

Shaping the future of **library, registration and archive** services in Kent



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Foreword

Our library, registration and archive services are at the heart of communities throughout Kent. You can access books and information, learn new skills, register births and deaths, explore Kent's rich history, celebrate key life events and so much more.

We know the impact these services have on communities; they aid and enrich lives. However, the needs of residents are changing and budgets are tighter than ever before. So, to maintain this impact we have had to adapt.

We have overseen big changes, including the introduction of self-service technology, and combining the Maidstone Library with the County Archive Centre to create the Kent History & Library Centre. The rewards are great. More efficient and cost-effective, our services are benefiting more residents than ever before.

But we can't stop there. The financial climate remains uncertain and what works now may not be viable in the future. So, we must look to adapt again, to safeguard the excellent services we have and to build a platform for future improvements.

We have explored a number of different ways to run the service and our preferred option is that an independent charitable trust is set up to run Kent's Library, Registration and Archive service.

We believe that a charitable trust gives us greater flexibility and financial freedom; a model that is less susceptible than other options to possible future changes to council funding. This means better opportunities to improve services and give residents more input and influence over future decisions.

Now we want to know what you think. We are consulting on the options presented on page 9 of this document, with transferring to a charitable trust our preferred option. No decision has been taken and your views will be vital to help council members make their final decision.

The consultation will run from 12 January to 8 April 2015. You can register your views online at kent.gov.uk/lraconsultation or complete the questionnaire at the end of this booklet. If you have any queries, want further information or have alternative suggestions, we want to hear from you.

Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services

What we currently deliver in Kent



Our Mission

We have a statutory duty to provide most of our services. However, our mission is to go beyond this duty. We strive to continually affect people's lives in a positive way and deliver services for every community in Kent, with some specially targeted services to help those who need it most.

We see our mission as:

- to continue to support local people with our services, throughout their lives
- to adapt, and improve library, registration and archive services in Kent, so that we continue to meet the changing needs of local communities
- to make sure we are as efficient and cost effective as possible
- Using the latest technology to benefit Kent's residents.

This mission will continue to be at the heart of library, registration and archive services, whatever delivery model we choose for the future.

See our mission in action:
Pages 6 and 7



Our mission in action:

In the last financial year:

- you borrowed over 5.6million items
- you used computers for over 600,000 hours
- more than 165,000 of you attended our events
- we delivered more than 5,800 ceremonies
- over 31,000 of you registered a birth or death

Because of what we do...

...young readers are inspired

Bookstart: 40,000 Bookstart packs delivered in the last financial year, helping parents and carers enjoy books with their children from an early age.

Summer reading challenge: 14,157 Kent children took part in our 2013 challenge, boosting their confidence and igniting imaginations.

Workshops and events: thousands of children attended a workshop or event at Kent libraries in 2013.



...families and communities are connected

Baby Rhyme Time: 2,804 sessions throughout our libraries in 2013, introducing infants to reading and rhymes, and giving parents a chance to make new friends.

Supporting reading groups: 650 reading groups in Kent currently enjoy access to our book collections and a space to meet.

Ceremonies: thousands of ceremonies delivered each year, from weddings and civil partnerships, to renewal of vows and welcoming events for new citizens.

...vulnerable residents are supported

Home Library service 13,034 visits to Home Library customers in the last year. The service is a vital lifeline bringing the library to people who can't leave their home due to ill health, a disability or caring responsibilities.

Dementia-friendly sessions in the last financial year more than 500 people living with dementia, and their carers, have benefited from library sessions that use pictures, stories and poetry to stimulate memories and build connections.

...new skills and information are at your fingertips

History and archives: thousands of historic archival documents relating to Kent and dating back to 699AD at the Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone as well as collections of local materials at our main town centre libraries.

Helping you to find work: 124 new jobseekers have joined our Work Club in the past 12 months, where they can get help with searching for jobs online, creating or updating CVs, application forms and much more.

Business toolkit: 3,194 people accessed our free online business services in the last financial year. This year we are putting on 41 workshops and clinics for business start-ups and micro businesses.

