

INVOLVING THE WHOLE COMMUNITY; THE KENT APPROACH TO LITERACY AND READING 2011-2021

DRAFT TEXT

1. INTRODUCTION

In order for Kent to move forward towards an aspiration of 100% literacy levels we need articulate and engaged communities. From birth through all stages of life we need to equip all of our communities with the life chances and opportunities to lead full and rewarding lives. Developing literacy skills, creating literate communities and promoting a love of reading for pleasure are central to these aims. *Involving the whole community..... the Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading* outlines why literate and reading communities are important to the continued success of Kent. It provides a new, simple and sustainable approach to achieve our aspiration.

Kent County Council and a growing number of partners aim to embed a culture where everyone aspires to read and provide excellent signposting to skills development opportunities, services and support.

Involving the Community; the Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading aims to

- Raise awareness of literacy needs
- Promote the benefits of reading
- Raise awareness of the excellent good practice that already exists
- Involve more people to help us raise standards.

It will recognise that:

- Everything starts with reading; it is key to a fulfilling life
- Reading and success go hand in hand
- Reading is anything, anywhere, anytime
- The best place to begin is with what you love; enjoy what you read and share that pleasure
- It's never too early or too late.

We recognise the enormous energy, commitment and expertise that are already raising the standards of literacy and reading across Kent, including the work of our teachers, tutors and librarians. The Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading does not seek to advise on how literacy should be taught. It aims to support those whose role it is to develop literacy skills and promote the enjoyment of reading. It also seeks to engage the people who could most benefit from literacy skills and reading including parents of young children, people who are seeking work, and people who suffer mental health problems.

Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the Kent Approach. Involving the whole community is all about challenging stereotypes and promoting positive images of reading and our target audiences. We will seek to benefit and involve everyone who lives or works in Kent, regardless of first language,

ability, gender, age, race, religious belief, gender identity or sexual orientation. All our partners have Equal opportunities policies.

2. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'LITERACY AND READING'?

We will support all four strands of literacy - speaking, listening, reading and writing. There are many definitions of 'Literacy and Reading' but we have chosen two which we believe best sum up the benefits:

"The ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associate with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society" UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

"We believe that reading can transform people's lives. The more you read, the more you know. The more you read, the more you imagine. The more you read, the better you understand and the better you can connect to people. Our mission is to inspire more people to read more." The Reading Agency

3. WHY DO WE NEED A KENT APPROACH TO LITERACY AND READING?

Literacy and Reading are vital to the delivery of Bold Steps for Kent, the authority's medium-term plan. Like the Kent approach, Bold Steps and the Vision for Kent can only be delivered in partnership. The following facts indicate why the contribution of literacy and reading is so crucial:

1. **Helping the Kent economy grow:** literacy skills will enable us to facilitate new growth in the Kent economy because:
 - Over 95% of all employment in the U.K. required employees to be able to read
 - 22% of men and 30% of women with literacy below entry level 2 live in non-working households
 - Men and women with poor literacy are least likely to be in full-time employment at the age of 30
 - Concern about basic numeracy and literacy is especially acute in retail and manufacturing – 69% of firms in retail and 50% in manufacturing report problems.
2. **Putting the citizen in control** – Literacy and Reading will enable us to place power and influence in the hands of local people so they are able to take responsibility for their own community and service needs because non-readers are less likely to:
 - Vote or have an interest in politics

- Participate in their local community
- Belong to a membership organisation.

3. Tackling disadvantage – Literacy and Reading will help to make Kent a county of opportunity where aspiration, rather than dependency is supported, particularly for those who are disadvantaged or who struggle to help themselves and their family because non-readers are more likely to:

- Suffer depression
- Smoke
- Live in over-crowded housing
- Have low aspirations.

To sum up, a love of reading and the ability to read brings benefits throughout life, including:

- Bonding; sharing a story with a parent or carer is one of the earliest and strongest opportunities
- Social skills; through storytime at pre-school or in a library a child can learn how to listen and interact with other children and adults
- Readiness for school; sharing stories helps a child to gain confidence
- Skills for life; literacy is a life skill; vital at every stage
- Skills for work; jobs and the use of computers and other technologies require literacy skills
- Involvement; a reader will be more confident to join in and play an active role in their community
- Health and wellbeing; reading can be a lifeline for anyone who is ill or lonely
- And not least...fun!

