

Libraries, Registration and Archives Strategy 2019-2022





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Visit kent.gov.uk/lrastrategy

Foreword



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Hill". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Mike Hill OBE -
Cabinet Member for
Community and
Regulatory Services

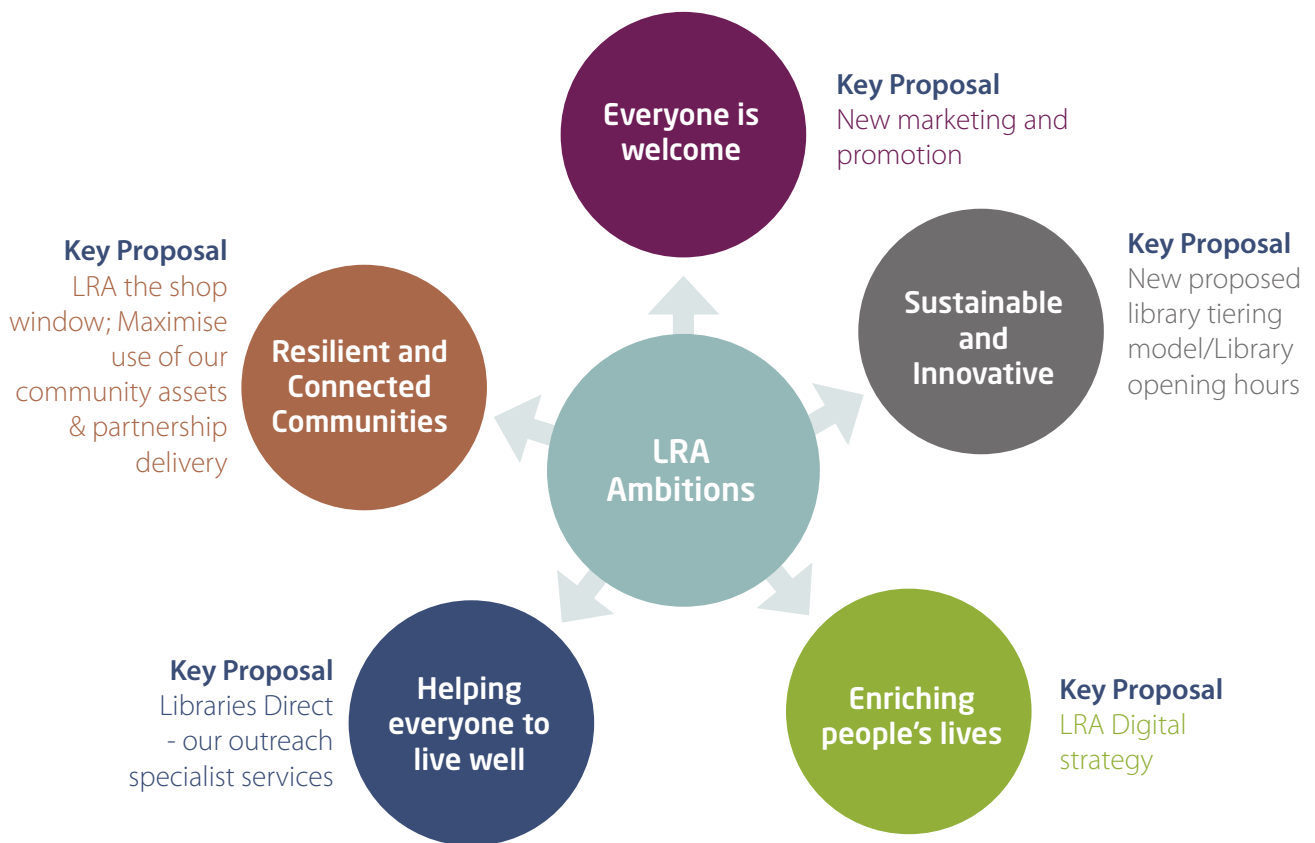
Kent County Council (KCC) is very proud of its Library, Registration and Archives (LRA) service and all it does to deliver positive outcomes for the residents of Kent. The LRA service is at the heart of communities throughout the county. Through our services you can access books, information and IT, register births and deaths, explore Kent's rich history and celebrate key life events.

These are tough financial times for all local authorities. Services must continue to be more cost effective and savings need to be made. We aim to do this while maintaining our full network of libraries, our magnificent archive centre and our five register offices. I believe passionately in the important role all three services play for communities by making a real difference to people's lives.

The service does need to adapt to the changes in how we are all living and reflect current demands. That means aligning our library opening hours with how they are being used to make sure they are open when people need them, and working with communities and partners to ensure these key public buildings are being used to their full potential.

To meet the challenges of the financial climate, and a rapidly changing county, we have produced this three year strategy. It is designed to harness the potential of the service and give it a clear direction for the future.

Strategy on a Page



Below are the key features of the strategy:

- retain our community network of 99 libraries, our archive and five register offices
- introduce a new library tiering model and new opening hours
- develop new marketing and promotion for the service
- provide and refresh our public PCs and Wi-Fi across all libraries
- work to widen access to our archive collections through digitisation
- develop our virtual library and archive brand
- promote our Registration services, offering range of choices and price options across Kent
- maximise use of our community buildings
- bring our specialist services together into the Library Direct offer

CHAPTER 1

About Libraries, Registration and Archives

The Libraries, Registration and Archives Service (LRA) run by Kent County Council is a highly-valued community service. LRA's wide range of services are delivered across Kent to anyone who lives, works, studies or visits Kent, and our services support everyone at important stages in their lives.

We provide

Libraries 2017-18

A network of
99
LIBRARIES
(see Appendix A)



Book delivery service to **143** residential and care homes

Over **1.5 million** adult and children's books for loan that generated **4,241,183** issues



5 mobile libraries reaching smaller and more rural communities, and stopping at 368 locations (see Appendix B)



38,463 DVDs, **47,158** CDs and audio books for loan



Home Library Service, and the Touch a New World initiative available to home library customers to borrow a tablet so that they can choose and reserve books, reached **1,305**



We ran **3,265** baby rhyme time events and **3,966** talk time events

Postal delivery service of audio books for people with visual impairments reached **955** people



5

PRISON LIBRARIES

Information services



Facebook page and **Twitter** feed gives up-to-date information, public comment and conversation about LRA services.



'Ask a Kent Librarian' enquiries **9,087** per year

Digital services 2017 -18



Free public access computers and Wi Fi in every library building

LRA websites attracted **909,763** hits allowing customers to reserve and renew books, check library opening times and search archives online



Access to **3,805** online newspapers and **2,698** online magazines



Computer buddies provided **4,458** sessions to **7,793** people

Registration Services in Kent and Bexley 2017 -18



3734 wedding ceremonies at **230** approved premises delivered

Birth and death registration offered at 28 libraries, **34,604** registrations completed

One hundred citizenship ceremonies welcomed new British citizens to Kent

Search facilities for customers to obtain birth, death and marriage certificates in Kent and Bexley since 1837 which issued **15,524** certificates



5 Register offices in Kent and 1 in Bexley (see Appendix A)

Deliver the registration service for the **London Borough of Bexley**

Nationality checking service helped **1,907** people to achieve British citizenship

Archives 2017-18

Record management service on behalf of KCC

Official documents range from the records of estates and landed families to intimate, personal items such as letters and diaries.



oldest document in our collection dates back to **699A.D**

Archive centre at Kent History and Library Centre contains over **8.5 miles of shelving** of historic archive documents

Local history collections at our larger town centre libraries include town directories, listed buildings records, historic maps of Kent, geology and land use maps and images, such as prints, photographs, postcards, and news cuttings.

