

# HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 5 March 2019  
Time: 6.30 pm  
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Cuming, Fermor, Fort, Harper (Chairman), Hastie, Hinder,  
Mrs Hinder, Lewins and Mrs Wilson (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.*

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## AGENDA

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| 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 29 January 2019  | 1 - 7  |
| 9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)  |        |
| 10. Questions and answer session for members of the public   |        |
| 11. Committee Work Programme   | 8      |
| 12. Future of Sport and Leisure Provision  | 9 - 24 |

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING AND ALTERNATIVE FORMATS**

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email [committee@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committee@maidstone.gov.uk).

In order to speak at this meeting, please contact Democratic Services using the contact details above, by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting, i.e. by 5 p.m. on

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**Issued on Monday 25 February 2019**

**Continued Over/:**

*Alison Broom*

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive**

Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019. If asking a question, you will need to provide the full text in writing. If making a statement, you will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on. Please note that slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://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 and Communications** by: **14 February 2019**

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29 JANUARY 2019**

**Present:** Councillors Harper (Chairman), Cuming, Fermor, Fort, Hinder, Joy, Lewins, Spooner and Mrs Wilson

117. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies were received by Councillors Hastie and Mrs Hinder.

118. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that the following members were present as substitute members:

- Councillor Mrs Joy for Councillor Hastie
- Councillor Spooner for Councillor Mrs Hinder

119. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

120. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

121. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

122. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

123. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

124. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2018

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Meeting held on 17 December 2018 be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed.

125. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

126. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

127. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee discussed the items on the Work Programme and made the following changes:-

- Briefing Notes for the Museum's Consultation Results and Fundraising Strategy and the Future Governance Options Update would be circulated to the Committee by Ms Victoria Barlow, Museum Director in due course.
- Future of Leisure Provision in Maidstone – this item was moved to March.
- 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the start of WWII – this item was also moved to the March meeting.
- An update from the HCL Committee Workshop would be presented to the March meeting.

Councillor Mrs Joy undertook to update any Member on the Joint Heritage Bid - All Saints Church after the meeting.

Mr John Foster, the Interim Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, advised that the demolition of the former public house on the Maidstone East Station site had been delayed due to the presence of asbestos. This would considerably delay the Art installation.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

128. 2018/19 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS UPDATE QUARTER 3

The Committee considered the report of Ms Anna Collier, Policy and Information Manager, which detailed the progress of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee that related to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

It was noted that:-

- 1 out of the 5 targeted KPIs achieved their target, compared to 4 in quarter 2.
- The Hazlitt Theatre achieved its target and increased its performance by 10% compared to 2017/18.

- The target for the number of students benefitting from the Museum’s educational service was not achieved in quarter 3 although there were 762 more visits compared to the same period in 2017/18.
- Footfall at the Museum and Visitor Information Centre was down to 11,586 against a target of 16,250.
- The number of approaches to the Visitor Information Centre was 455 against a target of 782.
- 184,401 people, against a target of 186,079, used the facilities at the Leisure Centre during the period.

In response to questions from Members, Officers advised that:-

- There was a Member Workshop scheduled for the first week in March to discuss KPIs for 2019/20 and any suggestions from Members for new KPIs should be forwarded to the Officer in advance of the Workshop.
- The KPIs for the Museum needed to be re-profiled as there were seasonal trends/fluctuations and the equipment used to measure footfall was not accurate.

The Committee KPIs for Parks and Events should be included for 2019/20’s suite of KPIs.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The summary of performance for Quarter 3 of 2018/19 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be noted.
2. KPIs for 2019/20 be profiled to give more context in order for the Committee to make an informed decision on what KPIs to take forward.

Voting: Unanimous

#### 129. STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-45 ACTION PLAN

The Committee considered the report of Mrs Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance which identified key actions that the Council was required to take in the short to medium term to ensure that the Council was on course to achieve the Strategic Plan outcomes.