4. WHY DO WE NEED TO INVOLVE THE WHOLE COMMUNITY?

We believe that the people who can make most difference are the readers of Kent; people who, whatever their first language, age or ability, can help us engage the non-readers of Kent. Readers far outnumber non-readers and their enthusiasm is infectious; let's harness it!

Everyone can play a role, whether it is taking a child to a library for the first time, making a storysack for a family, being a volunteer reader in a school, or accompanying a nervous friend to a Skills Plus Centre in the high street where they will find community learning and skills staff who can help them to gain a basic literacy qualification. Just talking about the sheer pleasure of reading can inspire others. There is good evidence to support our approach:

- Two out of five adults are encouraged to read a book after receiving tips from friends: [Office of National Statistics](#);

- 43% of young people will read something as a result of a peer recommendation: Nestle Family Monitor

Volunteering opportunities already exist and will be expanded. Volunteer Reading Help and Time2 Give, Libraries and Archives volunteering programme which is managed by Community Service Volunteers provide a range of opportunities including:

- Baby Rhyme Time and Story Time - helping to engage children in literacy related activities
- Supporting and Listening to children read - provided by Volunteer Reading Help in schools
- Summer Reading Challenge - peer and adult support for the school holiday programme
- Library links with local schools - promote library services in schools, encourage class visits, and act as a communication link between the school and local library. We may develop similar links with GP surgeries as well as promoting volunteering as a mental health therapy
- Reading Group hosts - facilitate and support reading groups in libraries. These include special interest groups e.g. the MIND reading group for people with mental health issues. There is also an Audio Reading Group for people who are blind or visually impaired
- Supporting Adult Literacy – opportunities to support Basic Literacy students, enabling them to have some extra support in the library between classes.

Other volunteering opportunities include:

- **Seashells Doorstep Library in Sheerness** - where Children's Centre volunteers and a Bookworker visit families each week offering to read a story and providing an opportunity to borrow books. They seek to create an atmosphere for the children to feel confident around books and to build a trusting relationship with the families to help them use other services. Many of the families now attend groups and activities at the Children's Centre and have joined the library. Parents have been inspired to become more interested and involved in their child's literacy
- **Employee Volunteering schemes** - to support literacy in schools and libraries. KCC will encourage volunteering to support literacy and reading through own Employee Volunteering Scheme
- **Words for Work** – volunteers from the business community are supporting nine Kent secondary schools in a National Literacy Trust pilot. This initiative helps nine pupils (13/14 year olds) to explore the use of speaking and listening skills in the workplace through a series of creative workshops
- **Reading Ambassadors** who will work in local communities, the workplace or in the clubs and societies. We want people who will help us to fly the flag, to help us challenge attitudes and other barriers to literacy and have some fun at the same time!

Everyone will be able to volunteer. We will welcome everyone whatever their first language, ability, gender, age, race, religious belief, gender identity or sexual orientation. For example, in 2008-09 at least 13% of our Time2Give volunteers were disabled and 9.4% were from Black Minority Ethnic groups.

A new opportunity for everyone to get involved!

We have been inspired by the *Future of Reading*, an Arts Council research project to engage people in a debate about the role and value of reading, and how it can best be encouraged in a digital age.

The report reveals a number of interesting findings about reading including:

- The importance of reading as an individual, creative experience and its perceived benefits of enjoyment, escape, empathy and overall wellbeing
- The reasons why people choose not to read, from a lack of time or interest to a fear of being too 'drawn in' to another world
- That all forms of reading are seen as valid and valuable and that people don't want to be patronised or dictated to about what they choose to read
- Ideas for how individuals and organisations, particularly libraries, can help to promote reading by tapping into a universal interest in good stories.

The report also promotes the use of '**great stories**' as an art form at the centre of a programme to get more people reading more and more widely. Storytelling is a very accessible medium and part of the culture of some communities including Gypsy Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage.

We know that everyone has a story to tell about their life and their reading experience; whether a good or bad experience when they were a child, a story of how reading has been a lifeline during periods of loneliness or depression, or to raise concerns about why some children and adults are unable to read and make suggestions for what should be done to address the problem.

To understand the barriers and to get new thinking we need to maintain this dialogue with the people of Kent. We can use these stories and experiences to break down the barriers and stigmas associated with illiteracy. We plan to launch the Kent Approach with a focus on **Local Legends of Kent**, encouraging everyone, in particular our target audiences to:

- Tell their own stories
- Tell other people's stories
- Talk about the stories they love
- Tell us about their reading experiences.

5. WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THE KENT APPROACH?

We have identified 15 priority groups as shown below and will regularly review progress and add new target audiences as needs are identified. Statistics below are from Literacy Changes Lives; a summary of the impact of reading in individuals, communities and the nation (2008).

- **Early Years children and their families:** Up to 10% of all children have a long term persistent communication difficulty. However, upwards of 50% of children on school entry have more transient difficulties which, with the right support, mean the children are likely to catch up. I CAN Talk paper- 'The Cost to the Nation of Children's Poor Communication'
- **Children at Key Stage 2 transition and their families:** at Key Stage 2 the expected level for pupils to achieve is Level 4. In Kent 21.5% are below Level 4 in English, 15.3% in Reading and 35.2% in Writing. Nationally, 6-7% of 11 year olds in England leave primary school at a reading level equivalent to an average 7 or 8 year old. (The Long Term Costs of Literacy Difficulties KPMG Foundation 2007)
- **Looked After Children:** in 2003, 48% of children in care left school without any qualifications, compared to only 5% of all other children. Children in care have poor results in Key Stage tests at ages 7, 11 and 14. Just 1% go to university. Children in care are 10 times more likely to be permanently excluded from school. Social Exclusion Unit :
- **Deaf children:** official figures suggest that over a quarter (28%) of all deaf children leave primary school without a basic understanding of literacy, compared with just 6% of all children
- **Men and boys:** 2396 pupils (12% of all pupils) in Kent were not awarded a Level for Reading. Of these 1566 were boys. Only 23% of boys read stories or novels every day compared to 41% of girls (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study In 2010 the National Literacy Trust found that boys do not enjoy writing as much as girls (38% vs. 52%) either for family/ friends or for schoolwork. 70% of men with poor literacy and/or numeracy were in manual jobs, compared with 50% of those who were competent in both
- **Young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs):** it is possible to track people's progress from age 17 to 37. Data show that those with lower levels of literacy are more likely to be unemployed by the time they are 23
- **Children and young people who are excluded from school:** 70% of children permanently excluded from school have difficulties in basic literacy skills.

- **Gypsy Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage:** Just 19% of pupils at Key Stage 2 in Kent achieved Level 4+ in English and Maths and 3.7% A* to C grades at Key Stage 4 (source: KCC Management Information Unit)
- **Families whose first language is not English (ESOL):** numbers of families from certain Minority Ethnic groups are increasing in parts of Kent. These include Nepali in Shepway, White Eastern European and Gypsy Roma in Thanet, Dover, Gravesend and Dartford
- **Adults with literacy skills below Level 2:** 276,000 adults in Kent and Medway have Entry Level 3 or below literacy skills. 75.9% of the working age population is employed, but the average household income in Kent is lower than in the rest of the South East. 12.1% of the population have no qualifications at all, 16.2% are qualified to L1 and 16.8% have a Level 2 qualification. In 2007/08, 23.9% of Community Learning and Skills learners (7,774) were on Preparation for Life and Work (literacy, language, and numeracy) programmes. The Moser report states that up to 7 million, i.e. 1 in 6, adults, in England have difficulties with literacy and numeracy.
- **People who are out of work or on working age benefits:** the gap between those with low literacy skill, average and good literacy skills widens by the time they are 37, with those with low literacy skills being less likely to be in full-time employment than those with average or good literacy skills. Improving literacy skills to Level 1 increases the likelihood of employment by about 5 percentage points. It also increases wages by 7 percentage points
- **Health patients in particular people with mental health issues:** Research at Sussex University has found that reading is the best way to relax, and even 6 minutes can be enough to reduce stress levels by more than two thirds. In a series of tests they found that reading reduced stress levels by 68%.
- **Adults with learning disabilities;** the majority of people with a learning disability have difficulty with literacy, reading and understanding. Being able to read and understand documents makes a tremendous difference to people's lives. It builds confidence and self-esteem. Putting information into 'easy read' can not only support people's understanding but it can also help support and develop their levels of literacy. There are an estimated 35,000 people with a recognised learning disability in Kent
- **People on probation or at risk of offending:** including young offenders: nearly two thirds of offenders under probation supervision in the community have a literacy and numeracy ability below that of an 11-year old. Source: Kent Probation. Nationally, 37% of prisoners are below Level 1 (expected of a seven year old or national Curriculum

