

Technical Appendix 16: Libraries, Registration & Archives (LRA)

1. Services Overview

- 1.1. KCC has a statutory duty under the [Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964](#) to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for everyone working, living, or studying in the area.
- 1.2. KCC's library policies are contained in [Framing Kent's Future, Our Council Strategy 2022-2026](#) and the [Libraries, Registration and Archives Strategy 2019-22](#).

For national guidance see:

[Building Better Libraries for the Future](#) (Updated 2017).

[Libraries as a statutory service](#) (July 2019).

[Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 to 2021](#).

[Government Policy on Archives \(1999\)](#).

- 1.3. KCC has a network of 99 libraries, (including registrations and archives facilities) across Kent's 12 districts, delivered via a tiered system, as set out in Table 1 below. [A list of Kent libraries can be found here](#).

Table 1: Library Tiers.

	Library Tier				
	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

1.4. In 2018/19, Kent libraries received almost 4.6 million visits and issued around 4.9 million books, eBooks, and audio-visual items; over 240,000 people attended 23,000 events. As well as being places to browse, request and borrow books, libraries offer a range of services to Kent residents and visitors, including:

- Free access to PCs and public Wi-Fi
- Help for job seekers
- 'Ask a Kent Librarian' giving 24-hour access to trusted information on any and all topics
- Free physical and digital activities for all ages, such as baby rhyme time, talk time, book groups, craft clubs, after school homework help and the summer reading challenge
- Mobile library service delivering to smaller and more remote communities
- Home library delivery service and Red Book Box service to care homes

- The Business and Intellectual Property Centre, Kent History and Library Centre, offering free professional advice to start up and small businesses
- Registration services
- Study spaces
- Community space for group activities

Research conducted by KCC LRA services showed that a significant number of people use more than one library, with many using multiple libraries. An easy lend/return service operates, enabling users to borrow from, and return to any library, meaning that individuals may use libraries near to work or their child's school for example.

- 1.5. With new communities come new users, who place increased pressure on local libraries to offer services that suit their needs. Co-location with other services at new community hub buildings and improving existing spaces to accommodate larger borrower numbers and audiences at events for example, are the current focus for increasing capacity.

2. Assessing Need and Calculating Demand

2.1. Threshold for Seeking Contributions and Qualifying Developments

- 2.1.1. Any development of 10 or more dwellings or a site size of 0.5Ha and above will be assessed and could generate a request for LRA contributions.

2.1.2. KCC will not seek contributions from:

- Student accommodation
- Sites specifically set aside for transient Gypsy and/or Traveller Communities

2.2. Service Capacity

- 2.2.1. New developments will place additional demands for both physical (hard copy) books and digital (eBooks/E-Audio) stock. The National Library Standard upper threshold recommends 1532 items per 1000 population; where stock levels are below this, contributions will be sought.

- 2.2.2. Library capacity has historically been based on Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) recommendation of 30sqm per 1,000 population – KCC does not currently meet this standard and has no plans to increase the number of libraries in Kent (the possible exception is the provision of new space on strategic sites/garden communities – (see below). In most cases, it will seek instead to meet the need generated by new growth by:

- Improving existing facilities
- Refits and reconfiguration

- Intensification of use

2.2.3. To create additional capacity within existing libraries, extending the public space will be considered where possible, this could include:

- Converting space previously used by staff into public space by reducing the number or size of offices, workrooms, or storage space.
- Making staff space available for community use at certain times.
- Reconfiguring libraries to allow more flexible use of space that can be used by different customer groups at different times of day.
- Provision of additional 'Library Extra' sites – using technology assisted opening hours and RFID technology, 'Library Extra' enables the public and community groups to visit and use library facilities outside of staffed hours. Currently, three 'Library Extra' sites operate in Kent.

2.2.4. An assessment of need will be made at the point of planning application, taking account of capacities within LRA facilities serving the development.

2.3. New users per dwelling

2.4. The number of new users created per dwelling is set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Additional Users Per Dwelling.

Kent Population	1,576,100 [1]
Library Users Per Year	188,807 [2]
% Of Kent Population Who Are Library Users	11.98%
Average Occupancy Rate of Each New Dwelling	2.4
New Residents From 100 Dwellings	240
New Library Users From 100 Dwellings	28.75
New Library Users Per Dwelling	0.29

[1] 2021 Census data.

[2] 2019 data.

3. Contributions Per Dwelling

3.1. Contributions per dwelling for the provision of additional book stock, plus shelving, furniture, technology and equipment to enable more intensive use of existing library space are set out in the Table 3.

Table 3: Per Dwelling Contribution Rate. [3]

Project	Cost Per User	Contribution Per Dwelling
Book Stock	£145.44	£41.81
Shelving and Furniture	£56.72	£20.82
Equipment and resources to enhance service provision, including IT, self-service equipment, digital dens	£15.67	
Total Contribution Per Dwelling		£62.63
Contribution Per Dwelling = Cost Per User x Users Per Dwelling		

[3] Figures shown in calculations have been rounded to 2 decimal places and may therefore, not sum correctly.

3.2. Reconfiguration of Library Space

Where reconfiguration of library space requires building works, this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and cost applied to new housing growth served by the facility.

3.3. Strategic Development/Garden Communities

3.3.1. While KCC currently has no plans for new additional libraries, large strategic developments/garden communities may require new stand-alone buildings or library facilities within a community hub. The drive for efficiencies is likely to influence overall space requirements and opportunities for co-location will be actively explored. Requirements for new or extended library facilities (plus fixtures, fittings and equipment) will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and contributions sought accordingly, based on the example costing set out in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Example Contribution Per Dwelling - Sought for New Build/Extension of Existing Building.

Build Cost Per Square Metre (including Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment)	£3,668.00
Build Cost Per 1000 Population (30 sqm)	£110,040
Per Dwelling (using Average Occupancy 2.4) £110,040/1000 x 2.4	£264.09

4. Provision of Infrastructure – Project Types

- 4.1. Library services infrastructure will be required from developments within the catchment area of the affected library or libraries. Need will generally be based on the library most local to the development, but contributions may also be sought for those most affected. This may include a sub-regional library delivering services/stock to a wider catchment area. NB: Libraries in urban areas also serve surrounding rural areas and villages.
- 4.2. Development contributions collected to increase capacity at existing Libraries will be applied towards one or more projects, including:
- Reconfiguring/expanding space, creating community meeting rooms and events space and improving accessibility
 - ‘Library Extra’ technology and equipment
 - Additional book stock, eBooks and eAudio books
 - Furniture including shelving and display equipment
 - Other equipment necessary to enhance the library offer

5. Indexation

- 5.1. To ensure financial contributions continue to cover the actual cost of delivering infrastructure, these will be subject to indexation. KCC applies the BCIS All-In Tender Price Index, with the base date for indexation set at Q1 2022.

6. Time Limit on Spend

- 6.1. Any contributions will be repaid to the original payee on request if not committed or spent towards its purpose within 10 years of receipt of the contributions in full (if paid in instalments) or alternative longer period as may be agreed.