Programme of **38 talks and exhibitions**



Kent Archives website where customers can browse, order documents, book a session in the search room had **49,535** hits

A new three year strategy for Libraries, Registration and Archives

Supporting our changing communities

The communities and customers that LRA serves are changing and will continue to change over time. There are new challenges to face and opportunities to explore. The strategy sets out how KCC will continue to provide a sustainable libraries, registration and archives service to meet the needs and choices of our customers and communities.

Kent's population is growing – it is estimated that between 2011 and 2031 there will be an additional 396,300 people living in the county, an increase of 23%¹. This will take the total population to an estimated 2,127,600.



Our growing population requires more housing, and an estimated 178,600 additional homes are planned across Kent and Medway between 2011 and 2031. Some of this housing development will create totally new communities, including 10,000 homes in the new Garden City in Ebbsfleet and the proposed new development at Otterpool. Like the rest of the UK, Kent's population is ageing. The number of people aged 65 and above is forecast to increase by 64% between 2011 and 2031³, and those aged 80+ are forecast to increase by 94%⁴.

The number of people living with long-term conditions, including dementia, is expected to increase in the coming years. There will also be more young people with learning and physical disabilities. Approximately 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience mental health issues and it is suggested that worries about issues such as money, jobs and benefits can make it harder for people to cope⁵. Social isolation and loneliness is affecting an increasing number of people of all ages and research shows it can be as damaging to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. LRA services, in the heart of local communities, are well-placed to support people to live healthier and happier lives, and our services must adapt so we can continue to meet changing needs.

Census information shows that Kent's population is becoming more diverse, with the percentage of people in the county who are from black and minority ethnic groups doubling between 2001 and 2011 (to 6.3% in 2011)². This varies considerably between different parts of Kent and is just one example of the distinctiveness of Kent's communities.



Technology, and how it is used, is changing constantly and there is an increasing expectation that information and services will be available digitally. People expect to be able to find what they need 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - quickly, simply and efficiently.

There are also those who don't have access to digital channels, or prefer face-to-face interaction and other non-digital methods of accessing information and services. It is important that these people are not left behind. LRA already provides a range of ways for people to access services and excellent customer service is one of our strengths. Going forward, we must be ready to quickly adapt to changing expectations and technological developments.



- 1 Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework, Kent County Council, 2018 update - http://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/80145/GIF-Framework-full-document.pdf
- 2 2011 Census – Cultural Diversity in Kent, Kent County Council, 2012 - http://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/8559/Cultural-diversity-in-Kent.pdf
- 3 Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework
- 4 Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework
- 5 How Common are mental health problems? Mind, 2018 - <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/statistics-and-facts-about-mental-health/how-common-are-mental-health-problems/#.WzTHGOQUmUk>

Delivering outcomes for Kent

The priority outcomes for Kent County Council are set out in 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving outcomes', Kent County Council's strategic statement 2015-2020. LRA will continue to make an essential contribution to each of the three strategic outcomes:



Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life

"My middle child completed your summer reading challenge this year. Before the challenge she was level 8 of the Oxford reading tree. After the summer she was assessed as a free reader (equivalent of level 11). I'm convinced the Summer Reading challenge inspired her to read more frequently and more confidently than she had done before"



Kent communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life

"It was one of the most important moments of my life, and the ceremony team did a wonderful job!!! Well done to everyone and keep giving the same excellent moments to the future citizens. All the best!!!!"



Older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently

"Talk Time makes a big difference to me, as I wouldn't bother getting out of the house otherwise"
"I come for the friendship as well as books, it's good to know someone cares"

National Picture for Libraries, Registration and Archives

Libraries

Local councils in England have a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for everyone working, living or studying in the area.

National leadership around public libraries is provided by the Libraries Taskforce, which reports to ministers through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Local Government Association. In 2016 the Taskforce produced 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for public libraries in England 2016-2021', which set out a vision for libraries in England. It is important that we demonstrate through our ambitions and strategy how Kent's libraries will deliver against the seven national outcomes.

Seven national outcomes

Cultural and creative enrichment

Increased reading and literacy

Improved digital access and literacy

Helping everyone achieve their full potential

Healthier and happier lives

Greater prosperity

Stronger, more resilient communities

(From Libraries Deliver: Ambition for public libraries in England 2016-2021)



"Libraries are vital community hubs - bringing people together and giving them access to the services and support they need to help them live better."

Libraries Deliver: Ambition for public libraries in England 2016-2021

National Picture for Libraries, Registration and Archives



Registration

Civil registration services are overseen by the General Register Office (GRO) which is part of Her Majesty's Passport Office in England and Wales. It maintains the national archive of all births, marriages and deaths dating back to 1837. KCC is required to offer statutory registration of births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships and citizenships. Current legislation states that the delivery of the registration service remains with the local authority.

Archives

National leadership for archives is provided by The National Archives. Our archive service has recently achieved national accreditation status. Kent archives will continue to sustain, develop and share its vibrant collections and services by engaging with and aligning to National Archives priorities as set out in 'Archives Inspire: The National Archives plans and priorities 2015-19'.

Strategic priorities for The National Archives

Provide expert advice and scrutiny to government, making sure that the record survives and thrives

Inspire the public with new ways of using and experiencing our collection

Be an effective leader and partner for the archives sector, to sustain and develop the nation's collection

Advance knowledge through exemplary academic liaison and outstanding interdisciplinary research

Become a digital archive by design

(Archives Inspire: The National Archives plans and priorities 2015-19)

Financial challenges

Reduction in funding for local government has required KCC to continue to seek new ways to deliver services to the people and communities of Kent. KCC faces annual spending pressures and reduced Government funding; the growth in business rates and council tax only offsets a part of those pressures. Therefore innovative savings and income generation opportunities need to be explored in order to continue providing value for money services for the residents of Kent.

LRA, along with all other services, is required to contribute to KCC's commitment to deliver efficiency savings. Since 2013/14 LRA has delivered savings or additional income of just under £7m. Over the next 2 financial years LRA currently has just under £1m to deliver. A further £1m of savings is to be delivered over the next two financial years. This strategy sets out ways that we propose to achieve these savings, whilst continuing to meet our statutory requirements.

LRA budget for 2017-18

In 2017-18, KCC spent **£15,993,000** on running Libraries, Registration and Archives services. LRA services brought in an income of **£6,300,000**; the majority of this comes from registration services leaving a net cost of **£9,623,000**. Spending is broken down in the following graphic:



Kent County Council acts as the corporate landlord for all council buildings including those used to deliver LRA services. Costs associated with buildings such as libraries and register offices are managed under a separate budget and are not part of the figures above.

Libraries, Registration and Archives Ambitions for the future

Taking into account the local, national and financial context, we have developed five ambitions for the LRA service.

Our ambitions are the key to increasing our customer base, making positive difference to people's lives and creating a sustainable LRA

service for the future. They will form the bedrock of our strategy to take the service through the next three years. The ambitions are for the whole of LRA, recognising the benefits of integration between libraries, registration and archives while also recognising the distinctiveness and importance of each.

We worked with our staff, public focus groups and KCC elected Members to shape and define our ambitions for the future. This involved:

- running staff workshops across the county and inviting all staff to comment via an online interactive tool
- commissioning focus groups for customers and people who don't use our services, delivered at five locations across Kent
- setting up a cross-party KCC Member working group to advise and contribute throughout the process.



The Five Ambitions

The chapters that follow explain what we will do to deliver our five ambitions and why they are important.

