

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 19 October 2021
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Cannon, Cox, Forecast, Harper, Hinder, Naghi, Newton, Round
(Chairman) and S Webb (Vice-Chairman)

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Notification of Substitute Members	
3. Urgent Items	
4. Notification of Visiting Members	
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
6. Disclosures of Lobbying	
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.	
8. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14/09/2021	1 - 5
9. Presentation of Petitions	
10. Question and Answer Session for Members of the Public	
11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)	
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16. Application for a Historic Plaque at Wrens Corner, Maidstone	37 - 41

Issued on Monday 11 October 2021

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting in person or by remote means, please call 01622 602899 or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 15 October 2021). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call 01622 602899 or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 15 October 2021). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call 01622 602899 or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to the **Policy and Resources Committee**, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by **three** Councillors, to the **Head of Policy, Communications and Governance** by: **Monday 18 October 2021**.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2021

Present: Councillors Cannon, Cox, Forecast, Harper, Hinder, Naghi, Round (Chairman) and S Webb

Also Present: Councillor Kimmance

33. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Newton.

34. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no Substitute Members.

35. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

36. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor Kimmance was present as a Visiting Member for Item 18 – Appointment to Maidstone Twinning Association.

37. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

38. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

39. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

40. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2021**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

41. **PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS**

There were no petitions.

42. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

43. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

44. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development commented that the report on Capital Expenditure Proposals for Maidstone Museum would require a decision.

It was requested that clarity be provided at the next meeting of the Committee on whether the Pump Track Development report would be presented at any other Committees.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

45. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

46. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION REVIEW

The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager introduced the report and confirmed that the comments previously raised by the Committee had been incorporated into the draft strategy. The majority of the changes proposed were minor due to previous engagement of stakeholders, however it was noted that the wording of Priority 5, Destination Maidstone Town Centre, had been changed to refer to '*a welcoming economy*' rather than '*a thriving day and night time economy*'.

Lucie Bailey, Economics Director at Lichfields, presented a summary of the work carried out to finalise the Economic Development Strategy (EDS). The consultation responses were largely positive, with eight organisations and individuals providing comments. The three key changes highlighted were the change in emphasis across the strategic priorities in response to feedback; the addition of specific references and examples; and the addition of specific actions to the action plan accompanying the EDS.

In response to comments, the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development confirmed that the Committee currently received regular reports on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as employment rates, but that the further KPIs referred to within the report would be more specific to the local area and utilise more current data.

RESOLVED: That the Economic Development Strategy and action plan be approved for full adoption, and that an initial review be presented to the Committee six months after adoption, with annual reviews thereafter.

47. RECOVERY AND RENEWAL ACTIONS

The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance introduced the report which had been developed following the release of a significant amount of government funding for recovery and renewal. The actions outlined in the report fell within the remit of the Committee, and an amended agenda had been published to include an additional appendix.

Jodie Stevens, representing MidKent College, presented the proposal of a skills and community hub to be piloted for six months, using an empty unit in The Mall and enabled by the prospective grant. Care would be taken to complement existing services from partners rather than creating competition. As this would be a new service, there would not be any historical data to aid analysis. However, a target had been set to support five adults per week on short courses, and to engage 25% of the local young people currently not in employment, education or training (NEETs) within the first three months of the pilot, supporting them into education, employment or apprenticeships. It was acknowledged that some outcomes may take longer than six months to present, however the aim would be to track the progress of those supported through the hub over a longer period.

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development added that communication from Kent County Council (KCC) had been received, confirming that they would be supportive of the initiative. It would not duplicate work undertaken currently by KCC, and data showed that there had been a significant reduction in provision for NEETs and young people.

In response to questions, Ms Stevens agreed to ensure the wording of the proposal clearly set out that it would be open to adults as well as young people. Marketing via social media and around the town centre was proposed to attract young people to the hub, and work would continue with existing partners to cross-refer into relevant services.

The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance confirmed that data could be reported to the Committee to measure the outcomes of the pilot.

In response to suggestions that the pilot scheme be extended if successful, the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development advised the Committee to consider the budget allocation at the proposal stage, as the funding may be fully allocated by the time the pilot was reviewed.

In response to questions, the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development agreed that there was often a short turnaround time between funding being released and the deadline for bids to be submitted. Technical support would enable bids to be prepared, including design and planning permission, so that when funding become available the bid would be ready for submission within the timeframe.

RESOLVED: That the Committee

1. support the Community and Skills Hub proposal from MidKent College, and recommend to Policy and Resources Committee that £60,000 be allocated to the project subject to a review taking place at four months;
2. endorse the support of the Visitor Economy including retail, hospitality and leisure sectors following the impacts of the pandemic to assist with the return of business as usual;
3. endorse the action to invest in industrial and warehouse premises to help de-risk new employment sites coming forward as this will support the Economic Development Strategy Priority 1 - Open for Business;
4. endorse the capacity to develop projects and bids for bidding through technical support for the levelling up fund; and
5. support the initial concept of the Maidstone Riverside Light Walk to improve links between Archbishops Palace, Lockmeadow and the Town Centre, and recommend to the Policy & Resources Committee that this concept be developed and brought back to this Committee at their meeting on 14 December 2021.

48. **SPEND OF FURTHER ALLOCATION OF ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT**

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development explained that, due to the short turnaround time of the multiple business support grants available during the pandemic, it was not feasible at that point to reflect on the administration process. However, the newly-released discretionary grant would be running for a longer period and therefore allowed time for a policy to be created and approved.

The Economic Development Officer introduced the report, which proposed the addition of four fixed-term Burden Support Coordinators to be funded through the new burdens fund, who could then reach out to businesses and signpost to relevant schemes. Businesses would be individually assessed so that appropriate support could be identified, and data would be collated and monitored so that regular reviews could be undertaken. A target was proposed of 50% of the spend to be achieved by the end of November 2021, when a review would take place with an opportunity to adapt the process if necessary. A second review would take place in January 2022.

RESOLVED: That the Additional Restrictions Grant Top Up Policy, at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved and a report brought back to the Committee in 6 months for review.