Why we need to change

As the face of public services continues to change, councils need to find new ways to deliver flexible and more cost effective services. We have always tried to be on the front foot and in the past six years we've made some important changes, including the introduction of self-service equipment.

The services we provide are richer and more varied than ever before, enhancing the lives of hundreds of thousands of Kent residents each year. These changes have also delivered £6million of savings to Kent County Council.

Whatever option we choose following this consultation, we will need to make savings of around £3.27million over the next three years as part of KCC's medium term financial plan. In addition to this, the needs of communities are changing, particularly as new technology drives people to access information in new ways, and we cannot be sure that the resources we have now will be the same in the future. To maintain the positive impact we have on residents' lives and to continue to improve services, we must change again. We feel that operating as a charitable trust will put library, registration and archive services in the best position to make these savings through innovation, income generation and additional grant funding.

This is an opportunity to enhance the long-term future of our services. Finding the the best way of doing this is not an easy task and we need your help to make the right decision.

The background to this consultation

As already outlined, the changes made in the last six years have improved our library, registration and archive services. However, there is still a growing gap between demand for these services and resources available.

So, in late 2013, we started a review, looking for a new way to deliver our service that will:

- give us the flexibility to look for other sources of income, rather than just cutting budgets
- give residents more influence over our service and how it is run and delivered.

The process

We researched different ways to run the service, and talked in-depth with various groups and other councils. All local authorities we approached are looking for new ways to deliver their services and some have already made considerable changes. ***For a list of key findings see appendix A.***

We also started, and continue to progress, positive discussions with the statutory regulators for Registration Services, about the possibility of delivering registration services through a charitable trust.

Options that we have considered

A summary of the options considered

- **Keep the service in house:** this means that, as it does now, Kent County Council would continue to run the service.
- **Transfer the service to a charitable trust:** a not-for-profit organisation, the charitable trust would be commissioned by Kent County Council to run the service.
- **Run the service in partnership with a provider:** Kent County Council would form a partnership with another suitable organisation or business to run the service.
- **Outsource the service to a 3rd party:** a suitable organisation or business would take over the running of the service.

See appendix B for advantages and disadvantages of all options considered.

Our preferred option, and why

As a result of the review our preferred option is to create an independent charitable trust which could be contracted to run our Library, Registration and Archive service.

All options could potentially deliver the required financial savings. However, of all the options available, it is our view that a charitable trust is the best option to safeguard the fantastic services we have and build a platform for future improvements. See page 10 for the additional benefits of this approach.



Libraries are more than just books; we offer a range of activities, including arts and crafts for our younger visitors.

In more detail - a charitable trust

Our preferred option – overview

Our library, registration and archive services would be managed and delivered by a charitable trust. The trust would be required to meet our current statutory obligations. However, it would be a company in its own right and, as such, would have greater freedom and flexibility to adapt services to best meet the needs of local communities. It could also access additional sources of funding not currently available to the service.

It is envisaged that the move to the trust model would still see the delivery of the full range of library, registration and archive services. The trust may want to review and develop services into the future. However, any significant changes must be agreed by KCC, and following consultation with you, the public.

The delivery of Registration Services by the proposed charitable trust is still under discussion with the statutory regulator for these services. For more information, see page 12.

Key benefits of this option

- operating outside of Kent County Council, we believe the charitable trust will be more responsive and better able to involve communities in the management and delivery of services
- we believe it will help to ensure that library, registration and archive services are available and accessible to all Kent residents and continue to play a positive role at the heart of local communities
- the charitable trust will be free from certain local authority restrictions, enabling access to alternative sources of funding not available to the council
- the charitable trust will be able to deliver services under contract to other organisations – in Kent and beyond – to generate additional income
- the trust will be able to deliver financial savings to the council, through both the preferential business rates it will enjoy and the greater freedom to generate income helping to protect the services that are most important to our communities



Many of our services, such as Baby Rhyme Time sessions, bring people together in a welcoming and safe environment.

How will the charitable trust work?

A board of volunteer trustees will be accountable for the management and oversight of the charitable trust. This will include ensuring that library, registration and archive services are delivered to the highest possible standard with the funding available.

