

# AGENDA

## HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE MEETING



Date: Tuesday 4 July 2017

Time: 6.45 pm or at the conclusion of the Headcorn  
Aerodrome Presentation, whichever is the later

Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Butler, Ells (Vice-Chairman), Fort, Hastie,  
Mrs Hinder, Lewins, Pickett (Chairman) and Mrs Wilson

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Page No.

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 6 June 2017 1 - 5
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)
10. Questions and answer session for members of the public

**Continued Over/:**

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**Issued on Monday 26 June 2017**

*Alison Broom*

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council,  
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone ME15 6JQ**

11. Committee Work Programme	6
12. Maidstone Parks & Open Spaces 10 Year Plan	7 - 44
13. Museum 20 Year Plan	45 - 71

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

In order to book a slot to speak at this meeting of the Heritage, Culture & Leisure Committee, please contact Ezzie Tunnicliff on 01622 602272 or by email on [ezzietunnicliff@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:ezzietunnicliff@maidstone.gov.uk) by 5 pm one clear working day before the meeting. 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.

### **ALTERNATIVE FORMATS**

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact Democratic Services on [committeeservices@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:committeeservices@maidstone.gov.uk) or 01622 602272**. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 6 JUNE 2017**

**Present:** Councillor Pickett (Chairman) and Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Butler, Ells, Fort, Hastie, Mrs Hinder, Lewins and Mrs Wilson

**Also Present:** Councillors English and Perry

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

7. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitutes.

8. URGENT ITEMS

It was noted that there was an updated recommendation for Item 13 – Bereavement Services – Developing Services.

9. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillors English and Perry were present as Visiting Members.

10. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

11. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

12. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

13. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 APRIL 2017

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the amendment of the last word of Paragraph 2, Item 146 on Page 2, to read as follows:

The Committee noted that the design created a sense of arrival at Maidstone East Station and ensured that visitors would appreciate the history of Maidstone through the timeline placed on the **ground**.

14. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MAY 2017

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

15. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

16. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

17. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Committee Work Programme for 2017/18.

It was noted that the annual report referred to in decision number 2 on Page 3 of the minutes, of the meeting held on 4 April 2017, had not been added to the Committee Work Programme.

The Chairman advised the Committee that the 'Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan' would likely be considered by the Committee in September.

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

18. BEREAVEMENT SERVICES - DEVELOPING SERVICES

The Head of Environment and Public Realm gave a presentation to the Committee regarding the future development of Bereavement Services.

It was noted that, in June 2016, this Committee agreed to submit a planning application for a pet crematorium and car park expansion at Vinters Park Crematorium. This was based on a business case which was prepared prior to the original agreement by Cabinet in February 2015. A new business case had since been prepared because it was deemed appropriate to update it according to current market conditions. Using the data, it was projected that the Capital payback would be between 7 and a half and 12 years depending on the level of direct sales achieved, which presented a greater risk compared to the previous business plan.

The Head of Environment and Public Realm advised the Committee on options that were available to improve the cemetery, for both staff and the public. In response to a question raised by the Committee, the Head of Environment and Public Realm assured the Committee that there was still significant capacity at the cemetery and agreed to include the future capacity of the cemetery in the business case when it was presented to the Committee.

The Committee considered whether off site storage was an option for paper records. However, the Head of Environment and Public Realm advised the Committee that a large number of people came to the crematorium in order to speak with the Cemetery Officer and view the records there.

In response to questions from Members, the officers explained that:

- It was the storage area at the Crematorium that required fire proofing, rather than the records.
- The money allocated in the Capital Programme for the Pet Crematorium would be carried forward as this project was not sustainable at this time.
- It was not necessary to refer the issue for capital funding back to the Policy and Resources Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Pet Crematorium project be suspended and reviewed in 2020/21, or sooner if markets dictate or partnership opportunities can be identified.
2. That Bereavement Services will focus on the delivery and improvement of its core business.
3. That £220,000 set aside in the Capital Programme for the Pet Crematorium be invested in the expansion of the Vinters Park Crematorium car park and improvements to disabled access.
4. That £30,000 from the Capital Programme be used for heat recovery from the cremators and fire proofing the storage area for paper records held at the Crematorium.
5. That a business case be prepared and presented to this Committee seeking Capital funding for improvements at Maidstone Cemetery, specifically the repair and reopening of the Chapel and the dismantling of the disused Groundsman's House and extension of the Cremated Remains Section.

Voting: Unanimous

19. STRATEGIC PLAN PERFORMANCE UPDATE QUARTER 4 FOR HCL

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement presented this item to the Committee. The Committee noted that:

- 60% of KPIs reported this quarter achieved their target for quarter 4; and

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to Policy and Resources Committee, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by three Councillors, to the Head of Policy and Communications by: 20 June 2017

- 100% of indicators had shown an increase in performance compared to the same quarter last year, where comparative data was available.

The Committee raised concerns about the footfall at the Museum and Visitor Information Centre. The Museum Director concurred that the figures had been disappointing and that this was related to national trends. In order to increase the footfall at the Museum, the Museum Director informed the Committee that:

- The Museum was continuing to run a series of 'Museum Lates' in order to attract new audiences through word of mouth;
- There was an exciting new Ancient Lives Gallery opening in September; and
- The Museum was developing the relationship with Fremlin Walk in order to increase awareness of the Museum to those visiting the shopping centre.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the summary of performance of Key Performance Indicators and corporate strategies and plans for Quarter 4 of 2016/17 be noted.
2. That no action needs to be taken nor amendments made to the Quarter 4 Performance Update report.
3. That Appendix II, the Quarter 4 Strategic Plan Action Plan Update, be noted.

Voting: Unanimous

20. **FOURTH QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING**

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement made a presentation to the Committee relating to budgets within the Committee's remit for the fourth quarter of 2016/17.

The Committee noted that:

- There was an overall underspend for services within the Committee's remit of £69,199.
- There was an overspend of £169,757 for the Mote Park Café due to higher than budgeted staff costs, but this figure was less than had been projected previously.
- The solar panels installed at Mote Park Leisure Centre were meant to provide a return to the Council, but as yet there had been no return as the mechanics of the calculation had not been established. A meeting had been arranged with SERCO to resolve this issue.

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to Policy and Resources Committee, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by three Councillors, to the Head of Policy and Communications by: 20 June 2017

- Cobtree Manor Golf Course had overspent by £36,917 for 2016/17 because the contract had ended with the operator. This meant that the Council had to pay the operator to run the Golf Course, rather than the operator paying the Council.

**RESOLVED:** That the financial position for services within the remit of the Committee at the end of the fourth quarter be noted.

Voting: Unanimous

21. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.08 p.m.

**2017/18 WORK PROGRAMME SORTED BY COMMITTEE**

Report Title	Work Stream	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan	New/Updates to Strategies & Policies	HCL	Jul-17	Dawn Hudd	Jason Taylor
Presentation from Headcorn Aerodrome	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	HCL	Jul-17	External	Victoria Barlow
Museums 20 Year Strategic Plan	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	HCL	Jul-17	Dawn Hudd	Victoria Barlow
Plaques and People Protocol	New/Updates to Strategies & Policies	HCL	Sep-17	David Pickett	Dawn Hudd
Café operations appointment of contractor	Changes to Services & Commissioning	HCL	Sep-17	Dawn Hudd	Dawn Hudd
Museum Future Governance Options	Changes to Services & Commissioning	HCL	Sep-17	External	Victoria Barlow
First Quarter Budget Monitoring	Corporate Finance and Budgets	HCL	Sep-17	Ellie Dunnet	Paul Holland
Biodiversity Action Plan	New/Updates to Strategies & Policies	HCL	Sep-17	Jennifer Shepherd	Philip Newcombe
Play Area Strategy	New/Updates to Strategies & Policies	HCL	Sep-17	Dawn Hudd	Jason Taylor
Q1 Performance Report 2017/18	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	HCL	Sep-17	Angela Woodhouse	Anna Collier
Tourism Destination Management Plan - Progress Update	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	HCL	Sep-17	Dawn Hudd	Laura Dickson
Disposal of Land at Hayle Place	Changes to Services & Commissioning	HCL	Sep-17	Dawn Hudd	Jason Taylor
Second Quarter Budget Monitoring	Corporate Finance and Budgets	HCL	Nov-17	Ellie Dunnet	Paul Holland
Q2 Performance Report 2017/18	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	HCL	Nov-17	Angela Woodhouse	Anna Collier
Festival and Events Update	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	HCL	Dec-17	Dawn Hudd	Laura Dickson
Tourism Destination Management Plan - Progress Update	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	HCL	Dec-17	Dawn Hudd	Laura Dickson
Fees & Charges	Corporate Finance and Budgets	HCL	Jan-18	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Medium Term Financial Strategy & Budget Proposals 2018/19	Corporate Finance and Budgets	HCL	Jan-18	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Strategic Plan Action Plan 2018/19	Corporate Planning	HCL	Jan-18	Angela Woodhouse	Angela Woodhouse
Setting new Key Performance Indicators (please note that there will be workshops with each committee prior to the report in January/February)	Corporate Planning	HCL	Feb-18	Angela Woodhouse	Anna Collier
Q3 Performance Report 2017/18	Updates, Monitoring Reports and Reviews	HCL	Feb-18	Angela Woodhouse	Anna Collier

# Agenda Item 12

<b>Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee</b>	<b>4 July 2017</b>
Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?	<b>Yes</b>

## **Maidstone Borough Council Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan Draft**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Heritage Culture and Leisure Committee
<b>Lead Director or Head of Service</b>	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Jason Taylor, Leisure Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Non-exempt
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards

### **This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:**

That the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee adopt the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan at Appendix I.

### **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone borough an attractive place for all.
  - Providing a clean and safe environment
  - Encouraging Good Health and wellbeing
  - Respecting the Character and Heritage of our Borough
  - Ensuring there are Good Leisure and Cultural Attractions

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b><i>Meeting</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
Corporate Leadership Team	20 June 2017
Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee	4 July 2017

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report introduces the final version of the Maidstone Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan, which deals with how Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) will manage the parks and open spaces that are under its control in the future.
- 1.2 Given the pressure on budgets and resources every part of MBC must consider carefully how its services are delivered; and this is particularly important for non-statutory services, including Parks and Open Spaces.
- 1.3 This plan sets out how the challenges ahead will be met, using the evidence base produced for the Local Plan and the results of the Residents' Survey. It explains the correlation between it and other MBC strategic documents, and shared targets and objectives.
- 1.4 The plan introduces priorities and principles that will shape our parks and open spaces in the future, and details how these will be achieved. It presents a Quality: Value Matrix which will help ensure that in future resources are targeted at areas where they will have the biggest impact on the lives of residents and visitors, and provides a route map for the short, medium and longer term, ensuring that MBC Parks and Open spaces are well-prepared for the challenges that lay ahead.

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## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 It was originally agreed in March 2016 that a Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan was needed and a report was brought to HCL Committee explaining how this would be achieved.
- 2.2 This project has gone through several iterations, with input from Members and senior council officers.
- 2.3 The final draft was produced by Val Hyland Associates who consolidated the information gathered into a shorter concise document.
- 2.4 Cllr Pickett, the Chair of Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee and Cllr Lewins, a member of the Committee, have both been involved in the production of the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan, having met with officers and received regular drafts as the document has progressed.
- 2.5 On 7 March 2017 a workshop was held which was open to all Councillors, which enabled wider comments and suggestions to be fed into the final document.

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## 3. PURPOSE OF THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES 10 YEAR PLAN

- 3.1 The purpose of this plan was set out in the report to HCL Committee on March 1 2016 as follows:

*“This project looks at the value and purpose of parks and open spaces in the Borough and how we currently manage them. It will ultimately provide an outline of how we*

*should manage them in the future to ensure their sustainability.*

*“Having a clear adopted 10 Year Plan will enable us to make best use of the resources available to us, bid to any relevant funding schemes which become available, have a clear set of objectives which we have agreed with our stakeholders, ensure that we put in place the most effective and efficient management arrangements for the future, and encourage the use of our parks and open spaces by residents and visitors whilst contributing to the health and wellbeing agenda.”*

3.2 The report detailed how the work would be carried out in three stages:

3.2.1 Stage 1

A review of our parks and open spaces to include: Parks, Play Areas, Allotments, Sports Pitches, Natural/Semi Natural open space and Events and how we manage and run them. This review will look at our own provision and compare it to how parks and open spaces belonging to others organisations are managed. There will be a review of how the value of green space is measured. This will involve reviewing academic research, online research and looking at case studies, to find good examples of best practice in other organisations that are managing their parks and open spaces with their future sustainability in mind. If appropriate, site visits will be arranged to view best practice elsewhere and to interview those involved in managing these sites.

3.2.2 Stage 2

Identifying any issues we currently have with the ongoing management of our parks and open spaces, compare how others deal with these issues and propose solutions on how MBC can resolve these issues in the future.

3.2.3 Stage 3

Production of a Draft Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan incorporating the work carried out above.

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## **4. PRODUCTION OF THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES 10 YEAR PLAN**

4.1 The initial research for the plan was carried out and a first draft produced by the Parks and Leisure Manger. The research involved a desk top study of available research, evidence and other studies into the provision and management of Parks and Open Spaces, and the changes and benefits that they can have for the communities that live and work near to them and for the people that visit them.

4.2 This investigation included reviewing the considerable amount of data that MBC had collected on existing Parks and Open Spaces in the borough for the production of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, which was adopted in 2016. Data had been updated on the amount of green spaces in the borough, how these were used, who they belonged to, where they were located and the quality of these spaces. This enabled us to get a very good picture of the current stock of green space in the borough.

4.3 Information was also held on what residents thought about the boroughs parks and open spaces from a telephone survey carried out in 2015.

4.4 Through using the adopted green space standards in the Local Plan and by looking at where future development will be located, it is possible to assess not only current

areas of under provision of green space, but also where these would be in the future.

4.5 Following this initial research, visits were arranged to a number of 'exemplar' Parks to see how they were managed to have a positive impact on the lives of their residents and visitors that used them. During these visits the managers of these parks were interviewed regarding how they managed their parks.