49. APPOINTMENT TO MAIDSTONE AREA ARTS PARTNERSHIP

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report, outlining that two nominations had been received for the two vacancies on the Maidstone Area Arts Partnership (MAAP). The length of term was one year, however MAAP were open to this being extended.

RESOLVED: That Councillors Harper and M Rose be appointed to the Maidstone Area Arts Partnership, each for a term of three years.

50. APPOINTMENT TO MAIDSTONE TWINNING ASSOCIATION

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the item, explaining that no written nominations had been received for the two vacancies on the Maidstone Twinning Association.

Councillor Kimmance expressed interest in being reappointed to the role and outlined his reasons for this.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Kimmance be appointed to the Maidstone Twinning Association, and that the further vacancy be readvertised.

51. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30pm to 9.32pm.

2021/22 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Origin	CLT to clear	Lead	Report Author
Maidstone Town Centre Strategy Scoping and Consultation Paper	ERL	16-Nov-21	Officer Update	Yes	John Foster	Chris Inwood
Feasibility Modelling for Future Leisure Options (MMMA)	ERL	16-Nov-21	Officer Update	Yes	John Foster	Mike Evans
Capital Expenditure Proposals - Maidstone Museum	ERL	16-Nov-21	Officer Update	Yes	John Foster	Victoria Barlow
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23-2026/27	ERL	14-Dec-21	Officer Update	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Fees and Charges 2021/22	ERL	14-Dec-21	Governance	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Q2 Budget and Performance Monitoring 2021/22	ERL	14-Dec-21	Governance		Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Recovery & Renewal - Maidstone Riverside Light Walk - <i>tbc by P&R</i>	ERL	14-Dec-21	Cllr Request		Alexa Kersting-Woods	John Foster
Leisure Stakeholder and Consultation Interim Update (MMMA)	ERL	18-Jan-22	Officer Update	Yes	John Foster	Mike Evans
Carraige Museum Options Appraisal Report	ERL	18-Jan-22	Officer Update	Yes	John Foster	Victoria Barlow
Medium Term Financial Strategy & Budget Proposals 2022/23	ERL	18-Jan-22	Governance	Yes	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Q3 Budget and Performance Monitoring 2021/22	ERL	15-Feb-22	Officer Update	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Review of Revised Museum Opening Hours and Working Arrangements	ERL	TBC	Cllr Request		John Foster	Victoria Barlow
Reopening the Town Centre - Arts and Cultural Activities	ERL	TBC	Cllr Request		John Foster	
Recovery & Renewal - 4-month review of Community and Skills Hub - <i>tbc by P&R</i>	ERL	TBC	Cllr Request		John Foster	John Foster

2021/22 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Origin	CLT to clear	Lead	Report Author
Pump Track Development	ERL	TBC	Officer Update	Yes	John Foster	Mike Evans

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Agenda Item 14

ECONOMIC REGENERATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE

19 October 2021

1st Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22

Final Decision-Maker	Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	Mark Green, Director of Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Authors	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client) Carly Benville, Senior Business Analyst
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the 2021/22 financial and performance position for the services reporting into the Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee (ERL) as at 30th June 2021 (Quarter 1). The primary focus is on:

- The 2021/22 Revenue and Capital budgets; and
- The 2021/22 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that relate to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045.

The combined reporting of the financial and performance position enables the Committee to consider and comment on the issues raised and actions being taken to address both budget pressures and performance issues in their proper context, reflecting the fact that the financial and performance-related fortunes of the Council are inextricably linked.

Budget Monitoring

Overall net expenditure at the end of Quarter 1 for the services reporting to ERL is £0.309m, compared to the approved profiled budget of £0.328m, representing an underspend of £0.019m.

Capital expenditure at the end of Quarter 1 was £0.543m against a total budget of £4.453m. Forecast spend for the year is £2.563m.

Performance Monitoring

0% (0 of 2) targetable quarterly key performance indicators reportable to the Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee achieved their Quarter 1 target.

Purpose of Report

The report enables the Committee to consider and comment on the issues raised and actions being taken to address both budget pressures and performance issues as at 30 June 2021.

This report makes the following Recommendations to the Committee:

1. That the Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 1 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted;
2. That the Capital position at the end of Quarter 1 be noted; and
3. That the Performance position as at Quarter 1 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted.

Timetable

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee	19 October 2021

1st Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>This report monitors actual activity against the revenue budget and other financial matters set by Council for the financial year. The budget is set in accordance with the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy which is linked to the Strategic Plan and corporate priorities.</p> <p>The Key Performance Indicators and strategic actions are part of the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2019-45 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. They also cover a wide range of services and priority areas.</p>	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Cross Cutting Objectives	This report enables any links between performance and financial matters to be identified and addressed at an early stage, thereby reducing the risk of compromising the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045, including its cross-cutting objectives.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Risk Management	This is addressed in Section 5 of this report.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Financial	<p>Financial implications are the focus of this report through high level budget monitoring. Budget monitoring ensures that services can react quickly enough to potential resource problems. The process ensures that the Council is not faced by corporate financial problems that may prejudice the delivery of strategic priorities.</p> <p>Performance indicators and targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and determining good value for money. The financial implications of any proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and associated annual budget setting process. Performance issues are highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.</p>	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Staffing	<p>The budget for staffing represents a significant proportion of the direct spend of the Council and is carefully monitored. Any issues in relation to employee costs will be raised in this and future monitoring reports.</p> <p>Having a clear set of performance targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place.</p>	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Legal	<p>The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget and the monitoring process enables the Committee to remain aware of issues and the process to be taken to maintain a balanced budget.</p> <p>There is no statutory duty to report regularly on the Council's performance. However, under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) a best value authority has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. One of the purposes of the Key Performance Indicators is to facilitate the improvement of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of Council services. Regular reports on Council performance help to demonstrate best value and compliance with the statutory duty.</p>	Principal Solicitor Contentious and Corporate Governance

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Privacy and Data Protection	The performance data is held and processed in accordance with the data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 2018 and in line with the Data Quality Policy, which sets out the requirement for ensuring data quality. There is a program for undertaking data quality audits of performance indicators.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	There is no impact on Equalities as a result of the recommendations in this report. An EqIA would be carried out as part of a policy or service change, should one be identified.	Equalities and Communities Officer
Public Health	The performance recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no specific issues arising.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Procurement	Performance Indicators and Strategic Milestones monitor any procurement needed to achieve the outcomes of the Strategic Plan.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Biodiversity & Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no direct implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2021/22 to 2025/26 - including the budget for 2021/22 - was approved by full Council on 24th February 2021. This report updates the Committee on how its services have performed over the last quarter with regard to revenue and capital expenditure against approved budgets.
- 1.2 The report includes details of the continuing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the financial position and performance of the service areas that fall under this committee and provide some further detail around any particular areas of concern.