1

Everyone is welcome



2

Enriching people's lives



3

Resilient and connected communities



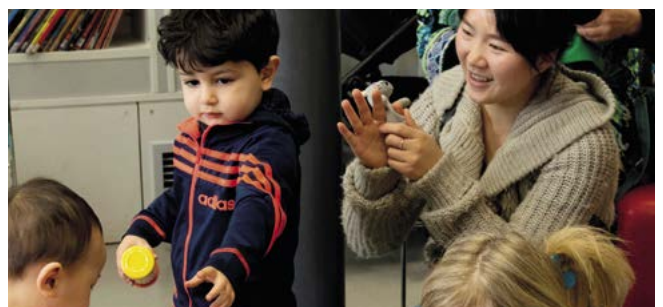
4

Sustainable and innovative



5

Helping everyone to live well



Ambition 1 Everyone is Welcome

Our services will be open to everyone throughout their lives, whatever their needs; everyone will feel valued, supported and safe. Stories, and storytelling are at the heart of our services and we will celebrate these in everything we do. People will understand what LRA has to offer and how it can help improve their lives. Our services will be the trusted first choice for everyone who seeks accessible, timely, credible information, advice and support. We will respond positively to customer feedback, to ensure our services focus on giving the best experience to all who use us.

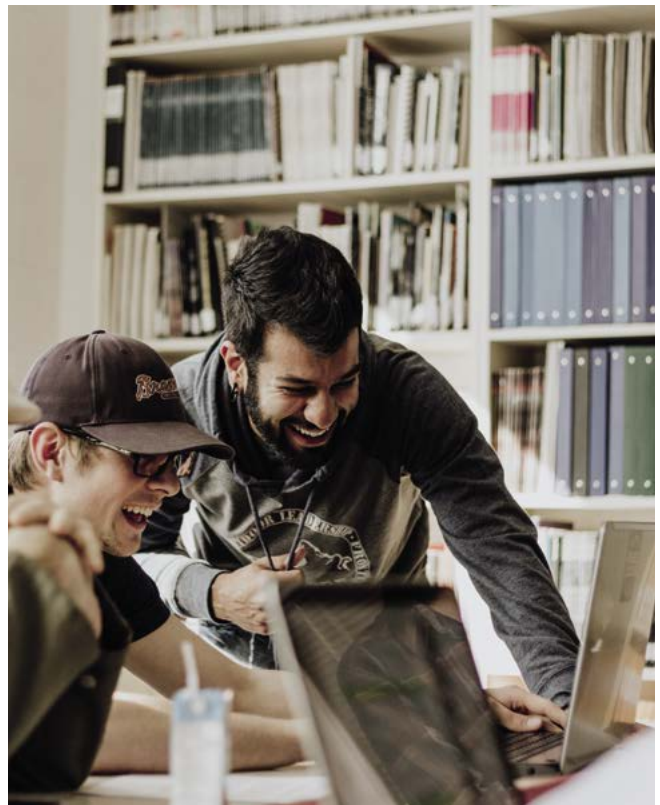
Why is this important?

Our services are unique, safe and are delivered in trusted spaces which anyone can access or visit. We want to improve awareness of our services to all so that more people come and use them. We want to ensure that everyone gets the best experience possible.

Findings from the public and customer focus groups showed that the majority of participants were unaware of the full extent of services that libraries have to offer. Even current users were unaware; for example help for job seekers, health and wellbeing books, delivery of books for care homes and day centres, support for people living with dementia and the people who care for them, our 'Ask a Kent Librarian' service, and e-books.

How we will achieve this Ambition?

We will focus on raising awareness of the services we offer, to ensure we are reaching the widest audience possible to develop and grow our customer base.





New marketing and promotion

We will develop a new marketing and promotion strategy to improve people's awareness of our services; this will include looking at our brand and the look of our buildings. We want to reach new people and wider audiences.

The marketing strategy will clarify our current position, identify where we want to be, and will provide a detailed action plan that will get us there. Within this strategy, we will highlight how we can target our unique resources and skills to raise our profile across the county.

The action plan will detail the various services we need to promote, the audiences we want to reach, and the most appropriate communication channels we will use. This will include looking to enhance our use of tools such as social media and online advertising, as well as more traditional methods such as roadshows, banner, radio and transport advertising.

We will confirm the ways in which we will measure our success and the budget required to meet our objectives.

We will commit to welcoming everyone regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, background, status or ability; we will focus our efforts using our new marketing strategy on promoting our buildings as safe accessible spaces open to everyone.

We will continue to provide places where people are free to come to enjoy any or all of the services we offer, or simply to spend some free time.

We will publish a Customer Promise; improve customer engagement by refining our customer service survey, utilising user and non-user focus groups, make better use of existing community needs data, improve the way we respond to comments and complaints and introduce 'you said, we did' boards.

We will work to ensure that however people choose to access our services whether online, telephone or face-to-face they experience the highest quality service. To remain relevant LRA will develop its services to meet the evolving needs and expectations of its customers and ensure we give a great experience to everyone.

Ambition 1 Everyone is Welcome

We will treat customers as individuals by being mindful of why they are using our services, remain customer focused, promote, and insist on a culture of mutual respect between all customers, staff and volunteers. We will ensure that staff and volunteers have the necessary skills, values and tools to deliver consistently excellent customer service.

We will work to continue to improve our buildings to make them bright, vibrant, accessible and comfortable spaces that people want to visit - the 'go to' place at the heart of the community. We will improve the look and feel of our buildings by optimising layouts, signage and stock presentation to enhance the sense of space and easy movement.

We will take every opportunity to promote and join up services, for example promoting library services to parents when registering their baby. We will work with colleagues from services such as Community Learning and Skills, Public Health, Children's Centres, and Gateways to develop seamless services for customers under one roof. We will work with our staff to ensure they have the information they need to better signpost customers to other services they may want or need.

We will ensure that customers are treated sensitively and with kindness at difficult times in their lives such as when registering a death, and celebrate good times when we deliver weddings and citizenship ceremonies.



We will tailor our services to meet local need, provide a range of books and other material relevant to the location, based on information about how the library material is used, and through conversations with local people.

We will provide a wide range of stock at our larger libraries. Smaller libraries will offer services very much tailored to local community need, including a range of books that meet local demand. We will provide stock beyond that held in our physical libraries with our catalogue of e-books and e-audio books, accessible to anyone with a Kent library card.

We will use a range of bibliographic tools and statistics to monitor the performance of stock to help to prioritise spending, and we will provide the opportunity for customers to develop our library stock through purchase requests.

Engaging Our Customers

We will build upon and improve the way we engage with our customers, encouraging feedback on our services. We will develop new ways to reach out to customers, hold 'speak to the manager' drop-in sessions and online forums where customers can make suggestions, to tell us what we are doing well and how we can improve. We will find meaningful ways to make customers aware that their feedback is helping to shape our services by putting in place message boards at each service point.

Stories and storytelling lie at the heart of all LRA services. We will connect children and adults to the wealth of wonderful stories that can be found within the pages of the thousands of books available to borrow from our libraries. We will host a range of activities and events to celebrate the value and joy of reading.

We will promote and make accessible our archives and local history collections that tell the story of Kent life over hundreds of years. Our key driver is to make this more accessible through digitisation so that more people can enjoy these

rich and unique collections. We will continue to support people to research their family history through free online ancestry services, and by providing the support, information and advice of our hugely knowledgeable and experienced archives team.

We are committed to the development of a strong resilient and flexible workforce, equipped with the skills they will need to meet the challenges and changes of future service delivery. To support this we will look at the service having two specific days a year for staff training so that as many staff as possible have the opportunity to come together and develop skills.

We will develop our network of volunteers who add enormous value to our services. Volunteers do not undertake the work of paid staff but work as part of the team to deliver additional tasks and to help with activities. For example, volunteers deliver the home library service, help customers to use technology and access the internet, help at events, and help care for local history collections.



