

# Making best use of the **Mobile Library Service**



## Have your say

Tell us your views about the  
Mobile Library Service across Kent

[Kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice](http://Kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice)  
Tell us what you think before 4 March 2016



We have sent all our current mobile library customers details of all stops in their district. However, if you would like information about stops in other districts, this is available at local libraries, on mobile libraries and at [kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice](http://kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice)

For alternative formats, see the back page of this document.

## Introduction

**Kent County Council (KCC) has been looking at how we can make our Mobile Library Service more efficient and provide a better service for residents across Kent.**

KCC is facing a significant financial challenge over the next few years, and all services need to look at areas where they can make savings. Libraries, Registration and Archives must save £1.3million over the next three financial years.

In recent years improved public transport links, growth of car ownership, as well as greater access to services available via the internet have meant that the way people access all KCC services, including library services, is changing and we need to adapt to meet our customers' needs.

We want to make sure that our Mobile Libraries stop in the places where they benefit our customers most.

Within this document we have included details of how and why we are redesigning this service, plus a list of all mobile library stops, so that you can easily find the stop that you use and see how the proposals could impact on you. For the majority of our users, we believe these proposed changes will result in a better service. However there are a number of users who will no longer be able to visit the mobile library at the current stop. This will not mean a loss of a library service – there are excellent alternative services available and these are also outlined in this document.

Please take time to read the information and then answer and return the questionnaire enclosed within this booklet.

### What could this mean for you?

**It is important that we know the views of our customers when reviewing and making changes to services.**

- We want to hear your views on the criterion we would like to use when planning how to make best use of our mobile libraries
- We would like to hear your views on the other changes we are proposing
- We want to hear any other comments you have about our proposals

Your responses will all be used to inform the KCC Cabinet Members decision on how we deliver this service in the future.

### What is the consultation timeline?

This consultation will **start** on Friday 22 January 2016 and **finish** at 5pm on Friday 4 March 2016.

## Background and context

As well as operating 99 library buildings, KCC currently operates 11 mobile libraries and one additional vehicle for use when others are off the road for maintenance. Our mobile libraries visit 651 locations across Kent. They offer a book lending service for people living, working and studying in the county, including those who live some distance from a traditional library building. Our vehicles do not provide access to computers or the internet.

The current Mobile Library Service has evolved over a number of years and there are differences in the service across Kent. Stopping times vary from 10 minutes to 90 minutes. Frequency of visits varies between two stops per week and once a month. The service was used by around 5,400 people during 2014-15 and demand has declined, with overall visits falling by 20% over the last 3 financial years (from 2012-13), and issues falling by 23% over the same period. For these reasons, we are reviewing all our routes so that we can be sure we are making the best use of our mobile libraries and providing the most efficient service across the county to all our customers.



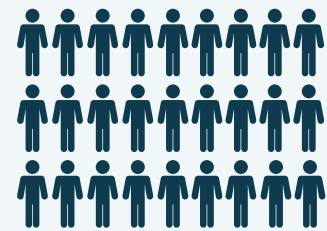
## Key Facts

Unless otherwise stated, facts are for the period October 2014 to September 2015.



The **average number of visitors across all mobile stops** was **two and a half**

The **busiest stop** averaged **27 visitors**



In the financial year 2014-15 the service cost ...

# £368,172

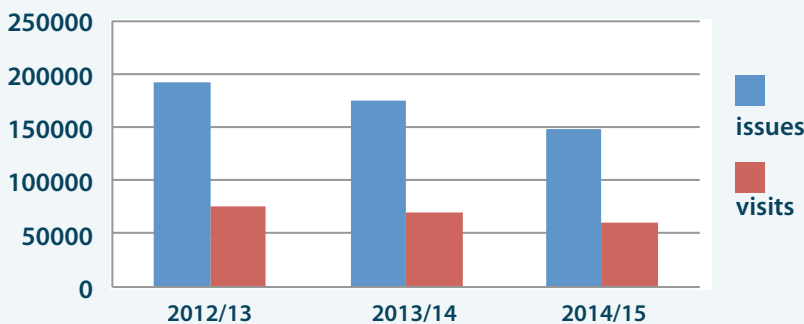
...to run. This is made up of staff salaries, maintenance costs and fuel.