- 1.3 This report also includes an update to the Committee on progress against its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
 - 1.4 Attached at **Appendix 1** is a report setting out the revenue and capital spending position at the Quarter 1 stage. Attached at **Appendix 2** is a report setting out the position for the KPIs for the corresponding period.
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2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 There are no matters for decision in this report. The Committee is asked to note the contents but may choose to take further action depending on the matters reported here.
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3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In considering the current position on the Revenue budget, the Capital Programme and KPIs at the end of June 2021, the Committee can choose to note this information or could choose to take further action.
 - 3.2 The Committee is requested to note the content of the report as no further actions are required.
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4. RISK

- 4.1 This report is presented for information only and has no direct risk management implications.
 - 4.2 The Council produced a balanced budget for both revenue and capital income and expenditure for 2021/22. The budget is set against a backdrop of limited resources and a difficult economic climate, even before the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic became clear. Regular and comprehensive monitoring of the type included in this report ensures early warning of significant issues that may place the Council at financial risk. This gives the Committee the best opportunity to take actions to mitigate such risks.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The KPIs update ("Performance Monitoring") is reported to service committees quarterly: Communities, Housing & Environment Committee; Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee; and the Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee. Each committee will receive a report on the relevant priority action areas. The report is also presented to the Policy & Resources Committee, reporting on the priority areas of "A Thriving Place", "Safe, Clean and Green", "Homes and Communities" and "Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure".
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The Quarter 1 Budget & Performance Monitoring reports are being considered by the relevant Service Committees during September and October 2021, including a full report to the Policy & Resources Committee on 15th September 2021.
 - 6.2 The Council could choose not to monitor its budget and/or the Strategic Plan and/or make alternative performance management arrangements, such as the frequency of reporting. This is not recommended as it could lead to action not being taken against financial and/or other performance during the year, and the Council failing to deliver its priorities.
 - 6.3 There remains uncertainty regarding the Council's financial position beyond 2021/22, arising from the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis and the Council's role in responding to this. Future finance reports to this committee will ensure that members are kept up to date with this situation as it develops.
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7. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: First Quarter Budget Monitoring 2021/22
 - Appendix 2: First Quarter Performance Monitoring 2021/22
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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

First Quarter Financial Update 2021/22

Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee
19th October 2021
Lead Officer: Mark Green
Report Authors: Ellie Dunnet/Paul Holland

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Part C: Capital Budget Q1 2021/22

C1) Capital Budget Page 9

Part A

Executive Summary & Overview



This report provides members with the financial position as at 30 June 2021, covering activity for both the Council as a whole and this committee's revenue and capital accounts for the first quarter of 2021/22.

Members will be aware of the significant uncertainty in the 2021/22 budget estimates arising from the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, both in relation to demands on the Council to respond and the speed of local economic recovery. Financial support from central government received during 2020/21 continues to support specific activities, and the unringfenced Covid-19 grant of £860,000 will be used to support recovery and renewal activities.

In addition, the Council will shortly be applying for the final round of funding under the government's sales, fees and charges compensation scheme covering income losses between April – June 2021 measured against the 2020/21 income budget. This is expected to be the final allocation of unringfenced Covid-19 funding from central government.

The headlines for Quarter 1 are as follows:

Part B: Revenue budget – Q1 2021/22

- Overall net expenditure at the end of Quarter 1 for the services reporting to ERL is £0.309m, compared to the approved profiled budget of £0.328m, representing an underspend of £0.019m.

Part C: Capital budget – Q1 2021/22

- Capital expenditure at the end of Quarter 1 was £0.543m against a total budget of £4.453m. Forecast spend for the year is £2.563m.

Part B

First Quarter Revenue Budget 2021/22



B2) Revenue Budget

B1.1 The table below provides a detailed summary on the budgeted net income position for ERL services at the end of Quarter 1. The financial figures are presented on an accruals basis (e.g. expenditure for goods and services received, but not yet paid for, is included).

ERL Revenue Budget & Outturn – Quarter 1

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Cost Centre	Approved Budget for Year £000	Budget to 30 June 2021 £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Forecast 31 March 2022 £000	Forecast Variance 31 March 2022 £000
Cultural Development Arts	12	3	2	1	12	0
Museum	19	-21	-28	6	19	0
Carriage Museum	4	0	1	-1	4	0
Museum-Grant Funded Activities	0	-8	-19	11	0	0
Hazlitt Arts Centre	292	86	72	14	292	0
Festivals and Events	-25	-23	0	-23	-25	0
Lettable Halls	-4	-1	-3	2	-4	0
Community Halls	76	24	17	8	76	0
Leisure Centre	-176	-44	-38	-6	-176	0
Mote Park Adventure Zone	-72	-37	-51	14	-72	0
Cobtree Golf Course	-35	0	0	0	-35	0
Mote Park Cafe	-33	2	-14	16	-33	0
Tourism	18	4	-10	14	18	0
Museum Shop	-21	-5	-1	-5	-21	0
Maintenance of Closed Churchyards	11	3	0	3	11	0
Sandling Road Site	26	7	7	0	26	0
Business Support & Enterprise	5	5	5	0	5	0
Business Terrace	82	53	51	2	82	0
Business Terrace Expansion (Phase 3)	-11	-3	23	-26	-11	0
Market	-41	16	38	-22	-41	0
Economic Dev - Promotion & Marketing	11	10	9	1	11	0
Leisure Services Section	56	26	24	2	56	0
Cultural Services Section	411	103	104	-2	411	0
Visitor Economy Section	117	29	29	0	117	0
Economic Development Section	190	61	54	7	190	0
Market Section	87	22	15	7	87	0
Head of Regeneration and Economic Development	97	25	22	3	97	0
Salary Slippage	-34	-8	0	-8	-34	0
Total	1,064	328	309	19	1,064	0

B1.2 The table shows that at the end of the first quarter overall net expenditure for the services reporting to ERL is £0.309m, compared to the approved profiled budget of £0.328m, representing an underspend of £0.019m.