4.6 The Parks visited included:

- **Victoria Park, Tower Hamlets.** Serial winner in the People's Choice Award for the Nations Favourite Park.
- **Margham Park, Port Talbot.** This park was voted 2<sup>nd</sup> in the People's Choice Awards for the Nations Favourite Park.
- **Bewl Water, Kent.** A commercially operated open space.
- **Bedgeburry Pinetum, Kent.** A Forestry Commission site operated through a Friends Group.
- **Dansen Park, Bexley.** A council operated park with commercial activities.

4.6.1 A considerable amount of time was spent looking at the health profiles of the wards in Maidstone Borough and how Parks and Open spaces could be used to improve the health and wellbeing of their residents. This was done with the cooperation of the Kent County Council Public Health Observatory and the MBC Community Partnerships and Resilience Team.

4.6.2 A meeting also took place with the Chair of one of the Local Clinical Commissioning Groups to discuss his thoughts on how Parks and Open Spaces could be used to improve the health and wellbeing of patients.

4.6.3 The cost of managing Parks and Opens Spaces was reviewed and analysis carried out to look at what impact budget cuts would have on service provision.

4.6.4 This work produced an initial document and large body of evidence. It was then agreed to bring in an external consultant to use this work to produce a concise 10 year Parks and Open Spaces Plan.

4.6.5 The document has progressed through a number of drafts including the one which was taken by the consultants to a Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan Workshop in March this year. Comments from this workshop have been added to the final document enclosed as appendix 1.

#### 4.7 **Structure of Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan**

4.7.1 The final document is set out in three parts:

**Part 1** - states why our open spaces are so important, and provides some background about Maidstone's open spaces.

**Part 2** - sets out the challenges ahead.

**Part 3** - sets out the way forward, service priorities and principles and the actions needed to achieve these.

4.7.2 Pages 8 and 9 show how the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan fits in with the MBC Strategic Plan and how it contributes to delivering Maidstone's supporting strategies.

4.7.3 There are important links with a number of existing MBC documents, particularly the following documents:

#### 4.8 **Maidstone Biodiversity Action Plan 2009-2014**

4.8.1 Local targets for the conservation of wildlife are set through the Maidstone Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). The LBAP provides the local context for a wider hierarchy, linking into the county Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), regional BAP and national BAP.

4.8.2 This Maidstone BAP identifies Biodiversity Opportunity Areas where available resources can be used to maximum effect to improve priority habitats.

4.8.3 It is proposed that a light touch review of this document will be carried out by the Parks and Open Spaces team in the first year following the adoption of the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan.

#### 4.9 **Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy**

The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy was produced to provide information for the Maidstone Local Plan. The document is borough wide and provides information on the current quantity and quality of the 5 different types of open space. It sets the open space standards for the whole of the borough.

#### 4.10 **Health Inequalities Action Plan**

This Plan sets out plans to tackle health inequalities across the borough. It highlights how living in areas of low income, poor employment and poor infrastructure increases the risk of ill health. Currently there is a 9 year difference in life expectancy depending on where you live in the borough.

4.11 **The priorities of the Parks and Open Spaces 10 year plan** can be seen in the table on page 14 of the plan but consist of the following priorities and principles:

##### 4.11.1 **Priority 1** Open Spaces supporting Vibrant and Healthy Communities

**Principle 1A** - Open spaces will be accessible to all residents

**Principle 1B** - Social, environmental and economic benefits will be maximised.

##### 4.11.2 **Priority 2** Open Spaces Fit for the Future

**Principle 2A** - The open space needs of future populations will be met

**Principle 2B** - The long-term management of Parks and Open Spaces will be secured.

##### 4.11.3 **Priority 3** Quality Spaces - Quality Service

**Principle 3A** - Quality open spaces will serve community needs

**Principle 3B** - The Service will seek continual improvement - invest and enhance.

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## 5. **DELIVERING THE 10 YEAR PLAN**

5.1 In order to deliver the Priorities, 4 Key Action Areas have been identified:

- 5.1.1 **Action Area 1: An Open Spaces Estate which best serves Maidstone’s needs**  
This action area details how the Quality: Value Matrix will be used to target resources to the areas where they are most needed.
- 5.1.2 **Action Area 2: Providing Open Spaces for a Changing Population**  
The population of the borough is going to increase significantly in the coming years, this action area details how we will ensure that both the quantity and quality of our Parks and Open Spaces adapt to the needs of residents in the future.
- 5.1.3 **Action Area 3: Connected Delivery – Multiple Benefits**  
Parks and Open Spaces need to deliver social, environmental and economic benefits better, and to do this means we need to work in partnership with others. This action area sets out how this will be achieved.
- 5.1.4 **Action Area 4: Working Smarter** – This details how we will need to be more effective, efficient and targeted to continue to deliver a good service with fewer resources.

## 5.2 Annual Forward Plans

On adoption of the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Strategy, annual forward plans will be produced which set out what will be achieved each year. These will be produced for each of the action areas and will be focussed to achieve the 3 priorities set out in the plan. Responsibility for implementation, and for producing and carrying out the Annual Forward Plans, will be with the Parks and Open Spaces Team.

The implementation will be funded from existing budgets and will form part of the Parks and Open Spaces Service Plan.

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## 6 AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 6.1 HCL Committee adopts the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan – **this is the recommended option.**
- 6.2 HCL Committee chooses not to adopt the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan –this option is not recommended.

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## 7 PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The preferred option is that HCL Committee adopt the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan, for the following reasons:
  - 7.1.1 To ensure high quality, attractive parks and open spaces are provided to serve a range of needs for our current and future residents and visitors, as Maidstone continues to grow.
  - 7.1.2 To ensure that the provision and management of open spaces is sustainable in a future with less public sector funding.
  - 7.1.3 Address the difficult issues we are facing and provide a sound basis for decision-making.

- 7.1.4 Ensure that parks and open spaces effectively support the delivery of Maidstone's Strategic Plan.
- 7.1.5 Provide a clear direction which MBC and its partners can unite around.

## 8 CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 8.1 A consultation workshop open to all members was carried out on 7 March 2017. At this workshop the latest draft of the local plan was presented to members by Val Hyland Associates. This led to a number of comments and suggestions from members and following this meeting changes were made to the document.
- 8.2 Cllr's Picket and Lewins, have represented HCL Committee and had considerable input into the development of this document,

## 9 NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 9.1 Once the plan is adopted the Parks and Open Spaces Team will implement the plan.
- 9.2 The first year's action plan will involve doing the groundwork to produce short, medium and long term objectives for the 10 Years of the plan.
- 9.3 This will include programming in the evaluation of sites using the Value: Quality Matrix.

## 10 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>This Plan impacts on a number of priorities under Keeping Maidstone borough an attractive place for all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Providing a clean and safe environment</li> <li>○ Encouraging Good Health and wellbeing</li> <li>○ Respecting the Character and Heritage of our Borough</li> <li>○ Ensuring there are Good Leisure and Cultural Attractions</li> </ul>	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.
<b>Risk Management</b>	None identified.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.
<b>Financial</b>		[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]
<b>Staffing</b>		[Head of Service]

<b>Legal</b>	None identified	Team Leader (Contracts and Commissioning) MKLS
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	EIAs will be conducted for any changes to the service provided through the Plan.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>		[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Community Safety</b>		[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	None	
<b>Procurement</b>	None	
<b>Asset Management</b>	This plan sets out how we will manage are parks assets over the next 10 years.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.

## 11 REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:  
Appendix 1 Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan

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## 12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

# Maidstone's Parks & Open Spaces

## *10 Year Strategic Plan*

*2017 - 2027*

*Final June 2017*

## Foreword

*Maidstone is proud of its parks and open spaces. They provide a sense of place, an attractive environment for those living and working in the borough, play a vital role in supporting health and well-being and provide a haven for wildlife. As the population of the borough grows it is more important than ever to protect these important open spaces.*

*The borough council is responsible for a unique heritage; with exemplars of municipal parks from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, from the historic Mote Park and Brenchley Gardens to the Millennium Whatman Park. The borough's parks and open spaces also play a vital role in supporting and conserving our natural heritage. With its urban and rural network of open spaces, churchyards, allotments, riverside areas and highway verges, the borough can play its part in reversing the wider decline in our native flora and fauna.*

*This Parks and Open Spaces Strategic Plan recognises the benefits our parks and open spaces bring to local communities, for healthier living, play and recreation, but also for the benefits they bring to our local economy.*

*This Plan sets out the Council's intention for the future of our parks and open spaces, as part of an interconnected network of high quality open spaces, cycle paths, green ways and footpaths. This plan recognises the different needs of communities across the borough, the valuable role of local people in managing their open spaces, and the Council's responsibility to protect our unique heritage not only for current residents, but to pass on to our children and those that come after them.*

*This bold and strategic approach is being taken to ensure that Maidstone Borough Council's Parks and Open Spaces continue to provide benefits for residents, visitors and wildlife, despite increased pressure on the resources available to deliver this service.*

**Cllr David Pickett**

**Chair of Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee**

## Part 1 – Setting the Scene

### About this Plan

A number of very significant challenges lie ahead for all local authorities.

Housing growth places further pressure on public services if not planned for. Every part of Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) must consider carefully how its services are delivered; and this is particularly important for non-statutory services, including Parks and Leisure.

Despite these challenges MBC is ambitious in its aspirations for the borough. MBC's Strategic Plan recognises the importance of heritage, cultural and natural assets in ensuring Maidstone continues to be a thriving and attractive place to live, work and visit. Parks and open spaces are essential in supporting this, but we need to find different ways of working in order to continue to provide the service residents expect.

This plan deals with how MBC will manage the parks and open spaces that are under its control. There are a number of other documents, explained further in Part 2 of this plan, which deal with borough wide issues such as Green and Blue Infrastructure, Biodiversity, Landscape Character, Air Quality, Heritage and Tourism. Whilst the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan may contribute towards the actions in these documents, it will not repeat existing borough wide targets.

This plan sets out how we will face the challenges ahead, founded on the evidence base produced by Parks and Leisure for the Local Plan, alongside the results of the Residents' Survey. The plan sets out a route map for the short, medium and longer term so that MBC is well-prepared. Some changes will take time to implement and it is

imperative we start now to ensure a smooth transition to new ways of working.

We need this plan to:<sup>1</sup>

- Ensure high quality, attractive parks and open spaces are provided to serve a range of needs for our current and future residents and visitors, as Maidstone continues to grow;
- Ensure that the provision and management of open spaces is sustainable in a future with less public sector funding;
- Address the difficult issues we are facing and provide a sound basis for decision-making;
- Ensure that parks and open spaces effectively support the delivery of Maidstone's Strategic Plan;
- Provide a clear direction which MBC and its partners can unite around.

The plan is in three parts:

- **Part 1** – provides background about Maidstone's open spaces and states why they are so important;
- **Part 2** – sets out the challenges ahead;
- **Part 3** – sets out the way forward, our service's Priorities and Principles and the actions needed.

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<sup>1</sup> This plan covers parks, nature reserves, amenity space, play areas and allotments owned by Maidstone Borough Council. Other spaces owned or managed by other organisations also make a valuable contribution, but this plan cannot prescribe actions for these. However, in reviewing greenspace provision, this plan takes these other spaces into account.

## Why we Need Parks and Open Spaces

**Our vision is for a greener, healthier Maidstone – valued, enjoyed and cared for by local people.**

**At a time of reducing public resources, this ten year plan for Parks & Open Spaces will provide the strategic direction for the Parks service to ensure that this vision is attained.**

Parks and open spaces are vital parts of the fabric of communities; they are places where people relax, play sport, socialise and exercise. They also underpin MBC's priorities and, as important components of the green infrastructure network, are essential to the successful delivery of Maidstone's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.

A theme throughout this plan is the need to ensure all the benefits<sup>2</sup> provided by Maidstone's open spaces are fully maximised. This requires good planning, prioritisation and cross-sector working; working 'smarter' to deliver the most possible with the resources available.

### Economic Growth

Investing in greenspaces can be a catalyst to regeneration. There is good evidence that when open space projects are integrated with regeneration and economic development projects they provide more benefits, faster. Improved attractiveness of an area also increases visitor numbers and visitor spend. Open spaces can be attractions in

<sup>2</sup> This is termed 'multi-functionality' in green infrastructure planning. It requires that each site provides as many benefits as possible.

themselves as venues for events, attracting new spend to the area.

*"Investments in greenspace have been shown to improve a region's image; helping to attract and retain high value industries, new business start-ups, entrepreneurs and workers."*

*Natural Economy North West (2008)*

Being physically active is strongly linked to better health and well-being, with lack of exercise shown to increase at least 20 chronic health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, cancer, type 2 diabetes and mental health problems.<sup>3</sup> Evidence shows that providing open spaces helps raise physical activity levels and can have a positive impact on low level mental health issues.<sup>4</sup> Visits are influenced by distance from home, ease of access, the amenities on offer and the absence of vandalism and graffiti. These are important considerations in attracting more people to open spaces to improve their health.

### Quality Environment

#### Open Spaces are Important to Maidstone's Residents:

- More than half of residents use an amenity greenspace regularly (at least once a week);
- The most popular activities are walking and exercising;
- Areas for children and young people are regularly used by over a third of residents (at least once a fortnight)

*(Residents Phone Survey 2015)*

<sup>3</sup> Department of Health (2011), Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries', Chief Medical Officers.

<sup>4</sup> Masterclass Briefing - Evidence Review: Spatial Determinants of Health in Urban Settings, Building Health; Planning and designing for health and happiness; 22 January 2010 University of the West of England.

All parks and open spaces, not just nature reserves, can contribute to better biodiversity. They can also help to improve the environment in other ways, such as reducing air pollution or helping to control flooding. In line with the ambition to provide multiple benefits, environmental improvements will be sought in as many open spaces as possible, in a way that also supports the needs of communities.

### *About Maidstone's Parks and Open Spaces*

Parks and open spaces are part of the character of Maidstone. There are many unique and historic greenspaces, including The Archbishop's Palace Gardens, Penenden Heath and Brenchley Gardens, several large parks including Cobtree and Mote Park and many other open spaces providing local play areas, sports pitches, wildlife havens and spaces for festivals and events.