# 50%

of all mobile library users also use one or more of our **library buildings**

**Overall book issues** for the mobile library service over the same period were **145,839** which equates to **2.8%** of total library issues.

Mobile issues and visits over the last three financial years



## £6.11



**MOBILE**

## £3.83



**STATIC**

The **average cost per customer visit**

of the mobile service is **£6.11** which compares to the static library average of **£3.83** (in 2014-15).



## How we reviewed our routes

KCC has looked at a range of information for the period October 2014 - September 2015 (which is the most up-to-date data we had available to us) about the current Mobile Library Service.

This included:

- number of recorded visitors at each stop
- number of items borrowed at each stop
- how long the vehicles stop at each stop
- how often vehicles visit each stop
- who our customers are
- the current routes that the vehicles travel
- which days of the week the service is currently offered

As part of this redesign we considered applying a range of criteria to all stops to help us assess the benefit they provide to local residents and considered a number of alternative options.



## Proposed criterion and impact

In redesigning the service we have selected one criterion to assess usage:

**Criterion: Stops that have only had, on average, 2 or less visitors over the period October 2014 - September 2015.**

Under our current proposals, stops that meet this criteria will be withdrawn.

From the data, we are proposing that we reduce the number of stops by 368:

Criteria	Number of Stops
<b>Stops that have received 2 or less visitors on average over the specified year period</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>Stops that have received over 2 visitors on average over the specified period.</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>Current total number of stops</b>	<b>651</b>

## Options we have considered

Criteria	Reason rejected
Take out stops within a mile of a static library	It is proposed to keep stops that had received over 2 visitors on average between October 2014 - September 2015. We decided actual usage of stops was key irrespective of their distance from the nearest static library.
Number of issues during 2014-15	We wanted to reflect the number of people actually using the service, rather than simply the number of books that are issued.
Only have one stop in a community	We propose to keep all stops that were performing above the minimum level as actual usage of stops was key.
Five visitors or less on average in October 2014 - September 2015.	The impact of this criterion was felt to be too high (580 stops in total would meet this criterion) to cover via alternative service. We felt that this would result in an imbalance of demand to the services we provide.



### **Redesigning the routes will allow us to implement a number of proposed improvements and changes to the stops;**

- Each stop would be on a new, fortnightly schedule
- Increasing the minimum stop time from 10 minutes to 30 minutes, improving the stop length for more than half of the stops
- Changing the days we operate to Tuesday through to Saturday to mitigate the impact of Bank Holiday Mondays on our current schedules and to increase opportunity for wider use
- In addition, we expect the redesigned routes will result in better fuel efficiency and improve the environmental impact of the Mobile Library Service.
- It will also deliver a saving for KCC.



## The impact of the proposed changes

Based on our proposed changes, we predict that **80%** of the current visits and 77% of the current book issues would still be delivered through the proposed mobile network. The table below shows a summary of the number of mobile stops that will remain in each district if we apply the proposed criterion.

To see what this means for your specific stop please see the A - Z list of stops sent with this document or visit [www.kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice](http://www.kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice) where an A-Z list of stops is available to download.

District	Number of static libraries	Current number of stops	Proposed number of stops
Ashford	6	92	50
Canterbury	5	86	42
Dartford	9	20	5
Dover	6	80	30
Gravesham	10	17	5
Maidstone	11	85	43
Sevenoaks	11	39	17
Shepway	8	58	30
Swale	7	55	23
Thanet	8	42	11
Tonbridge	9	47	15
Tunbridge Wells	9	30	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>651</b>	<b>283</b>

The cost of the service in 2014-15 is **£368,172**

If we were to implement the proposals we estimate that we would be able to deliver the service with 5 mobile libraries which we predict would mean potential savings of £150,000 per annum.

## Providing alternative access to library services

**Underused mobile library stops do not offer good value for money for Kent residents particularly where there are alternative ways for local residents to access library services. We have considered whether these services could expand to meet demand, and we believe that this would be feasible. These include:**

### **Home library service**

Our very popular Home Library Service brings library materials directly to your door. One of our trained volunteers can visit your home to discuss your reading tastes and requirements or you can simply request specific titles that you want. Books and other materials will then be chosen based on your preferences, and a volunteer will drop off and collect these at a time and frequency that is convenient to you.