B1.3 At this stage there are no adverse variances to report for this Committee.

Part C

First Quarter Capital Budget 2021/22



B1) Capital Budget: Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee (ERL)

B1.1 The position of the 2021/22 ERL element of the Capital Programme at the Quarter 1 stage is presented in Table 3 below. The budget for 2021/22 includes resources brought forward from 2020/21.

ERL Capital Programme 2021/22 (@ Quarter 1)

Capital Programme Heading	Adjusted Estimate 2021/22 £000	Actual to June 2021 £000	Budget Remaining £000	Q2 Profile £000	Q3 Profile £000	Q4 Profile £000	Projected	Projected
							Total Expenditure £000	Slippage to 2022/23 £000
Mote Park Visitor Centre & Estate Services Building	2,776	8	2,768	375	500	500	1,383	1,393
Mote Park Lake - Dam Works	672	25	647	100	50		175	497
Mall Bus Station Redevelopment	1,006	511	495	495			1,006	
Total	4,453	543	3,910	970	550	500	2,563	1,890





B1.2 Comments on the variances in the table above are as follows:




Mote Park Visitor Centre & Estate Services Building – Construction works are now underway, and the new centre will open in 2022.

Mote Park Lake Dam Works – This scheme is now substantially complete, although some works to a sluice gate are yet to be completed. The figures in the appendix for these works are indicative pending an update on the actual costs of these works.

ERL: Quarter 1 Performance Report

Key to performance ratings

RAG Rating	
	Target not achieved
	Target slightly missed (within 10%)
	Target met
	Data Only




Direction	
	Performance has improved
	Performance has been sustained
	Performance has declined
N/A	No previous data to compare

Performance Summary

RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A ¹	Total
KPIs	0	1	1	4	6
Direction	Up	No Change	Down	N/A	Total
Last Quarter	1	1	0	4	6
Last Year	1	0	1	4	6

- 0% 0 of 2 targetable quarterly key performance indicators (KPIs) reportable to this Committee achieved their Quarter 1 (Q1) target¹.
- Compared to last quarter (Q4 2020/21), performance for 50% 1 of 2 KPIs has improved, and for 50% 1 of 2 KPIs has sustained¹.
- Compared to last year (Q1 2020/21), performance for 50% 1 of 2 KPIs has improved, and for 50% 1 of 2 KPIs has declined.

Economy

Performance Indicator	Q1 2021/22				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Footfall in the Town Centre	2,588,741	2,722,375			
Percentage of vacant retail units in the town centre	Annual KPI				

Footfall in the Town Centre missed its Q1 target, but within 10%. Q1's outcome is the highest amount of footfall seen in the Town Centre since Q3 19/20 (pre-pandemic) so it is improving. The Economic Development team expect to see footfall numbers continue to rise at the public's confidence improves following post-lockdown conditions, and office workers being to return from working from home.

Percentage of unemployed people in Maidstone (out-of-work benefits) [NOMIS]

¹ PIs rated N/A are not included in the summary calculations

	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend (Last Month)	Long Trend (Last Year)
April 2021	5.2%				
May 2021	4.8%				
June 2021	4.5%				

Unemployment rates in Maidstone have continued to fall in this quarter, and whilst April 2021 is higher than last year (4.1% in April 2020), the rate for May and June are significantly lower than last year (5.5% and 5.3% respectively).

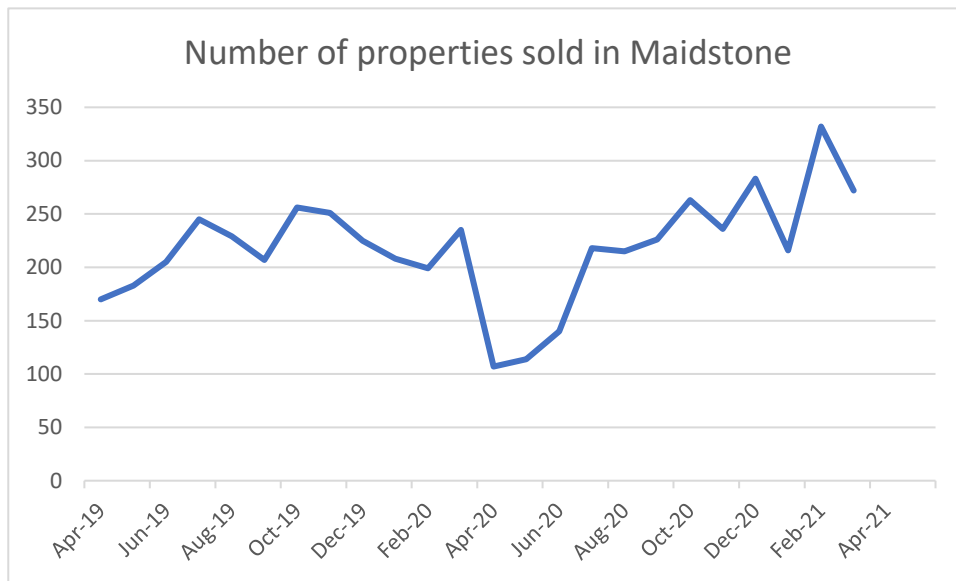
Number of youths unemployed (18-24)					
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend (Last Month)	Long Trend (Last Year)
April 2021	1045	373			
May 2021	935	373			
June 2021	900	373			

Unemployment in youths have been consistently above 1,000 since May 2020. In April 2020 the figure was 745. The number of unemployed youths has started to fall in quarter one for the first time since the start of the pandemic. The target of 373 is taken from an average monthly number of youths employed in 2019/2020 (pre-pandemic).