Level 2) against 16% in the general population between 16 -65 years. Non readers are more likely to commit a crime and be sent to prison or re-offend once released and represent half of all offenders leaving prison

- **People living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage:** the breakdown of an overall percentage of adults who have skills levels, below 1, in literacy and numeracy across Kent is 47%. In Swale it is 54% and in Thanet it is 52%
- **There are many other people who will benefit from the Kent Approach.** People of all ages, people who are disabled, people of both sexes, lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people, people of every religion, and people of all races may fit into one or more of our target audiences. Many will play a positive role helping us to deliver the Kent Approach. For example black children are ahead of their white peers when it comes to reading; gypsy roma and travellers have a rich culture of storytelling and people with disabilities can help us to develop accessible approaches. No one will be excluded. For example, Kent Association for the Blind holds a monthly Book Club at Maidstone Library

6. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO LITERACY AND READING?

These include family background, upbringing, early years experience, a past lack of educational opportunity, peer pressure, lifestyle changes and other circumstances which occur throughout life. 5 of the most significant barriers are summed up below:

1. **Attitudes:** research into attitudes towards reading commissioned by DCSF has highlighted that only 24% of parents in the lower C2DE socio-economic group see the link between reading and success in life. Many people associate reading with books and literature and do not realise that you need good literacy skills to use a computer, read information on the internet or in leaflets. We must demonstrate the value and benefits of reading, including magazines, websites, signs etc so that everyone aspires to read. The Skills for Life Survey 2003 states that:
 - 54% of people with Entry Level 1 or lower level literacy said their everyday reading ability was very or fairly good.
 - Only 2% felt their weak skills had hindered their job prospects or led to mistakes at work

Many people come across children and adults who cannot read and write but do not think it is their responsibility to help and are not motivated to find out about the availability of help and support. **We must challenge these attitudes and make literacy everyone's responsibility**

2. **Lack of confidence:** There is a huge stigma attached to an inability to read and most people prefer to cover up the fact. This is increasingly difficult as the use of computers and most job opportunities require reading skills. **We must remove the stigma so that people feel as comfortable discussing their literacy skills as their maths skills.**
3. **Lack of awareness of services and support:** there is a wealth of free advice, help and support out there but many people are unaware that it exists and that it is for them. These include parents, young people, practitioners, employers and the general public. **We must raise awareness of our fantastic services and improve signposting to them through partnerships, website and staff training**
4. **Lack of access to services and support:** many people want help but are unable to access it for a variety of reasons including time, cost, travel etc. **We must understand their needs and overcome these obstacles through use of new technologies which can provide access to services 24/7 and other new approaches**
5. **Behaviours:** some will never have used library or adult education services or sought help and advice from other sources. They may associate learning with a bad experience at school in the past. They may have a stereotypical image of a library. **We must help and support everyone to see for themselves that our services are modern, welcoming and open to all.**

7. WHAT WILL THIS STRATEGY ACHIEVE?

It will promote and build on excellent and innovative work that takes places in our schools, Community Learning and Skills Centres (Kent Adult Education and Key Training Services), in further education colleges and in public libraries every day. These include:

- a. **Bookstart;** a universal programme which is managed and promoted by the Booktrust. It is funded by the Department of Education and books are donated by publishers. In Kent, Libraries and Archives manage the scheme which, in 2009-10, gifted books to 100% of babies at registration; books to 87% children at 18 – 30 months via the health service; and to 100% of 36-48 month olds via early years settings including Children's Centres and Pre-schools; totalling over 49,000 pre-school children. Bookstart is also available in alternative formats including dual language and Bookshine and signed books for children who are deaf
- b. **Every Child a Talker;** a national initiative designed to promote early speech, language and communication skills in children. It has been developed to address a national concern regarding the significant number of children entering school with poor communication skills. The Every Child a Talker programme will improve the skills and expertise of early year's practitioners; it will increase practitioners'

knowledge and understanding of the development of early language and lead to measurable improvements in the early language of the children attending the settings involved. It will raise the understanding and expertise of early years practitioners across the whole setting and equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to work with both children and parents. As well as creating an enriched language environment within settings, the programme will increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning and will help to develop stronger home learning environments which was developed by the Booktrust to maintain these benefits when children start school. Reception-aged children receive two books in a book bag with information for the parent/carer about sharing books. NIACE reported that Kent's Booktime programme ensured that "children are enthused by other books, that parents are inspired to play a part in their child's education and that families develop the library habit"