#### **Maidstone Borough Council's Parks and Open Spaces:**

- 425 hectares of greenspace
- 30 large parks
- 80 Neighbourhood greenspaces
- 68 play areas
- 700 Allotments plots across 12 sites
- 4 Green Flag parks

To make sure all residents have sufficient access to greenspace the Council has set out quantity standards for publicly accessible open space in its 2016 Local Plan. These standards indicate the minimum size for greenspace types and the area to be provided per thousand residents, as well as the maximum distance that any resident should have to travel to a greenspace.

The standards were devised to ensure that adequate greenspaces are provided on new housing developments; but they have also been applied across the rest of the borough to help ensure that all residents have access to a range of different types of open space. As well as addressing the quantity of open space, the quality of Maidstone's open spaces was also evaluated recently. The Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy considered the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open spaces, alongside the location and size of planned housing developments, and it has identified those areas of the borough where there is currently a deficit or over-provision of open space (or will be in future).

The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy identified the following current public accessible open space deficiencies across the borough:

- Amenity Greenspace - Current deficits in Fant, High Street, Bearsted, Allington and North Wards;
- Children's Play Space - Fair in most of the borough with slight deficiency in urban Maidstone. There is also a shortage of youth play in Marden, Staplehurst, Headcorn and Sutton Valence;
- Natural/Semi-natural Greenspace – Generally good but deficient in urban Maidstone, Staplehurst, Headcorn and Marden and slight deficiencies in Lenham, Coxheath and Sutton Valence.
- Allotments - Deficient in most of the Maidstone urban area and Staplehurst.

## How our Parks and Open Spaces are Managed

Managing Maidstone's open spaces includes strategic service planning and budgeting, from management planning for individual sites, liaison with site teams, contractors and local community groups, to the day-to-day operation of sites including maintenance and repairs.

### What Maidstone's residents say ...

- 75% of residents rate the quality of open spaces in Maidstone as good or very good
- Natural open spaces are important to 60% of residents
- 90% of residents visit one of Maidstone's parks every year

*(Resident's Phone Survey 2015)*

The Parks Team is responsible for overall managerial oversight, with site maintenance carried out by in-house teams.

A number of other MBC teams are also involved in site management, including cleaning, waste removal, parking, events bookings and general enquiries. Some sites are managed by other organisations on behalf of MBC and allotments are managed through The Maidstone Allotment Management Committee.

As finances reduce, it will become increasingly difficult to continue to manage all sites to a high quality and to respond to the demands of visitors.

It is not MBC's intention to dispose of any of our parks and open spaces. However, there may be occasions where disposal of a small piece of land or open space will be considered where doing so could facilitate the achievement of broader objectives. It is also becoming increasingly necessary, as other local authorities have found, to consider alternative options for the management of existing stock and new stock emerging through the Local Plan process.

Several local community groups also support managing some parks, varying from running small events to operating the site day-to-day. The input of local communities is vital to the smooth running of our sites and is to be particularly welcomed as public funding becomes more constrained. It is also a good way for local communities to get involved in the management of their local park. Through the delivery of this strategy, 'Friends Of' groups will be encouraged and local people will be supported in taking on more formalised management roles of some sites.



## Profile of Mote Park - "The Jewel in Maidstone's Crown"



Formerly a country estate, Mote Park was purchased by the Council in 1929. It is the biggest of Maidstone's parks at 186 hectares (450 acres). Mote Park is one of the UK's ten favourite parks (People's Choice Awards) and receives over 1 million visitors each year.

Mote Park has a very active 'Friends' group - 'The Mote Park Fellowship'. The group meets regularly with MBC officers to provide feedback and find ways to improve the park. The group run the Mote Park website, have weekly volunteering sessions, run a tree sponsorship scheme, assist with large events as well as organising their own, apply for funding toward Mote Park Projects and carry out conservation activities such as sowing meadows, planting trees, clearing unwanted growth and assisting the grounds maintenance team in the park.

Mote Park is also an important venue for events and festivals, annually hosting the Ramblin' Man festival, Race for Life and hosting The Radio 1 Big Weekend in 2009. A multitude of other regular events take place in the park, including fun fairs, low key walks and runs, open air theatre, dragon boat racing, "It's a knock out" and history and wildlife walks and talks.

### Fact File

- ✿ Grassland, woodland, 30 acre lake and river
- ✿ 4 play areas
- ✿ 6 mile of paths
- ✿ 5 Football and Rugby pitches
- ✿ 5k walking/running track
- ✿ Dementia walk with interactive signage
- ✿ BMX track
- ✿ Model railway
- ✿ Café
- ✿ Model boat and fishing clubs
- ✿ Watersports – sailing, windsurfing, canoeing and rowing boat hire
- ✿ Picnic Area
- ✿ 3 car parks
- ✿ Over 35 events expected in 2017
- ✿ 100 veteran trees, 9 of the UK's 17 bat species and at least 28 different mammal species
- ✿ Arboretum in excess of 150 trees species.
- ✿ 90 benches and 91 bins

## Part 2 – Preparing for the Future

### Delivering Maidstone's Strategic Priorities

MBC's Strategic Plan (2015-2020) sets out the direction that the Council will take to deliver services and improve the borough, set against a backdrop of reduced finances. Open spaces support the delivery of the Strategic Plan and directly contribute to many of the Action Areas.

The Strategic Plan is supported through a range of other strategies, each setting the direction for specific areas of work. An overview of how greenspaces and this plan contribute to delivering the Strategic Plan and several of the additional strategic documents is shown below (Strategic Plan) and on the following page.

### Contribution to Delivering Maidstone's Strategic Plan

#### Maidstone Borough Council Strategic Plan 2015 -2020 - Vision

That our residents live in decent homes, enjoy good health and a pleasant environment, with a successful economy that is supported by reliable transport networks.

**Priority 1:** Keeping Maidstone borough an attractive place for all

**Priority 2 :** Securing a successful economy for Maidstone borough

#### ACTION AREAS

##### Providing a clean and safe environment

*High quality open spaces contribute to Maidstone being a pleasant and attractive place to live and work.*

##### Encouraging good health and wellbeing

*Open spaces provide places for healthy exercise and support efforts to improve health inequality.*

##### Respecting the character and heritage of our borough

*Many of Maidstone's open spaces have high environmental, heritage and biodiversity value.*

##### Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions

*Parks host major events, as well as being attractions in themselves.*

##### Regenerating the town centre

*Urban parks add to the setting of the town, and an enhanced riverside route will contribute to regeneration.*

##### Securing improvements to the transport infrastructure of our borough

*Open spaces provide safe off-road transport routes.*

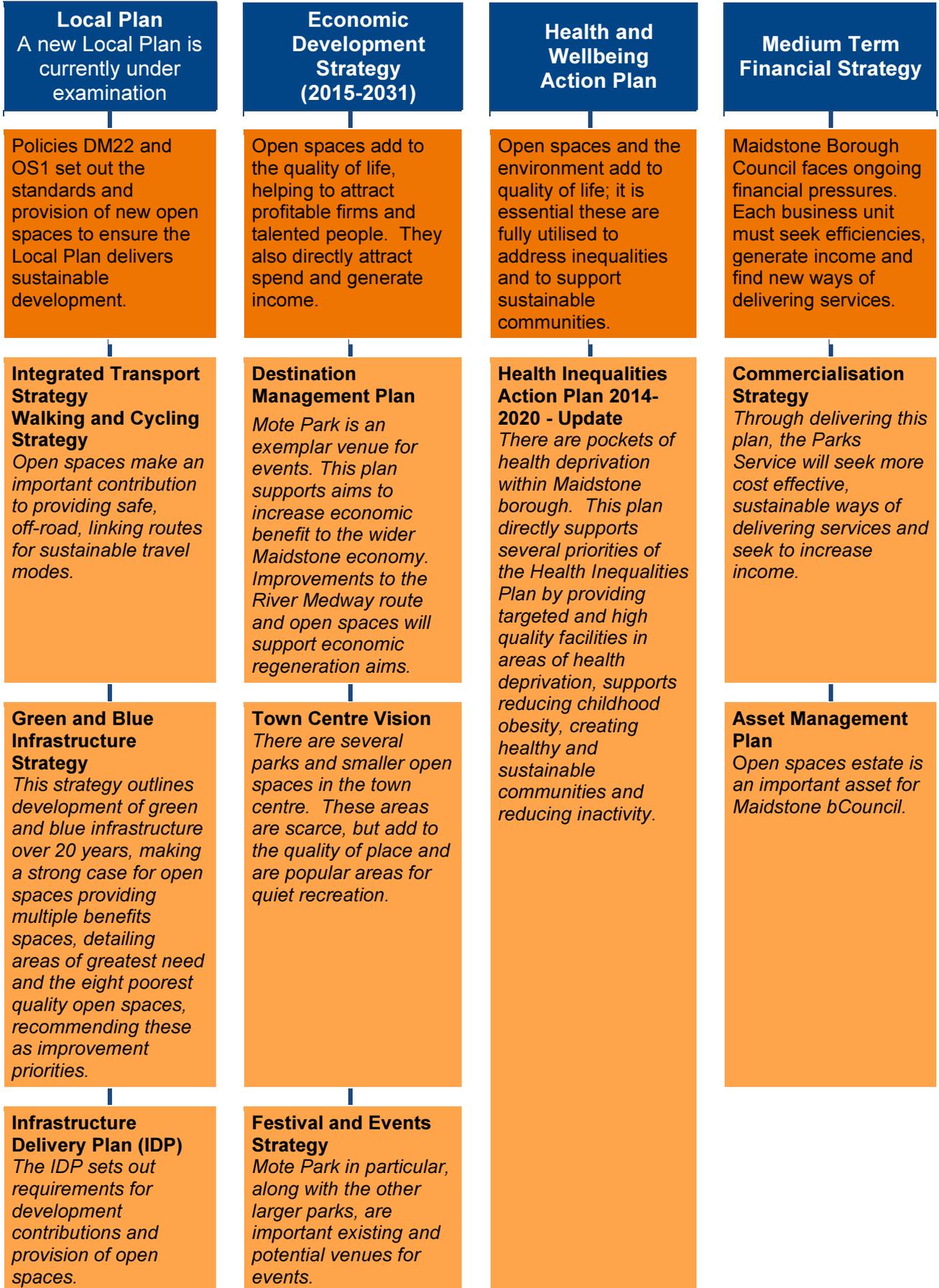
##### Promoting a range of employment opportunities and skills required across our borough

*Open spaces provide opportunities for apprenticeships and volunteers to gain skills.*

##### A home for everyone

*It is important that Maidstone creates attractive new communities; open spaces are essential in doing this.*

**Contribution to Delivering Maidstone's Supporting Strategies**



## *Important Documents that link closely with the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan*

Below is a summary of the other MBC strategies and plans that are most closely linked to the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan.

All of these documents have their own aims, objectives and targets. The Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan deliberately does not repeat the aims and objectives of these other documents, but it is important that the relationship between them is understood:

### **Maidstone Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2009- 2014**

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) provides the opportunity to review current activities and issues, identify aims and set specific objectives and targets for action by a wide range of internal and external partners.

It provides a much-needed overarching strategy for everyone involved in safeguarding and enhancing Maidstone's natural environment.

The Maidstone LBAP fits into a framework which consists of the UK BAP, The South-East Biodiversity Strategy, Kent Biodiversity Action Plan (Kent BAP).

The LBAP provides targets for a number of biodiversity opportunity areas across the borough regardless of ownership.

It is planned that a light touch review will be carried out of the Maidstone LBAP as an action in the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan.

### **Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy**

This document was produced by Planners and provides the green spaces and rivers input into the Local Plan. In the production of this document an audit was carried out to identify the type, size and quality of all of the publicly accessible green space in the borough.

The information from this audit was used to agree new green space standards for the whole of the borough, and sets out a vision for the borough's green and blue infrastructure for the next 20 years.

An action plan is currently being produced to implement this vision.

### **Health Inequalities Action Plan 2016**

This Plan sets out plans to tackle health inequalities across the borough. This report highlights how living in areas of low income, poor employment and poor infrastructure increases the risk of ill health. Currently there is a 9 year difference in life expectancy depending on where you live in the borough. This report highlights how health inequality including inactivity will be dealt with.

### **Maidstone Play Area Strategy 2017 (DRAFT)**

This deals with the play element of the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Strategy by setting quality and accessibility standards for play across the borough going forward. It describes how the borough will ensure that quality play areas are provided across the borough.

This document will be adopted in the later part of 2017.

**Maidstone Playing Pitch Strategy and Sports Facilities Strategy (DRAFT)**

This is currently being produced by the Planning Team as part of a wider assessment of sport and leisure provision in the borough which also includes playing pitches. It will direct the Local Plan as to the future playing pitch and sports facility need of the borough.

**Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment 2012 (Amended 2013)**

This document identifies all of the landscape types and landscape character areas that occur in the rural part of the borough (i.e. outside of the main urban area of Maidstone). This then guides the type of development that would be acceptable in these areas.

**Maidstone Low Emission Strategy 2017 (DRAFT)**

This document aims to achieve a higher standard of air quality across Maidstone in a number of ways including reductions in vehicle emissions through the promotion and uptake of low and ultra-low emission vehicles.

## *The Challenges Ahead*

Parks and open spaces are facing significant challenges. The greatest of these is how to continue to deliver a quality parks and open spaces service with significantly reduced resources.

Budgetary pressures are ongoing, with Government funding having ending.

Park maintenance budgets have not increased for a number of years and are currently being reduced; however the net cost of managing the parks estate increases every year. MBC has already introduced management efficiencies and has worked hard to maximise income streams e.g. through concessions and events in parks. Current funding projections indicate that in the near future the costs of managing our greenspaces will exceed budget.

MBC are committed, however, to continue to provide quality spaces where they are needed and to be ambitious and forward-looking. We believe that through committed and steadfast delivery of this plan, not only will open spaces continue to provide their current benefits to Maidstone residents, but these benefits can be increased.

Maidstone is also set to grow, with 17,000 new homes planned from 2011 to 2031; increasing the population of Maidstone by 42,000. Additional greenspaces are being

provided on some new housing developments, but not all.

The long-term management of these new greenspaces is an important issue and one for which an agreed way forward is required between MBC and developers to ensure that these spaces do not place additional burdens on the Council.

It is vital that the actions set out in this plan begin now. Many of them are inter-connected requiring action across many areas. Several of them are challenging. Many also need other MBC services and local communities to take a stake in delivery. To delay in taking forward these actions now will create further problems in the future, will make the challenges more difficult to address and will lead to a reduction in the quality of open spaces.