House Prices in Maidstone – April 2021				
House Type	Average price	Target	Short Trend (Last Month)	Long Trend (Last Year)
All properties	£309,362			
Detached Houses	£522,737			
Semi-detached Houses	£335,005			
Terraced Houses	£261,627			
Flats & Maisonettes	£174,995			

House prices in Maidstone have increased when comparing April 2021 to April 2020. The average house price (all properties) in April 2020 was £280,715, an increase of 10.2%. However, April 2020 saw a decrease in house prices when comparing to April 2019. The average house price (all properties) in April 2019 was £291,296. When comparing April 2021 to April 2019 (pre-pandemic) there has been an increase of 6.2% in house prices (all properties).

Number of properties sold in Maidstone – April 2019 to March 2021



At the time of writing this report, volumes have not yet been published by HM Land Registry for April 2021. However, since numbers prior to this appear to be increasing when comparing to pre-pandemic levels.

Agenda Item 15

Economic Regeneration and Leisure

19 October 2021

Commemorative Plaque Scheme Review

Final Decision-Maker	ERL
Lead Head of Service	Victoria Barlow
Lead Officer and Report Author	Victoria Barlow
Classification	Public
Wards affected	High Street Ward.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to consider minor procedural updates to the Commemorative Plaque Scheme.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That the proposed updated procedure for administering the scheme be approved, to make roles and responsibilities clearer for applicants.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	19 October 2021

Commemorative Plaque Scheme Review

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 <p>We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council’s overall achievement of its aims as set out in section 3</p>	Museum Director
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 the Heritage is Respected cross cutting objectives by making significant elements of our built heritage more visible to members of the public.</p>	Museum Director
Risk Management	The Commemorative Plaque Scheme Policy lays out how risks are addressed.	Museum Director
Financial	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	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Regeneration and

		Economic Development
Legal	No legal implications identified.	Senior Lawyer, Corporate Governance
Privacy and Data Protection	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation will have no impact on Crime and Disorder.	Museum Director
Procurement	No procurement will be required as a result of these recommendations	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	No direct implications on biodiversity and climate change arise in this report.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Maidstone Commemorative Plaques scheme was introduced to commemorate people and events which have contributed to the rich cultural heritage of the borough. In the past, a number of plaques and other memorials to culturally significant people and events have been raised, including a statue to Queen Victoria, plaques marking the home of Andrew Broughton (who was Clerk of the Court at the trial of Charles I), the Chapel where William Hazlitt's father preached and a memorial to the dead of the Battle of Maidstone (1648) in Brenchley Gardens.



A wide variety of styles and media were previously used.

2.2 In December 2017 members agreed the launch of an official MBC scheme with a standardised, preferred design to allow residents to easily pick out and recognise plaques which were part of the scheme. This report will examine the administration of the scheme and clarify several issues which have arisen for both officers and members of the public.

2.3 Design of Plaques

The Council's preferred plaque design is smooth Grey slate 18" [460mm] x 18" [460mm] x 1.25" [30mm]. Inscription to be "v" cut in the stone in Times Roman style and letters enamelled in light grey. Prominent features such as a named person or event should be gilded using 23crt gold letters. None of these new plaques has yet been approved and so no image exists.

NB: Although the term, Blue Plaque has become a common term of reference for plaques marking historic sites, the official scheme is run by English Heritage and is only awarded to sites within Greater London.

2.4 Eligibility

2.4.1 In order for a plaque to be approved for an individual:

- They must have died at least 10 years previously
- They must be sufficiently famous that they are recognisable to the succeeding generation or sufficiently significant in their field
- Their achievements should be lasting and significant
- The building to which the plaque will be attached must have a direct link to the individual and they must have lived or worked there for at least 5 years

2.4.2 For one to be approved to commemorate an event:

- The event must have happened at least 25 years ago
- The event should be recognisable to many of the general public
- The event must have been of special historical interest or significant in the history of Maidstone or Britain
- The building to which the plaque will be attached must have a direct link to the event

2.4.3 Under the scheme, plaques must also be visible to the public and subject to the agreement of the building owner.

2.4.4 It is the applicant's responsibility to apply for Planning or Listed Building Consent, where these are appropriate.

2.5 Costs

Applicants for a plaque are made aware that no costs will be covered by Maidstone Borough Council and they should be prepared to budget for upwards of £700 for a completed project.

2.6 The Council's role

2.6.1 Maidstone Borough Council (in the person of the Museum Director) is responsible for co-ordinating the scheme, considering applications at ERL committee, and helping to promote the plaque by covering unveilings and featuring plaques on the council website. It should be noted that there is a maximum capacity for one person to assess 3 applications a year and this may affect what steps are taken to promote applications.

2.6.2 Applicants should provide as much information as possible in their application to allow a decision to be made. However, in order to protect the Council from reputational damage, some research will be carried out by staff in order to ensure that the individual to be marked is largely known for the actions being commemorated. (For example, a bid to mark the house of a person described as 'a great philanthropist' is unlikely to be accepted if they were better known for criminal activity, although the criminal activity may be worthwhile marking)

2.6.3 Applicants should allow six months from application to decision. This allows for applications to be programmed into an appropriate committee meeting after the research above has been carried out. In contrast, it should be noted that applicants seeking permission to raise an English Heritage Blue Plaque are advised their application may take up to three years to reach a conclusion.

2.7 Beyond approval

Once an application has been approved, it is the responsibility of the applicant to procure all the appropriate permissions, consents and the plaque itself. The applicant is also responsible for fixing the plaque in place securely and safely. All maintenance and replacement of damaged plaques is also the responsibility of the applicant in perpetuity.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 Members accept the report which lays out more specifically (in paragraph 2.6) the responsibilities of the scheme administrator and the procedural timescales for applicants

3.2 Members may reject the report with the proposed clarifications

3.3 Members may suggest additional or alternative elements

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is preferred that members accept the report which clarifies several points of the process, making it manageable by officers and clearer to applicants
-

5. RISK

The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

The report introduces minor refinements to the scheme agreed in 2017 by ERL.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Applicant guidance will be updated on approval of the report by Members

8. REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix A – Commemorative Plaques Scheme

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The public version of applicant guidance can be found at https://maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/word_doc/0011/178553/AGREED-Commemorative-Plaque-Guide.docx

Maidstone already has a number of plaques and monuments of historical and cultural significance. Plaques are an effective and visible means of celebrating Maidstone's heritage and our historic environment, tangibly connecting past and present, increasing pride among local communities and giving a sense of place to residents and visitors. Plaques can also play an important conservation role, helping to highlight buildings with historic associations and support their preservation.