It was noted that any suggested improvements and/or amendments made by the Committee were due to be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 13 February 2019.

The Committee made the following comments:-

- That clarity needed to be put in the narrative as to what was meant by high quality parks and/or that a KPI could be considered for a neighbourhood park to be provided within 10 minutes walking distance of residential areas or put this in the achievements between 2019-24.
- It was felt that the introduction and snapshot for a Thriving Place weighted heavily on economic development. Therefore the following bullet points should be included:-
  1. Development and commencement of delivering the new gallery at the Museum
  2. Events which assist people in increasing their pride in communities and our environment
- The first bullet point should read "Reviewing and delivering leisure and cultural services that are fit for the future e.g. sports facilities".

That reference to the outcome focussed commissioning and service delivery should be made clearer in the narrative.

The Committee requested a copy of the paper be circulated to them prior to consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That the suggested amendments made by the Committee to the high level key actions be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee.

Voting: Unanimous

### 130. 3RD QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING 2018/19

Mr Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement presented a report which set out the financial position for the Committee at the end of Quarter 3 2018/19 against the revenue and capital budgets.

The Committee noted that:-

- Although there had been an underspend against the revenue budget of £151,000, it was expected to reduce to an underspend of £19,000 by the end of the financial year.
- There had been income shortfalls on the Adventure Zone and Lockmeadow Market but this had been offset by increased income from the Crematorium and savings arising from staff vacancies.
- The additional income from the Leisure Centre was being set aside for the review of leisure provision.

- The Crematorium car park project had overspent and a final analysis of that budget was due to be reported to the Committee's March meeting.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Green advised that he would be reporting back in June on the final outturn and it would be at that time the Committee would have an opportunity to put forward proposals to utilise any underspend.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The revenue position at the end of the third quarter and the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances had been identified, be noted.
2. The capital position at the end of the third quarter be noted.

131. FEES & CHARGES 2019/20

The Committee considered the report of Mr Green which set out the proposed fees and charges for 2019/20 for the services within the remit of the Committee.

It was noted that the main source of income from the fees and charges for this Committee was the Crematorium.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr Green advised that:-

- The Maidstone Management Allotments Committee managed the allotment sites on behalf of the Council.
- The charges for Bereavement Services were competitively priced and were benchmarked against other providers in the region.
- A briefing note would be prepared by Officers on the effectiveness of the Woodside Walk Book and circulated to the Committee.

The Committee requested that the service providers for activities that come under the responsibilities of the Committee such as the Allotments Management Committee, Serco and Parkwood Leisure present their annual reports to the Committee to enable a dialogue to be formed and that this should be built into the Committee Work Programme.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The proposed discretionary fees and charges as set out in Appendix A to this report be approved.
2. Key service providers be invited along to the Committee to present their annual report and that this is built into the Committee Work Programme.

Voting: Unanimous

132. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY & BUDGET PROPOSALS

Mr Green presented a report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy which set out budget proposals for services within the remit of the Committee.

The Committee noted that the revenue budget was close to being balanced for 2019/20 and good progress had been made in reducing the budget gap for 2020/21.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Green advised that:-

- The revenue budget identified that a significant amount of money had been spent on all the parks, not just Mote Park. However, the capital works in Mote Park were expected to generate a financial return.
- The savings identified for festivals and events were in relation to direct expenditure and would not impact on staffing resources as Officers would continue to facilitate events in the borough.

The Committee felt that the budget and strategic plan did not necessarily align at present and it needed to ensure that the resources were sufficient to enable the strategic plan to be delivered.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The revenue budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be agreed for submission to Policy and Resources Committee.
2. The capital budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be agreed for submission to Policy and Resources Committee.
3. The Committee ensures that the resources are better aligned to coincide with the aspirations of the Strategic Plan.

