1,880			300	23,240
Advertising and Marketing	17,500				16,500		7,600			4,600			10,000	56,200
Training														-
Print and graphics	4,700	360			8,100		1,900		450	1,000	900			17,410
Contract costs			266,040											266,040
	747,360	37,380	297,540	71,250	117,930	76,720	107,140	35,500	456,800	1,887,130	47,470	13,130	309,000	4,204,350
Central Recharges	79,120	7,510	24,990	2,810	3,000	3,600	1,310	13,020	42,730	81,170	1,310	2,840	28,330	291,740
Departmental Recharges	161,600	5,500	1,030	290	23,000	30,800	24,880	13,360	17,890	85,710	12,280	1,620	30,950	408,910
Depreciation	139,710	11,480	54,570					175,300		202,800	220,260		32,370	836,490
Operating Lease									1,220					1,220
	380,430	24,490	80,590	3,100	26,000	34,400	26,190	201,680	61,840	369,680	233,850	4,460	91,650	1,538,360
INCOME	181,990	4,000	-	20,300			67,370	200,000	556,710	175,490	-	40	350,370	1,556,270
TOTALS	945,800	57,870	378,130	54,050	143,930	111,120	65,960	37,180	- 38,070	2,081,320	281,320	17,550	50,280	4,186,440

Current MCL controlled income

	Cultural Services	Parks and Leisure	Kent Conference Bureau	Markets	Totals
Income Type					
Café	4,000	14,600			18,600
Café Gallery	600				600
Room Hire	40,540				40,540
School Education Activities	22,500				22,500
Events	12,000				12,000
Museum Tours	1,000				1,000
Other Income	6,600		6,230		12,830
Joint Financing			61,140		61,140
Kent Archaeological	4,000				4,000
Royal West Kent	2,000				2,000
FIT	1,100				1,100
Collections Commercial	25,000				25,000
Maidstone Museums	1,000				1,000
MMF Grant	20,000				20,000
Museum Shop	45,650				45,650
Service Charge				147,000	147,000
Slipway fees		430			430
Bowls		2,820			2,820
Football and rugby		14,260			14,260
Pitch and putt		13,600			13,600
Mote Park Car Parking		30,000			30,000
Fairs and circuses		29,330			29,330
Wayleave		670			670
Licences		1,130			1,130
Section 106 income		37,360			37,360
Rent income		24,980			24,980
Commercial opportunities		26,650		20,620	47,270
Market Lets				179,840	179,840
Shuttle Bus				2,910	2,910
	185,990	195,830	67,370	350,370	799,560
Cobtree trust		556,710			556,710
Leisure Centre		200,000			200,000
Total	185,990	952,540	67,370	350,370	1,556,270

Notes:

- I. The £30 Mote Park car parking income target is currently unachievable as charges were not previously introduced.
- II. Cobtree Estate and Maidstone Leisure Centre are shown separately as they are not within the control of MCL.

10. Business Operational Objectives

Now that a financial baseline has been established in section 10., the intention is to move towards the following business operational objectives:

Stage 1 – Confirmation of financial baseline.

Confirmation of financial baseline, particularly in relation to:

- Revenue Targets.
- Analysis of Revenue Target performance over past 24 months to check viability.
- Confirmation of any future savings already agreed.
- Whether depreciation should remain in the MCL budgets.

Stage 2 – Zero Based Budget and Challenge for value.

Using the financial baseline established in stage 1 to challenge for value and undertake zero based budgeting. This may result in some services currently being bought internally to MBC going to external organisations.

Stage 3 – Introduction of Commercial Projects.

This will run concurrently with other stages and details can be found at section 12.

Stage 4 – Determination of future legal structure.