Providing and managing open spaces represents just 5.6% of MBC's gross annual expenditure

## *Consider a range of Options*

Innovative approaches and non-traditional thinking will be needed in moving towards a secure future for our open spaces. This Plan will support a strategy for MBC in gearing-up for potential changes. As other authorities face similar pressures and difficult funding choices, some of the approaches they are adopting may provide useful learning for MBC.

*The service faces multiple and inter-connected challenges*



### Rethinking Parks

'Rethinking Parks' was a 2016 £1 million Big Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund and Nesta programme designed to find, support and test new business models to sustain the UK's public parks. 'Rethinking Parks' developed ideas for the future resourcing of public parks, ran pilot projects and produced the 'Learning to Rethink Parks' report.

The report suggestions included:

- Consider a ring-fenced revenue budget planned for the medium term and investigate other sources, including income from assets, concessions and events, as well as capital receipts, dowries, endowments and trusts, donations and sponsorship;
- Deploy different funding models to help parks focus on sustainability, exploring ways to build alternative long-term income streams such as setting up endowments for parks;
- The key messages from the work included ideas for future funding of open spaces, the value of involving partners and local people and the importance of encouraging innovation and sharing good practice;
- The programme recognised that public parks need to diversify their funding sources to meet the size of cuts, but cautioned against looking to one answer to solve everything, favouring the approach of diversifying income sources and finding new ways to maintain open spaces at lower cost.

Recognising the issues facing local authorities in securing the future of public parks and open spaces, the Government held an inquiry into the future funding of public parks. The report of the findings has just been published <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/communities-and-local-government-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/public-parks-16-17/>

The report recognises the challenges being faced by the parks sector and the need for a sustainable future to be secured. It also recognises the importance and value of parks and highlights particular benefits, including parks' role in public health and well-being, in social cohesion, as vital green corridors for nature, in ameliorating the local effects of climate change and in supporting local economies and growth.

Assessing the value of parks in terms of health and other benefits may be helpful in identifying and accessing funding from other sources including health, flood prevention or water quality. This wider contribution of parks and open spaces may be helpful in local authority funding decisions regarding their open spaces.

Of particular interest to MBC, the report supports the concept of cross-sectoral funding e.g. accessing funds available under public health strategies such as the Obesity Strategy, and of Parks teams working with Health and Well-Being Boards; of accessing developer contribution funds to cover parks' revenue requirements; the importance of understanding parks as part of wider networks of green infrastructure and the sharing of learning and good practice.  
(*Department for Communities and Local Government Committee Public Parks report 2017*)

## Part 3 – The Way Forward

### Our Priorities and Principles

The Priorities and Principles are all necessary and mutually supporting (detailed on following page). If delivery in one of these is lacking, then delivery in the others will be compromised. All of the actions in this strategic plan contribute directly to delivering these Priorities and Principles.

#### *Focused Decision-Making means Effective Delivery*

As this 10 year plan progresses, many individual decisions will be taken. These will each be measured against the Priorities and Principles to ensure that the vision and financial viability is achieved. ‘Smarter’ ways of working will be found, which will include questioning the ways we do things.

Underpinning this are the ways of working which we will integrate into all service areas:

- **Targeted and focused on outcomes:** we will apply actions to the areas of greatest need as identified, as part of this Plan;
- **Evidence based:** we will seek the best available evidence to support our decisions;
- **Forward planned:** we will produce forward plans and assess progress;
- **Effective:** we will question whether each decision and action provides the greatest benefit for the resources employed;
- **Efficient:** We will consistently seek to reduce resource input, while retaining quality and delivering the Priorities and Principles.



*Brenchley Gardens*

Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
<b>Open Spaces supporting Vibrant and Healthy Communities</b>	<b>Open Spaces Fit for the Future</b>	<b>Quality Spaces - Quality Service</b>
<b>Principle 1A</b>	<b>Principle 2A</b>	<b>Principle 3A</b>
<b>Open spaces will be accessible to all residents</b>	<b>The open space needs of future populations will be met</b>	<b>Quality open spaces will serve community needs</b>
<p>All communities will have access to a range of facilities. These will include spaces where they can play, participate in sport, find quiet recreation and access nature.</p> <p>Our open spaces will be accessible for all abilities and will provide facilities to serve the needs of the local population.</p> <p>The Open Space Standards will provide a basis for this. Achieving this principle also links to Principle 1B and the need to provide a range of facilities on all sites to bring maximum benefits.</p>	<p>We will strive to ensure that all communities – future and existing – will have access to greenspaces.</p> <p>The Local Plan requires that new greenspaces are provided in housing developments or for contributions to be made to improve existing sites.</p> <p>We will ensure that new greenspaces are secured for the future and existing sites enhanced to provide good quality facilities. This principle closely links with Principles 1A and 1B and the need to provide multiple benefits for communities.</p>	<p>Providing quality sites supports Principles 1A and 1B. However, with reduced resources it may not be possible to continue current levels of management for all sites.</p> <p>Open Space Management Standards will be developed to ensure that quality meets the needs of communities.</p>
<b>Principle 1B</b>	<b>Principle 2B</b>	<b>Principle 3B</b>
<b>Social, environmental and economic benefits will be maximised</b>	<b>The long-term management of Parks and Open Spaces will be secured</b>	<b>The Service will seek continual improvement - invest and enhance</b>
<p>The need for greenspaces to provide multiple benefits is a thread throughout this plan. All spaces will provide multiple benefits to contribute to the social, environmental and economic needs of the communities which they serve.</p> <p><b>Social:</b> increasing use of open spaces, supporting health and well-being and deprivation improvement and reducing ASB and vandalism;</p> <p><b>Environmental:</b> Enhancing biodiversity and incorporating nature in our sites – and ensuring people can experience nature;</p> <p><b>Economic:</b> Spaces will contribute to ‘quality of life’ and inward investment through place shaping as well as (where possible) generating income.</p>	<p>Sustainable service delivery models will be required to adjust to reduced resources.</p> <p>This will require both income generation and reduction in expenditure.</p> <p>It will also require changes in delivery structures and different delivery models.</p> <p>It will require communities to increase their involvement in open spaces.</p>	<p>The Service will continue to be ambitious in delivering quality open spaces for Maidstone.</p> <p>Forward planning will enable a programme of continuous improvement.</p> <p>We will seek external funding and work with other partners to secure this (links to Principle 2B).</p> <p>We will invest in those sites identified as being of greatest ‘value’ or with the greatest potential to increase income (Principle 3A) to maximise this potential.</p>

## *Delivering this Plan*

Actions are needed across a number of areas to deliver the Priorities and Principles of this Plan. Many of these actions are interconnected, meaning that several actions need to progress at the same time. These actions and interconnections are shown in Appendix 1 of this report.

The high level actions will be delivered on the ground through more detailed Annual Forward Plans which will set annual targets and review progress year on year.

The diagram on the following page – ‘from strategy to delivery’ shows how the priorities and principles will be delivered through the Action Areas and annual plans.

These annual plans will be agreed every year. The initial meeting could take place as a workshop to set short medium and long term objectives, which will then be broken down into annual achievable objectives. Progress on the previous year will be reviewed prior to agreeing the new objectives each year.

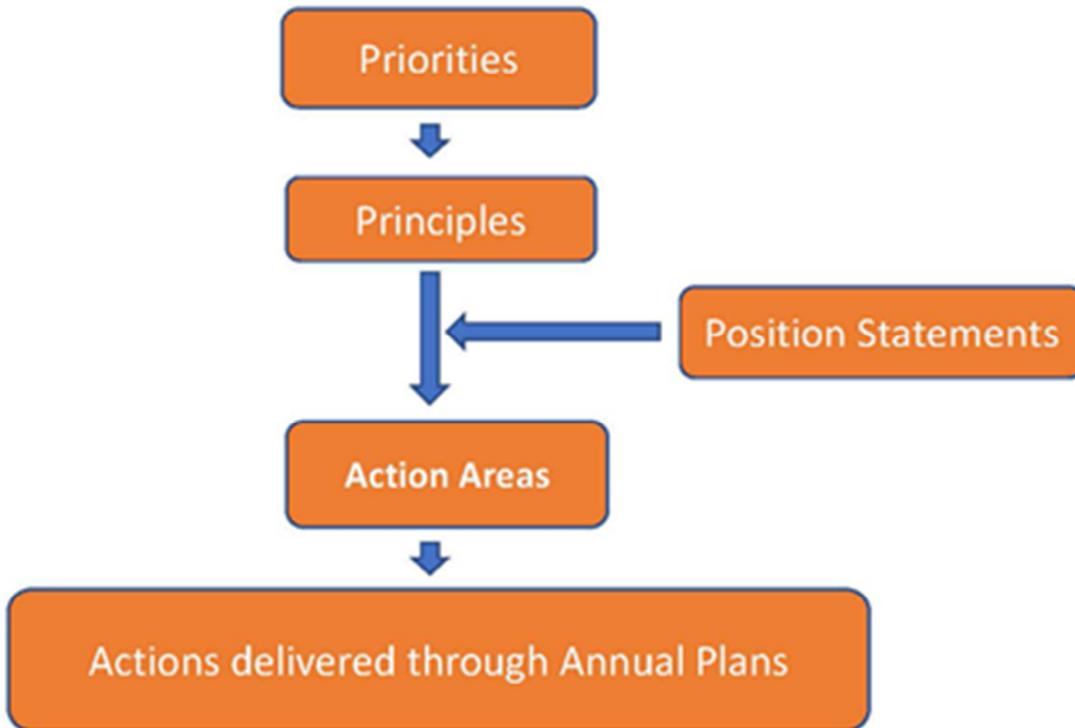
These objectives will then filter down to the individual parks and open space management plans.

### **Working with Partners**

MBC cannot deliver all these actions alone and we will need the support of a range of people and organisations to be successful. These partners will include other local authorities, parish councils, friends and community groups. In order to build productive relationships with partners it is essential that the appropriate resources are available.

In meeting the open space demands of a changing population, it is important for MBC to be clear about its Priorities and Principles, and that specific position statements provide clarity on the future direction of the service.

### From strategy to delivery



## Position Statements

### 1. Adoption of Open Space

MBC will ensure that housing development provides a high quality environment with sufficient, high quality open spaces where needed for local people to enjoy. These open spaces, though welcomed as assets for the borough, cannot place additional financial burdens on the Council. It will therefore be the responsibility of the Developer to make arrangements for the long term management of these open spaces.

### 2. S106 Developer Contributions

The Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2011 – 2031) Policies DM19 and OS1 together set out the Council's requirements for the delivery of new and improved open space to support development within the Borough. The Council's preference is that the needs for open space generated by new development should be accommodated within a development site to increase the overall quantity of provision. Where these needs cannot however be met in full on site, or in an off-site location, the Council will require financial contributions through planning obligations to ensure that necessary improvements to the quality of existing open space provision can be delivered. This Plan and its subsequent Action Plans, together with other relevant evidence, will be used by the Council to inform decisions about where such contributions can be allocated most effectively.

### 3. Biodiversity

MBC's commitment to encouraging and promoting biodiversity has always been strong and will continue to be so in the future. Wherever possible we will set aside areas for biodiversity, these could be large sites such as woodland and meadows, or on smaller well used sites where it could be incorporated as part of the overall management. MBC will continue to work with partner organisations to provide maximum benefits from our open spaces for wildlife and residents

### 4. MBC Nature Reserves

MBC will plan to ensure that the management of its open spaces supports and enhances biodiversity and addresses fragmentation of wildlife habitats. This will be achieved through the review of Maidstone's Local Biodiversity Action Plan and the management of existing sites and not by the further development or adoption of new nature reserves.

### 5. Ownership of MBC open spaces

MBC has a strong commitment to its parks and open spaces and the value that they provide to residents, visitors and wildlife. We are not seeking to reduce the amount of parks and open spaces we have or outsource the wholesale management of them at this time. However, it is important to regularly review the way in which we manage these assets and we will be receptive to alternative management arrangements such as working with Parish's and community groups.



Cobtree Manor Park Adventure Zone

## Actions

Four high-level Action Areas are identified which will deliver the Priorities and Principles of this Plan.

### *Action Area 1: An Open Spaces Estate which best serves Maidstone's needs*

#### Why do we need this Action Area?

- To prioritise resources to where they are most needed;
- To reduce our resources on areas which don't best serve the needs of Maidstone's residents;
- To deliver more benefits (e.g. health and environment) where they are needed, despite reduced resources;
- To generate increased income.

#### How will we achieve this?

- To ensure we target our resources fairly and effectively a **Strategy for Maintenance and Development** has been developed. This will identify the needs of our communities - social, economic and environmental – and determine where there is sufficient or not enough provision of each type of open space;
- We will evaluate whether these needs are currently provided for. The Strategy is described below, and includes a **Quality: Value Matrix** which measures the value (or benefits) provided by each open space (or its potential to provide them) against its current level of quality.

As resources reduce, decisions will need to be made as to how we manage our open spaces. An ongoing process of gradually reducing budgets and reducing standards for all open spaces is not acceptable. A rational, objective approach is therefore needed to decide on:

- The levels of maintenance at each site;
- The range of facilities to be provided;
- Management arrangements;
- Targeting of improvements and investment.

The framework for decision-making is complex and needs to take into account a range of factors. These include:

- The need to support MBC's priorities, existing strategies and wider agendas (social, environmental, health inequality and economic development);
- Current levels of need for and provision of open space;
- Future levels of need for and provision of open space with an increasing population.

### The Quality/Value Matrix

A matrix will be used to reach decisions about our open spaces, which fully incorporates the wider factors necessary to make decisions on a future strategy for individual open spaces. These decisions need to be transparent, rational and defensible, and the use of the matrix will support this.

There are two elements to the matrix approach:

- 1 Quality Rating – the quality survey data for each site will be used to represent the current quality of the site;
- 2 Value Rating – each site will be assessed against a range of wider social, economic and environmental criteria to arrive at a value rating.



### Value Rating

In rating each greenspace for Value, the potential of the site should be borne in mind, and not simply the extent to which it is currently fulfilling its potential. The interaction between 'quality' and 'value' is important in this regard; e.g. a site may not be fulfilling its potential value due to the current low quality.