Voting: Unanimous

133. PROGRESS REPORT: PARKS AND OPEN SPACES 10 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2027

The Committee considered the report of Andrew Williams, Parks and Open Spaces Manager, which provided an update on the progress made in the delivery of the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan.

Mr Williams highlighted that:-

- A review of the strategic and non-strategic play areas had been undertaken. The principle being that families should have access to a play area within 1 km (or 12 minutes walk) from where they live.
- The implementation of a pro-active tree safety inspection programme was moving from a 4 year cycle to a 3 year cycle.
- The grant scheme for Strategically Important Play Areas maintained by Parishes had been implemented.
- The team were working with developers and Planning Officers at pre-application stage to plan and develop open spaces on new housing developments.
- A Parks and Open Spaces Stakeholder Group would be developed during 2019-20.
- Projects such as the Go Green Go Wild had been developed to progress bio-diversity in partnership with local community groups.
- Officers worked collaboratively with other agencies to develop a quality of life programme.

The Committee requested that their thanks be noted to the staff and volunteers for all their hard work.

**RESOLVED:** That

- 1) That the first annual summary of progress for Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Strategic Plan be noted.
- 2) That a letter of thanks from the Committee be sent to the staff and volunteers.

Voting: Unanimous

134. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.42 p.m.

## 2018/19 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Future of Sports and Leisure Provision	HCL	05/03/19	John Foster	Mike Evans
Biodiversity Action Plan	HCL	02/04/19	Jennifer Shepherd	Andrew Williams
Strategic Plan - New KPIs	HCL	02/04/19	Angela Woodhouse	Anna Collier
Museums - Agreeing the 'Story of Maidstone'	HCL	02/04/19	John Foster	Victoria Barlow
Cemetery Update	HCL	02/04/19	Jennifer Shepherd	Sharon Smith
Refresh of the Destination Management Plan - Progress Report	HCL	Jun-19	John Foster	Laura Dickson
Market Review	HCL	Jun-19	John Foster	Fran Wallis
∞ Mote Park Programme - Key Projects Update	HCL	TBC	John Foster	Mike Evans
Long Term Maintenance of Assets	HCL	TBC	TBC	TBC (at the request of HCL Committee)

## HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

**5 March 2019**

### Future of Leisure Provision in Maidstone

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service/Lead Director</b>	John Foster, Acting Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Mike Evans
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

#### **Executive Summary**

With three key strategic elements impacting on Maidstone at the same time it is important that Maidstone plans for the next 20 years of leisure provision. The Maidstone Leisure Centre contract, the forecasted population growth and the expected development in the borough make this the right time to plan how Maidstone will provide leisure opportunities to residents and visitors in the future.

#### **This report makes the following recommendations to Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee**

1. That a stakeholder engagement exercise be run to understand the feasibility of recommendations in the Sports Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy and to shape the future of sport and leisure provision in the borough.
2. That the stakeholder engagement frames future leisure plans for the borough alongside its existing commitments including the future of Maidstone Leisure Centre.
3. That the leisure centre surplus share be used to fund a fixed-term project officer post at a cost of £18,865 per annum to support the stakeholder engagement exercise.

#### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee	5 March 2019

# Future of Leisure Provision in Maidstone

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Maidstone's population is growing and ageing. Its sport and leisure needs will be changing and Maidstone Borough Council needs to ensure that what is on offer in the borough caters for residents as best it can.
- 1.2 The Sports Facilities Strategy (SFS) and Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS), both from Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Ltd and available as background papers 2 and 3, will form part of the council's evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and will inform development management decisions.

They will provide an evidence base for future budgetary needs or funding applications. Both strategies assess the quantity, quality, accessibility and availability of indoor and outdoor sports facilities and pitches in the borough and forecast needs to 2031.

### Strategic Context

- 1.3 The Sports Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy reference the local and national strategies with which they share impacts and ambitions. Below are the related strategies:
  - Maidstone Borough Council's Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020 (due to be replaced by the 2018 – 2045 Strategic Plan)
  - Maidstone Borough Local Plan
  - National Planning Policy Framework
  - Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
  - Kent Sport's Strategic Framework
  - Government's Sports Strategy
  - Sport England Strategy

The Sports Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy provide a good evidence base for planning policy and support the strategy work of national and local partners.