Nominate an individual

This scheme commemorates people and events who have contributed to the rich cultural heritage of Maidstone.

To be commemorated, a person should have lived or worked in Maidstone for at least five years, and at least 10 years should have passed since the anniversary of their death. An individual may not be commemorated on more than one plaque within this scheme. An event should have passed its 25th anniversary and have proven significance to the history of Maidstone.

This is a Maidstone scheme, so we can only consider proposals for plaques that are sited within the administrative boundaries of Maidstone Borough Council. Please read the additional assessment criteria below before completing the nomination form.

Assessment criteria

To commemorate a person

At least 10 years should have passed since their death.

They should be:

- Sufficiently famous to be familiar to the succeeding generation or be regarded as sufficiently significant within their field.
- Their achievements must have made a lasting and significant contribution.
- The building on which the plaque will be fixed must be directly related to the proposed person, and they must have lived or worked there for at least 5 years

In addition, please note that:

- Plaques will not normally be installed on hotels or public venues (e.g. concert halls) where connections with the building were transitory.
- A person cannot be commemorated on more than one plaque within the Council's scheme.

To commemorate an event

- The event should have happened at least 25 years ago.
- The event should be instantly recognisable to many of the general public.

- The event should be of special historical interest or significance in the history of Maidstone or the country as a whole.
- The building proposed for installation must be directly related to the event.

Additional considerations

- The proposal will be considered and approved by the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee.
- The Committee will only approve plaques that will be visible to passers-by.
- You will need the agreement of the building owner.
- Exceptional cases will be considered on their merits, subject to the submission of a thoroughly researched and justified case.

Funding

Unfortunately, there is no budget to pay for the costs of plaques, so proposals can only be taken forward if the proposer or supporting group is able to meet costs.

Costs could include

- The making of the plaque (usually around £500 each).
- The installation of the plaque (usually around £200 depending on the type of building).
- Any legal costs (e.g. indemnification of building owner).
- Research and validation (if required).
- Any special costs around listed building consent or other planning consents.
- The cost of an unveiling event (if required).
- Ongoing maintenance and repair.

In addition, please note that:

- The Council's preferred plaque design is smooth Grey slate 18" [460mm] x 18" [460mm] x 1.25" [30mm]. Inscription to be "v" cut in the stone in Times Roman style and letters enamelled in light grey. Prominent features such as a named person or event should be gilded using 23crt gold letters.
- The inscription should be clear, simple and accurate – do not create a false history, make sure all the information is correct.
- The inscription should be approximately 19 words.
- Where plaques are funded by specific bodies, the name may also be included in the design.

Applications will also be considered for larger scale memorials and additions to the roll of honour in the Town Hall Chamber.

The Council's jurisdiction

- The council will co-ordinate the scheme.
- All proposals will be considered by the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee as advocates of the scheme.
- The Council will fulfill its statutory duties as part of the scheme.
- It will provide complimentary PR at the unveiling ceremony.
- The council will promote the scheme via its website.

Organisations that can provide guidance and expertise

[English Heritage](#)

[Open Plaques](#)

Commemorative Plaque Nomination Form

Applicant details

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

Email:

Details of Plaque

What person or event is to be commemorated?

What is the significance of this person or event?

What links the building to the person or event? (Please include dates where possible),

What is the address of the building that has been identified for the plaque?

Who is the building owner?

Has consent been obtained by the owner? Yes No

If yes please provide written confirmation from the owner).

Suggested wording for the plaque

Are you willing to fund this proposal?

Please give details of secured funding and any commitment to raise funds.

Does your proposal have additional support from community or other groups?

Please return completed form to: The Museum's Director, Maidstone Museum, St Faith's Street, Maidstone ME14 1LH

Economic Regeneration and Leisure

19 October 2021

Application for a Commemorative Plaque at Wren’s Corner, Maidstone

Final Decision-Maker	ERL
Lead Head of Service	John Foster
Lead Officer and Report Author	Victoria Barlow
Classification	Public
Wards affected	High Street

Executive Summary

Judges House was the first headquarters of the Kent County Constabulary and first Police Station in Kent and therefore is an important part of the social history of Kent and Maidstone. This application to raise a commemorative plaque on the building is submitted under Maidstone Borough Council’s Commemorative Plaque Scheme.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That the application for permission to erect a Commemorative Plaque at Wren’s Cross, Maidstone be approved.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	19/10/2021

Application for a Commemorative Plaque at Wren's Corner, Maidstone

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 • We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council's overall achievement of its aims as set out in section 3 [preferred alternative]. 	Museum Director
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 the Heritage is Respected cross cutting objective by supporting the scheme to mark important parts of our built heritage.</p>	Museum Director
Risk Management	The Commemorative Plaque Scheme Policy lays out how risks are addressed	Museum Director
Financial	All financial costs are apportioned to the applicant and none to Maidstone Borough Council.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Museum Director
Legal	No legal implications identified.	Senior Lawyer, Corporate Governance
Privacy and Data Protection	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation will have no impact on Crime and Disorder	Museum Director
Procurement	No procurement by MBC is required	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and are; <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 An application has been made by Golding Homes to erect a plaque on the former Police Headquarters at Wren's Cross, Maidstone under the terms of the MBC Commemorative Plaque Scheme.
- 2.2 Golding Homes, owners of the building, wish to mark the importance of the building as the first headquarters of Kent Police.
- 2.3 The Grade 2 Listed building now known as Judges House is a key venue in the history of crime prevention and management in the county. It was first rented in 1857 by the recently established Kent County Constabulary (the

first county-wide, civilian and professional force.) It was acquired permanently in 1860 for £1,200. It remained in use, although extended, until 1940 when the new Headquarters at Sutton Road was opened.