### Economic

The economic benefits of open spaces in contributing to the economy of a local area are well recognised and supported with a substantial body of research. The 'intensity' of this varies; from an open space providing an attractive setting to new development which boosts house prices to an open space asset which itself directly attracts spend into the local economy through, for

example, being a tourist attraction. It is also important that those assets which can directly generate income to support the parks service do these most effectively.

Two measures are proposed, which encompass the ability of the greenspace to directly contribute to the economic growth and development of Maidstone borough and to generate income for the sustainability of the service.

- 1 *Ability or potential ability of open space to promote economic development/ regeneration in the locality and/or support tourism.*
- 2 *Ability or potential ability of open space to generate income for the parks service and/or Maidstone Borough Council.*

### Social

Open spaces support health, well-being and quality of life, and are important spaces and places which support community cohesion. They may be valued by communities for their heritage or for creating a more attractive place in which to live. This parameter captures the wider social benefits of open spaces.

Three measures are proposed:

- 3 *The open space serves the population in one of the four Wards with levels of deprivation, contributing to (or with the potential to contribute to) improving health deprivation (Shepway North and South, High Street and Park Wood) and/or is identified as a key priority for improvement in Maidstone's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.*
- 4 *The open space makes an essential contribution in reaching the open space standards set out in the Local Plan (draft), or is in an area for which the open space standards are not being met (an area of deficiency) or will not be met in the future due to increased housing.*
- 5 *The open space has inherent social value by virtue of, for example, having historic or landscape value, being an attractive setting for the community, being a site with high levels of community interest or a site for educational activity or through providing other demonstrable social benefits.*

### Environmental

Open spaces obviously provide a range of environmental benefits. This not only includes biodiversity on the site itself, but can also include the site's role in providing wider connectivity of ecological networks, in improving air quality, helping to regulate water flow and assist with flood management and other benefits; for example in providing pollination sources or protecting ground water quality. As a principle, the maximum range of environmental benefits will be sought from sites managed by MBC, in line with the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. This approach is termed 'multi-functionality'; which in essence means that each site should contribute to a wide range of needs of the community and the environment.

Two measures are proposed:

- 6 *The open space has high biodiversity value (or potential to improve biodiversity value) – demonstrated through being designated for its interest, being highlighted in the Maidstone Biodiversity Action Plan for its habitats or species or being identified in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy as an important site.*
- 7 *The open space provides (or has greater potential in providing) wider environmental benefits, for example contributing to water management including flooding, as a connecting wildlife corridor or ‘stepping stone’ site or through contributing to improving air quality or climate change adaptation.*

### **Implementing the Matrix**

After assessment, each open space will fall into one of the four quadrants of the matrix. This will help to indicate a possible course of action for each open space, but the final decision will require consideration by experienced staff. The matrix provides a tool to help decision making by MBC in the context of wider MBC strategies and the Parks & Open Spaces 10 year Plan. Fundamentally it supports decision-making on the targeting of resources.

In summary, the actions going forward could be:

**High Value – High Quality:** These open spaces are performing strongly; they fulfil an identified need to a high quality. It is important that this standard is maintained to ensure that these functions continue to be provided. Although these sites perform well there may also be areas in which the site could be improved. Plans should be produced to identify areas of improvement and to ensure that the sites continue to maintain high quality.

**High Value – Low Quality:** These open spaces have a high value/serve a strong need but this not being delivered to its full potential due to low quality or inadequate facilities. These open spaces should be a priority for investment. Investment plans should be drawn up to quantify the improvements required and to develop a business case. Funding could then be sought through s106, CIL or internal or external funding sources.

**Low Value – High Quality:** These open spaces are being maintained to a high quality but do not score highly across the value criteria. This may be, for example, that they are in an area where there is a good supply of open space. The future of these open spaces needs careful consideration on a case-by-case basis and taking into account the wider community. In these cases the matrix should be used to provoke a more in-depth consideration of the open space and its role and not for making the final decision on the future of the site. Even though the value score for the open spaces may be low, they may be highly valued by the local community. Options for these open spaces may include reducing management input, seeking ways to manage with less input (e.g. reducing bedding or planting) or divesting to a more community based management structure in the medium term.

**Low Quality – Low Value:** These open spaces do not provide high value or serve a high level of need. Although low quality, investment in these open spaces would not improve the value which the sites bring. MBC therefore needs to consider future management of these open spaces. Options may include reducing management input, seeking ways to manage with less input (e.g. reducing bedding or planting) or divesting to a more community based management structure in the medium term.

## Action Area 2: Providing Open Spaces for a Changing Population

### Why do we need this Action Area?

- Maidstone is growing: new housing and population change will increase the demand for open space, and we need to make sure it is provided and supports vibrant communities;
- We need to make sure new open spaces provided by developers continue to be maintained to a high standard in the long term; and that the Council does not pay the cost of failure;
- We need to make sure that existing open spaces are invested in so that more demand from an increased population does not degrade them;
- We need to work smarter to deliver more health and well-being improvements for a changing population.

### How will we achieve this?

- By understanding the supply of and need for open spaces, and forward-planning to ensure provision is made;
- By setting up robust agreements with developers to ensure sustainable management;
- By ensuring new spaces are well-designed;
- Through seeking developer contributions to improve existing spaces to meet the identified need.



Whatman Park

### Action Area 3: Connected Delivery – Multiple Benefits

#### Why do we need this Action Area?

- Because many organisations and groups, as well as MBC, manage the open spaces which residents enjoy;
- Because we understand that parks and open spaces need to deliver social, environmental and economic benefits better, and to do this means we need to work in partnership more effectively;
- Because it will help us secure external funding;
- Because there is a need for communities to take a more active stake in managing open spaces.

#### How will we achieve this?

- MBC will set up two external groups to plan strategically for the open spaces that Maidstone will need into the future, to progress ambitious projects and to seek funding:  
Parks and open spaces are key elements of Maidstone's 'green infrastructure'. MBC will lead an action-focused partnership to plan and deliver Maidstone's Green and Blue Infrastructure network and larger strategic projects, with the objectives of maximising the social, environmental and economic benefits of open spaces and to champion open spaces and wider green infrastructure at a senior level. This partnership will draw in other organisations at a senior level to collaborate in developing strategic projects, raise funding and support delivery.

A Maidstone Parks and Open Spaces Stakeholder Group, led by the Parks and Open Spaces team, to include other organisations who manage public open spaces to work together in addressing practical management issues, improve communications and to seek funding.

- We will also support capacity-building, skills-development and independence in community groups.

## Action Area 4: Working Smarter

### Why do we need this Action Area?

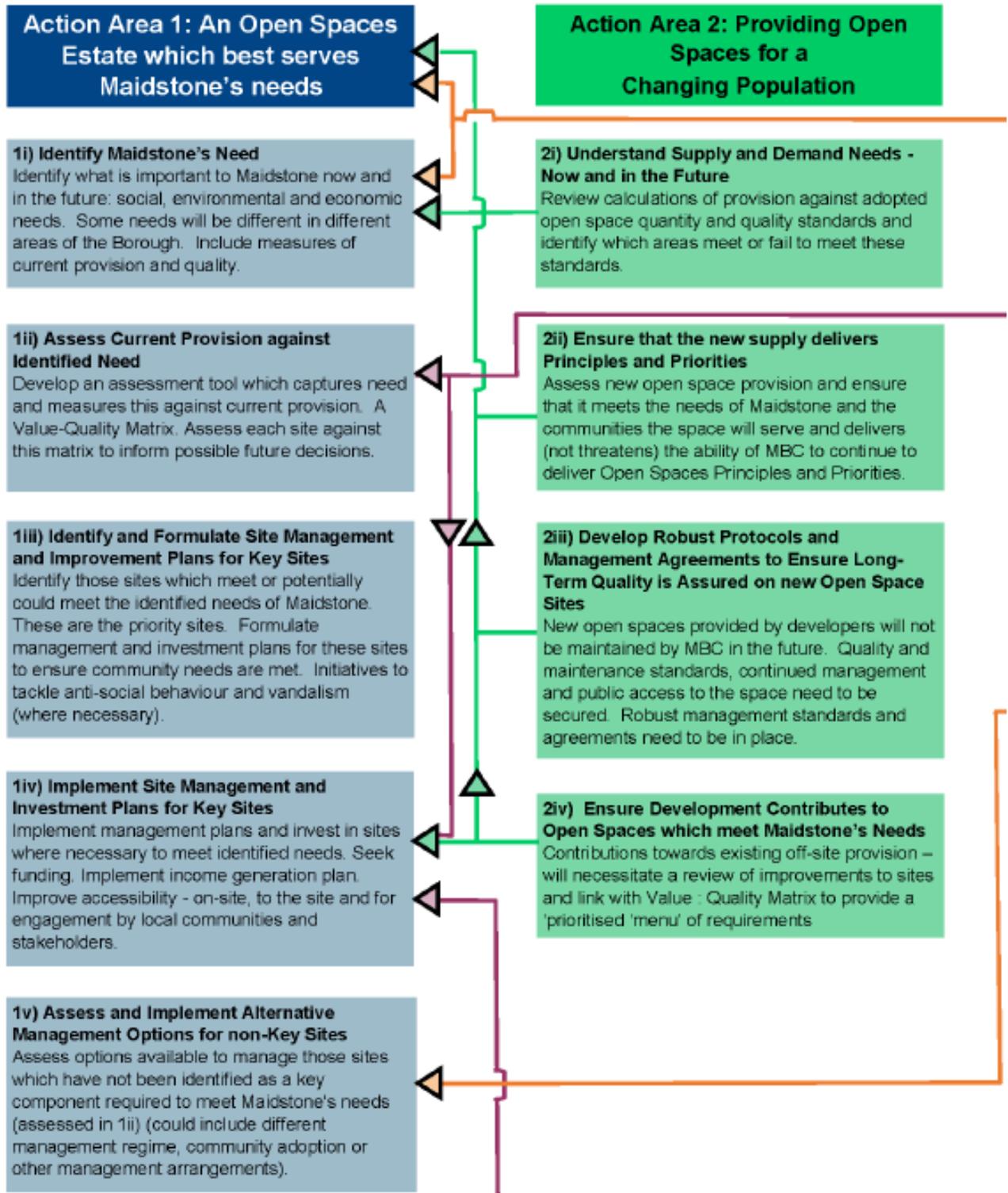
- We need to be more effective, efficient and targeted to continue to deliver a good service with fewer resources;
- We need to continually review our service to find better ways of working;
- We need to increase external income and increase commercialisation opportunities;
- Because different parts of MBC have a stake in making sure open spaces serve residents – we need to work as a whole council and not as disconnected units to ensure we work smarter and more collaboratively and maximise resources; to deliver high quality spaces which fully support communities.

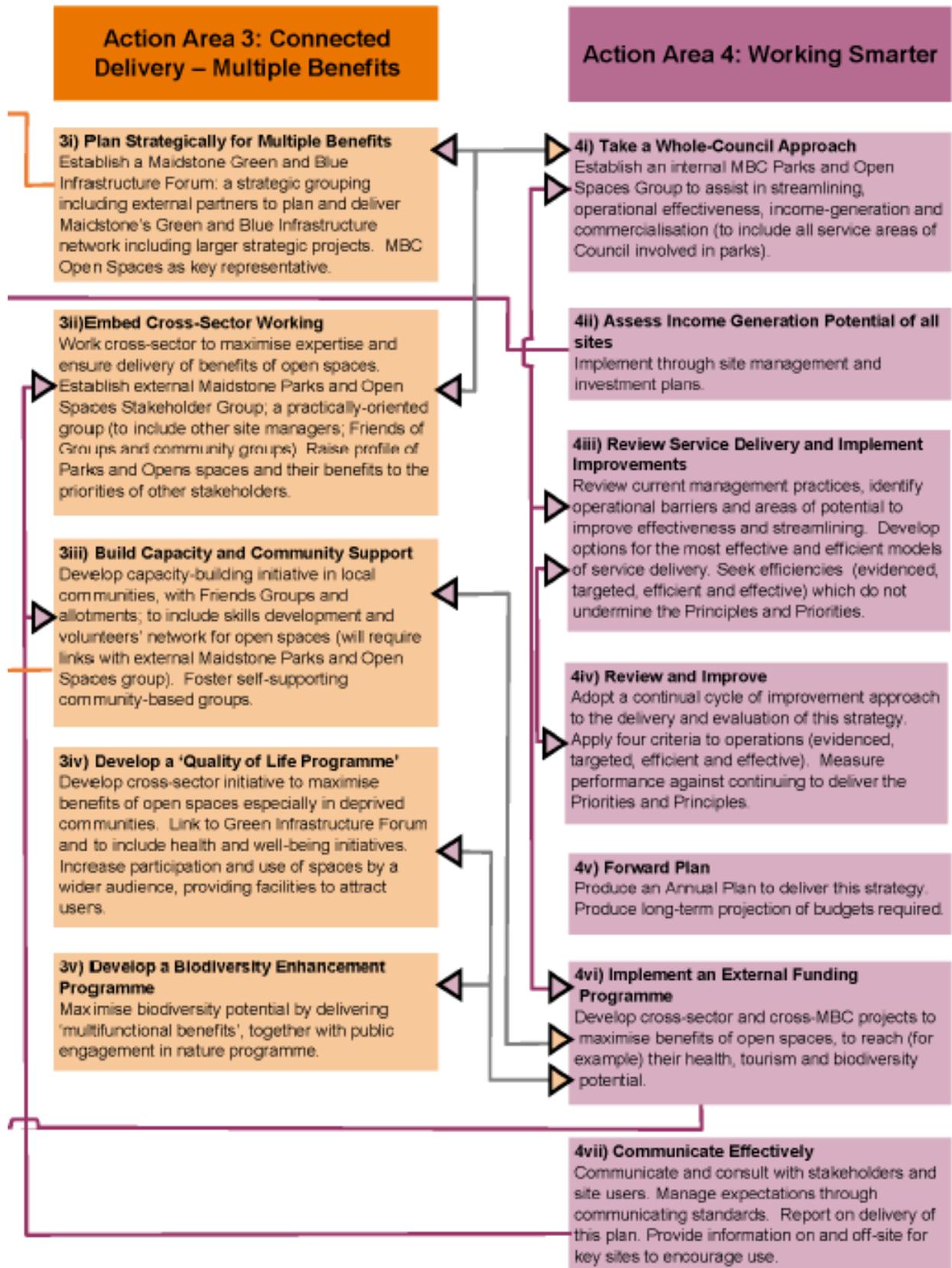
### How will we achieve this?