- c. **Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy programmes** run by Community Learning and Skills in schools, children's centres and other venues across Kent and are specifically designed where appropriate, to enable adults and children to learn together. These excellent programmes aim to raise standards of literacy, language and numeracy for both parents and children, to extend parents' skills in supporting their children's developing literacy skills, and to provide opportunities for parents to achieve literacy qualifications at an appropriate level. For many adult learners a family programme is their first step back into formal learning since their own school days, and one important motivation is the desire to offer their child support and opportunity. For many children this can provide the encouragement they need to re-engage and feel success in learning.
- d. **Reading Recovery;** Kent has been successfully involved in the Every Child a Reader project since September 2006. Every Child a Reader is an initiative designed to tackle the literacy difficulties that blight many children's lives, particularly those of children who live in poverty. Currently approximately 70 Kent schools are involved in the initiative.

The initiative is part funding the salary, and providing training, of highly skilled Reading Recovery teachers to give intensive help to children most in need. Reading Recovery is an early intervention for children who have made very little progress in reading and writing during their first year at school. It involves a daily one-to-one lesson with a trained Reading Recovery teacher for a period of between 12 and 20 weeks. There is strong evidence that school failure leads to lack of self-esteem, diminished confidence, school dropout and other negative outcomes. Reading Recovery has a strong track record of preventing literacy failure for many children through early intervention. Investing early to prevent reading failure saves money in the public purse at a later date.

In 2010, of the 453 children who completed their Reading Recovery programme, 79% achieved age appropriate levels in reading and writing

- e. **Volunteer Reading Help**, a national charity which works with schools in Kent. Our aim is to help build a nation of confident children who are literate for life. We do this by training and supporting a team of amazing people who volunteer their time to become reading helpers in a local primary school
- f. **Summer Reading Challenge**: led by The Reading Agency in partnership with public libraries, this is the biggest national reading initiative. It is promoted as a fun, free and accessible activity that encourages children, aged 4-12 years, to sustain their reading habit during the summer break. Research by the UK Literacy Association (UKLA) shows it can help primary schools avoid the "summer dip" in pupils' reading motivation and attainment, widen pupils' reading range and repertoire and boost their desire to read at home. The challenge is simple – children join up at their local library. They can read or listen to any books they like during the holidays with incentives to collect along the way. There is a certificate and medal for every child who completes the challenge by reading 6 books. Libraries across Kent hold events and activities that offer free family fun throughout the summer to complement the challenge

In 2010 we targeted Reading Recovery schools. Six Reading Recovery schools received reading trophies for having achieved between 15% and 33% of their school rolls participating

- g. **Skills Plus Centres** (SPCs) are town centre learning centres with a difference. There is no standard delivery of courses and learners can set their own pattern of attendance to fit with their lives. Courses are tailored to individual need, usually embed basic IT and where appropriate learners can also undertake self-study with the support of the tutor. There are other satellite courses that take place outside the Skills Plus Centre e.g. in the workplace or in other Adult Education Centres
- h. **New partnerships**; since National Year of Reading a range of new and non-traditional partners have got involved working to support schools and engage Community Learning and Skills or Libraries to raise literacy levels and promote reading to meet their priorities. These include health, the community safety sector and housing
- i. **New approaches** e.g. a primary school in Kent is piloting R.E.A.D (Reading Education Assistance Dogs). Well-established in parts of the U.S.A. and Canada this scheme encourages reluctant readers to read to a trained therapy dog and its volunteer handler
- j. **New opportunities**: Technology based materials are most frequently read, with nearly two thirds of children and young people reading websites every week, and half of children and young people reading e-mails and blogs/ networking sites every week.