Ambition 2 Enriching People's Lives

Our services will make a positive impact by focusing on delivering outcomes that matter. We will put customers at the heart of everything we do. We will provide choice and allow for personal preferences to make it possible to access our services in different ways. We will promote life-long and family learning to develop potential, and enable people to flourish. We will promote access to the digital world and emerging technologies to ensure no-one is left behind. We will provide information and advice about careers, business and employment to support the local economy.

Why is this important?

In order to ensure that our services remain relevant and sustainable, LRA needs to adapt to meet changing needs, preferences and demands, for example:

- Technological advances have raised expectations about services being available 24/7, accessible online and with fast delivery.
- People expect to have more choice about how they access services; one size doesn't fit all. We need to listen and shape our services to suit the community as well as the preferences of new and existing customers.
- Changes to family structures, for example grandparents providing more childcare.
- An increasingly fast-paced and competitive business market is an opportunity to rethink how we can engage with businesses and better promote our services.

How we will achieve this Ambition?

Registration

We will continue to deliver the registration of births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships on behalf of Kent County Council. The service benefits from being a fully integrated service which allows people using the service to choose their most convenient location to register births and deaths, across Kent via our library and office network.

Kent is a popular location for marriages and civil partnerships, attracting couples from outside of Kent as well as its own residents. The combination of Kent's own register offices and its licensed commercial premises offers couples a wide and varied choice of locations, styles and sizes to suit all budgets. We will undertake a programme of refurbishment at our own ceremony offices, to remain attractive. Ensuring Kent remains within statutory boundaries, we will offer couples more opportunity to personalise their ceremony, with a commitment to provide affordable ceremony provision across the county.



New citizens are welcomed to the United Kingdom at our register offices, celebrating their achievement and their new life in Kent. New citizens really appreciate these events with a 93% satisfaction rate, so we are committed to develop our offer to give new citizens choice, availability and easy access.

We will adapt to any changing legislation in registration such as potential changes to Civil Partnership legislation.



Community activities

We will focus more on tailoring our services to local communities. For example activities that attract older people will be well attended in some communities but less so in others with high levels of young families. We will work to ensure our activities are shaped by the local community and tailored accordingly.

We will continue to promote volunteering opportunities as a way for people to contribute and get involved, or as the first step back into paid employment.

Supporting lifelong and family learning remains a priority. From the very beginning at birth registration we will signpost to LRA and other services to support new parents and families. We will create more study spaces to provide children and young people with a safe and calm environment where they can learn.

Ambition 2 Enriching People's Lives

Our Business offer

We will develop our offer to businesses and play a full role in supporting Kent's established and new businesses through our Ask a Kent Librarian service (AKL). We will develop a wide selection of online tools and services for established companies, prospective businesses, and new start-ups.

Our business offer has not been widely promoted so we will work with other parts of KCC so that businesses will have one point of access and a clear offer of what KCC as a whole can do to support them.

Development of our digital offer

We will continue to provide free IT access from our libraries, via desktop computers and Wi-Fi. Our team of volunteer IT buddies will support people to use IT and take that first step to get online.

We will re-launch and promote the Touch a New World (loan of i-Pads for home library service users) initiative to encourage people to borrow one of our i-Pads along with a volunteer to support them using it. We will explore emerging proven technology to ensure our services keep abreast of changes and offer access to information and learning in the way people want it. As part of this work we will be looking at a pilot of Wi-Fi printing - something customers have already said they would like us to do.

We will bring our on-line services into new virtual library offers, working to improve accessibility for all.

We will market ourselves as the place to access trusted information, to the people of Kent.



CASE STUDY

Information services

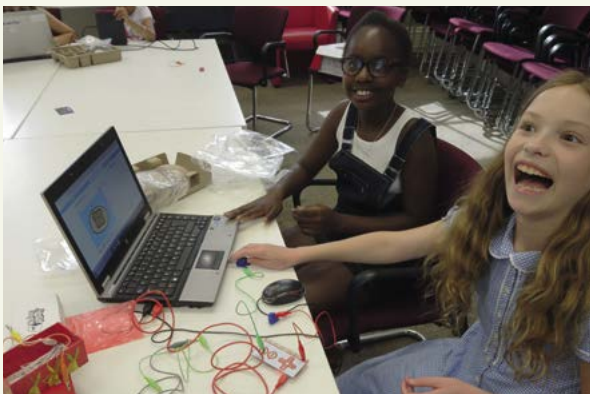
As a business owner with many demands on her time, Katie really appreciates the amount of time that she has saved by using the 'Ask a Kent Librarian' business service. She stated that the business list she requested was provided promptly, and contained lots of relevant contacts – "It would have taken me weeks to compile a list like this!"

CASE STUDY

Digital Dens

In April 2017 LRA successfully bid for funding from the Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone (LOFE) innovation grant, to fund the Kent Digital Dens project. The project set up five digital clubs with the aim of tackling disadvantage amongst children aged 8-11. They achieve this through weekly club sessions which teach different digital skills, and by providing access to technology that the young people might not otherwise have, such as 3D printers.

The clubs not only support development of digital skills, like coding and fact finding online, but also key skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, developing creativity and team working.



Since opening the first club in August 2017, there have been:

- 106 Digital Den sessions across the county
- 1,691 attendances registered at club sessions, promotional events and external events including GEEK festival at Margate
- Over 30% of club attendances are from young girls. We are working to increase this even more and to encourage more young women to take up science, technology, engineering and mathematic (STEM) related fields.

The project also saw additional benefits for Kent libraries:

- We were able to secure 190 Micro:bits for free from the Micro:bit Foundation, which are now available for borrowing at selected libraries in each district.

- Kent libraries have recently partnered with the Raspberry Pi Foundation, a global brand, to bring CoderDojos, a new type of club for young people aged 7-17 to libraries at Canterbury, Gravesend, Ramsgate, Sevenoaks, and Tonbridge. Kent is one of only two counties that have been selected by the Foundation for this pilot.
- Other local organisations and volunteer groups who are setting up similar clubs/activities have contacted their local Digital Den to explore opportunities for partnerships and cross-promotion. Both volunteers and staff say they also feel more confident using technology in general.



Ambition 3 Resilient and Connected Communities

Our services will be at the heart of communities, building resilience and helping people to stay safe, connected and live independently. We will connect different community groups, cultures and generations. We will celebrate Kent and its people both past and present. We will stimulate new ideas and experiences, offer volunteering opportunities, and access to cultural, learning and social events. We will fully utilise our community buildings making sure they are welcoming and easy to access. We will provide spaces for people to be calm and reflective or to take part in events and activities, enabling a sense of place and belonging.

Why is this important?

Kent will continue to change and evolve with new communities forming, growing numbers of older people, and continuing digital transformation. LRA services must change and adapt to these changes and ensure it plays an increasingly important role in supporting local communities. For example:

- Bringing people together in safe, welcoming buildings that are accessible to all.
- Offering a range of events and activities to engage and stimulate, to connect people and develop community cohesion.
- Supporting people to find the information they need to help them live independently and well.

We will work with other parts of KCC and external partners to make the best use of our libraries and other community buildings. We will look for opportunities to bring community services under one roof, deliver services differently and work in partnership. For example we are working with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Adult Education and Gateway on the new culture and learning hub at Tunbridge Wells. We are also building on successful co-locations with adult social care 'Good Day Programme' services at Dartford, Swanley and

Faversham libraries. We want to develop LRA's role as the shop window for KCC and community services, providing information and signposting people to the services they need.

