

Name of Review: Maidstone's Twilight Economy

What are the objectives and desired outcomes of the review

The following definition of the Twilight Economy was agreed by the committee:

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)

- To assess whether there is a need for a more vibrant twilight economy;
- To investigate whether there is a will for town centre stakeholders to provide for a more vibrant twilight economy; and
- If the answer to both of the above is yes, what can be done to improve the twilight economy in Maidstone.

What equality issues will need to be considered as part of the review – giving consideration to the 9 protected characteristics:

Members will consider whether the twilight economy is accessible to those with any of the protected characteristics. It is not anticipated that this subject will have any impact, however any recommendations that are made as a result of the review will be made with due consideration to the protected characteristics.

Which witnesses are required?

First set of witnesses:

- Cabinet Member
- An officer from Economic Development
- A representative from Town Centre Management

Second set of witnesses:

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

Other ways to seek evidence? E.g. site visits, involving members of the public, consultation.

- If possible, the Town Centre Regeneration Phase 3 consultation document;
- Site visits of Maidstone, and other places (perhaps one aspirational, one that we don't want to be like)
- Some form of public consultation on demand for the twilight economy
- Any previous work carried out on this subject by MBC, Town Centre Management or any other organisation

Suggested time for review and report completion date:

- Draft scoping document presented to the committee at the meeting of 26th August;
- First set of witnesses to be interviewed/evidence to be presented at the meeting of 28th October;
- Second set of witnesses to be interviewed/evidence to be presented at the meeting of 25th November
- Draft report presented for sign off for the meeting of 23rd December or 27th January (depending on whether December meeting goes ahead)

How does the review link to council priorities?

This review will help contribute to the following priorities:

- For Maidstone to have a growing economy- by encouraging the twilight economy to grow, providing a benefit to business owners and to increase quality of life for residents which attracts inward investment; and
- For Maidstone to be a decent place to live- by increasing quality of life for residents

How does this item deliver CfPS effective scrutiny principles?

- **Provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers**
- **Enables the voice and concerns of the public**
- **Is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role**
- **Drives improvement in public services**

Any co-optees or expert witnesses?

None