Involving the whole community; the Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading will demonstrate the importance of literacy for educational attainment, work and life. It will encourage and enable:

- Increased skills levels
- Confidence and skills to get a job and/or retain a job
- raised awareness of services for literacy and reading
- every home to become a reading home
- a confident and articulate population including parents, carers and children
- young people to understand the importance of reading
- boys to feel more enthusiastic about reading
- adult literacy development and improvement
- more people to read more
- everyone to be better informed

Involving the whole community; the Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading will also:

- Enliven minds
- Broaden horizons
- Inspire creativity, innovation and fun
- Make possible progressions in education
- Increase aspirations and attainment
- Increase participation
- Support emotional and intellectual development
- Increase knowledge
- Break down barriers
- Help to build stronger and safer communities
- Encourage and support awareness and participation in local decision making
- Enable community empowerment through awareness of rights, benefits and services
- Improve the responsiveness of services to community needs including the needs of our target audiences
- Encourage healthy lifestyles and contribute to mental and physical well-being; 40% of people who read a book on health said it made them feel better!
- Enable people to cope with isolation, anxiety or ill-health
- Help children and young people to enjoy life and make a positive contribution
- Support cultural diversity and identity
- Change attitudes, behaviours and the culture

8. HOW WILL THE KENT APPROACH TO LITERACY AND READING BE DELIVERED?

If we are to achieve our aspiration of 100% literacy we must ensure that the Kent Approach is sustainable until 2021 and beyond. The Kent Approach

must be really simple to be effective. It will provide a continuous cycle of interventions, recognising that a range of different approaches is needed and that there is no 'quick fix'. Three broad areas have been identified:

Conversation, Charter and Challenge.

The **Conversation** aims to reach the widest possible range of partners, communities and individuals in order to get everyone talking about literacy and sharing responsibility to help find new approaches. Questions will be adapted for different audiences but will be based on the following:

- What is your experience of literacy and/or reading?
- How can we raise standards of literacy?
- How can we introduce more people to the benefits of reading?
- What are the barriers to success and how can we overcome them?
- What can you or your organisation contribute?

A **Reading Charter** for the people of Kent will promote existing services, many of which are free, alongside new offers and opportunities to get involved. It will aim to raise awareness of the range of facilities and activities that exist at local and county level enabling more effective signposting to help and support.

We will also seek pledges from individuals and organisations and add them to our Charter. I will go home and read to my child; I will drop into my local SkillsPlus Centre; I will encourage my W.I to make Storysacks.

Through continuous **Challenge** we aim to maintain commitment to seek new approaches until the goal of 100% literacy has been achieved. The role of our champions and partners will be crucial in ensuring that literacy and reading are at the heart of Kent's strategic and local priorities. To succeed we must challenge and be open to challenge. We must constantly strive to find alternative approaches and be open to suggestions

We need to promote the strongest possible links with the under 5's. I think language development through speech therapists and library services could run group clinics or align themselves with preschool settings in partnership with parents and preschool staff. These sessions both for parents with their child and training sessions on how to support their child at home with language development (PEP Head respondent to National Literacy Trust Family Reading Matters survey 2009).

9. WHEN WILL THE KENT APPROACH TO LITERACY AND READING BEGIN?

It began in National Year of Reading in 2008 and it won't stop until everyone has had the opportunity to develop their literacy skills and/or discover the joy of reading. Throughout 2011 we will host roadshows/ launch events to include:

- April 2011 Showcase services and initiatives and begin a Conversation with local people, gathering pledges etc

- Monthly Roadshow to town centres based on the above
- Promotional events for every target audience including: Kent 2020 Business to Business Conference (April); Horsmonden Horse Fair (Gypsy Roma/ Traveller communities; summer); Early Years Conference (autumn).

10. HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

The wonderful thing is that, while literacy is even more vital during an economic downturn, the Kent Approach to Literacy and Reading can be achieved through prioritising and focussing existing services and resources.

Most importantly the human resources also exist; not only the teachers, tutors and librarians but the people of Kent who love to read and the organisations which work with our target audiences including Volunteer Reading Help, the Probation Service, Health Service and the District Councils. Our partners bring a range of skills, facilities and access to other resources as well as energy and enthusiasm. Maximising access to, and synergy between, these resources will be a critical to the success of the Kent Approach.

The Kent Approach will use existing forums and events wherever possible to engage audiences and ensure sustainability.

The Kent Approach is attracting investment including:

- Dept for Education/ National Literacy Trust funding for the appointment of a Coordinator for Partners in Literacy
- Innovation Fund to support work in Swale and Thanet
- YMCA investment to support work with NEETs in Kent Thameside
- AmicusHorizon investment to reach families in Swale.