We will ensure our spaces are accessible, flexible and can accommodate many uses, such as quiet study areas, and space for activities and events. In smaller buildings where this is not so easy we will manage our programme of activities carefully to ensure that customers know the days and times when activities are happening. We will make sure there is available time for quieter activities such as browsing books or study.

We are committed to ensuring that **everyone** will receive a warm welcome. We will provide volunteering opportunities to add value and to help develop integrated communities. As other local services such as banks and post offices are closing branches, we will be open to assist and provide space for them to continue to offer a level of service for the community from our buildings where feasible.

We will continue to develop our archive service and build on the recent achievement of National Archive accreditation standard. Accreditation is the UK quality standard which recognises good performance in all areas of archive service delivery. Building on this we



will develop a county approach for the deposit of future collections in their original digital format rather than traditional paper. We will continue to digitise our collections to make them more widely accessible from across the county.



CASE STUDY

Towards Turner Prize Kent 2019

For the forthcoming Turner Prize in Margate in 2019, Turner Contemporary's aspiration is for as many of Kent's public to experience the Prize, and discussions are ongoing as to how this could be fulfilled in part through our library network. We are also exploring how Turner Contemporary can support the annual Summer Reading Challenge linking to the run up to the Turner Prize. These are some examples of how we are developing our cultural offer and we will continue to develop this as part of the strategy.

Ambition 3 Resilient and Connected Communities



We will develop our cultural offer by working in partnership, for example with Turner Contemporary, the University of Kent and KCC culture and creative colleagues. We will maximise opportunities to work in partnership with other services such as Adult Education to provide a range of learning and creative experiences.

We will provide space for a wide range of cultural, learning and social events to bring people together, tailored to local needs and preferences. We will maximise community and commercial use of our libraries and register offices by better and wider promotion of them as potential venues. We will look for more opportunities to deliver, promote and host community events particularly in those communities with a limited choice.



CASE STUDY

Nepalese Community Engagement at Cheriton Library

Cheriton, with a population of nearly 2000 Nepalese people, has one of the country's largest Nepali communities. The growth of this vibrant and active community is attributed to the move of the Royal Gurkha Rifles Regiment to the nearby Shorncliffe Garrison in 2000. Service men and women have settled into the local area with their wider families during their three year postings, with some remaining in the area following their military service.

The Nepalese community has been keen to retain their rich heritage and culture, whilst also integrating into the local community. They have been eager to share their values and culture within the Folkestone area, hosting activities and events for all.

We provide a range of books in Nepali at Cheriton Library, and we have been working to support the Nepalese population. For example the Nepalese Elders Group meets in the library and has between 20-30 attendees at each session.

This group actively supports other library activities, including our annual Macmillan coffee morning, and recently promoting our meet and practice English group. Our local staff have built up a fantastic relationship with the group, and are invited each year as guests of honour to their Dashain Celebrations.



Ambition 4 Sustainable and Innovative

We will meet KCC’s clear, long-term commitment to the future of Library Registration and Archive services whilst recognising these are times of unprecedented financial pressure for local government. To meet these challenges LRA will deliver flexible, innovative and sustainable services. In addition to our free core services we will focus our resources to ensure excellent value for money; be commercial and take opportunities to generate income. We will keep up with trends and developments to ensure we remain relevant and continue to meet the changing needs of people and communities.

Why is this important?

All KCC services must contribute to help to meet the ongoing financial challenges and still deliver their statutory duties. LRA services must evolve to ensure that they continue to deliver services that the people of Kent need and want. To achieve the best outcomes, and ensure that our services deliver the very best value, LRA needs to:

- Better understand what the people of Kent need.
- Innovate and pilot new initiatives to keep our services modern and relevant.
- Be mindful of national developments and trends and share best practice.
- Work in partnership with other service providers to develop a better joined up approach to service delivery.

We will use technology to develop our services. We will take advantage of proven initiatives and learn from national successes. The trend for customers to use public Wi-Fi more and less desktop computers will allow us to review the number of public computers at each location.

The success of the ‘Digital Dens’ project has demonstrated the appetite amongst young people

to engage with emerging technologies. We have also seen that other local authorities have created ‘Makerspaces’ for all ages. A ‘Makerspace’ is a collaborative workspace for making, learning and exploring. These spaces are open to adults and children and have a variety of maker equipment, including 3D printers, laser cutters, and even sewing machines. Building on the success of our Digital Dens we propose to develop a permanent ‘Makerspace’ and take the opportunity to promote it to a broader customer base.

We will develop our commercial approach and seek opportunities to raise income to help maintain LRA as a sustainable service.

We will review our fees and charges annually and make changes where it is appropriate to do so. Our new Kent-themed merchandise has proved popular and we plan to introduce new lines to boost income. Arts Council England offers opportunities for organisations to bid for National Portfolio status. LRA will consider this potential as a way to expand our cultural offer. National Portfolio status would give us opportunities to bring additional funding into the service for cultural events and activities.





CASE STUDY

Library Extra Pilot

Library Extra is a new initiative that we are piloting at three libraries. The pilot allows customers to access the library outside of normal opening hours using assisted opening technology. This is a first for Kent but is a tried and tested technology, and a well-established service in other library authorities such as Norfolk, Peterborough, Brighton and Milton Keynes.

Library Extra enables customers to come into the library when no staff members are present, using a door entry system with a specially enabled swipe card. The Library Extra system controls the lights, CCTV, alarms and PA system to maximise safety and security. Customers who choose to sign up to Library Extra are able to use the self-service machines to issue and discharge books and other items, pay charges, and access the public desktop computers and Wi-Fi. Community groups such as reading groups and local history groups will be able to meet in the library during Library Extra opening hours too.



The three libraries piloting Library Extra are:

- Deal library, a large town centre library in a prime location
- Higham library, a small village library near the local shop
- Paddock Wood library, a small town centre library near the train station

The Library Extra pilot will give us an opportunity to test and evaluate technology-assisted opening hours. This will give us an evidence base to inform future service planning, for example finding out if Library Extra is popular with existing customers, reaching out to new ones, and the most popular times it is used.

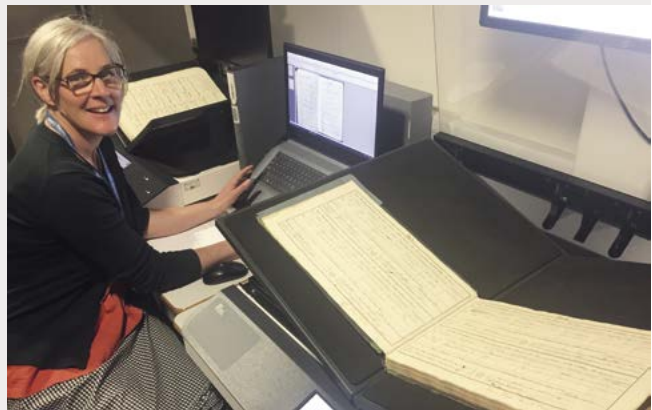
Ambition 4 Sustainable and Innovative

CASE STUDY Archives Digitisation Project

Our vision is to improve access to our archive collections for everyone in Kent; to deliver seamless access to materials that support the study of local people and communities.

In 2015 we asked permission of the Church of England parishes in the dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester if they would consider digitising their deposited baptism, banns, marriage, and burial registers, from the earliest up to 1918. Almost all said yes. This was an enormous project, a first for Kent's archives service.

In 2017 we partnered with 'FindMyPast', to take forward this exciting and huge project. By May 2018 we had digitised 1,300 registers of the 2,600 eligible, well ahead of schedule.



We are now identifying extra material for inclusion in the project, including those parish registers still out in the parishes. A go-live date is scheduled for 2019. By digitising the parish registers we will widen access to these documents, and generate income. Digitisation will also allow us to bank the images and provide a resource for the service for years to come.