### **Touch a New World**

Following a trial with some of our Home Library Service customers, we now offer the Touch a New World scheme. The aim is to get people online through the help of a volunteer and, if required, the loan of an iPad for ten weeks. Once able to use the internet and with a permanent means to go online, customers can use their library card and pin number to reserve items of their choice from our online catalogue. Home Library Service customers items are then dropped off and collected from your home.



### Static libraries and services available online

KCC has 99 library buildings across Kent. Each of the 12 districts in Kent has a district hub library. These are located in the town centres and are open a minimum of six days per week. Each district has at least one library that is open until 8pm one evening per week, and four libraries in Kent are open seven days per week. We know that half of mobile customers use a static library as well as a mobile already.

There are a number of static libraries in each district. Information about the location, the opening hours and the services offered at each of the Kent libraries can be found at [kent.gov.uk/libraries](http://kent.gov.uk/libraries) and clicking on 'find your library'.

Many of our services can be accessed online either at one of our libraries or using your home computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone. If you have a library card and pin number you can access items held in our own and partner libraries, including e-books. You can also request and renew items online.

Our online reference library offers more than 50 free online subscriptions. These include encyclopaedias, newspapers and e-learning resources. Many of these are accessible remotely using your library card and pin number.

All online Kent library services can be found by visiting [kent.gov.uk/libraries](http://kent.gov.uk/libraries) and clicking on 'online reference library'.



## Have your say

**We want to make sure that the Mobile Library Service continues to meet our customers' needs, is well used and offers Kent residents the best value for money. Following this review, we plan to use the same criterion to look at our routes on an annual basis to make sure our service stays cost-effective and relevant to our customers.**

We have carried out an Equality Impact Assessment as part of this review, and have published this along with all the consultation documents at [kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice](http://kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice). There is a question about this at the back of this booklet and we will use the feedback we receive about our assumptions to update this following the completion of this engagement process.

We are redesigning the Mobile Library Service and your views are important to us in shaping this process.

We want to hear what you think of the criterion and changes we have outlined in this document. Please let us know by visiting [kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice](http://kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice) and **completing the online consultation questionnaire.**

Alternatively, complete the questionnaire enclosed with this document and send it back to us in a marked envelope using the freepost address below:

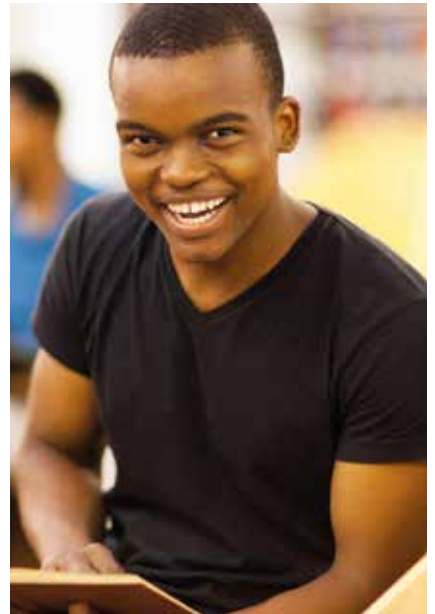
### **Freepost LRA Consultation**

(this is all the detail you need to put on the envelope)

### **You can also contact us by:**

Telephone: 03000 41 31 31 Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

**Email: [LRAconsultation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:LRAconsultation@kent.gov.uk)**



## What happens next?

This consultation will start on 22 January and finish on 4 March 2016 at 5pm (inclusive). Your responses will help us complete our review of the Mobile Library Service, and better understand the impact of any proposals on our customers. Following the consultation the findings will be put into a report that will be available from the library service and the website.

This report will inform the decision to be taken by the KCC Cabinet Member, who will consider all the responses provided about the proposed criterion and changes before making the decision on how to redesign the Mobile Library Service.



