

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL - MEETING 28 SEPTEMBER 2022**

### **MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ROSE - BRIEFING**

#### **Wording of motion:**

Extended Museum Opening Hours for Secondary School Pupils' Access

The current restricted opening hours of Maidstone Museum are deterring its use by Secondary School pupils. Closing in the week at 4pm is too early for them to get there. When the Museum was previously opened later there was a considerable usage by pupils from the Borough's Secondary Schools. As this age group is important to the Museum's mission and long-term support by future generations, it is important that weekday access for them be made easier.

Maidstone Borough Council resolves to extend opening hours for the Museum one afternoon a week to 5pm. The cost to be incorporated into the 2023/24 revenue budget and also the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

#### **Background information**

The Museum team has not seen evidence of demand from secondary school pupils for extended opening hours. Moreover, there is a risk that opening for an extra hour for one evening a week would not have a significant impact, and few visitors would in fact come during the extra hour.

It is suggested that a more fruitful approach would be to engage directly with secondary school pupils, both through their schools and through social media, about what is likely to be of value to them. For example, the following opportunities could be explored.

- Specific areas, such as the Library, could be set aside for young people to use and appropriate equipment installed.
- Changes in opening hours could be tailored to whatever specific requirements are identified through engagement with young people. There is scope for changes to opening hours at relatively low cost by amending rotas. Rather than opening for an extra hour just one day a week, and so confusing messages about opening times, the Museum would consider a regular later closing time throughout the week.
- Activities could be arranged, along the lines of the Cur8 scheme. This is a programme for young people with an interest in archaeology, which runs one Saturday a month. It ceased running two years ago but, with Maidstone Museums Trust sponsorship, is due to re-start shortly.

The Executive Member will review the options and report back to the mover of the motion before implementing the necessary steps.