- 2.4 Eventually the wider site at Wrens Cross comprised offices, Police barracks, stables, a driving school and other related buildings. Recently the site has been redeveloped for housing.
- 2.5 The proposed plaque will read Wrens Cross/First Police Headquarters and Station in Kent/1857-1940/Golding Homes



Copyright Kent County Council

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Members may approve the application
- 3.2 Members may reject the application

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that the application is approved as it meets the criteria laid out in the Commemorative Plaques Policy with the building representing a key moment in the social history of Maidstone and the county as a whole.
-

5. RISK

5.1 The risks have been identified and mitigated as follows:

Financial – Golding Homes have undertaken to bear all costs associated with erecting the plaque from the cost of gaining Listed Building Consent, manufacture and installation to maintenance and after care.

Reputational – There are no identified reputational risks with this building and the associated people.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 Members for High Street Ward have been consulted.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 If approved, the applicant will be notified and is responsible for the further action needed to complete the erection of the plaque.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

None.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Agenda Item 17

Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee

19 October 2021

Maidstone Museum Savings and Restructure Progress Report

Final Decision-Maker	Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	John Foster, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Victoria Barlow, Museum Director
Classification	Public
Wards affected	ALL

Executive Summary

The new arrangements at the museum are generally going very well and the service has had a strong re-opening period after Covid.

Progress over the first six months of implementation has been a matter of adjustment and refinement and has had a rather reactive focus as we settled into a very new situation. The savings required are on track and the meeting of revised income targets will be carefully monitored over the financial year.

For staff, the process has been challenging but it has also brought forward many suggestions of new ways to deliver the service and focus efforts where they produce real benefits. Over the second half of the year and beyond, the focus will be on bringing staff together with a reinvigorated sense of purpose and new goals to encourage a positive outlook for the future.

Purpose of Report

To note the progress made in Maidstone Museums in achieving Medium Term Financial Strategy targets and restructure.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That the report be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee	19/10/2021

Maidstone Museum Savings and Restructure Progress Report

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 <p>This report supports the objective A Thriving Place.</p>	Museum Director
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 supports the achievement(s) of the Heritage is Respected cross cutting objectives by ensuring an efficient and well-run museum.</p>	Museum Director
Risk Management	The report is for noting	Museum Director
Financial	The report describes how Maidstone Museums have delivered MTFS budget savings. The Council has relied on these savings in order to set a balanced budget, so their successful delivery is to be welcomed.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Regeneration and

		Economic Development
Legal	No legal implications identified.	Senior Lawyer, Corporate Governance
Privacy and Data Protection	We will hold data in line with our retention schedules.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation will have no impact on Crime and Disorder.	Museum Director
Procurement	No procurement will be required as a result of this report	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	As part of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan and need to reduce MBC's buildings carbon footprint to Net Zero by 2030 the Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager is currently looking in to upgrading the Museums heating systems, energy efficiency and sustainable power generation. These upgrades while moving away from a dependency on fossil fuels and reducing the carbon footprint of the Museum, will also reduce the amount of energy needed to heat the building and should in the long terms save money on energy bills. Furthermore, as part of these upgrades, the Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager is looking into the potential of placing solar PV panels on the museum roof, either to reduce the need for grid electricity or as a supplementary income by producing energy via the museum. Please not that Solar PV will be in keeping with the heritage and grade listing of the building and all upgrades will be kept to a minimum or hidden where possible. These upgrades are pending a feasibility study.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 Background

2.2 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of progress towards the savings target identified and agreed in 2020. At Policy and Resources Committee on 25th November 2020, it was resolved that the measures agreed at ERL Committee on 12th November be implemented:

1. To produce revenue savings of £152,000, £138k arising from a reduction in opening hours to take effect by April 2021 and the balance from a package of other actions to take effect by April 2022
2. Access to the main Museum's collections is maintained
3. Any changes made are reversible
4. The Museum's Accreditation Status is maintained; and
5. Volunteers be at the heart of Maidstone Museum's model.
- 6 That an annualised hours system of working would be introduced equivalent to opening 4 days a week.

2.3 A formal process of staff consultation, guided by Human Resources, enabled the restructure to be implemented by April 2021. The full saving of £138,000 was achieved although this is subject to the Council's Payment Protection Policy, so the full saving will not be made until year 3.

2.4 The Museum's non Visitor Services team now work 4 days a week. The Front of House team, through the introduction of the annualised opening model now work a rota which allows the Museum to open on the following basis:

- Mid-February to Mid-December open 4 days a week except during school holidays when it is open 6 days a week.
- Mid-December to early-February the museum is closed to visitors.
- Carriage Museum is open by appointment only

2.5 From 1st April 2021, the following posts were deleted:

- Collections Documentation Assistant
- Visitor Services Supervisor
- Visitor Experience Officer x 2 seasonal
- Casual Visitor Experience Officer (s)

2.6 The Collections Documentation Assistant was found alternative employment within the Council. The Visitor Services Supervisor found a new job outside of the Council before the restructure process was complete. All other posts were vacant. No compulsory redundancies were made.

2.7 It should be noted that the Learning Team remain full time as they are funded by a grant from the Arts Council. This remains a potential threat to

the service as this is grant is always only for one year and may not be renewed.