- KCC will continue to fund, and remain accountable for library, registration and archive services
- KCC will retain the statutory obligations, e.g. to provide a free book-lending and information service and deliver statutory registration services
- Once set up, a charitable trust could take a fresh look at how services are delivered.

A board of volunteer trustees will be recruited to manage and oversee the charitable trust. To obtain charitable status the trust must be independent of the county council and work in the interest of the aims of the charity.

This could mean that you could be more involved in decision making and shaping services that the trust delivers.

If the charitable trust wants to make significant changes to services it must secure the approval of Kent County Council and will consult with residents before any final decisions are made.

As explained throughout this document, our proposal is to deliver registration services via a charitable trust alongside library and archive services. The statutory regulator for registration services has acknowledged that this change would represent an innovative way of working.

Under current UK law, registration services must be delivered via a Local Government approved scheme, and because of this, we are working with the statutory regulator to understand what the timeline could be for delivering KCC's registration services under this new model. It may be that moving registration services into a charitable trust will take longer than moving across library and archive services.

KCC's preferred option is to deliver library, registration and archive services through one charitable trust. We strongly

believe that the trust model offers the greatest benefit for these services into the future, and therefore, if necessary, we will consider taking a phased approach to the delivery of this proposal:

- Phase one: Create a charitable trust to deliver library and archive services
- Phase two: Move registration services across to the charitable trust

Whether libraries, registration and archive services move to the charitable trust at the same time or whether we take the phased approach outlined above, our customers will still be able to register births and deaths in our libraries.

As soon as we are in a position to confirm the timescales for the possible delivery of our preferred option, we will publish them on kent.gov.uk.



In summary

What we do

We (Kent County Council) currently deliver, and are accountable for library, registration and archive services across Kent.

Our preferred option and key benefits

Kent's Library, Registration and Archive service would be run by a charitable trust, delivering significant benefits:

- sustainable services for a future that we want you to shape
- greater freedom to adapt and improve services to meet the needs of local communities
- the opportunity to access more funding and explore greater income-generating opportunities
- contribute savings for the council.

Although this document sets out our preferred option at this time, our plans are at a formative stage. Your feedback as part of this consultation, as well as discussions with our staff, partners and stakeholders, will inform our next steps as we develop our plans further.

How to get involved and have your say

We are consulting on the options presented in this document, with transferring to a charitable trust our preferred option. No decision has been taken yet and your views will be vital to help council members make the final decision.

Please visit kent.gov.uk/lraconsultation and complete the online questionnaire. Alternatively, complete the questionnaire on page 17 and return to **Freepost LRA Consultation**.

What happens next?

This consultation will be open from **12 January to 8 April 2015**. We will then consider all of the feedback and alternative suggestions in full, before a final decision is made in early 2015.

Appendices

Appendix A

Key findings from research. After an in-depth review we found that:

- all the 21 local authorities that we approached are looking for new ways to deliver their services in light of financial challenges, and some have already made considerable changes
- compared to other local authorities, looking at per 1,000 population, Kent's LRA service:
 - is low-cost
 - is below average in terms of visits and book issues, although there are good levels of user satisfaction the service has a higher proportion of volunteers, compared to the national average
- the number of ceremonies delivered by registration services is increasing year on year.

For more information please visit:
kent.gov.uk/lraconsultation

Appendix B

Options: advantages and disadvantages

Structural Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
Retain service in house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no set-up costs • guaranteed Kent County Council control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may not lead to radical transformation • potential for saving/ income generation restricted without significant change to services • higher levels of savings to make as no rates relief available
Transfer to charitable trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guarantees community involvement • maximum opportunity to identify new funding streams • most flexible model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existing models of operation still in their infancy • phased implementation may be required
Partnership with a provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ability to tap into partner's expertise to deliver improved service • increased purchasing power, shared systems and intellectual property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no commercial acumen for providing registration services • any new income or savings would be shared; potential for conflicting approach
Outsource to 3rd Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a model proven to reduce costs • increased purchasing power, shared systems and intellectual property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no proven track record of running large library network equivalent to Kent • no market for providing registration services • risk that cost efficiencies are not fully realised for Kent



Libraries, registration and archive services touch everyone in Kent, whether you are registering a life event, studying for your exams, or researching your family tree.