During National Year of Reading just £18,715 provided seedcorn funding to enable 9 initiatives to get off the ground. They were:

- The introduction of Bag Books, multi-sensory stories for adults and children with severe or profound learning disabilities, autistic children, children with ADHD and children and adults with physical disabilities
- Making libraries more user-friendly for people with dyslexia
- A health-themed Alphabet book aimed at adults with basic literacy skills
- Kent souvenir guide books for gifting at Citizenship ceremonies
- Introduction of 6 Book Challenge to support Skills Plus Centres
- Education thru' Art initiative to support Headspace youth project
- New Chatterbooks reading group for young people
- Provision of magazines for young people
- Support for literacy and reading in prison libraries

We will continue to pursue investment opportunities including sponsorship for high profile Kent Approach promotional events and seedcorn funding to test new approaches which will engage new audiences and new partners. We will welcome offers of seedcorn funding in particular to help kick-start projects in

local communities or countywide. Please contact us if you would like more details or want to alert us to an investment opportunity. We will acknowledge all sponsorship in publicity and liaise with funding partners to see if there are other mutual benefits in working together.

10. WHO IS LEADING KENT APPROACH TO LITERACY AND READING?

Kent County Council has statutory responsibilities for education and libraries and is well placed to take a strategic lead. Libraries and Archives will act as lead partner for the Kent Approach and will act as coordinator, broker and enabler. Literacy and Reading is Libraries and Archives core business alongside community cohesion, public information and digital inclusion and can provide support through shared use of resources including IT, library buildings and staff skills.

KCC and its strategic partners cannot of course deliver the Kent Approach alone and we will continue to work with a widening range of partners and local people.

In the final analysis the people of Kent are the real key to success. We will work with individuals and organisations at local community, county and national levels to deliver the Kent Approach. There is a role for everyone and opportunities to get involved from taking ten minutes to read to a child to helping in other ways.

The **Kent Forum for Literacy and Reading** provides a wide and diverse partnership forum to champion, steer and sustain the Kent Approach. It will:

- Provide leadership, challenge, support and advice
- Bring new thinking, creativity and flair
- Celebrate literacy and reading at every opportunity
- Involve and represent key sectors and partners
- Help to broker new partnerships
- Secure resources including in-kind resources
- Ensure high level recognition within KCC and from its strategic partners
- Advise on links with national and local policy

Existing partners are KCC Directorates plus Aimhigher Kent and Medway; Amicus Horizon Housing; Canterbury Christchurch University; Community Learning and Skills; Connexions; Employment And Skills Board Manager, Kent And Medway; Innovation, Business Solutions and Policy; JobCentre Plus; Kent Association of Training Organisations; Kent Economic Board,; Kent Probation; Maidstone Borough Council; Volunteer Reading Help; West Kent NHS; Youth Offending Service; Youth Service. A wide and diverse range of partners are involved in local projects including Kent County Council's Arts Development Unit and Sports, Leisure and Olympics as well as Hi Kent and Kent Association for the Blind

12. HOW WILL WE KNOW WHETHER THE KENT APPROACH IS WORKING AND WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR?

Ultimately the test will of course be improved literacy levels but this is a long term goal and proxy indicators will need to be developed in order to measure progress. These will include the success of individual projects and initiatives; and levels of participation and partner involvement

Work to develop the Kent Approach has already enabled a range of new partnerships, new approaches and new opportunities. A few examples are cited below:

- **New partnership:** A Rapid English Forum has been formed to develop and evaluate Rapid English in Kent including representatives from Children Families and Education, Community Learning and Skills, Connexions, the Library Service and Youth Offending Service. Rapid English helps anyone with poor levels of literacy as well as families whose first language is not English (ESOL), to communicate clearly and confidently. It is a user-friendly interactive IT programme which provides a positive and enjoyable learning experience and a simple but highly effective teaching method. It achieves rapid and dynamic improvements in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills
- **New approach:** Kent Reading Champions, people from all walks of life who live in the county or who have strong associations with Kent. They can include anyone who will inspire others to read more or improve their literacy skills. They will include a Bookstart Baby, young people, some of our oldest residents, and others from our target audiences, who may have struggled to read but have overcome their difficulties. These people will champion the Kent Approach acting as ambassadors and role models to inspire others to read or improve their literacy skills
- **New focus on an existing programme:** Reading Recovery teachers have promoted the Summer Reading Challenge in their schools and in many cases accompanied groups of Reading Recovery children and their parents to the nearest library to get them signed up for the Challenge and to collect their first book

13. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

As you can see from the examples above, the team that has worked together to develop the Kent Approach has not been a talking shop. However the Kent Approach is a call to action to enable everyone to get involved. Together we must promote and embed a culture where everyone aspires to read and where there is excellent signposting to skills development opportunities and support.