We will use data and evidence to understand the demand and need for our services, to ensure our resources are well focussed to deliver the best outcomes for Kent residents. Recent examples of this approach include our reviews of the mobile library service and the archive search room. By investigating usage data we could see how many people were using our services and when, enabling us to work up evidence-led proposals to make changes to our mobile library routes and search room opening hours.

We will continue to use an evidence-based approach to ensure our services are available when people want them, are efficient, and good value for money.



Kent Library Tiering Proposal and Opening Hour Review

KCC is proud to deliver 99 libraries and we will continue to do so.

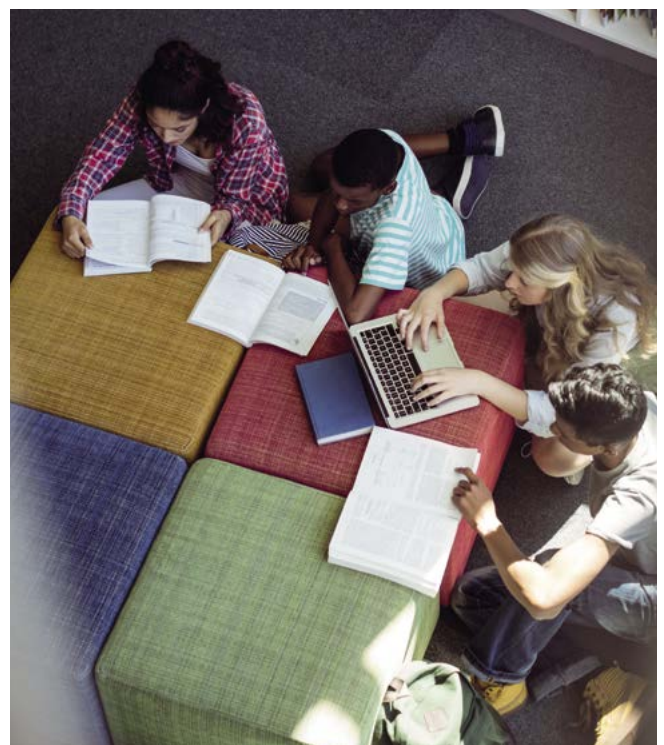
In recent years we have reviewed our mobile library service and opening times at individual libraries. However, for many years, we have not reviewed the number of opening hours across all our libraries, to make sure they reflect current customer demand and use of our services.

We have now undertaken a comprehensive review to give us a clear, up-to-date picture for each library. Data and feedback from staff highlight that not all of our library opening hours reflect current demand. It is important that the service we provide is efficient and cost effective; opening when we are not well used is not a good use of taxpayers' money. Visits across the county declined by 4.2% last financial year and we know that our usage varies across the opening hours. For example, in August 2018:

- **Our busiest time was between 10 am-12 pm accounting for 29.4% of our visits**
- **Our quietest time was 5 pm- 8 pm which accounts for 4.9% of visits**

In light of our review, public consultation and decision-making process we will reduce the overall number of library opening hours across the county by 18%. We have used data and evidence to develop a tiered model, which takes into account demand and use at each library. This approach ensures we make the best use of our resources and would save KCC up to £1m. *The data used for this was the period October 2017 to September 2018.*

This model means reducing the overall number of staff we employ in our libraries. This could be achieved in various ways, including, not recruiting to any vacancies, early retirement, as well as redundancies. We will do all that we can to minimise the impact on our staff who are highly valued and respected by both us and the public they assist in our libraries.



Ambition 4 Sustainable and Innovative

A tiering model is a way of grouping libraries together to better allocate resources effectively. It will provide consistency across the county because each library will be allocated a tier, and every library in that tier will have the same number of opening hours. We have opted for five tiers and have used the criteria below in this priority order to decide which tier each library goes into:

Usage	Criteria	Why have we used this data?
	Visits per hour	<p>Visits are a key measure of library use as they record everyone who comes into the library not just those who have borrowed an item or used a public computer.</p> <p>We have used 'per hour' as this is a fair way of evaluating all our libraries regardless of how many hours they are open.</p>
	Loans per hour	<p>It is important that we recognise our core role of providing access to books, DVDs, audio books etc.</p> <p>Again, we have used 'per hour' as this is a fair way of evaluating all our libraries regardless of how many hours they are open.</p>
	% unique users	<p>There are some libraries where a lot of customers only use that library and others where people use more than one library. This covers the number of users who only use one library.</p>
	% public computer use	<p>IT (Information Technology) use is an important part of the modern service and we wanted to ensure this was taken into account.</p>
	% of customers who attend events	<p>Events and activities are another important part of the modern library service.</p>
Building size	<p>The size of library building will to some extent determine the level of stock and facilities that can be made available and the type and number of activities and events that can take place.</p>	

This data provides effective criteria to evaluate how people use a modern library service. The performance of our 99 libraries, our mobile libraries, outreach and online services tells us we are providing comprehensive coverage across Kent. Therefore we are proposing not to incorporate 'need' criteria (for example, deprivation).

The tiering model sets out the number of opening hours per week for each library but not the pattern of opening times. Following our decision-making process to implement the model, we will engage with local people to shape how the opening hours can be arranged to best suit local need.

This approach will mean that all libraries will be open on Saturdays to improve access to people unable to visit their library Monday to Friday.

We will continue to reflect how libraries are being used every two years, this may mean that some libraries move between tiers based on their use.

This table provides information about each of the proposed tiers:

	1	2	3	4	5
Library location	Located in large highly populated towns	Located in large highly populated towns, and villages	Located in small towns, villages and suburban communities	Located in villages and suburban communities	Located in smaller villages and suburban communities
Library building	Large building often co-located with partner services	Large and medium buildings some co-located with partner services	Medium and small buildings some co-located with partner services	Small buildings some co-located with partner services	Small buildings some co-located in community and village centres.
Weekly staffed opening hours	42	37	28	23	15
Stock available	Large comprehensive range of adult and children's fiction and non-fiction books and DVDs for loan. Local history collection	Good range of adult and children's fiction and non-fiction books and DVDs for loan. Local history collection	Range of adult and children's fiction and non-fiction books for loan, chosen and developed to reflect local need and preferences. Some local history stock	Range of adult and children's fiction and non-fiction books for loan, chosen and developed to reflect local need and preferences. Some local history stock.	Core stock of adult and children's fiction and non-fiction books for loan, chosen and developed to reflect local need and preferences.
Access to public PCs and Wi-Fi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Access to information and e-resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Summer Reading Challenge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community activities, such as Rhymetime & Talk Time	✓	✓	✓ subject to volunteer availability	✓ subject to volunteer availability	✓ subject to volunteer availability

Ambition 4 Sustainable and Innovative

Each library will be assigned to one of five tiers as set out in the following table

