

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

TUESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2014

REPORT OF RESEARCH AND PERFORMANCE OFFICER

Report prepared by Sam Bailey

1. TWILIGHT ECONOMY REVIEW

1.1 Issue for Consideration

1.1.1 At the meeting of 26 August 2014, the Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided to undertake a review of the twilight economy in Maidstone.

1.2 Recommendation of the Research and Performance Officer

1.2.1 It is recommended that the Committee interview the witnesses to gather evidence for the review.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 At the meeting of 26 August 2014, the committee agreed that the twilight economy should be defined as:

Economic activity that occurs in the town centre after ordinary shop and workplace closing times (around 5.30pm) but before the usual pub closing times (around 11.30 pm)

1.3.2 The scoping document for the review (Appendix A), which was agreed by the committee at the meeting of 26 August 2014, outlined that the second set of witnesses could include:

- Town centre stakeholders in the twilight economy, including Hazlitt Arts Centre management and local business owners/managers from the sector;
- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Youth Forum

1.3.3 Bill Moss, Town Centre Manager; Natalie Price, Manager of the Hazlitt Arts Centre; and Georgie Grassom, Marketing Manager of the Hazlitt

Arts Centre will be present to give evidence on this subject. The committee may wish to ask the following questions:

- What is the current state of the twilight economy in Maidstone?
- Do witnesses feel there is a need for a more vibrant twilight economy in Maidstone?
- Do witnesses feel there is a desire from town centre stakeholders to improve the twilight economy offering in Maidstone?
- What are Maidstone's strengths in the twilight economy?
- Are there any obvious opportunities for further developing the Twilight Economy in Maidstone?
- Are there any weaknesses in the twilight economy that need addressing urgently?
- What can the council do to improve the twilight economy?
- Will the proposed redevelopment of Earl Street benefit the twilight economy?

1.3.4 The consultation documents for the phase 3 public realm improvements are attached as Appendix B. These were sent out in March and April of 2014. The sketch of the proposed improvements for Earl Street may be of particular interest for the twilight economy. The committee may want to ask the witnesses what the impact on the twilight economy may be of the proposed improvements.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The Committee could choose not to interview the witnesses, but this would make it difficult to carry out the review of the twilight economy.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 This review has an impact on the following corporate objectives:

- For Maidstone to have a growing economy; and
- For Maidstone to be a decent place to live.

1.6 Relevant Documents

1.6.1 Appendices

Appendix A: Twilight Economy Review Scoping Document

1.6.2 Background Documents

None

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

THIS BOX MUST BE COMPLETED

Yes

No

If yes, this is a Key Decision because:

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Wards/Parishes affected:

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