## Notes

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# Questionnaire

Tell us what you think by 4 March 2016

Please tell us your postcode to help us understand who is responding to our consultation:

## Data Protection

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

**Q1. Are you completing this questionnaire on behalf of:**

*Please select one option*

- Yourself (as an individual)
- Yourself (as a relative or friend of a Mobile Library Service user)
- Yourself as a member of Kent County Council staff
- A District/Town/Parish Council
- A Business
- A Voluntary or Community Sector Organisation (VCS)
- Other, please specify:

**Q1a. If you are responding on behalf of a Council / Business / VCS, please tell us the name of the organisation:**

## Q2. Do you currently use the Mobile Library Service?

*Please select one option*

Yes

No

## Q2a. If 'yes', please give the name of the Mobile Library Stop that you currently use

## Q3. When did you last use the Mobile Library Service?

*Please select one option*

Within the last month

Within the last three months

Within the last year

More than a year ago

**Q4. We are proposing to use one criterion to assess the future of mobile library stops:**

Criterion: Stops that have had 2 or less visitors on average over the period October 2014 to September 2015

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed criteria? Please indicate by placing an X in appropriate box below:

Strongly Agree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Don't Know

**Q4a. Are there alternative or other criteria you think we should use?**

## Q5. Frequency of visits to each location

We are proposing to change the frequency of visits to each location to every two weeks.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

## Q6. Changing the days we operate

We are proposing to change the days we operate the Mobile Library Service from **Monday to Friday** to **Tuesday to Saturday**

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know        |

**Q7. Increasing the minimum stopping time**

We are proposing to change the minimum stop time, increasing this from 10 minutes to 30 minutes.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposed change?**

Strongly agree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Don't know

**Q7a. Please tell us the reasons for your answers in response to questions 5, 6 and 7**

**Q8. Having read about the different ways to access KCC library services, which of the following options would be best for you?**

*(please select as many as you wish)*

Home Library Service

Online Library Services

Touch a New World

Visit to a library building

None of the above

**Q8a. After considering our proposal will you still be able to access library services?**

Yes

No

Don't know

*(Information on these services can be found on page 10 and 11 of the consultation document)*

**Q9: Equality Impact Assessment**

We have completed an Equality Impact Assessment on the review of the Mobile Library Service, and we welcome your views on the assumptions we have made. To view the document, go to [kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice](http://kent.gov.uk/mobilelibraryservice) or ask to see a copy on your mobile library. Please write your comments here:



**Q10. Anything Else?**

If you still have concerns about how you would access the library service in the future, or have any other comments, please let us know.

## About You...

*If you are responding as an individual, please answer the following questions:*

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that no one gets left out. That's why we're 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.

**Q11. Are you....?** *Please select one box.*

Male       Female       I prefer not to say

**Q12. Which of these age groups applies to you?** *Please select one box.*

0 - 15       25 - 34       50 - 59       65 - 74       85 + over  
 16 - 24       35 - 49       60 - 64       75 - 84       I prefer not to say

**Q13. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong? (Source: 2011 census)** *Please select one box.*

White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British
English <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	Indian <input type="checkbox"/>	Caribbean
Scottish <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Black African <input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>	African
Welsh <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>	Other*
Northern Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	Other* <input type="checkbox"/>	Other* <input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say
Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	Arab <input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>	
Gypsy/Roma <input type="checkbox"/>	*If your ethnic group is not specified in the list, please describe it here:		
Irish Traveller <input type="checkbox"/>			
Other* <input type="checkbox"/>			

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?** *Please select one box.*

**Yes**       **No**       **I prefer not to say**

**Q14a. If you answered Yes to Q14, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you.**

You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these applies to you, please select Other, and give brief details of the impairment you have.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical impairment  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning disability     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy. |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other*   | <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to say     |

\*If Other, please specify:

**Q15. Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion or belief?** *Please select one box.*

**Yes**       **No**       **I prefer not to say**

**Q15a. If you answered Yes to Q15, which of the following applies to you?** *Please select one box.*

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

**Q16. Are you?** *Please select one box.*

Heterosexual/Straight       Gay woman/Lesbian       Other  
 Bi/Bisexual       Gay man       I prefer not to say

**Q17. If you would like to receive updates about the development of our proposal and future engagement activities or would like us to contact you regarding alternative library service options please provide your contact details below.** *Please select one box.*

Our preferred method of communication is by email, however if you do not have an email address then please provide your postal address.

Full Name   
Email Address   
Postal Address

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.**

**Please post your complete questionnaire to:**

Freepost LRA Consultation

Or return it to your mobile library driver.

## **Alternative formats**

If you require this document in any other format or language, please email [alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk](mailto:alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk) or call: 03000 421553 (text relay service number: 18001 03000 421553). This number is monitored during office hours, and there is an answering machine at other times.