Library tiers and opening hours

Tier 1 <i>(open 42 hours a week)</i>	Tier 2 <i>(open 37 hours a week)</i>	Tier 3 <i>(open 28 hours a week)</i>	Tier 4 <i>(open 23 hours a week)</i>	Tier 5 <i>(open 15 hours a week)</i>
Ashford	Birchington	Allington	Ash	Bockhanger
Canterbury	Broadstairs	Bearsted	Ashen Drive	Boughton
Dartford	Cliftonville	Borough Green	Aylesham	Dashwood
Deal	Edenbridge	Cheriton	Charing	Queenborough
Dover	Folkestone	Coldharbour	East Peckham	Riverhead
Faversham	Hythe	Coxheath	Hadlow	Seal
Gravesend	Larkfield	Cranbrook	Hartley	Sherwood
Herne Bay	Ramsgate	Fleetdown	Hawkhurst	Showfields
Maidstone	Sheerness	Greenhithe	Hildenborough	Stanhope
Margate	Tenterden	Headcorn	Hive House	Vigo
Sevenoaks	Whitstable	Higham	Kemsing	
Sittingbourne		Lenham	Kings Farm	
Swanley		Lyminge	Longfield	
Tonbridge		Madgingford	Lydd	
		Marden	Marling Cross	
		Meophamy	Minster-in-Thanel	
		Minster-in-Sheppey	Newington	
		New Ash Green	Otford	
		New Romney	Paddock Wood	
		Sandwich	Pembury	
		Shepway	Riverview Park	
		Snodland	Rusthall	
		Staplehurst	St Margaret's	
		Summerhouse drive	Sturry	
		Westerham	Sutton-at-Hone	
		Westgate	Swalecliffe	
		Wye	Swan Valley	
			Temple Hill	
			Teynham	
			Tonbridge North	
			West Kingsdown	
			West Malling	
			Wood Avenue	
			Yalding	

Libraries not part of the tiering model

We have not included Tunbridge Wells or Southborough libraries as these are part of major projects with partners to bring services together under one roof which are still in development.

The tiering model could be applied at a later date.

Sandgate library has not been included because the day-to-day running of the service is delivered by Sandgate Parish Council.

Ambition 5

Helping Everyone to Live Well

Our services will make a real difference to people's lives. We will reduce loneliness and isolation; we will promote literacy and a love of reading and books. We will bring people together through physical and digital services. We will promote healthy choices and self-management of health conditions. We will support people of all ages to live well, adding value to the lives of families, older people, children and young adults. We will complement new local care services to support mental, physical and emotional health for all ages.

Why is this important?

Modern lives and advances in healthcare are resulting in people living longer. Alongside this however there are also increased numbers of people with complex health issues, mental health issues (particularly among men and young people), increased reports of people suffering from isolation and loneliness, and public fears brought about by the growth of extremism.

LRA services whether they are accessed online, from our network of community buildings across Kent, or delivered directly into people's homes, are trusted and valued by the people who use them and increasingly provide an important role to counter such challenges.

We will review and refresh the library services that we currently offer to people who are not able to regularly visit one of our buildings, to help to tackle social isolation and loneliness. Our specialist access services include:

- Audio books by post for blind and partially sighted people
- Mobile library service
- Home library service
- Touch A New World (TANW) – i-Pad loans and support
- Delivery for care homes and day centres
- Reminiscence boxes to help people with dementia

Our aim will be to bring all of these services together under one brand - Library Direct.

We will ensure that services are delivered to the people who want and need them, and that they are delivered in the most efficient and effective way. For example the mobile library vehicles that we currently use are subject to breakdowns.

We will therefore explore the potential to replace the current fleet of six mobile libraries with smaller more reliable and fuel-efficient vehicles to still deliver mobile library services.





We will refresh and promote our home library and Touch A New World services to ensure we are making more people aware that these services are available to them.

We are committed to continuing and developing our programme of free core events and activities that take place across our libraries. In 2017 - 2018 we delivered or hosted:

- 3,966 talk time sessions, where local people come together to chat, share experiences and talk about topics of interest

- 3,265 baby rhyme time sessions, where parents and carers bring their babies and toddlers to sing songs and listen to rhymes
- 1,360 reading group sessions, both adult and children's groups
- 4,458 IT buddy sessions to help people get online and get connected.



Ambition 5 Helping Everyone to Live Well

We will always promote and champion literacy and a love of reading. Our offer to primary and secondary schools supports the improvement of reading and literacy, and enhances learning across the whole curriculum. We help schools to bring books and reading to life in the classroom to improve pupils' attainment, stimulate their imagination and provide for their language needs. We offer schools the opportunity for teachers to borrow up to 50 books and other items for a loan period of up to eight weeks, including dual language books. All of our libraries are available to host class visits and in 2017-2018 we hosted 1,994 visits.

We will ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate each year in the Summer Reading Challenge and keep their reading habit up over the long summer break. There is good evidence that the challenge improves children's reading skills and ensures they are better prepared for the return to school. We received many positive comments from last year's challenge from parents and children.

"The Summer Reading Challenge really motivated my daughter. As a result my daughter's reading has clicked and she was the first in her year to become a free reader"

Parent of 7 year-old girl, Otford

In 2018, 17,023 Kent children signed up to the challenge and over half of those completed the challenge to read the target of six books during their holiday. The theme changes every year and LRA sees this as a key part of our yearly programme.

We will promote healthy choices and health information. The 'Reading Well Books on Prescription' initiative recommends books people might find



helpful for a range of needs including dementia, long-term health conditions, and young people's mental health. The books include information and advice, help after diagnosis, practical support for carers and personal stories, and can be borrowed or reserved from any library or online. We will also work to develop links with Public Health colleagues to promote and support the 'One You Kent' campaign, (kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/one-you-kent) to help get Kent's residents fitter and healthier.

We will develop and promote LRA's contribution to helping people who are isolated. One way we expect to do this is by expanding social prescribing.

CASE STUDY

Social Prescribing Swalecliffe Library

Social prescribing is defined as *"a means of enabling primary care services to refer patients with social, emotional or practical needs to a range of local, non-clinical services, often provided by the voluntary and community sector."*

Roy, 88, lost his wife and all his male friends were gone too. He was very lonely and was finding life depressing. His GP put him in touch with Red Zebra a charity that works closely with organisations and individuals to build stronger local communities. They work with individuals to find activities for them that could help their situation. One of the activities they suggested was Talk Time at Swalecliffe library. The group meets weekly on a Wednesday morning. Roy went along to the group where he met lots of different people. They have a cup of tea and talk about all sorts of topics. Roy now says that he feels less lonely and he looks forward to going to the group.



"I thought the books that I read were very interesting and fun. I like all the books in this library! I don't want you to change anything because it was brilliant!"

7 year-old boy, Herne Bay

A successful thriving service

Measures of success

We will review the success of our Library, Registration and Archives services at each stage of implementation of the strategy, and we will carry out a whole review at the end of the strategy. By examining the data we collect against our performance indicators, we will see if we have reached more customers and how well we are delivering services to them.

We will seek and use feedback from our customers to improve services and let them know how their feedback is helping to shape the service. We will use positive customer stories to demonstrate how the delivery of our ambitions is making a real difference to people's lives, and delivering the outcomes we want.

We propose to carry out regular and more frequent performance reviews as part of our service strategy, for example this will include:

- An annual review of fees and charges
- A review of our mobile library service every two years to the agreed set of criteria used in the 2016 mobile library review
- A review of the library tiering every two years using the criteria set out in chapter five

This approach will enable us to ensure that we are providing services that people want and need at the right level. We will engage with and inform our customers to help shape LRA services going forward. If the strategy is adopted, some services will be developed and may result in additional proposals where we seek customer consultation.