### Population

- 1.4 Maidstone is the most populous of the Kent districts. The 2011 census measured the population as 155,143. 107,627 people live in the town. The remainder live in the rural service centres and surrounding villages.
- 1.5 Kent County Council's Housing Led Forecasts (2018) quote the current Maidstone population as being 167,700, based on ONS 2017 mid-year estimates. The housing led forecast is an 18.3% increase 198,500 people by 2037.

- 1.6 Maidstone’s population is ageing. The population forecasts expect growth to be as per the table below:

Age category	2017 population	2037 population	Total increase	Percentage increase
Total population	167,700	198,500	30,800	18.3%
0 – 15 years	32,900	36,100	3,200	9.8%
16 – 64 years	102,800	113,600	10,800	10.5%
65+ years	32,100	48,800	16,700	52.2%

Figures taken from Kent County Council Housing Led Forecasts 2018 (Background paper 4)

- 1.7 Maidstone’s population is growing and ageing. Future leisure provision must take this in to account and be tailored to the needs of the future population as much as possible.

### **Health**

- 1.8 The borough’s life expectancy rates are better than the national average but excess weight inequalities in the adult and child populations do need to be addressed. Sport and leisure provision are key to tackling these health inequalities.

The borough’s ageing population is likely to show increased rates of age-related diseases and illnesses. Physical activity and social prescribing are ideal counter measures to age-related conditions. Leisure provision in Maidstone will continue to deliver health-related benefits to its residents.

### **Sporting participation and physical activity**

- 1.9 Leisure provision will continue to be important for the borough’s sporting participation levels. Regular sporting participation provides all residents with health benefits and also provides social benefits in the form of coaching and volunteering opportunities. It continues to provide a platform for people to reach their sporting potential, which for some residents is international and professional sport.

Sporting participation in the borough is above the Kent average. 77.2% of residents are described as either fairly active or active, using Sport England Active Lives measures, compared to 75.9% across the county. This leaves 22.8% of Maidstone’s adult population needing a leisure provision that persuades them to be active.

### **Maidstone Leisure Centre**

- 1.10 The growth in population comes at a time when Maidstone Leisure Centre, the borough’s flagship sports centre, has five years left to run on its current 15-year management contract. The oldest part of the building is approximately 40 years old. The pool and reception area opened in 1991.

The condition of the leisure centre building is unknown and therefore it is not certain if a similar 15-year contract will be possible in 2024.

It is highly likely that future capital works will be required, but the extent of those is unknown at this time, as is the cost effectiveness of repairing an ageing building.

That condition survey work will need to be done as part of the re-tender process for the Maidstone Leisure Centre contract, which expires in 2024. Knowing the condition of the building sooner than that will identify what the future of Maidstone Leisure Centre looks like.

As such a pivotal piece of leisure infrastructure its future will have a large impact on Maidstone Borough Council's other plans for the borough.

The population growth, coupled with the forthcoming leisure centre contract renewal, make this a crucial time for planning how Maidstone wishes to manage its leisure provision in the next 20 years. Future plans need to reflect these two key strategic elements.

### **Planning for the Future of Leisure**

1.11 At Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee on 4 September 2018 it was resolved:

- 1) That the Sports Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy form part of the Council's evidence base be noted and the comments on the documents be referred to Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee for consideration prior to re-engagement with key stakeholders and all Ward Councillors;
- 2) That the Committee conduct an in-depth review of Sports Provision in the Borough once the new Leisure Officer has been appointed and the draft Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies have been finalised;
- 3) That the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee are recommended to expedite the consultation with Ward Councillors on the draft Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies;
- 4) That the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee are recommended to consider the accessibility and affordability of facilities in the borough.