- The Parks Team will set up and lead an internal MBC working group to better coordinate activities in our open space sites; to ensure accountability and responsibility; to implement streamlining, remove duplication and increase effectiveness;
- We will assess the income generation potential of sites;
- We will increase external funding, particularly utilising the new external grouping established under Action Area 3;
- We will consider all options of providing and managing our public open spaces in the future, including alternative non-MBC arrangements;
- We will produce annual plans which will set ambitious targets and review implementation of this plan.



Appendix1 – Detailed Action Plan.





## Heritage, Culture and Leisure

**4 July 2017**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**Yes**

### Maidstone Museums 20 Year Plan

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Heritage, Culture and Leisure
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Victoria Barlow, Museums Director
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. That the Museums 20 Year Plan attached as Appendix I be adopted.
2. That the Museums Strategic Board be given approval to develop a detailed Action Plan in pursuit of fulfilling the Plan.

**This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all -  
Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions  
Respecting the character and heritage of our borough

**Timetable**

<i><b>Meeting</b></i>	<i><b>Date</b></i>
Heritage, Culture and Leisure	4 July 2017

# Maidstone Museum 20 Year Plan

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report lays out the vision for the future of the Maidstone Museum and Carriage Museum to ensure a sustainable future for the service.
  - 1.2 It highlights areas of opportunity for development and improvements to the service.
  - 1.3 The report identifies some of the next steps necessary to create an action plan for the delivery of this improved service.
- 

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Maidstone Museum Strategic Board was created in 2016 in response to an earlier report approved by HCL in January 2015.
  - 2.2 The role of the Strategic Board is to provide direction and advice to officers in the development of a sustainable museum service, recognised as a leader in the South East and forming the cornerstone of the borough's tourist economy.
  - 2.3 The Strategic Board is made up of representatives from MBC, museum stakeholder organisations, Kent County Council and representatives of private enterprise. They have been selected for their experience, knowledge and area of expertise.
  - 2.4 The 20 Year Plan reflects the vision of the Strategic Board working with officers.
- 

## **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Members can adopt the plan and give the Strategic Board a remit to continue to create a detailed action plan to take forward the recommendations in the 20 Year Plan.
  - 3.2 Members do not approve the plan.
- 

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

- 4.1 Members approve the 20 Year Plan and give the Strategic Board a remit to continue to create a detailed action plan to take forward the recommendations in the Plan.
- 4.2 This will provide a direction for forward planning, information gathering and the creation of a framework for development and fundraising.

## 5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

5.1 Public consultation will be undertaken alongside consultation involving stakeholders. This will take a variety of forms at different stages of the action plan but is likely to include focus groups, surveys, workshops and informal feedback.

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## 6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all - Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions Respecting the character and heritage of our borough	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.
<b>Risk Management</b>		[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Financial</b>	None currently identified.	[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]
<b>Staffing</b>	None currently identified.	[Head of Service]
<b>Legal</b>		[Legal Team]
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	EINAs will be completed for any changes to the service before they are implemented.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>		[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Community Safety</b>		[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	N/A	
<b>Procurement</b>	Any procurement will be undertaken using the Council's	[Head of Service &

	contract standing order procedures.	Section 151 Officer]
<b>Asset Management</b>	The 20 Year Plan will seek to ensure that eh museum assets are managed and protected.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development

**7. REPORT APPENDICES**

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Maidstone Museum 20 Year Plan

# MAIDSTONE MUSEUM 20 YEAR PLAN

JUNE 2017



## Mission Statement

Maidstone Museums inspires, educates and challenges its visitors and users through the use of its collections, staff and buildings. We do this by telling the story of Maidstone, its people, their natural environment and the wider world in which they live, through the artefacts and specimens we collect and interpret.

## Vision Statement

We will create a diverse and energetic community of people invested and involved in the museum and its collections.

We envision a future where the story of Maidstone and its people will be told through the objects in our care which, in turn, inspire learning, shared experiences and new ways of seeing.

We will achieve this by:

- Delivering a high quality informed service
- Creating a sustainable and resilient organisation
- Caring for and creating access to our collections for present and future generations
- Creating an environment that inspires, educates and challenges visitors and users
- Ensuring that the museum is accessible to all and has the power to transform lives through the use of its collections
- Developing and encouraging a forward thinking and innovative workforce
- Working to nationally recognised standards

## The things we value are:

- Enriching people's lives with new experiences and access to amazing collections
- Being inclusive and welcoming to everyone
- Excellence in collections care and interpretation
- Enjoyment of our collections and exhibitions in a friendly, relaxed environment
- Running an efficient and effective service in order to ensure we can be here for generations to come





## 1. Introduction

In January 2015 a report was taken to the Council's Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee with the following recommendations:

- a) That a Strategic Board be established to shape a vision for the museums service for the next 20 years and to oversee delivery of that vision.
- b) That the vision should link to Maidstone Borough Council's (MBC's) strategic plan and in particular to the Culture & Heritage Positioning Statement and Destination Management's Plan's ambitions to grow Maidstone as a cultural and heritage destination and broaden its appeal to visitors.
- c) The vision should reflect Maidstone's status as one of the largest museum services in Kent, with the largest collection in Kent, some of which is of international significance.
- d) The vision should be ambitious, seeking to re-gain the position of Maidstone Museums as the county museum service and to become one of the South East's hub services.
- e) Maidstone Museums should be a flagship museum service and a nationally recognised tourist destination; a service that is well used by the local community and of which they are proud; but which also draws audiences from across the country forming the cornerstone of Maidstone's tourist economy.

To achieve this vision, the museum service will need to be attaining best practice in the following areas:

- Visitor experience and audience development.
- Curatorship, interpretation and access to collection.
- Entrepreneurship and ongoing sustainability.
- Leadership in the sector and ability to be mentor smaller services.

These reflect the Arts Council priorities of:

- Care for Collections
- Connect with people
- Create a sustainable service.

Accordingly, a Strategic Board was established and has met several times during 2016 and 2017 with the following membership:

Paul Hudson, former chairman of Heritage Lottery Fund south-east region and Kent Ambassador (Chairman)

Emma Liddiard (until March 2017), Managing Director Global.com and Kent Ambassador

Cllr Fran Wilson, MBC

Cllr David Pickett, MBC

Michael Cooke, Arts Council South East

Lucy Keeley, Kent County Council

Joanna Low, South East Museums Development Service

Dawn Hudd, MBC

Victoria Barlow, MBC

Mark Baker, Maidstone Museums Foundation

The Board identified several key issues concerning the existing museum operation, and these include:

- Complexity of the ownership of several major collections
- Future of the Carriage Museum
- Updating the collections and exhibitions
- Marketing and branding
- Visitor facilities
- Opening hours
- Opening up the “back door” to Brenchley Gardens

The Strategic Plan seeks to consider how these issues can be addressed in conjunction with gallery redisplays that can attract outside investment and provide value for money for MBC’s investment.

If major issues around the quality of offer, resident awareness and involvement and governance/ownership of collections are addressed swiftly, the real likelihood is that the spectre of a situation where the museum will stagnate and decline to a state where opening is no longer viable can be avoided. If not, Maidstone Borough Council would still be liable for the cost of maintaining both buildings and collections for no discernible benefit and, indeed, reputational damage.

The Strategic Board did not take this pessimistic view. Rather, it concentrated on the central role that the museum performs and needs to continue to play in the identity of Maidstone itself and the long history it represents. This report is therefore the outcome of the Strategic Board’s recommendations to the Council about how best to resolve these issues in order to make the most of the major asset to Maidstone that the museum provides.





## 2. Context – the national, regional and local picture

This Strategic Plan sits within the context of priorities set nationally and regionally for the museums sector and within MBC's own objectives for the role heritage and the museums will play in the future development of Maidstone and its economy.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sports Culture White Paper, published in 2016, highlighted the government's commitment to the right of everyone to enjoy cultural activities and made special reference to those facing barriers to participation or employment because of the sector's lack of diversity and its impact on inclusion. The same White Paper promoted the importance of heritage in place-making. Maidstone Museums are ideally placed to respond to this agenda, working as part of the Council's Regeneration and Economic Development service.

Kent County Council is currently in the process of producing a Cultural Strategy for the county. It is hoped that the Strategy will provide clear paths to cooperation and partnership with arts organisations across the county. Maidstone is already a leading member of the Kent and Medway Museums Partnership.

Maidstone Borough Council's Strategic Plan 2015-2020 makes it clear that the museum has an important role to play in the development of the cultural offer in the town. One of the two priorities for the Borough Council is 'Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all' and one of the action areas for this is 'Respecting the character and heritage of our borough'.

The Maidstone Destination Management Plan produced by Blue Sail in 2015, also makes clear that Heritage has an important role in attracting visitors to Maidstone. Over 50% of overseas visitors said it was a major factor in their visit to the town, although it is recognised that the museums are only one part of the heritage offer locally.

Most recently, the Culture and Heritage Positioning Report commissioned by Maidstone Borough Council and produced by Nick Ewbank Associates in 2015 stressed the importance of finding a positive solution to the placement and under-use of the Carriage Museum at the Tithe Barn, Maidstone.

All of these plans feed into this Strategic Plan in order to ensure that Maidstone Museums continue to "harness the nourishing effects of culture" (Ed Vaizey MP, The Culture White Paper (2016)) for the benefit of the people of Maidstone.

## 3. Maidstone Museums: The current service

Maidstone Museums is made up of three, technically separate, museums – Maidstone Museum and Bentlif Art Gallery, The Queens Own Royal West Kent Regimental Museum and Maidstone Carriage Museum. The first two of these are co-located at the St Faith's Street site, whilst the Carriage Museum is a separate building in Mill Street. They are all funded, managed and operated by Maidstone Borough Council. However, there is also a complicated pattern of ownership of collections within the museums of long-standing which will need to be simplified if the current service is to be improved. The main museum opens 6 days a week (5 in winter) and the Carriage Museum has a limited hours, summer-only opening. This difference is reflected in the visitor figures.

## 3.1 Collections

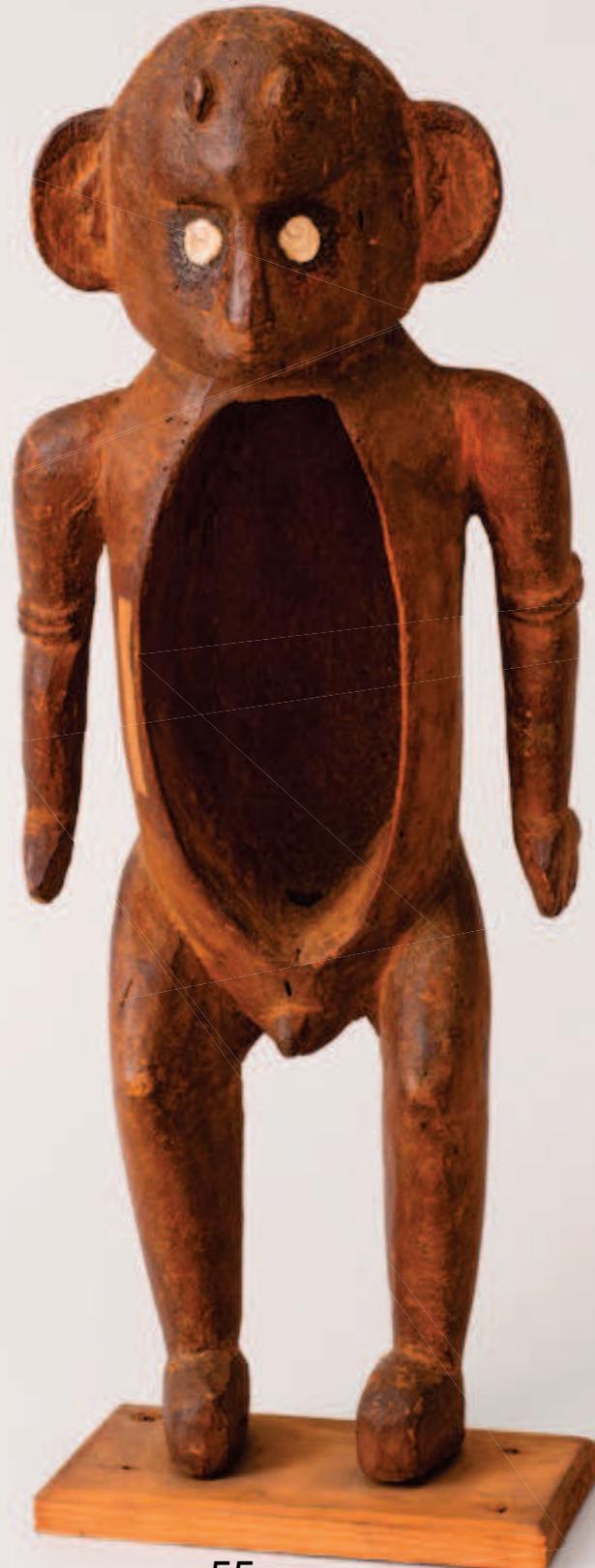
The museum collections are at the heart of everything Maidstone Museums offer and the collections of over 600,500 artefacts and specimens are outstanding in their diversity and quality. They form the largest collections in Kent and are recognised as one of the South East's most important mixed collections.

Three collections are of exceptional national importance:

**Japanese** – The Japanese collection of Fine and Applied Art from the Edo period is acknowledged as the best, most comprehensive collection in public ownership outside a national museum. The 3,000+ artefacts include rare and exceptionally high quality pieces. They were collected, in large part, by two local men, Marsham and Samuel. Other pieces were added by Julius Brenchley.



**The Brenchley collection** – Lucius Julius Brenchley was born into a wealthy Maidstone family. Between 1845 and 1867 he went travelling around the world collecting thousands of objects while living with indigenous groups in North America and with the Royal Navy in the Pacific. Many of the items in the collection come from New Zealand and the Solomon Islands. Other items from his collection were bequeathed to the British Museum and The Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.