A legal analysis will need to be conducted, at the appropriate juncture, and after MBC's aspirations for MCL develop, to review the possible legal structures for MCL. The factors to be considered will include:

- Legal basis to trade.
- Aspiration to win clients outside MBC.
- If clients are private or public sector.
- The implications of Teckal on MBC's procurement processes.
- Teckal implications for bidding for clients other than MBC. (Teckal is an exception that means, in certain circumstances, a contract let by a public body will not be deemed to be a contract for the purposes of the public procurement regime).
- Tax implications.
- Control implications.

11. Commercial Projects

Income generating projects will be identified in a number of ways including ideas generated by staff, enhancement of services to customers, market research and looking at innovation and best practice elsewhere.

Each project will have a robust business case developed providing a profit and loss forecast for the activity and identifying any investment funding required to enable the project to happen in line with the Council's Commercialisation Strategy.

The legal and business basis for conducting commercial activities is a matter which requires further, detailed consideration on a case-by-case basis. The charging and trading activities currently conducted by the MCL business unit, and those on the proposed list of commercial projects are, for the most part covered by existing legislation giving councils' trading and charging powers.

There are some which may not be covered by pre-existing legislation and the legal basis to trade in these instances will be provided under the Localism Act 2011 s.4. Activity MCL carries out under this Act is required to be carried out through a separate company (owned by MBC). It is imperative that legal advice is sought on this matter prior to the start of any individual commercial project.

Looking into the medium term, as the commercial activity carried out by MCL increases, it may be more appropriate to have the whole business unit trading as a separate company.

The list in Appendix A shows the current projects that have been identified and the potential for income generation where known. This list changes constantly as new ideas develop or are discounted as not viable.

12. Stakeholders and Key Relationships

MCL has many relationships with external organisations which are essential to the delivery of the business objectives. Some are contractual and include funding arrangements, some are partnerships and others are informal. The list below is not exhaustive but endeavours to show the importance of partnership working.

a) Arts Council

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives.

They support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries - from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better.

Between 2011 and 2015, they will invest £1.4 billion of public money from government and an estimated £1 billion from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. Government funding is received from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and requirements are laid out in our funding agreement with them.

Great art and culture for everyone, is their 10-year strategic framework for the arts.

b) The Bentlif Trust

The Bentlif Trust was set up in 1897 with a legacy from the Bentlif brothers who had previously funded the building of the art gallery wing at Maidstone Museum in 1890.

The first trustees were invited to join, and were drawn from the social and business world of Samuel and George Amatt Bentlif. The trustees were responsible for administering the collection and appointing and funding a Curator, as well as ensuring that the collections were preserved in perpetuity to represent the tastes of a Victorian collector.

The current body of trustees continue to work with the museum to ensure that the original Bentlif bequest of artwork and sculpture is researched, exhibited and conserved. In addition they actively look to support local artists through the promotion of the Bentlif Open Art Prize.

c) The Brenchley Trust

The primary duty of the trust is to ensure that the artefacts which make up the collections accumulated by Julius Lucius Brenchley, and given to the Maidstone

Museum for the enlightenment of the people of Maidstone, are preserved in the best possible condition.

d) The Cobtree Charity Trust

The founder of The Cobtree Charity Trust, Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake had in 1951 one wish. That “The grounds and lands of Cobtree Manor, some 300 acres, be used for the benefit of the inhabitants of Maidstone and surrounding neighbourhood in the County of Kent.” At the inaugural meeting he handed to his first Trustees “a handsome endowment.”

In 1971 a long lease was agreed between the Trustees of The Cobtree Charity Trust and Maidstone Borough Council to realise the wishes of the founder and to interpret his will and codicils. Today the estate boasts a thriving park, the Cobtree Manor Park Golf Club and the Kent Life visitor attraction. Plans are underway to introduce additional attractions and to encourage greater use of the Park.

The Trustees continue to administer the freehold of the Park through the leaseholder Maidstone Borough Council and are able to support progress with grants such as the new visitor centre planned for 2015.

e) Cobtree Manor Estate Committee

This committee comprises four MBC cabinet members. MBC is the corporate trustee of the charity and when representing the charity committee members must act in the interests of the charity.