Working with Maidstone Borough Council's Transformation and Digital Services team and the Policy and Information Manager the leisure manager will begin work on the actions as resolved in points 1) and 2) on 4 September 2018, namely:

- Engagement with key stakeholder and all Ward Councillors
- Conduct an in-depth review of Sports Provision in the borough

These two actions have been formalised in to a list of project objectives and aspirations.

## **Project Objectives and Aspirations**

### 1.12 We want to achieve:

- A vibrant sport, leisure and culture offer which is enjoyed by residents and attractive to visitors
- An improved leisure offer that contributes to increased sporting participation and physical activity levels in the borough
- Health inequalities and issues are addressed and factored in to future provision
- Facilities are fit for purpose and tailored to the needs of the borough
- Facilities provide opportunities for coaching and volunteering
- Facilities are operated in a way that maximises their use and financial performance
- Needs and issues in rural areas are considered as part of the borough-wide plan but localised challenges are understood
- Usage agreements are discussed with schools and other private facilities

### 1.13 We want to understand:

- Current trends in sports and leisure
- Future trends in sports and leisure, particularly from smart technology, and what can be expected for Maidstone
- Likely locations of population growth
- Saturation points of existing clubs and venues, can growth be accommodated
- Barriers to greater participation on a local level
- The appetite for investment in the leisure sector from private operators
- What the local leisure market can achieve without any council intervention
- What will help us stay on top of leisure trends in future

### 1.14 We want to explore:

- Future options for Maidstone Leisure Centre's next management contract
- The role of the Maidstone Leisure Trust
- How can health, physical activity and leisure work hand in hand for the benefit of everyone
- Feasibility of additional council-owned sports facilities in the borough of Maidstone
- Feasibility of large developments including sports facilities
- Feasibility for additional 3G football pitches in the borough
- How can leisure sector manage itself in Maidstone to ensure wide success and mutual benefit
- Future ways of working

1.15 The table below maps these objectives against where the answer can be explored and discovered. In some cases the answers will be available in Maidstone. For others the answers will need to be sought from further afield.

Where answers can be found in Maidstone that means the answer is not necessarily with Maidstone Borough Council. This column also includes other Maidstone-based organisations and groups.

The external partners column represents partner organisations not based in Maidstone. This includes Kent-based and nationwide partner organisations with whom we have an established relationship already.

The in industry column represents answers that would need to come from industry experts or from case studies from other local authorities. Understanding where the answers are will help decide the best way to explore and discover them.

<b>Project objective/outcome</b>	<b>Where is the answer?</b>		
	In Maidstone	External partner	In industry
<b>Objectives resolved at 4 Sep HCL meeting</b>			
Engagement with key stakeholder and all Ward Councillors	✓		
Conduct an in-depth review of Sports Provision in the borough	✓		
<b>Section total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Things to achieve</b>			
A vibrant sport, leisure and culture offer which is enjoyed by residents and attractive to visitors	✓	✓	
An improved leisure offer that contributes to increased sporting participation and physical activity levels in the borough	✓	✓	
Health inequalities and issues are addressed and factored in to future provision	✓	✓	
Facilities are fit for purpose and tailored to the needs of the borough	✓		
Facilities provide opportunities for coaching and volunteering	✓	✓	
Facilities are operated in a way that maximises their use and financial performance	✓	✓	
Needs and issues in rural areas are considered as part of the borough-wide plan but localised challenges are understood	✓		
Usage agreements are discussed with schools and other private facilities	✓	✓	
<b>Section total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Things to understand</b>			
Current trends in sports and leisure		✓	✓
Future trends in sports and leisure, particularly from smart technology, and what can be expected for Maidstone		✓	✓
Likely locations of population growth	✓		
Saturation points of existing clubs and venues, can growth be accommodated?	✓		
Barriers to greater participation on a local level	✓	✓	
The appetite for investment in the leisure sector from private operators		✓	✓
What the local leisure market can achieve without any council intervention	✓	✓	✓
What will help us stay on top of leisure trends in future	✓	✓	✓
<b>Section total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Things we want to explore</b>			
Future options for Maidstone Leisure Centre's next management contract		✓	✓
The role of the Maidstone Leisure Trust	✓	✓	✓
How can health, physical activity and leisure work hand in hand for the benefit of everyone		✓	✓
Feasibility of additional council-owned sports facilities in the borough	✓		
Feasibility of large developments including sports facilities	✓		
Feasibility for additional 3G football pitches in the borough	✓	✓	
How can leisure sector manage itself in Maidstone to ensure wide success and mutual benefit	✓	✓	
Future ways of working and future structures to support that	✓	✓	✓
<b>Section total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Overall total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