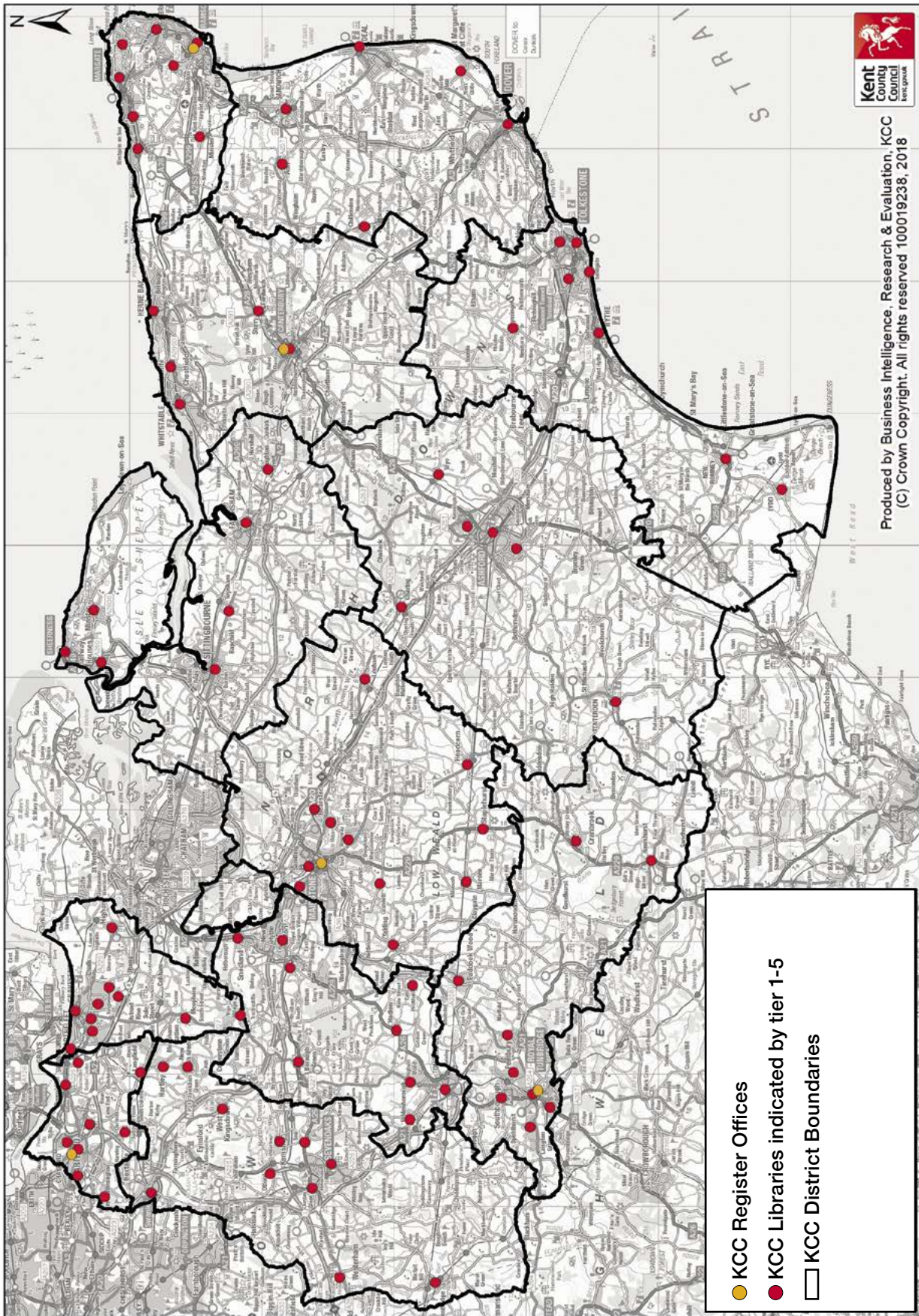
We will keep the public informed of any proposals, and inviting suggestions and feedback to ensure excellent and cost-effective services.

We have used feedback from the public consultation to finalise the strategy and the consultation feedback will also inform how we move forward to deliver the strategy.

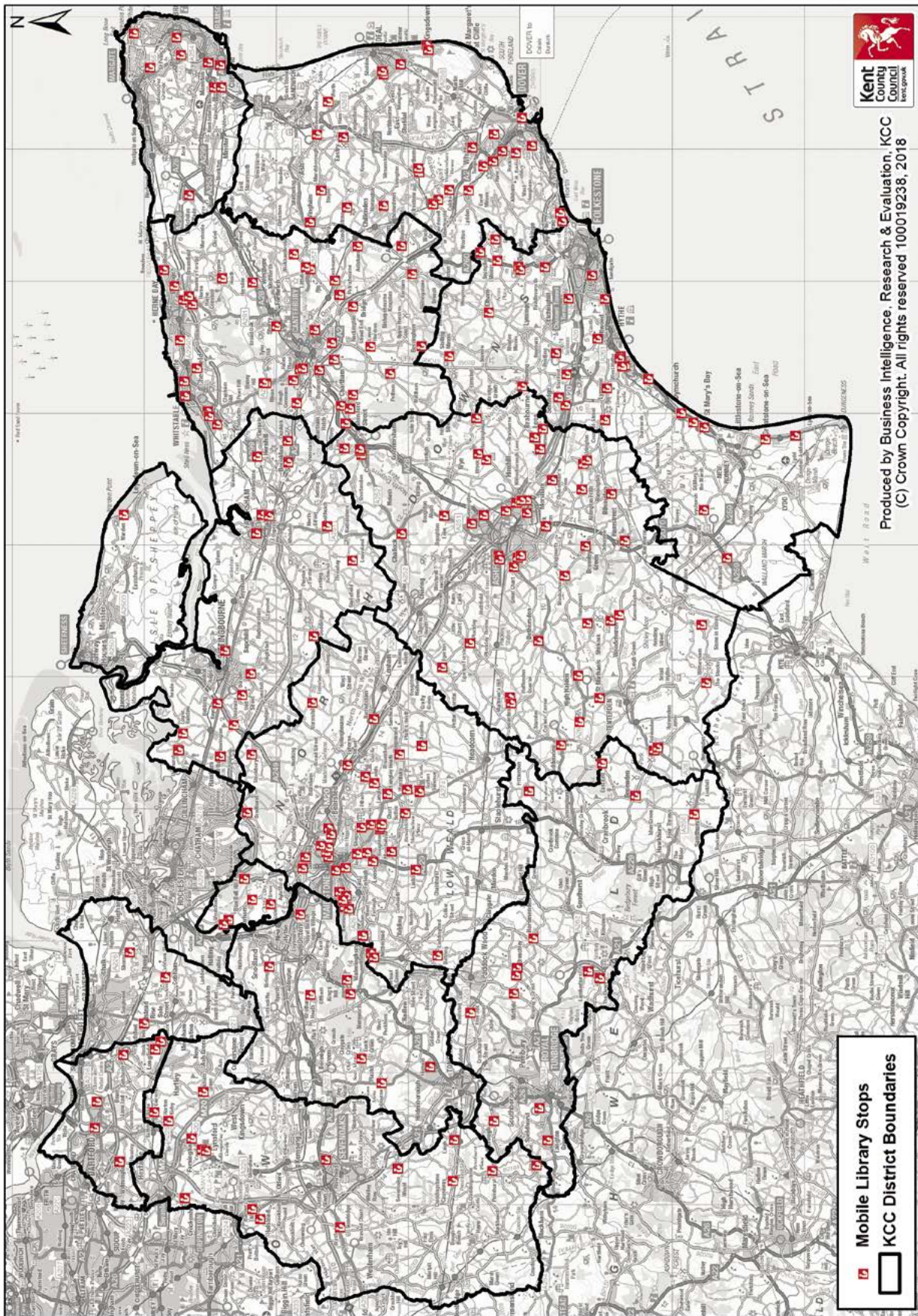
We will make a commitment that LRA's strategy for the future is fully costed, affordable, and deliverable with the funding available to us. We will work to deliver savings in line with KCC's medium term financial plan and ensure our services deliver good value for money for the people of Kent.



Appendix A:



Appendix B:



Alternative formats

If you require an alternative format or language please email alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call **03000 421553** (text relay service number: 18001 03000 421553). This number goes to an answering machine, which is monitored during office hours.