- 2.8 All non-Visitor services staff are now given a Duty Officer role on rota. The purpose is to ensure a central point of contact for staff now that there are fewer staff in the museum at any one time. Additionally, non-Visitor staff also cover their Visitor Experience colleagues at peak times on weekends (again on rota) and during any absences. Saturday working is carried out on a TOIL basis. This practice has greatly improved the team's understanding of the museum and its visitors at a time they do not usually work but does mean that staff TOIL has to be managed very carefully.
- 2.9 One issue that became clear over the busy school holiday is the need for greater resilience during peak periods in order to ensure cover is available for sickness and other absence, and staff numbers are sufficient for the emergency evacuation procedure. A budget increase may be required here.
- 2.10 By 31st August 2021, four out of five members of Visitor Experience Team staff had resigned, with three of these stating that the requirements of the annualised hours contract were at least one consideration in their decision to leave. The contract currently requires front of house staff to work 6 days a week during the summer school holidays with no leave. In contrast, these staff are not required to work from mid-December to mid-February. It was always clear that the specific details of the new arrangements might need to be assessed and reviewed after implementation and staff turnover was identified in the Risk Assessment for the restructure. Although recruitment is underway to replace these members of staff, it is our intention to review the arrangements to see if there is any flexibility in the requirement to work 6 day shifts for the whole of the summer school holidays but also to best consider how we keep the team engaged during the closed period.
- 2.11 Impact on Services
- 2.12 No formal feedback has been received from visitors or non-visitors on the effects of these changes and no complaints, but we will be monitoring general satisfaction with the service through visitor surveys and other opportunities to comment.
- 2.13 Research visits by students and specialists have been halted as we no longer have the staff available to accompany researchers while working with collections. This decision was taken because, although a few researchers each year may make a significant contribution to their field or our knowledge of our collections however the majority of visits are from students or non-professional researchers.
- 2.14 Individual photographic reproductions have been halted and all available images are currently being moved to Bridgeman Images which manages the reproduction and licensing of our images for a fee.
- 2.15 The events programme has been reduced. The monthly Lates have been reduced to 4 a year as we no longer have budget to pay staff out of hours

nor the flexibility to award Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) at previous levels. Other events, such as the Halloween Tour and History Mystery Tours, were previously provided by staff who volunteered time outside work to rehearse etc.

- 2.16 There is a moratorium on all collecting of new artefacts due to the capacity of the Collections Team to properly administer new donations.
- 2.17 Further Savings for 2022 onwards
- 2.18 Further revenue savings of £14,000 have been identified and while income generation has been seriously impacted by continuing Covid measures, the museum has secured a grant of £35,000 from DCMS to backfill this lost income in 2021-2022 and expects income to recover further in 2022-23.
- 2.19 The Maidstone Museums Foundation is contributing to the desired increase in income through the provision of a contactless donations machine in the museum and a portable version for use in their Pop-Up shop in Fremlin Walk, at external events and at events such as the annual Carol Concert. Their goal is to raise £14,000 per year which will be returned to the museum on a quarterly basis. The machines will formally accept donations to the MMF as research shows that donors would rather give to a charity than to a statutory body such as the Council. These are expected to be in place by mid-October 2021.



- 2.20 The new donation machines have been purchased by MMF and it is they who will cover on-going costs of servicing and software. The branding will be as shown above.

2.21 Implementation of new opening hours and visitation

2.22 The museum re-opened to visitors on May 19th 2021 after a second COVID lockdown. Between then and 31st August, almost 20,000 visits were made.

19 May 2021- 31 st May	494
June	2,521
July	5,847
August	10,138
TOTAL	19,878

2.23 In large part this was due to the popularity of the Elmer Trail and the 'Learning Herd' of elephants in the museum and an exhibition of Star Wars related memorabilia. However, it is also likely that the increased opening to six days a week during school holidays contributed to this success. It is clear from daily figures that visitation was spread across all days of the week, including the newly introduced Mondays.



2.24 In comparison, the last full year of operation, 2019, saw a total of 26,117 visits.

2.25 Maidstone Carriage Museum

2.26 Maidstone Carriage Museum is currently closed except by appointment for groups, at a minimum cost of £150 for groups of 10. Options for its future operation are being explored and an appraisal of these will be brought to committee in January 2022.

2.27 The immediate priority for the museum is to find a way to re-open the museum in a sustainable way which does not deny residents and visitors the opportunity to see an important local collection. Over the past twenty years several schemes have been put forward to re-house the carriages but it should be noted (and will be expanded on in the report) that the vehicles in the museum are currently acclimatised to the environment in the museum, which has had various improvements over the past few years and are in a stable condition. Moving them is not only a potentially

expensive and difficult procedure, but also runs a very high risk of causing deterioration in their condition, which is currently good and stable.

- 2.28 In the next six months we will be recruiting and training a team of Carriage Museum volunteers so that during the summer, the museum will reopen on a regular basis. It isn't possible to open all year round due to the unheated nature of the building but once a team is in place, they will have plenty of work to do when the colder months come.
- 2.29 Use of the Capital Allocation
- 2.30 The museum has a capital budget of £389,000. Work is ongoing to determine the best use of this budget in improving access to museum collections and bring an additional financial return. Proposals include the creation of a new Temporary Exhibition Gallery, creation of a new events space and the development of a new British Archaeology Gallery in partnership with Kent Archaeological Society, The William and Edith Oldham Trust and Maidstone Museums Foundation. The William and Edith Oldham Trust have made the generous offer of matched funding, up to £100,000 for sums raised by MMF from local support. It is proposed to bring a final report to ERL in November 2021
- 2.31 Growing the volunteer team
- 2.32 The major 'objective to underpin the future operational model for the museums' sought by members was the growth of the museums volunteer team. Although volunteers already work in most areas of museum operations including collections, exhibitions, learning and visitor services, members felt that this number could be grown in a sustainable manner to increase the museums' capacity.
- 2.33 Currently, no staff member has volunteer management in their Job Description and it has been carried out on an ad hoc basis. Since the recruitment and retention of volunteers will be critical in areas such as the already discussed Carriage Museum, a Revenue Growth request is to be submitted to create a small amount of capacity among the team for the development, training and management of volunteers across the museums. This will ensure the sustainability of the service and especially the Carriage Museum as it allows access by residents with only a very small investment. the potential benefits of engaging residents in our work as volunteers are great and may contribute to the well-being of volunteers, the development of new activities and events and increase the awareness and sense of local ownership of the museum.
- 2.34 South East Museums Development, funded by Arts Council England, have launched a project to help 8 museums develop their plans for volunteers. Maidstone Museums successfully applied and will receive online and in person training from October, as well as consultant support to create an action plan which will see the creation of new role descriptions and recruitment systems for volunteers as well as advising on retention and management of volunteers. A small grant of £500 will also be available to assist this work.

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The report is for noting the progress made in the first six months of implementation.
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4. RISK

- 4.1 This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 See introduction 2.2
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The report is for noting. A further report will be presented to ERL Committee on the options for the capital programme and for the future of the Carriage Museum.
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7. REPORT APPENDICES

None

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None