1.16 Key to the scoping phase is engaging with key stakeholders in the borough in a way that enables them to share information, thoughts and comments.

The key groups to consult with, in no particular order and not exhaustive, include:

- Sport England
- Kent Sport
- Public Health England
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- Ward councillors
- Parish councils
- Maidstone Leisure Trust
- Council-let facilities
- Local sports bodies and leagues
- Local sports clubs with their own facilities
- Local sports clubs without their own facilities
- Private sector providers and facility operators
- Schools
- Community groups
- Charities

1.17 The Policy and Information Manager and Transformation and Digital Services Team will advise on the best way to engage with the different stakeholder groups and Ward Councillors.

The approach taken with each group will need to be tailored to the group's needs. It is important that people can engage with the process in an easy and effective way and that the process makes people feel comfortable, relaxed and enable them to make valuable contributions

The process will take approximately 18 months to complete and once people have been welcomed in to the process it will be prudent for there to be a repeat engagement mechanism for them to add further comments and follow up information at later dates.

It is anticipated the methods used to engage with stakeholders will include:

- Formal meetings and ongoing dialogues
- Attendance by key community representatives at committee meetings
- Forums in relaxed settings
- Workshops
- Open consultation comments facility

## **Borough-wide Approach**

1.18 Key to future leisure provision is ensuring plans work for everyone as best they can.

Population growth will be borough-wide. The Local Plan identifies key development sites and leisure provision must complement the new areas of development as well as supporting population growth in existing areas.

Maidstone benefits from rural service centres and villages as well as a thriving town centre. The needs of the residents in all areas will have lots of similarities but they will also have differences. Understanding this in the scoping phase is key to the creation of effective future plans.

- 1.19 The future of leisure provision needs to include opinions and input from residents who do not currently engage in sport and leisure, which is a key driver for health and physical activity levels. The current leisure offer in Maidstone is not appealing to, or catering for, a large percentage of people. Understanding the reasons for that will help shape future provision so that it meets the needs of most people.
- 1.20 The next step in providing a successful future of leisure provision for Maidstone is to work the Sports Facilities Strategy and the Playing Pitch Strategy in to future plans for Maidstone Borough Council's leisure offer.

This builds on the two resolved actions from the 4 September HCL meeting and the other objectives, aspirations and outcomes listed in table 2. This feasibility work contains finding answers that are either in Maidstone; with a partner organisation, ranging from local to national level; or with industry experts.

The locations of those answers can be weighted when deciding options for how the stakeholder engagement can be delivered and managed.

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## **2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

### **Do Nothing**

- 2.1 Maidstone Borough Council does not need to do this work. It can leave leisure provision to the third sector, the private sector and allow market forces to dictate its future direction.

The Sports Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy would exist as part of the council's evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, to be adopted by Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee, and will inform development management decisions.

This option would go against the resolved action of the 4 September 2018 Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee meeting and is not recommended.

### **Consider the future of Maidstone Leisure Centre separately**

- 2.2 Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee has the option to consider the renewal of the Maidstone Leisure Centre contract in isolation, without considering the parallel issue of future provision for a growing and ageing population.