Consultation closes 8 April 2015

Libraries, Registration and Archive Service: Proposed Charitable Trust Consultation Questionnaire

(If you need more space for your answers please include an additional piece of paper with your response).

1. Having read Kent County Council's mission for the future of its Libraries, Registration and Archives, which of the following statements best describes your thoughts? (Please tick one box)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither disagree or agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

2. If there are any other services you would like to suggest or anything you would like to see the Libraries, Registration and Archive service deliver that it doesn't at present please tell us here:

3. Having read Kent County Council's proposal to establish a charitable trust, which of the following statements best describes your thoughts? (Please tick one box)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither disagree or agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |

Please let us know the reasons for your choice in the box below:

4. Which of the following statements best describes the impact you feel the proposed charitable trust model will have on you/your organisation: (please tick one box)

- The proposed changes will not affect me/my organisation
- The proposed changes will have some impact on me/my organisation
- The proposed changes will have a significant impact on me/my organisation
- I don't know

Consultation closes 8 April 2015

If you feel that the proposed changes to the Library, Registration and Archive service will have some or a significant impact on you/ your organisation, whether positive or negative, or you have any other comments you wish to make, please provide details below:

5. If you have any alternative ideas of how we should deliver the Library, Registration and Archive service or if you consider any of the other options to be preferable, please tell us here:



6. When did you last use the Library, Registration and Archive service?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In the last month | <input type="checkbox"/> Between 7 and 12 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between 2 and 6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 12 months |

If you have not visited the service in the last 12 months, please tell us why:

7. We have completed an Equality Impact Assessment and we welcome your views on the assumptions we have made. To view the document, go to kent.gov.uk/lraconsultation. Please write your comments here:

Consultation closes 8 April 2015

8. Are you completing this questionnaire as a private individual or as a member of a group/organisation? (Please tick)

Individual Group/organisation

If you have selected 'Individual' for question 8, please go on to question 10

9. If group/organisation

Which of the following best describes your role (please tick):

- Public sector partner
 Business organisation
 Voluntary, community or faith sector
 Service provider
 Other (please specify in the box below):

If you answered 'Individual' to **Question 8**, we would be grateful if you could complete the 'About you' questions on the following page.

About you...

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that no one gets left out. That's why we are asking you these questions. We won't share the information you give us with anyone else. We'll use it only to help us make decisions, and improve our services.

If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

Q10 Are you...? Male Female I prefer not to say

Q11. How old are you?

Q12. What is your postcode? (We only use this for geographical mapping)

Q13. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong?
 (Source: 2011 census)

White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British
British <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	Indian <input type="checkbox"/>	Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>
Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Black African <input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>	African <input type="checkbox"/>
Gypsy/Roma <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>	Other* <input type="checkbox"/>
Irish Traveller <input type="checkbox"/>	Other* <input type="checkbox"/>	Other* <input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>
Other * <input type="checkbox"/>	Arab <input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Other ethnic group - if your ethnic group is not specified in the list, please describe it here:

Consultation closes 8 April 2015

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS, for example), are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Q14. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

Yes No I prefer not to say

Q15. If you answered Yes to Q14, please tell us which type of impairment applies to you. You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all the impairments that apply to you. If none of these applies to you, please select other, and write in the type of impairment you have.

- Physical impairment Mental health condition
 Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both) Learning disability
 Long standing illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy
 Other, please specify: I prefer not to say



Q16. Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion or belief?

Yes No I prefer not to say

Q17. If you answered Yes to Q16, which of the following applies to you?

- Christian Hindu Muslim Buddhist
 Jewish Sikh Any other religion, please specify:

Thank you for taking the time to give us your views

Kent County Council (KCC) collects and processes personal information in order to provide a range of public services. KCC respects the privacy of individuals and endeavours to ensure personal information is collected fairly, lawfully, and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you would like to be kept informed of future developments on the Library, Registration and Archive service please provide your contact details below:

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Please address your completed questionnaire to 'Freepost LRA Consultation'



This document is available in alternative formats and languages.

Please phone **0300 3335540** or speak to a member of staff at your Library who can phone on your behalf.

Text Relay: **18001 0300 3335540**