We need the help and support of:

- Everyone who recognises the value of literacy and/or loves to read
- Every organisation which would benefit if we could improve the literacy skills of the children, young people and adults of Kent.

15. HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

There are many ways in which you can help us to get everyone talking and taking action to raise standards of literacy and promoting the joys of reading for pleasure. You can help us by:

- Talking about it to others in your organisation, your community or your workplace
- Passing this paper on to others
- Sharing your thoughts
- Sharing your ideas
- Sharing opportunities
- Sharing resources e.g. in-kind or financial support to help us achieve our aims
- Helping us to initiate the Conversations about literacy and reading
- Getting actively engaged with Living Legends of Kent and telling us your story

(End of text)

Some of our favourite Quotes about Literacy and Reading:

"A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.": Chinese proverb

"Books were my window on the world": Michael Caine

"A child taken to the library on a monthly basis from ages 3 to 5 is two and a half months ahead of an equivalent child at age 5 who did not visit the library so frequently": Sutton Trust 2010

"The greatest part of a writer's time is spent in reading in order to write. A man will turn over half a library to make a book.": Samuel Johnson

"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents": Emilie Bouchwald

"He who has a garden and a library, wants for nothing": Cicero

"I am a bear of very little brain, and long words bother me.": Winnie the Pooh, A. A. Milne

"I have this belief that children become readers before they can read. They become hooked on books because they were read to as a child.": Jacqueline Wilson, Children's Author

"If I don't read two books a day my brain won't grow": Ella Aldous of Kent, aged 4

"If there's a book you really want to read but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it.": Toni Morrison

"In the digital age, more than ever before, we need strong literacy skills to make sense of our daily lives and interact with the world around us. Good communication skills make an individual more effective, engaging and employable. We must call for these skills to be addressed at an early age.": Thomson Reuters.

"A library is a hospital for the mind": Anonymous

"Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty, and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories. Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for the promotion of cultural and national identity. Especially for girls and women, it is an agent of family health and nutrition. For everyone, everywhere, literacy is, along with education in general, a basic human right.... Literacy is, finally, the road to human progress and the means through which

every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential” : Kofi Annan

“.....Literacy is the most basic currency of the knowledge economy” : Barack Obama

“Literacy is not a luxury; it is a right and a responsibility” : President Clinton on International Literacy Day 1994

“The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them” : Mark Twain

“The moment we persuade a child, any child to cross that threshold into a library, we’ve changed their lives forever, and for the better. This is an enormous force for good!” : Barrack Obama

“Never judge a book by its movie” : J W Eagan

“The only end of writing is to enable readers better to enjoy life or better to endure it.” : Samuel Johnson

“Outside of a dog, a book is man’s best friend, inside of a dog it’s too dark to read” : Groucho Marx

“People say that life is the thing, but I prefer reading” : Logan Pearsall Smith

“Poor literacy is an intergenerational phenomenon, and having poor literacy skills impacts not only on adults’ life chances but also on those of their children” : National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy

“Reading is the gateway skill that makes all other learning possible” : Barack Obama

“Reading without reflection is like eating without digesting” : Edmund Burke

“So please, oh PLEASE, we beg, we pray, Go throw your TV set away, And in its place you can install, A lovely bookshelf on the wall.” : Roald Dahl, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

“Some books are to be tasted, others swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested” : Francis Bacon

“Speaking and listening are the foundations of social and emotional development as well as preparation for future learning. We learn to talk and communicate by imitation, so parents must be supported to encourage their child’s language development.” : Professor Tara Bryon Psychologist and Writer

“Teaching reading is rocket science” : Louisa Moats

"There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island.": Walt Disney

"The things I want to know are in books; my best friend is the man who'll get me a book I ain't read": Abraham Lincoln

"Through literacy you can begin to see the universe. Through music you can reach anybody. Between the two there is you, unstoppable.": Grace Slick

"When you are growing up, there are two institutional places that affect you most powerfully -- the church, which belongs to God, and the public library, which belongs to you. The public library is a great equalizer.": Keith Richards, Rolling Stones Guitarist

"A wonderful thing about a book, in contrast to a computer screen, is that you can take it to bed with you.": Daniel J. Boorstin