This option would see both work strands progressed without linking them together. Decisions made in each work strand would have the potential to cause duplication, omission and financial complications.

For these reasons it is best to consider the two linked issues alongside each other and therefore managing the contractual renewal of Maidstone Leisure Centre and any capital upgrade works that would be required, without ensuring they complement the needs of the rest of the borough, is not recommended.

**Use Maidstone Borough Council's surplus share from the leisure centre contract to conduct stakeholder engagement that jointly addresses options for future leisure provision and future options for Maidstone Leisure Centre.**

- 2.3 This option ensures that the future of leisure provision includes the two main strategic elements affecting the borough in the medium term future, and ensures they are done in conjunction with each other so that plans and actions are complementary.

The format of the stakeholder engagement will be designed in collaboration with Maidstone Borough Council's Transformation and Digital Services Team and the Policy and Information Manager and use the weighting of information in table 2 when deciding the most appropriate way to direct funding. **This is the preferred option.**

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### **3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 As outlined in section 1 this option ensures the two strategic elements of the Maidstone Leisure Centre contract and the borough's growing and ageing population are managed in parallel.
- 3.2 The leisure budget currently has a surplus share from the Maidstone Leisure Centre contract of approximately £44,000. It is recommended that these funds are used to support the stakeholder engagement work for a period of 18 months. There are no contractual restrictions on what the council can use its surplus share from the leisure centre operations for.

#### **Managing Stakeholder Engagement In House**

- 3.3 The objectives and outcomes in table 2 will form the basis of the stakeholder engagement. The locations of the answers show that the majority of the information required is available from organisations within the borough, or with an established partnership or relationship to Maidstone Borough Council. For this reason it is recommended that the funds are used to recruit a project officer who will co-ordinate the engagement period and schedule the meetings, workshops and visits that it will comprise.
- 3.4 The project officer would be recruited on a part-time, fixed-term basis and would be managed by the leisure manager with direction and guidance from

the Policy and Information Manager and the Digital Transformation Team. They would monitor and co-ordinate comments and submissions from community groups and organisations.

The £44,000 budget would cover the cost of a project officer, the cost of the engagement workshops and forums and allow contingency for any industry consultancy needed for outstanding project objectives for which answers are not found locally.

- 3.5 The job evaluation panel have evaluated the leisure project officer post and deemed it to be grade 7. A project officer at the top of grade 7 working 3 days per week will cost £18,865 per annum with on costs included. It will be possible to employ the project officer for 24 months to support the entire consultation period.
- 3.6 Managing the engagement in house enables Maidstone Borough Council to be flexible over the engagement period. We would be flexible to the needs of community groups and would not have a limit on the number of engagement sessions there would be. It would enable us to maintain dialogue with key stakeholders for the duration of the engagement and beyond.

The project officer, like the leisure manager, would be part of Maidstone Borough Council and by sharing an office with colleagues would be in the best position to co-ordinate work with other council departments.

- 3.7 Maidstone Borough Council has existing relationships with the national partner organisations included in paragraph 1.3. Any funding bids or joint projects which are identified as part of the stakeholder engagement work are more likely to achieve success if we have developed them together from the outset.

We want to use our own relationships and seek to establish and foster them for ourselves where we currently don't have them. A third party consultant acting on our behalf would be able to find out the information for us but would not be able to develop and report back a relationship to us in the same way.

### **Considering an External Consultant**

- 3.8 Provision for consultancy is still included in the £44,000 budget if needed. The most likely area where some industry expertise may be needed is in mapping trends and changes expected in the leisure industry in the next 20 years.

Recognising that does not mean we are unable to find that information ourselves. We have contracts with four leisure providers who manage indoor and outdoor facilities across the country on behalf of local authorities and leisure trusts.

We can work with those organisations, while being mindful of our contractual arrangements and relationships here in Maidstone, to give insight in to trends elsewhere in the leisure industry. In addition to

discussion with our local operators, the APSE network would provide another good resource for case studies and engagement with other local authorities before needing to engage the services of an external consultant.