The terms of reference are to be responsible for all matters relating to the Registered Charity Number 283617 known as the Cobtree Manor Estate, with the exception of daily management of the Charity and the land known as Cobtree Estate, Sandling, Maidstone, Kent which will be undertaken by the Head of Commercial and Economic Development.

Maidstone Borough Council has a 999 year lease on the Cobtree Estate from The Cobtree Trust. This estate includes Cobtree Manor Park, Cobtree Manor Golf Course, Kent Life Attraction, Tyland Barn and various small pockets of land.

f) Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) gives grants to sustain and transform our heritage. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions they invest in every part of our diverse heritage.

HLF sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage through innovative investment in projects with a lasting impact on people and places. As the largest dedicated

funder of the UK's heritage, with around £375million a year to invest in new projects and a considerable body of knowledge, they are also a leading advocate for the value of heritage to modern life. Since 1994, HLF has supported over 36,500 projects allocating more than £6billion across the UK.

g) Kent Archeological Society

The Society, which has its base in Maidstone Museum, was founded in 1857 and is now a registered charity with the following objects: To promote the study and publication of archaeology and history in all their branches, especially within the ancient county of Kent. Much of the County has been lost to London since 1857 so the "ancient county" is treated as including the London Boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich and Lewisham, as well as Medway and the administrative county. The Society's interests are not confined to fieldwork. Its objects cover archaeology and local history in the widest sense. They include historic buildings, genealogy, industrial archaeology and local history though it is not always active in all these fields.

g) Maidstone Area Arts Partnership

MAAP's vision is that individuals and communities in Maidstone flourish through the contribution of Arts and Culture. Their mission is to represent and promote arts and culture in Maidstone and participate as a proactive partner in its artistic and cultural development.

They do this by:

- Contributing to development of artistic and cultural initiatives for individual and wider community benefit.
- Partnering with key agencies to implement artistic and cultural initiatives for individual and wider community benefit.
- Improving public awareness of artistic and cultural activities and its benefits to individuals and communities.
- Represent arts organisations in the Maidstone area and helping their members to flourish.

h) Maidstone Leisure Trust

The Maidstone Leisure Trust was formed in April 2007. It is responsible for the strategic management and development of a wide variety of leisure facilities and activities at Maidstone Leisure Centre.

The board comprises seven people and their aim is to provide, maintain and develop a first class range of health, leisure and recreational activities and facilities to serve the borough of Maidstone and the surrounding areas.

They work in partnership with the community, sports clubs and all relevant bodies including existing providers of relevant leisure and recreational activities, Kent

County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, School Sports partnerships, parish councils and potential funding partners.

The Trust holds the contract to run Maidstone Leisure Centre on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council and contracts with Serco Leisure to manage the centre on a day to day basis. The contract is monitored by MBC to ensure performance, which to date has been good with a clear customer focus.

i) Maidstone Museums' Foundation

The Maidstone Museums' Foundation is a registered charity with the aim of providing support and assistance to Maidstone's fantastic museums. Its works with the museums to secure funding from Trusts and Foundations. MMF run a Friends Scheme, gather donations and encourages volunteering in the museums.

j) Maidstone Tourism Association

MTA was created to promote and develop the interests of Tourism in Maidstone Borough. Members, through their views and advice, enjoy the opportunity to help shape the future development and delivery of Tourism in the area. Members include local attractions, bed & breakfast establishments, hotels and also retailers, pubs and restaurants acknowledging that visitor created footfall to the borough is good for local businesses as well as the tourism economy.

k) Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment

This independent museum has been housed within Maidstone Museum since 1960. It is packed with fascinating, colourful and thought-provoking exhibits. It tells the story of this famous local regiment, beginning with its forebears, the local Militia and the 50th and 97th Foot, and recounting their exploits during the British Army's many 18th and 19th century campaigns.

l) Local Cultural Partners

- Kent County Council
- Kent Cultural Transformation Board
- Culture Kent pathfinder Group