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**The Tyrwhitt-Drake Carriage collection** – comprising approximately 60 specimens of horse drawn transport the collection is widely regarded as the best public collection of carriages in the country and one of the finest in Europe. As a reflection of its national significance, the collection includes objects from the Royal Mews and the V and A, and is housed in its own museum in the mediaeval stables of Maidstone’s Archbishop’s Palace. However, the building has severe limitations in terms of facilities and environment for visitors and schools. Thus it is only currently open in summer and has a limited number of visitors. These limitations will need to be addressed if the collection is to take its rightful place in the story of Maidstone.

Beyond these national collections, there are extensive holdings of British and foreign archaeology (including two human mummies); county wide social history material; worldwide ethnography; over 20,000 coins and medals; the finest ceramics collection in the region and over 9,000 items of costume and textiles. The museum also holds 600 oil paintings (including works by Continental Old Masters), 2,500 watercolours and drawings and over 3,500 prints.

The Natural History collections include zoological holdings forming a comprehensive collection of British birds, mammals and insects. Geology includes important collections of minerals and palaeontology. Botanical collections include 30,000 specimens representative of British flora and include type specimens.



## 3.2 Cost of service

The museum budget for 2017-18 is £1,076,930 and the detail is included as Appendix 1.

As with any front facing service, there is a significant element of spending on staff salaries and on-costs. A staffing review was carried out in 2016 and this reduced structure is now in place. Two key posts are currently funded through an Arts Council grant scheme, and it is anticipated that these posts will become self-financing over the next 5 years.

Volunteers have traditionally only been used by the collections team for packing and cataloguing and are currently under-used elsewhere in the museum. New roles have now been identified in exhibitions, learning and visitor operations. Gallery volunteers will allow us to increase the human interaction our visitors receive. The main Maidstone museum building in St. Faith's Street is somewhat sprawling and confusing and guides will be on hand not only to impart historical and collections information but also to direct and advise visitors who are a bit lost.

Income generation is actively being pursued by all departments within the museum through successful programmes such as children's parties, schools sessions and retail. This is being further developed with the introduction of charges for entry to Temporary Exhibitions, a wider range of paid for events and improved marketing of room hire.

Sponsorship and partner funding is actively sought for both project and revenue funding, and the museum activities as a whole are strongly supported by the Maidstone Museum Foundation as a separate Friend's organisation.

## 3.3 Audiences

Visitor figures are critical for showing the health of the museum service. While the museum records a range of figures for use of the service both on and off site, the figures below show the number of visits by people to the museums sites whether for a general visit, school trip or event.

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
62,692	81,417	72,489	74,291	84,262	69,813

It is clear from these figures that the opening of the East Wing entrance in 2012 encouraged much higher visitation than previously. The dip in 2014/15 was caused by a closure period necessary for remedial works to the reception area, while 2015/16 benefited from the unprecedentedly popular Lego exhibition, Brick City. 2016/17 shows very disappointing figures in comparison. The success of Lego was not duplicated and the museum was closed, for the first time, on Mondays which affected visits. Monday closure was instigated to reduce the Visitor Experience Officer expenditure and allowed other teams to carry out work in galleries that could not be done while the public were present. However, the impact on reduced visitor numbers for 2016/17 was inevitable.

Sampling work has shown that the museum's audiences tend, in general terms, to be 30-45 year olds with children or the active retired. Work is being carried out through projects to reach those under 24 and those over 65, especially people at risk of isolation. The museum's social history collections will need to represent both modernity and the diversity of people in the area and so this will be tied closely to the Audience Development Plan.

However, it is clear from visitor feedback that the museum offers a high quality experience, reflected in exceptionally high scoring reviews on Facebook and Trip Advisor. The museum presents an appealing and inviting offer backed up by an excellent modern website, and plainly much progress has been made in trying to overcome the difficulties of a complex building through floor plans and signage to guide visitors.

Overall though, the collection strengths are not recognised by the majority of visitors. The most popular and regularly visited galleries are those relating to ancient Egypt and Geology (the Dinosaur Gallery). Work to improve the quality of galleries has begun with the 2017 redevelopment of the Egyptian gallery into the Ancient Lives gallery - but it is also clear that the real artefacts in the Geology gallery are not as popular as the scene stealing plastic dinosaurs!

It is vital that the profile of the collections must be raised and their importance shared with the residents of Maidstone, as they have been, more successfully, with academics and specialists. This will require the redevelopment and reordering of the older galleries to tell a consistent story and make clear their relevance to life in Maidstone in the past and the future.



## 4. A vision for Maidstone Museums

A SWOT analysis (Appendix 2) carried out in 2015, identified a large number of issues and opportunities for the museums. This provides a helpful checklist sitting alongside the main considerations identified by the Strategic Board mentioned in the introduction which form the recommendations for the Strategic Plan.

### 4.1 Quality of collections and storytelling

Collections are the 'Unique Selling Point' of any museum. Maidstone Museums have, as highlighted above, collections of national and international importance. In addition they hold collections which tell the stories of the people of Maidstone and its surroundings throughout history. The audit of current collections means that the museum will not only hold the objects with the most relevance to the borough but will also show where there is a need for development. It is clear that little contemporary collecting has been carried out which means that there is an imbalance in social history and the ability to tell the story of recent history. This is especially important at a time when Maidstone is seeing unprecedented growth in both the numbers and diversity of its residents.

Maidstone's unique history as a centre of Kent life and home to explorers, travellers and migrants provides for a wealth of stories to be told using the collections. Artefacts from all over the world sit alongside the everyday reminding us that as well as the County Town, Maidstone and its people have travelled and been part of a much wider world just as today increasing numbers of residents have experience of life elsewhere. It is those experiences, stories and memories that will allow visitors to find connections with their own lives and, in turn, share their own.

The most modern displays in the Museum, particularly in the newly constructed East Wing, are of a standard matching that of the best museums in the country. However, others are decidedly tired and badly in need of updating. Perhaps most important is the need to substantially improve the displays dealing with Maidstone itself which are presently cramped despite containing individual objects and artefacts of enormous importance and appeal. At the same time, decisions need to be taken about the continuing relevance of some displays such as the costume gallery and what stories they need to tell in relation to the overarching purpose of the museum. Once these priorities are settled and detailed proposals established, then external funding support needs to be sought to implement them.



## 4.2 The Carriage Museum

Formerly known as the Tyrwhitt-Drake Museum of Carriages, the Carriage Museum has been housed in the Tithe Barn in Mill Street since its opening in 1946. It is centrally located, close to plentiful parking and next to a pocket park which provides a tranquil space to enjoy the architecture of this 14th century building. The Board considered whether the Carriage Museum is a liability which should be closed and a new owner sought for the collection. The carriage collection, as has been noted, is of considerable importance nationally and internationally and in the Board's view has massive potential for supporting learning in science, technology, engineering and maths as well as local history

At present, the displays are very crowded and poorly explained. Some of the less important items could be removed from display to improve the appeal and integrity of the overall collection. There are considerable drawbacks with the current building in that it has never been converted for museum purposes and so lacks heating, toilet facilities or room for school groups. However, subject to the appropriate statutory permissions, the building could be extended into the park to create a new entrance and facilities, including lift access to the second floor. It would then be possible to allow for year-round use and the ability to secure a large increase in visitation. Plainly this is a project on its own which would require some considerable resources and the first step is to draw up a detailed proposition to enable the costs to be established and the appropriate funding then sought for implementation.



## 4.3 Community relationships

With new and planned housing development, improvements in infrastructure and travel times to London alongside general population growth, Maidstone Borough has and will continue to grow at a fast rate. At its most basic, this growth will provide an increasing market for the museums' services but it will also provide opportunities to diversify the workforce, volunteer background and stories told by the museums.

There are two strands to be developed here. The first is the involvement of people in the museum as volunteers. A successful scheme is already running in the collections department and this has been expanded to Learning, Visitor Services and Public Programming in early 2017. Volunteers not only bring increased capacity to the museum but also fresh thinking, ideas and commitment. In return the museum provides volunteers with both formal and informal learning opportunities, skills and experience which can be used in career or personal development as well the health and well being benefits of being part of a team and avoiding isolation.

The second strand is the development of working relationships with residents and users. A modern museum can not operate without the cooperation of those whose story it purports to tell. The days of the curatorial voice being the only authority are gone. Visitors want and expect to see themselves and their lives reflected in the displays, marketing and event programming of the museums. Groups and individuals will need to be involved at all stages of planning and providing services. This will require a large cultural change as decision making powers will need to be surrendered by those who have long held them and consider themselves to know best. However, the power of working with the people in whose name the collection is held will result in a better used, loved and understood shared history.



## 4.4 Lack of physical access

All three constituents of Maidstone Museums are housed in historic buildings, The Carriage Museum is housed in a Grade 1 listed building, whilst the main museum itself in St Faith's Street is a Grade 2\* listed building, so both are of extreme importance to the built heritage of Maidstone in their own right, let alone the uses they contain. Whilst these provide attractive surroundings for the collections, they are often impractical for modern demands. For first-time visitors, the main museum is difficult to navigate, despite some recent major improvements in providing floor plans and signage. Currently the main museum has access only via stairs to the majority of galleries. Refurbishment work will allow access to three more with the installation of a two-storey lift.

An access audit was carried out in 2016 which shows that whilst it would be possible to create accessible routes around the museums, these would depend heavily on funding and approval from the planning authority. A comprehensive improvement programme is therefore needed to make the layout of the galleries in the main museum more comprehensible and intelligible, and at the same time improve access for disabled visitors.

In addition, the museum backs onto Brenchley Gardens which historically forms an integral part of the building but is practically isolated from it by the lack of any rear access. In the Board's view, the Gardens represent a major asset to the museum which needs to be realised by opening up the back of the museum building to enable much easier visitor flows, with the opportunities to use some of the outdoor spaces more purposefully. With an eye on the prospective redevelopment of the Maidstone East station site and adjoining sites, there is every advantage to the museum in looking at this whole sector of the town in a comprehensive way to maximise linkages and increase the profile and appeal of the museum itself.

## 4.5 Lack of collections expansion space

As part of the East Wing project in 2012, two new environmentally controlled stores were constructed. These have provided museum quality storage for a large part of the museums' collections. However, following the move from Chillington House of offices and smaller storage spaces, many items are now stored in cellars, an attic and former gallery. The museum currently has no expansion space and a hold was placed on collecting in 2015-16. While it is desirable that as many objects as possible are on display at any one time, it is impossible to show all the collections at once and so storage is essential for the protection of collections. In order for the museum to represent the history of the borough thoroughly, there is a need to continue and, as noted above, especially contemporary collecting. Without sufficient storage space it would be irresponsible to bring new items into the collection and we would be unable to represent life in a large part of the 20th and all of the 21st centuries.

## 4.6 Governance

The museum service currently manages and cares for collections and buildings as well as operating the museums. Governance is provided by MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL through the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee.

However, the ownership of items is more complicated. The majority of objects (for ease known here as the Museum Collection) are held in Trust by Maidstone Council on behalf of the people of Maidstone. The Collection therefore is neither a realisable asset nor will its ownership be passed to another organisation even if stewardship is. This means that in the event of the museum service passing from the local authority control, the Collection would not become the property of any new entity.

Not all items held by Maidstone Museums are part of the Museum Collection. Some are on loan from other organisations such as other museums or private individuals. Much work has been done in the past few years on formalising and updating these arrangements. All loans are now only taken for a specific purpose and for a maximum of 5 years.

In addition, the museum hosts collections owned by the Bently, Brenchley and Queens Own Royal West Kent Regimental Museum (QORWKRMT) charitable trusts. Further, the QORWKRMT has only one corporate trustee – Maidstone Borough Council. These collections are cared for, managed, documented and displayed by the museum service although no Service Level Agreement exists for any of the collections. In addition, The Bently Trust also retains a claim over the use of various spaces in the museum.

A consultant, Julie Cole, has been appointed to carry out a review of current and future governance issues which will be put before the Council in parallel with this Strategic Plan. Museum services across the country have followed different models in recent years and these will be reviewed in order to make recommendations of the most sustainable solution for Maidstone Museums.

It has become very clear that the relationship between the Council, Museum and Trusts is complex and lacks a standard form of agreement, and it is crucial that these relationships are clarified and simplified. Julie Cole has met the trustees of all of these Trusts as well as other stakeholders as part of the review to determine the best solution for Trusts, Council and Museum.

Whatever form of governance is introduced, the branding of the all different parts of the service as Maidstone Museums (rather than for example the Tyrwhitt-Drake Museum of Carriages) is vital in showcasing the size and the importance of our collections and stories to the town and its residents. None of this detracts from the historic importance of the original collections, their name recognition and contribution to the current museum, but if the recent strides in improved marketing are to be maintained and then a simple inclusive brand is essential.

## 4.7 Opening Hours

There is an obvious dilemma in matching the costs of opening the museums against the pattern of visitation, such that the buildings are open during the most popular core times and closed when visitor numbers are low. The main museum is now open six days a week whilst the Carriage Museum is limited to weekends only during the summer months. Experience from museums elsewhere suggest that visitor expectations are much more broad with pressure for evening opening alongside seven days a week, and indeed Maidstone has had popular success with the programme of evening lates.

The main museum is also the location of the visitor information centre, and plainly this is of limited value as it is constrained by museum opening hours, including not being open at all on Mondays. To make the museum a fully functioning attraction at the heart of Maidstone's visitor offer, the objective should be to return to opening the main museum every day of the week and if possible extending closing times. The Carriage Museum is a separate issue, considered above.



## 4.8 Funding

The report referred to in the introduction proposed the allocation of a capital budget set out in Appendix 3 to facilitate the most efficient running of the museum and maximise the potential for income generation.

The capital projects identified for 2016 -18 address immediate concerns:

- Firstly improvements to the building which will improve the efficiency of staff by enabling them to multi-task and take on additional tasks during quiet time. These works include creating a second workspace/ reception area at the old reception area and re-routing CCTV to the old reception desk.
- Secondly, improvements are proposed that will increase the ability to generate income and draw more visitors into the building. These works include refurbishing the 'old education room' to meet the standards of the learning studio which doubles our capacity for delivering children's parties and improves the learning offer and improvements to the outside of the building to attract visitors.