- 3.9 A consultation exercise with Maidstone sport and leisure stakeholders, local and national partner organisations and the leisure industry has the potential to provide answers to all of the objectives and outcomes in table 2, paragraph 1.12.

The answers would be framed against the backdrop of the Maidstone Leisure Centre contract and the borough's growing population.

If, after pursuing all those opportunities, it was felt that an external consultant would add value to the exercise there would be sufficient budget to engage one at that stage should Committee wish to pursue that option at a later date.

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#### **4. RISK**

- 4.1 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.

#### **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 No previous consultation has taken place. Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee has previously resolved that this work would be completed.

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#### **6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 6.1 Once the recommendations have been agreed the leisure manager will need to continue work with the Transformation and Digital Services Team and the Policy and Information Manager to finalise the design of the stakeholder engagement process. This will include the order in which the groups and organisations are contacted and the chosen formats for each one.
- 6.2 The leisure project officer post can then be advertised with the project officer starting in late spring or early summer. They would be in post for 24 months.
- 6.3 The next steps timeline is summarised in the table below:

<b>Action</b>	<b>Completion date</b>
Stakeholder engagement process finalised with Transformation and Digital Services Team and Policy and Information Manager	1 May 2019
Project officer post advertised	1 April 2019
Leisure project officer in post	1 June 2019
Community consultation engagement work begins	July 2019

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## 7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve the following new strategic plan objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council leads master planning and invests in new places which are well designed</li> <li>• Sufficient infrastructure is planned to meet the demands of growth</li> <li>• A diverse range of community activities is encouraged</li> <li>• Community facilities and services in the right place at the right time to support communities</li> <li>• A vibrant leisure and culture offer, enjoyed by residents and attractive to visitors</li> <li>• Our town and village centres are fit for the future</li> </ul> <p>This work will follow the council's cross cutting objective of health inequalities being addressed and reduced.</p>	Head of Service

	<p>This work will follow the aspirations of how we do things by including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community engagement and leadership</li> <li>• Outcome focussed commissioning and service delivery</li> </ul>	
<b>Risk Management</b>	Refer to paragraph 4 of the report	Head of Service
<b>Financial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepting the recommendations will demand new spending of £44,000. We plan to fund that spending as set out in section 3.</li> </ul>	Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client)
<b>Staffing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will deliver the recommendations using our current staffing with support from a fixed term project officer.</li> <li>• The identified budget also includes contingency for accessing extra expertise to deliver the recommendations, as set out in section 3.</li> </ul>	Head of Service
<b>Legal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recommendations in the report and the Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies align with the Council's general duty, under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 as a best value authority, to make arrangements to</li> </ul>	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS

	secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.	
<b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data will be held and processed in accordance with the data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 2018.</li> </ul>	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
<b>Equalities</b>	Understanding the needs of our residents and service users will be a key consideration if the preferred option is taken forward. An EIA will be completed and an appropriate approach taken with consultation.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
<b>Public Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals</li> <li>In accepting the recommendations the Council would be fulfilling the requirements of the Health Inequalities Plan</li> </ul>	Head of Service
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	Not applicable	Head of Service or Manager
<b>Procurement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should a consultant's services be accessed at a later date this will be in accordance with the relevant procurement exercises. We will complete those exercises</li> </ul>	Head of Service

	in line with financial procedure rules.	
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## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

None

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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following background papers are to be made available with this report:

- Background Paper 1: Draft Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies report from Mark Egerton to Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee on 4 September 2018.
- Background Paper 2: *Sports Facilities Strategy Final Draft* from Plozajski Lynch Consulting Ltd. June 2018
- Background Paper 3: *Playing Pitch Strategy Final Draft* from Plozajski Lynch Consulting Ltd. June 2018
- Background Paper 4: Kent County Council Housing Led Forecasts Summary (October 2018)