A second phase of the capital programme would reflect the ambition of this Strategic Plan. These works are key to fully realising the museums potential and to addressing larger concerns with the buildings. Projects would address DDA issues, heating and environment in the central and west wing of the building, the need to consider position of the café, visitor flow and redisplay of the galleries. Some of these projects will require additional fundraising to make them a reality.

Currently the full cost of managing, running and maintaining the museums is borne by Maidstone Borough Council. With continuing cuts to public spending by successive governments, it is clear that this cannot be sustained. Whilst the museum has already made moves to increase and diversify its own income streams, this currently covers only a fraction of costs. There is a real danger of funding cuts damaging the museum's ability to carry out basic work and making developments of the type outlined in the vision above impossible.

Over the past 20 years, museums have relied on capital funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund in particular to carry out transformative capital projects such as new museum buildings or the development of refurbished galleries as will be necessary here. It has become clear more recently that, not only is competition becoming heavier, but also that the requirement for partnership funding is a barrier to many organisations, especially local authorities faced with spending cuts. The museum currently has a significant commitment to capital expenditure from Maids tone Borough Council but by no means all the funds it will need to update and improve the museum facilities. The challenge to management will be to attract investment from external sources for a programme of updates to be made within an overall framework to maintain a sense of a coherent whole.



## 5. Next Steps

If the proposals in this Strategic Plan are to be realised, then a substantial programme of work is necessary to develop projects in detail, in order to establish likely costs as the basis for preparing individual bids for external funding support. The following table contains proposed actions in the immediate period and the medium and long terms as a starting point.

Short Term 1-5 years	Medium Term 6-10 years	Long Term 11-20 years
Governance review	Gallery redisplay phase 2	Resilient governance and funding achieved
New governance model introduced	Museum café move	Review success of advisory panels
Opening of Ancient Civilisations Gallery	Japanese gallery move	Gallery reviews.
Carriage Museum options appraisal	Complete Carriage Museum project	
Gallery redisplay framework created and phase 1	Storage improvement plan implemented	
Learning service funding secured	Community Action Plan in operation	
Museum café brought in-house	Advisory panels formed and operating	
Capital programme completed	Address parking issues	
Storage improvement plan completed	National Awards such as Kids in Museums or museum of the Year	
Programme of in-house exhibitions only launched		
Raised awareness and resident satisfaction		

## 6. Maidstone Museums 2037

As a concluding section, it is perhaps helpful to articulate a possible vision for how Maidstone museums would look in 20 years time, if at least some of the hopes and opportunities set out in this report are realised.

In 2037 Maidstone Museums will be a vibrant and active service open seven days a week, regularly used by many members of the local community and visitors from further afield, which engenders a feeling of ownership and pride among local people.

The museums' collections will be at the centre of what we do but we will know more about them and be able to share that with audiences both in the museum and via digital platforms. The museum will answer clearly and confidently the questions "Why are these things here?" and "Why does this matter to Maidstone?" whilst allowing people to enjoy and share their own reactions to our artefacts.

One of the first differences you will notice will be the number of people coming to the museum buildings to have fun in non-traditionally museum ways. They might be using the café, taking part in a drawing workshop or attending a birthday party. They may be joining the exercise class in the library, the discussion group in the art gallery or browsing the shop for gifts they can't find elsewhere in Maidstone. Carriage drivers visiting from Belgium will want to see all of our collections having enjoyed the display about our other collections while visiting the Carriage Museum. There may be a couple of teenagers waiting to be collected after school and finding a space where they feel safe but not fussed over. It is vital that the museums lose their image of being places to visit with school or with bored grandchildren and instead become a community hub where people feel at home but open to new ideas, challenges or debate.

For the carriage collection in particular, investment in the form of new facilities, interpretation and branding will be needed to allow this internationally important collection to take its place alongside the other jewels in Maidstone's crown. This could mean a radical re-think of how the museum building is laid out and what stories the collection can tell.

The stories told by displays and exhibitions will be exciting, modern and created with societies and members of the community. They will tell interesting stories in exciting and interactive ways. These people might be chosen for specialist knowledge or experience (e.g. Kent Association for the Blind, Maidstone Nepalese Community, Kent Archaeological Society etc.) or purely because they are interested in taking part as individuals. The museum will be less reliant on temporary exhibitions to bring repeat visits as the permanent displays will be change more often and will be flexible with less built-in set construction and cases and better use of movable and temporary displays. Interpretation will be carried out in ways other than wall-mounted panels. These could include the 2037 iteration of digital solutions such as apps or audio-guides which it is impossible to define now but would also include interaction with volunteer gallery guides who may be costumed but who can deliver information in a much more tailored way for visitors.

The museum may charge for entry or for particular exhibitions but the quality of these exhibitions will mean that any charge will be justifiable. Temporary exhibitions will be suggested and created by public or groups working with our staff to provide a programme which highlights the museums' collections as well as reflecting multiple voices and previously unheard stories.

The museum's learning programme for schools will continue to provide an excellent service. A teacher advisory panel will help guide development of new materials and reactions to inevitable curriculum changes. In the informal learning area, a wide range of events will take place at various times of the day. Some of these are small and easy to create (e.g. 5 minute gallery talks by volunteers) others such as the annual Family Fun Day or Night at the Museum event will require significant sponsorship and fundraising efforts by Maidstone Museum Foundation and museum staff together.

Events will be carefully thought through to attract specific audiences and may take place in one of the museum buildings or elsewhere in the borough such as village halls, libraries or in the street (weather permitting!) Again, a vital part of the museums development is to move beyond the walls of the museum buildings into those parts of our community and borough where people not currently visiting are found or would be comfortable to go. Working with partners from an early stage means that where external funding is being sought, the costs of these events can be built in.

As well as community partnerships in the form of volunteering programmes, joint projects and co-production of museum content, we will continue to build more formal connections with local societies and organisations, individual researchers, academics, university departments and other museums through specialist subject networks (SSNs) which allow us access to expertise not held by those on staff. Museum staff will increasingly need knowledge of non-traditional areas such as fundraising, working with hard to reach audiences and creating networks.

The organisation running the museum will no doubt be under-pressure to find more money each year but the ability of the museums to generate income and pay for itself will have grown and the solution chosen after the 2017 review will have allowed a more sustainable funding model to develop.



## Appendix 1.

<b>MUSEUM RUNNING COSTS 2017-18</b>				
	<b>Museum</b>	<b>Carriage Museum</b>	<b>Learning Service</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Staff costs</b>	£497,800	£14,360	£63,880	£576,040
<b>Property costs - maintenance (planned and reactive)</b>	£88,000	£10,200	-	£98,200
<b>Property costs - Non-domestic Rates</b>	£111,340	£7,460	-	£118,800
<b>Property costs- Gas and electricity</b>	£58,400	£4,390	-	£62,790
<b>Other property costs</b>	£66,040	£5,710	-	£71,750
<b>Stock for shop</b>	£29,800	£400	-	£30,200
<b>Collections Management</b>	£5,000	-	-	£5,000
<b>Exhibitions and events</b>	£18,000	-	-	£18,000
<b>Other controllable costs</b>	£56,840	£3,390	£17,910	£78,140
<b>SUB TOTAL RUNNING COSTS</b>	£931,220	£45,910	£81,790	£1,058,920
<b>Income- Room hire</b>	-£14,000	-	-	-£14,000
<b>Income- Children's parties</b>	-£15,000	-	-	-£15,000
<b>Income- Exhibitions/ events</b>	-£20,600	-	-	-£20,600
<b>Income - Retail sales</b>	-£43,000	-	-	-£43,000
<b>Income -Grant</b>	-	-	-£77,600	-£77,600
<b>Income-other</b>	-£15,200	-£2,000	-£24,300	-£41,500
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	£107,800	£2,000	£101,900	£211,700
<b>NET RUNNING COSTS</b>	£823,420	£43,910	-£20,110	£847,220
<b>Recharges- Central charges</b>	£42,100	£6,010	£2,270	£50,380
<b>Recharges- Departmental Overheads</b>	£172,330	£5,250	£1,750	£179,330
<b>RECHARGES</b>	£214,430	£11,260	£4,020	£229,710
<b>TOTAL MUSEUM BUDGET</b>	£1,037,850	£55,170	-£16,090	£1,076,930
<b>Depreciation</b>	£645,000	£22,500	-	£667,500

## Appendix 2 – SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality and breadth of collections</li> <li>• Historic buildings</li> <li>• Existing partnerships</li> <li>• Location – next to Train Station and edge of Park</li> <li>• Public Programmes</li> <li>• Reputation – Regionally and Nationally</li> <li>• Professional staff</li> <li>• Volunteer programme</li> <li>• External funding and earned income</li> <li>• Formal learning programme</li> <li>• Proactive and forward thinking</li> <li>• Temporary exhibitions – new audiences and repeats</li> <li>• Additional Facilities – TIC, toilets, café</li> <li>• Corporate offer – room hire</li> <li>• Separate Foundation for Friends and fundraising</li> <li>• Local Authority run</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of space and storage</li> <li>• Tired and dated permanent displays and gallery spaces</li> <li>• Access – physical, intellectual</li> <li>• Location – not in Town Centre</li> <li>• Signage – Building externally/internally and Town</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Not a University Town</li> <li>• Council run</li> <li>• Discretionary service</li> <li>• Funding reliant</li> <li>• Funding constraints - projects</li> <li>• Café – outside provider</li> <li>• Ownership – Bentlif Trust and LA</li> <li>• Documentation backlog</li> <li>• Cleanliness</li> <li>• Carriage Museum – location, condition, overall visitor experience</li> <li>• IT support</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community partners</li> <li>• Partnerships &amp; networks</li> <li>• Improvement to access building, collections &amp; learning</li> <li>• Retail Development</li> <li>• Redevelopment of Maidstone East; Public Realm work</li> <li>• New housing developments- audiences</li> <li>• Marketing capacity</li> <li>• Front of House – training and process</li> <li>• User and Stakeholder consultation</li> <li>• Exhibitions and events programme</li> <li>• Learning – Informal learning, teenage audiences</li> <li>• Joint projects &amp; funding–public health</li> <li>• Regional, national &amp; international partnerships</li> <li>• Gallery development</li> <li>• Volunteer programme</li> <li>• Corporate development – membership, loans, sponsorship</li> <li>• External Funding, Donations, Friends memberships</li> <li>• STEAM agenda at Carriage Museum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political change</li> <li>• Senior leadership change</li> <li>• Change in MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL strategic direction and priorities</li> <li>• Reputational damage</li> <li>• Budget cuts</li> <li>• Café management – bust</li> <li>• External funding cuts</li> <li>• Loss of staff</li> <li>• Change in funding landscape</li> <li>• KAS moving with their collection</li> <li>• Trusts leavingx</li> </ul>

## Appendix 3 – Planned Capital expenditure

Project	Planned Capital Expenditure 2017-2018 Programme detail	Total cost (000)	MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL	Other
<b>Egyptian Gallery to Ancient Civilisations Gallery</b>	Refurb of Egyptian Gallery into Ancient Civilisations Gallery taking advantage of necessary building works for damp (already programmed) to improve a tired and shabby gallery.	200	10	HLF up to £79k, MMF fundraising £90k
	Upgrade Old Education room (to modern classroom 25m sq). Also providing additional space for children's parties to meet demand - current usable space fully booked.	30	30	30 TBC
	Install a lift to provide full access to 3 galleries which are difficult/impossible to access for families with buggies and wheelchair users.	110	110	
<b>HLF up to £79k, MMF fundraising £90k</b>	Enables a second workstation for VSA + wayfinding in the west wing for customers. Improves security	10	10	
	Move CCTV system from 1st floor to old reception area. Equipment malfunctioning due to overheating in current space. VSA time unproductive due to monitoring equipment and not able to carry out any other duties.	20	20	
<b>External improvements</b>	Scope improvements to outside of building to improve visibility/attractiveness from Fremlin Walk, St Faith Street and station. Architect procured to create a design - needs a cohesive approach which takes into account listed building consent.	5	5	
	Mark bays to side of museum for efficiency/deliveries/disabled access space and to better manage non-museum cars parking across fire exits.	3	3	
<b>Replace electrical distribution boards and upgrade wiring</b>	Existing wired fuses to be replaced with RCBs. Upgrade existing wiring to comply with current standards.	60	60	
		438	239	199

Potential capital Projects years 3-5	Programme detail	Est. costs (000)
<b>External</b>		
Improve visibility of museum entrance from street (signage/lighting/public art)	Improve footfall & customer satisfaction	25
<b>Cafe</b>		
Godiva Courtyard extension to house a purpose built café (40m sq)	Improved café offer. Park location gives USP and attracts customers from park/station.	100
Refit existing café as temporary exhibition space (Current Café 40 m sq)	Better space for hosting and managing paid for exhibitions. Enables easy access in and out & can be closed without detriment to the rest of the museum.	30
<b>Galleries</b>		
Improved acoustics and lighting to Brenchley Room	Subject to advice from acoustics and lighting consultant.	20
Refit medieval gallery as a collections store & improve access (85m sq)	Improved storage / better access / easier access for staff.	100
Swap Japanese gallery with small temp exhibition space	Enables outstanding collection to be viewed during paid for exhibitions and during exhibition change (145m sq) Assume no major alterations or replacement. Allow for redecorations, making good . Estimates for replacement of cases or display units to be provided by Museum.	30
Withdrawing room floor	The existing sprung floor causes objects to move in display cases and presents challenges for visitors with mobility issues.	20
<b>General</b>		
Humidity works in vic cellar, upper and lower stores.	To care for the collections	100
Improve museum IT to enable secure storage for collections databases (IT already involved - requires improved connection with Maidstone House)	Issues with the current system mean that collections database isn't always backed up, risking loss of digital database	TBA
Install daytime case alarm system (SECOM indicated £1100 for panel and 10 case alarms with £500 for each additional 10 Units - Sam to confirm number)	No need for patrolling of galleries for security. Assumed to be an extension of the existing intruder alarm system.	25
Upgrade security of temporary exhibitions space to meet government indemnity standards	Save staff time and money for temporary insurance cover for incoming loans	1
Re-lamp East wing with LED		10
External redecorations and repairs	£70k approximately every 5 years - allow x 4	70
		531

